

A HISTORY OF CHURCHES IN WHEELING PARALLELS A HISTORY OF THE CITY ITSELF.

Fort Henry, constructed in 1774 as protection against Native American raids, served as the pioneers' defense during a siege in 1777, and again in a second siege in 1782, last battle of the Revolutionary War. It was shortly after the second siege that Presbyterian minister Thaddeus Dodd reportedly preached in the fort itself. The Princeton-educated Dodd is believed to have been only the second clergyman west of the Monongahela River. Organized in nearby Elm Grove in 1787, the Forks of Wheeling Presbyterian Church fostered establishment of First Presbyterian Church to meet the needs of a growing downtown population.

The first organized church in Wheeling, Fourth Street Methodist, was founded in what is now downtown Wheeling in 1785 on land donated by Noah Zane, son of Wheeling's founder, Ebenezer Zane. The original building no longer stands, but another early church building, First Presbyterian – built 1823-25 – is still in use. Its first minister, James Hervey, reportedly "rode into town on horseback, performed the office of janitor, rang the dinner bell for services, and preached the gospel." The town's population at the time was fewer than 1,000.

As the population grew, so did the number of churches. Waves of German, Irish, Greek, and Lebanese immigrants led to the founding of Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish congregations, with many of their 19th century buildings still standing today. This brochure features a few of those in downtown, East Wheeling, and Centre Wheeling and their more recent replacements.

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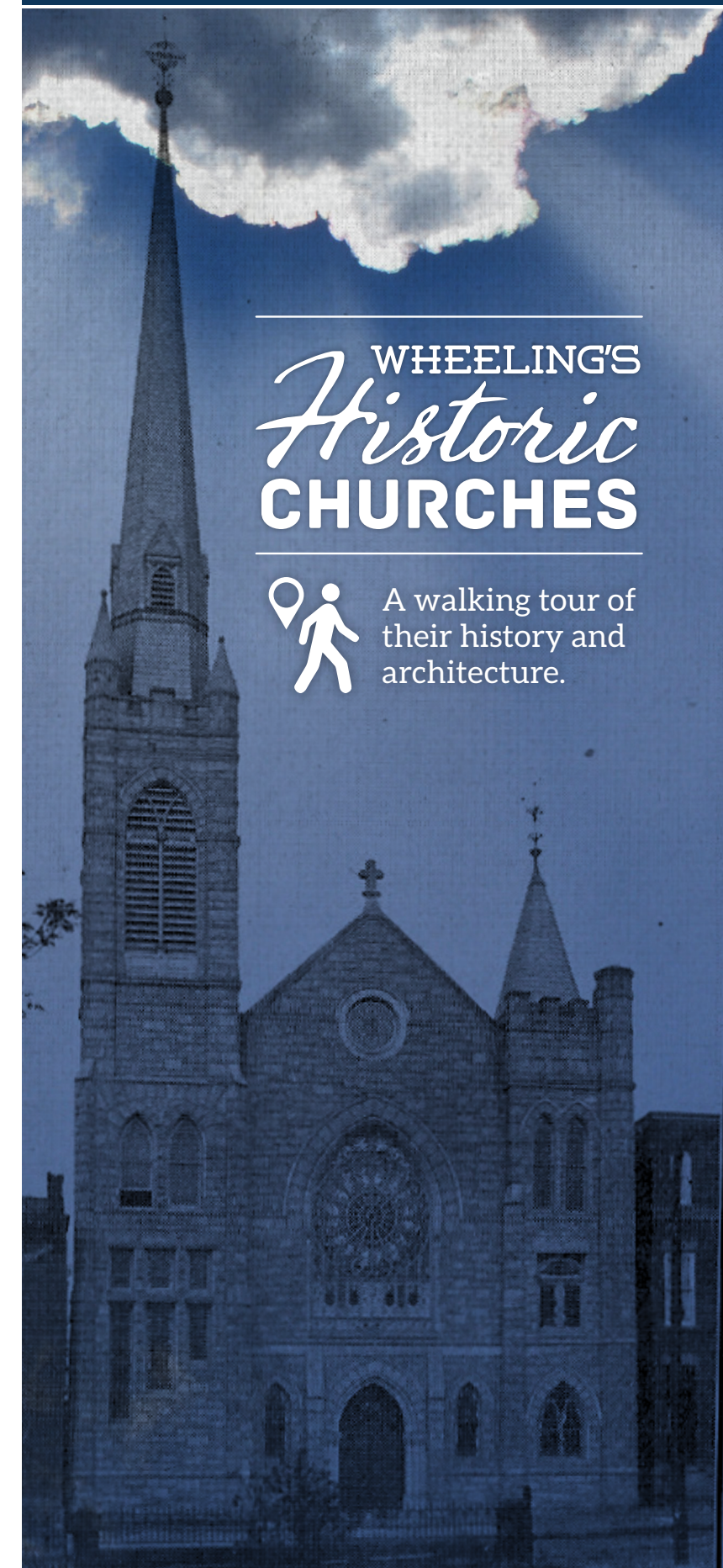
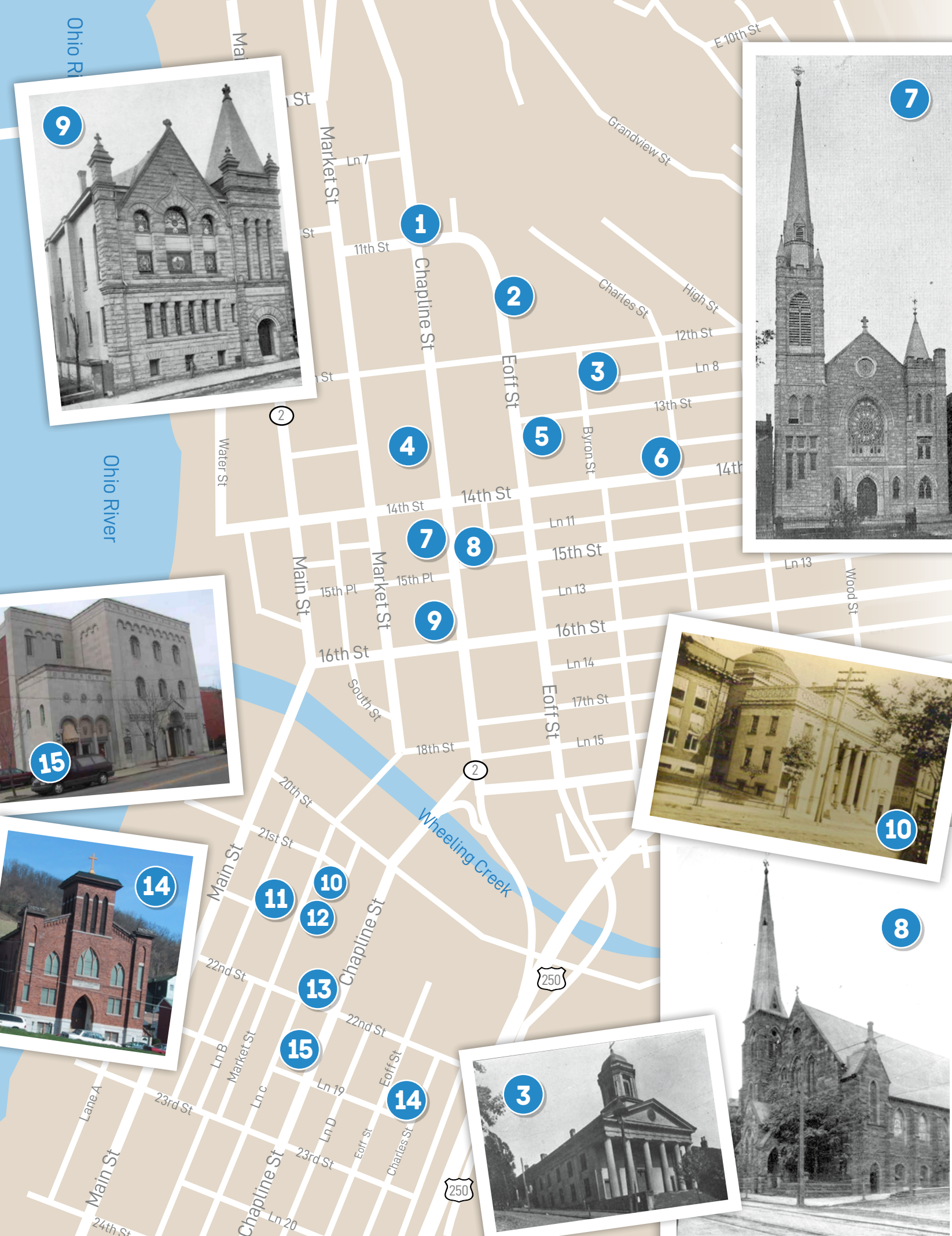


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WHEELING'S *Historic* CHURCHES



A walking tour of
their history and
architecture.





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1

FOURTH STREET UNITED METHODIST 1060 Chapline St.

Established in 1785, Fourth Street Methodist Church was the first organized church in Wheeling. A one-room brick church was built on what is now Chapline Street (then named 4th Street). A larger church was dedicated in 1836, and a third in 1870. The congregation purchased the current building in 1950. The Art Deco style structure was built (1938) by the George A. Fuller Company, which also built the Lincoln Memorial.

2

SIMPSON UNITED METHODIST 1120 Eoff Street

Named for founder Bishop Simpson, this church's cornerstone was laid on June 24, 1893. Professor James McHenry Jones, then the principal at Wheeling's segregated Lincoln School, spoke at the elaborate Masonic ceremony, which also featured a parade and marching bands. Unique features include a large circular stained glass window in the center bay that is surrounded by intricately decorative brick corbeling.



1

3

OLD ST. MATTHEWS ("The Blue Church") 1206 Byron Street

This 1837 Greek Revival-style church is one of the last pre-Civil War buildings remaining in Wheeling. Built as the third St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, it was constructed of brick, which has been covered in stucco. In May 1866, the First Baptist Church of Wheeling purchased the building from St. Matthew's. It was later the home of the Church of God and the Saints of Christ.

4

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN 1307 Chapline Street

This Greek Revival building was built between 1823 and 1825 on ground donated by Noah Zane. It is the oldest extant church and perhaps the oldest building still standing in downtown Wheeling. In 1835, a bell and clock tower were added. For many of the approximately 13,000 residents of Wheeling, this was the first time the accurate time was readily accessible.

5

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL 1300 Eoff Street

Dedicated in 1926, this Lombard Romanesque style cathedral, which replaced an older cathedral (St. James) on the same site, was constructed entirely of Indiana limestone. It remains one of the largest churches in the state. The colorful Medieval Byzantine interior includes a primary dome filled with a depiction of heaven, and a mural of Christ fills the half-dome of the apse.

6

AGAPE BAPTIST 99 14th Street

This 1926 Colonial style, Roman-influenced building features four large stone Doric columns. Stone sills support eight large, opaque, geometric art windows, four on each side. The interior features a large foyer, true cathedral ceilings, walnut woodwork, and a pipe organ donated by Mrs. Edward Stifel. From 1926 to 1994, the building was the home of Wheeling's First Church of Christ Scientist.

7

ST. JAMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN 1409 Chapline Street

In 1891, members of the German immigrant congregation added a Gothic tower and bell to the original 1860 structure. In 1906, a new altar was installed. The anti-German backlash of WWI caused the church to stop offering German-language services. In the 1950s a chapel was constructed in memory of those who lost their lives in World War II.

8

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL 1410 Chapline Street

Established in 1819, St. Matthew's congregation consecrated its current, Gothic Revival-style church building, designed by architect Gordon W. Lloyd, in 1888. The sandstone structure is known for its bell tower, slate-covered broach spire, hammerbeam truss ceiling, quatrefoil panels, Tiffany-designed stained glass windows, ornate wrought iron rood screen, stone-carved altar, and carved wooden pulpit. A custom-designed Marshall & Ogletree organ was installed in 2015.

9

FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN 36 16th Street

The First English Evangelical Lutheran Church, with its Richardsonian Romanesque façade of cut stone, grand stained glass windows created by German immigrants, slate-covered steeple, nave pews in a horseshoe shape, and red rooftop pinnacles, was dedicated on January 12, 1898. A million-dollar renovation project, including the addition of a sky mural inside the sanctuary dome, was completed in 1999.

10

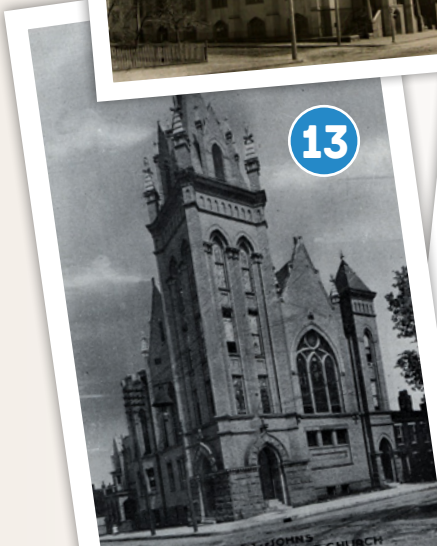
FIRST CHRISTIAN 2112 Market Street

This building at 2112 Market Street, was dedicated on October 19, 1913 by the First Christian Church congregation. The building was sold to the Living Word Church, which held services here until June 17, 1973, when the building was sold to Eagles Aerie No. 344.

5



13



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11

ST. ALPHONSUS 2111 Market Street

St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church was founded by Bishop Richard V. Whelan and the Redemptorist Fathers in 1856 to serve Wheeling's large German Catholic population. A Romanesque Revival building was completed in 1858. The original church was demolished and the current church, designed by architect E.W. Wells and noted for its fine statuary, intricately carved wood, and ornate stained glass, was built in 1886.

12

ZION LUTHERAN (Towngate Theatre) 2118 Market Street

This 1850 red brick Gothic Revival structure was built as a Congregational church and sold to the First German Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church in 1852. Wheeling's first known Christmas tree was displayed here in 1856. The last German language service took place on the day Pearl Harbor was bombed. The building was sold to Oglebay Institute, and now houses Towngate, a community theater and cinema.

13

ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT 41 22nd Street

Designed by Frederick F. Faris, this 1908 German Gothic structure is the third location for St. John's congregation. The original cornerstone inscription translates to, "First German Lutheran Church in Wheeling, 1836." The second structure had been sold and razed to make way for the B&O Railroad terminus building. The memorial stained glass windows, organ, bell, and other items were salvaged.

14

OUR LADY OF LEBANON MARONITE 2216 Eoff Street

The only Maronite Catholic Church in West Virginia was built by Lebanese immigrants in 1922, with Father Paul Abraham ministering. A painting of Our Lady of Lebanon miraculously survived a destructive 1932 fire. It can be viewed above the main altar today. In order to raise funds to rebuild the church, the community organized a Mahrajan festival, still held annually at Oglebay Park.

15

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE GREEK ORTHODOX 2215 Chapline Street

In 1913, Wheeling's Greek community established the first Orthodox Church in West Virginia in a converted two-story home. In 1921, the church opened a Greek school, featuring instruction in the Greek language and culture. The current church opened in 1951, and a Hellenic Center was added. Every August, St. John the Divine Church sponsors a Greek Food Festival, featuring traditional food, music, and dance.