

Sacred rites open house

5-17-20

This Saturday and Sunday from 12 to 3 p.m. four Albion churches will participate in the Second Annual Sacred Rites Open House weekend.

This is statewide event organized by the New York Landmarks Conservancy. It is the only non-profit statewide program in the nation responding to the unique preservation needs of historic religious properties. Since 1986 this program has supported over 675 religious institutions throughout the state.



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Recipients have received more than \$7.3 million in matching grants for restoration and repair of important religious landmarks.

The four Albion churches participating in the open house event this coming weekend are: First Presbyterian, First United Methodist, Christ Episcopal and Pullman Memorial Universalist.

The four landmark churches are all located around the historic Court House Square and were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Each congregation will provide a knowledgeable person at their church to provide a guided tour anytime between the hours of 12 and 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

First Presbyterian Church with its landmark spire of 175 feet was built of brown

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Medina Sandstone in 1874 at a cost of around \$80,000. In 2007 the congregation restored the sanctuary to its 1910 appearance by decorating the walls and ceiling with stenciled designs. This makes for a most extraordinary interior which embellishes the Gothic Revival architecture.

The First United Methodist Church was built in 1860 and rebuilt in 1914. Outstanding features of this edifice include a most unusual front entrance which appears to be limestone. However, it is cement with extraordinary detail in a faux finish which was actually all molded. On the interior one will see a major stained glass window representing the Good Shepherd in the Tiffany style of art glass.

At Christ Episcopal Church, tour goers can feast their eye on a number of pretty stained glass windows dating back to the 1860's up to the 1980's. In 1889 the church interior

was remodeled with a beautiful wooden ceiling supported by very decorative beams in Gothic Revival style. Built in 1830 this is the oldest church building in Orleans County still being used for worship.

Our interior photo which accompanies this article shows the interior of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church erected in 1894 of pink Medina Sandstone. It was paid for by George M. Pullman and given to the congregation as a memorial to his parents. The interior features Tiffany stained glass windows, Tiffany decorated organ pipes and a Tiffany ceiling. Built in Gothic Revival style it was meant to look like a rural English Gothic Church from the 11th century.

The open house for these sacred sites will give people and opportunity to learn about their local heritage as well as a glimpse of some great art and architectural treasures right in our own community.

C.W. Lattin is the Orleans county historian. Bethinking of Olde Orleans appears every Thursday in The Journal-Register.