

2023 Indiana Co. Walk Works Decathlon - May 6, 2023  
“Saltsburg’s Historic Churches” hosted by Jack and Linda Maguire

**# 29. St. Matthews Roman Catholic Church (1847), 501 Cathedral Street**

Restoration was begun in commemoration of the 175 anniversary of the building of the original church which was celebrated in September of 2022. Several Church members have been instrumental in bringing this preservation project to fruition. Among those are the following:

**Angelo DiLascio** - a highly skilled craftsman who meticulously rebuilt the altar to its original glory. Using early photographs as the model and evidence of its outline on the Church wall, he was able to accurately complete the altar to accommodate the original Tabernacle that fits perfectly along with the statues of Joseph and Mary.

**Albert Eckenrode** – Angelo’s brother-in-law who worked with him as part of a team in repairing areas of the floor, replacing glass in the Church windows, and currently preparing to replace the doors with old ones resembling the original, and then rebuilding and installing the bell tower.

**Elvia DiLascio Eckenrode** – Angelo’s sister and Albert’s wife who was instrumental in motivating her brother and husband to take on this preservation project and to later dedicate the restoration in memory of the DiLascio’s mother and father.

**Chuck Colton** – a local historian whose research on the Church ignited the preservation interests of other Church members and made the congregation aware that the structure was always intended to be maintained and preserved. He also assisted with much of the restoration work that’s been done so far.

**# 13. First United Methodist Church (c.1850’s), 809 Salt Street**

This is one of two surviving Canal-era (1829-1864) churches located in Saltsburg’s Historic District. It is a simple Gothic brick structure with a cut stone foundation and painted Gothic arched windows. In 1909 through 1949, this Church was linked with the nearby Nowrytown church which was erected in 1888. Today, the congregation actively seeks to serve the area with outreach ministries including a free clothing distribution program, “My Friend’s Closet”, and an annual free community turkey dinner near Thanksgiving time.

**#11. Free Gospel Church (1843), 806 Salt Street**

This is the second surviving Canal-era church in Saltsburg. It is constructed of stucco-coated brick with a Gothic style, arched entrance with decorative brick trim and 12 brick-framed Gothic arched windows. The interior has the original tin ceiling and walls, along with the original baptismal. A religious scene mural was hand painted around the altar area. Through the years, this church has also housed Baptist and Pentecostal congregations. It was recently sold to a private owner who lives in the small housing addition at the back of the church.

#### **#24. Sons of Zebedee Lutheran Church (1878), 422 Salt Street**

This church was built during the period known as the “Early Railroad and Coal Era” (1863-1900). It is a Gothic style, brick structure with pointed-arch doors and stained-glass windows. The interior is graced with exposed, decorative wood beams. The central steeple within the bell tower was unfortunately taken down during the latter twentieth century due to the expense of completing necessary repairs. The original name of this Saltsburg church was St. John’s. The current name of the Church came about when it merged in 1972 with the nearby St. James Lutheran Church (est. 1803) located across the Kiskiminetas River in Bell Township. After the merger, the St. James Church was ravaged by a fire and its remains are now privately owned. However, the 4.5 acre cemetery near the Church remains and is the site of many graves of those born in the 1700’s, including General George Washington’s wagon maker during the Revolutionary War, Mathias Ringle (1742-1811).

#### **#21. Saltsburg Presbyterian Church (1874), 517 Salt Street**

Another brick church built in the Gothic Revival style, this is also the second church within Saltsburg’s historic district erected during the Early Railroad and Coal Era. At the time, it was quoted as being “one of the most substantial brick and stone structures in this part of the State.” The original structure was smaller than the current building which now has a first floor social area with a kitchen, and the second floor houses rooms for Sunday school. This upstairs area is also utilized by the preschool known as Kindernook during the week. This is not the first church built by the Presbyterians in Saltsburg. The earliest known church was a stone structure completed in 1831 at the northern end of town near the present fire department’s River Hall. A few days after its construction, it was consumed by fire. Soon afterward, a brick church was built at the same site. Gravesites from the old cemetery associated with those early churches are still evident and being maintained through volunteer efforts.