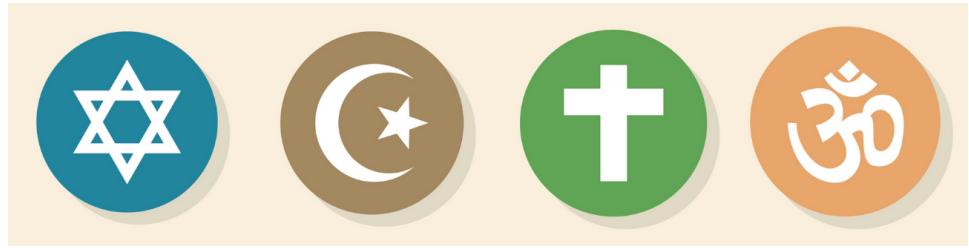


Special Thanks

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Gabrielle Yee
Scranton Area Ministerium
University of Scranton Office of Community Relations
and the National Endowment for the Humanities



PLACES OF WORSHIP BUS TOUR

Sunday, May 7, 2023

presented by
The Lackawanna Historical Society,
a project partner of the
University of Scranton's
"Scranton's Story, Our Nation's Story"



For more information on all programs, please visit www.scranton.edu/scrantonstory
Questions? Email community@scranton.edu or call 570-941-4419.

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Scranton Area Ministerium
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May 7th Tour

Multi-Faith Places of Worship Bus Tour:

These tours explore multi-faith places of worship across different neighborhoods in Scranton. Each tour includes six Scranton places of worship of varying Christian denominations as well as Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu faith traditions, and will focus on the history and cultural aspects of the congregation as well as special architectural details. These tours are led by the Lackawanna Historical Society in collaboration with the Scranton Area Ministerium and are part of the "Religious Tapestry of Scranton: Past and Present" theme of the Scranton's Story, Our Nation's Story collaborative community project led by The University of Scranton supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Shree Swaminarayan

Dedicated during the Summer of 2014, the Shree Swaminarayan Mandir is associated with Shree Swaminarayan Vadtal Gadi (SSVG) and a member of Shree Swaminarayan Agyna Upasana Satsang Mandal (SSAUSM). This Hindu temple provides space for prayers and worship for members of the Hindu community of Scranton as well as various celebrations and

festivals throughout the year such as Diwali.

A *mandir* is a sacred Hindu place of worship. It represents the earthly home of *Bhagwan*, where one can visit to quiet the mind and experience spirituality. Visitors and devotees come to *mandir* to offer prayers before the *murtis*, or sacred images, as well as to attend cultural classes and religious services known as *sabhas*.

Mandirs represent a Vedic tradition of building, maintaining, and preserving physical spaces to uphold the philosophy of Hinduism. The rituals and traditions celebrated at mandirs connect individuals to their families, communities, and to Bhagwan. Mandirs ensure that the legacy of Hinduism's oldest teachings is shared with future generations for many years to come.

The building, originally the Petersburg German Presbyterian church was dedicated on May 31, 1908. Petersburg Presbyterian was formed in 1858 and originally met in the city's No. 5 public school at Petersburg corners before building a small structure known as the Old White Church in 1868 on Wheeler Avenue.

Petersburg Presbyterian, which like its Lutheran neighbors also conducted



May 7th Tour

the former St. John's, and since moving into the building has recognized a growing Hispanic population in their neighborhood and added a Spanish Sunday service.

The previous St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church was formed in 1853 when the Roman Catholic parish of St. Bonaventure split into St. Mary the Assumption serving South Side Germans and the Church of St. Vincent de Paul in the city's downtown serving the Irish. But when South Side Irish Catholics quickly tired of traveling across the city, they petitioned Bishop William O'Hara, the first bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, for another Catholic parish in South Scranton. In response, St. John's was founded in 1886 as a territorial parish to serve a specific geographical location, not as a national parish which served a particular ethnic group, though for at least its first 50 years, the majority of its communicants were Irish.



St. John the Evangelist

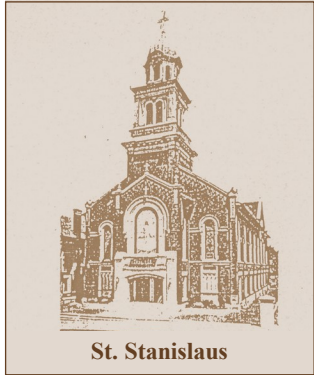
In its first year, St. John's also built the first formal school within the Twentieth Ward. By 1888, the school had 500 students enrolled under the direction of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1902 they dedicated this building which they occupied until 2009, when St. John's closed as part of the Diocese's effort to merge local parishes, nearly halving the number of active physical churches. The building was unoccupied for a short time until Steamtown Church adopted it, expressing the goal of promoting the evangelical spirit and mission behind the name of the original building.

Information Sources:

Lackawanna Historical Society archives and newsletters; Places of Worship websites and newsletters; and public media, including Newspapers.com and *Happenings Magazine* (including information drawn from "A History of Nativity of Our Lord Parish," compiled by researchers Diane Parente and Noreen Nixon Joyce). Special thanks to University of Scranton intern Joe Barry.



May 7th Tour



St. Stanislaus

St. Stanislaus Polish National Cathedral

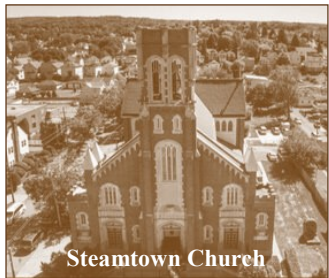
In 1897, an unlikely schism occurred between Polish Catholics of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the Diocese of Scranton after the Diocese refused to allow the Polish Catholic community to choose their own priests and control parish property. After the Diocese of Scranton, and later the Vatican, refused to acknowledge their requests for

local control and respect their ethnic traditions, conflict broke out between the two groups, and this portion of the Polish community chose to

cut ties with the Roman Catholic Church.

Today, the Polish National Catholic Church has continued to incrementally mend relations with Rome, although they continue to theologically align with the Union of Old Catholic Churches, which are based within the Netherlands.

St. Stanislaus was constructed the same year as the Polish community's split from the Diocese of Scranton, under the supervision of the Rev. Francis Hodur. Hodur was consecrated as the First Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church in 1907; since then, the Polish National Catholic Church has grown considerably across the United States. It continues to serve as the central house of worship for the Polish National Catholic Church and welcomes all to church services and activities.



Steamtown Church

Steamtown Church

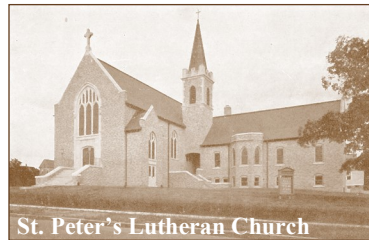
Originally St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, the building is today home to the Christian nondenominational Steamtown Church, which began as a youth ministry in 2005 in the former Boys and Girls Club in West Side and developed as a dream of its founding pastors, Dennis D'Augustine and Peter Fox, of planting a church in Scranton. Steamtown Church held its

first official Sunday Gathering on March 3, 2008 in downtown Scranton at the Red Carpet Inn. On June 2, 2013, they held their first Sunday service in



May 7th Tour

services in German, remained here until a 1993 merger with Hickory Street Presbyterian resulted in the sale of the building to The Springwood Group, an architectural firm from Luzerne County, who occupied the space until 2006. However, with changing demographics in the city, the building is once again a place for immigrant faith communities: it has been home to the Shree Swaminarayan Mandir since 2012, adopted by an Indian population and attended by Hindus in the Scranton community.



St. Peter's Lutheran Church

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

St. Peter's traces its beginnings back to 1868 when the German Evangelical Lutheran Church was established as a mission congregation of the Zion Lutheran Church. Plans were begun that same year for a church to be built on the corner of Ash Street and Prescott

Avenue. The new church was dedicated in 1869 and services were conducted in both English and German, a tradition that continued until 1941.

In 1925, a committee was appointed to begin plans for a new church, as its original home could no longer meet the needs of the growing congregation, which by this time represented more than 80% of the residents in the Petersburg section of the city. The new church was dedicated on September 14, 1930 and it is interesting to note that the cornerstone from the original church is included in the present structure.

By 1961, St. Peter's congregation joined the new Lutheran Church in America, and became part of the wider ecumenical movement as members of the Upper Hill Ministerium, which also includes Myrtle Street United Methodist Church and Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.

Renovations to the church nave, chancel, sanctuary, and other sections of the facility begun in the 1970s were completed in time to commemorate the church's 50th anniversary in 1980. In January 1980, church members approved changing the church names to St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In 1992, St. Peter's merged with St. Paul's Lutheran Church to form the current congregation. The church today carries pieces of St. Paul's with it – namely the stain glass windows and an original organ.



May 7th Tour



Temple Hesed

Temple Hesed

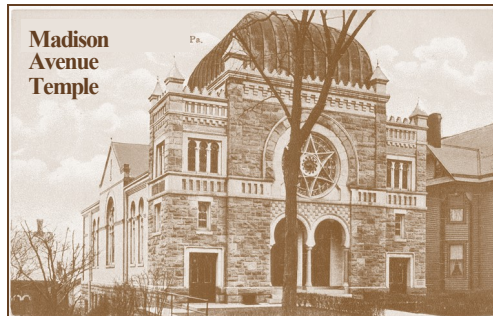
The earliest members of the Jewish *Chevre Rodef Shalom* (Brotherhood of the Pursuer of Peace) congregation arrived in what is today Lackawanna County during the 1840s, making it Scranton's first and oldest Jewish

congregation. In August of 1860, it became *Kehilat Anshe Chesed* (Congregation of People of Loving-Kindness) at the old Alhambra Hall on Lackawanna Avenue.

By 1867, the congregation moved into their first synagogue on Linden Street, and in 1880 became part of the American Reform Movement dedicated by founder Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise; today this organization is called the Union of Reformed Judaism.

In 1902, the congregation moved to their second synagogue on Madison Avenue, which was expanded in 1938 to include school and auditorium facilities. During the 1950s-60s, the synagogue underwent significant renovations and was renamed the Madison Avenue Temple, with the congregation's membership at historic heights.

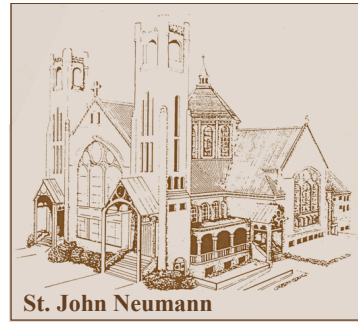
Plans were made for a new synagogue on Knox Street by 1967; the consecration of the current Temple *Hesed* (Temple of Loving-Kindness) occurred December 1973. When noted architect Percival Goodman began considering what the sanctuary should look like, according to current Rabbi Daniel Swartz, "he delved into the social, cultural, and environmental history of our area, coming up with a design that sought to highlight the injustices and cruelty of the coal era and coal breakers, while simultaneously showing a transformative alternative vision of a society that puts people above profits, that brings in light instead of blood-stained soot."



Madison Avenue Temple



May 7th Tour



St. John Neumann

St. John Neumann (Nativity of Our Lord) Church

The first Roman Catholic Church in Scranton, a small frame structure, was built in 1848 on Hemlock Street where the Church of the Nativity now stands, in the South Side neighborhood known then as "Shanty Hill." Residents worshipped there for three decades, until the arrival of Fr. James A. O'Reilly, the rector of St. Peter's Cathedral, who worked to re-

name the area to Nativity Place, and began the plans necessary to provide the working-class neighborhood of largely Irish immigrants as well as Welsh and German immigrants, with their own complete house of worship.

By 1904, ground was broken for the present Nativity Church and the facilities were completed in 1905. The church includes Tudor-Gothic architecture, grand oak double doors, an ornately painted rotunda, and Munich stained

glass. The Nativity School and Convent were completed by 1933 (recently sold to John Basalyga to adapt into multifamily apartments).

In 2010, the current parish of St. John Neumann was formed when three South Scranton parishes (Holy Name of Jesus, Nativity of Our Lord, and St. Mary of the Assumption) were consolidated into one Catholic faith community.

Today St. John Neumann and St. Paul of the Cross (formerly Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, founded by Polish coal miners in 1904) are linked parishes. These parishes continue to minister to hundreds of families, including providing regular Spanish masses for a significant Hispanic Catholic community emigrated in recent decades from across Latin America.



Shanty Hill