

Historic Polish Church Tour Part of PHS Chicago Bus Trip

By Richard Panek

The Polska Bus Trip sponsored by the PHS on April 27 includes an experience in Chicago that may make you swear that you're visiting cathedrals in Poland: a tour of some of the city's historic Polish churches. (See form on page 4 to order tickets)

Anyone who has traveled by car on the Kennedy Expressway (I-90 West) north of Downtown Chicago may have noticed the multiple grand spires and domes of these churches rising above the surrounding neighborhoods.

Growing up in the Chicago area, I would often see them on family car trips to downtown.



Barbara Kozuchowska

During a fall visit to Chicago, I had the opportunity to meet one of the Polish Museum of America guides, Basia (Barbara) Kozuchowska, who is also an expert on the history of these churches. I learned from her that the establishment and growth of these churches tells

the story of the immigrant experience in Chicago.

"What makes them stand out is the classic architecture harking back to 16th century Europe" said Kozuchowska, who will be the church tour guide for the Polska Bus Trip in April. The look of these churches termed "Polish Cathedral" is a style of design that appeared in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic areas of America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

According to Wikipedia, examples can also be found in Milwaukee, Buffalo, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, as well as here in Grand Rapids. The style is characterized by its grand scale, ornate interiors, and classical revival style of the Baroque and Renaissance periods.

"Polish Chicago, sometimes referred to as 'Polonia,' was shaped by multiple immigration waves," Kozuchowska said. "The latest of which took place in the early eighties with the institution of martial law in Poland."

According to the Encyclopedia of Chicago, the first and largest immigration wave lasted from the 1850s to the early 1920s and was likewise driven primarily by economic and political change in Poland. The arrival of large numbers of Irish and German Catholic immigrants to Chicago in the mid-1800s, led to



Saint Stanislaus Kostka, the "Mother Church" of Chicago's Historic Polish Churches

the establishment of ethnic Catholic parishes which provided a base for social as well as spiritual support for new immigrant communities.

As it grew, the Chicago and West Michigan Polish immigrant communities quickly did the same. Ethnic pastoral

needs led to the building of the German parish of St. Mary's, Irish parish of St. James and the Polish parish of St. Adalbert just blocks away from each other on the west side of Grand Rapids.

The pace and geographic spread

(Continued on page 2)

**Polish Heritage Society
of Grand Rapids**

**PO Box 1844
Grand Rapids MI
49501-1844**

<https://polishheritagesociety.com>

Email us at phsgrandrapids@gmail.com.

The Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids promotes Polish/Lithuanian culture in the metro Grand Rapids. The Society meets on the 3rd Monday of every month except for December and general meetings in June and October. The society publishes this newsletter monthly. We invite story ideas and content contributions. For more information, please contact Matthew Gryczan, Richard Panek or Marilyn Lignell by writing to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com.

**President
Teresa Bonham**

**1st VP
John Theisen**

**2nd VP
Anthony Zasuwa**

**Treasurer
Michael Jasperse**

**Corresponding Secretary
Elena Chaidez**

**Recording Secretary
Matthew Gryczan**

**Director
Rosemary Maciejewski**

**Director
Martin Rogalski**

**Director
Angela Walejewski-Zasuwa**

**Director
Michael Kozal**

**Director
Thaddeus Broda**

(Continued from page 1)

of Polish settlement in Chicago can be traced through the growth of Polish parishes because nearly all Polish immigrants were Catholic.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Chicago's growing Polish community led to the building of several new churches, creating an impressive architectural legacy in the process. From humble beginnings, often starting in multi-story structures housing meeting hall/gymnasium and rectory as well as the church, parishes raised funds for grander sanctuaries to serve their growing flocks.

These Polish churches played a significant role in the history of Chicago's Polish community as a symbol of the community's strength, resilience, and cultural identity. The Polish cathedral style was also a testament to the community's faith and devotion to the Catholic Church.

Founded in 1867, St. Stanislaus Kostka parish was "the first Polish parish in Chicago and is considered the 'Mother Church' of the nearly 60 Polish parishes in the Chicago Archdiocese," Kozuchowska said.

St. Stanislaus Kostka went on to become one of the largest parishes in the United States, with more than 35,000 parishioners in 1908, its website states.

To relieve overcrowding at St. Stanislaus Kostka, the diocese permitted the founding of Holy Trinity Church in 1872, but there was a feud over property ownership between the two parishes that wasn't resolved until 20 years later by an apostolic delegate dispatched by the Vatican.

As an aside, a similar feud happened in Grand Rapids between

St. Adalbert's Parish and Sacred Heart Parish. The Rev. Simon Ponganis, then pastor of St. Adalbert's, said "Sooner will hair grow on the palms of my hands than that another Polish parish be established in Grand Rapids," according to notes kept by his assistant priest, the Rev. Ladislaus Krakowski. As the Polish community continued to grow, Krakowski went on to found Sacred Heart Parish.

Just over a mile away from Chicago's Holy Trinity, St. John Cantius parish was founded in 1893 in response to the growth of the Polish community, and by 1898 the church was completed. The parish nearly closed during the 1980s due to changing demographics, but it was rejuvenated by efforts of its pastor the Rev. Frank Phillips

and financial backers. Its interior underwent restoration in 2013 to return it to its original splendor.

The Basilica of St. Hyacinth is another notable example of this Polish Cathedral style founded in 1894 by priests from St. Stanislaus Kostka. It became the center of Chicago's most well-known Polish neighborhood, Jackowo (yatz-kovo). The first Mass took place at St. Hyacinth in 1921 and it was designated a minor basilica by Pope John Paul II in 2003. Visitors who walk through the monumental bronze doors of this Catholic church say they are awed by the 3,000-square-foot mural of saints and laity painted on its cavernous dome.

About 3 miles from St. Hyac-

(Continued on page 3)



Interior view of Holy Trinity Church in Chicago

(Continued from page 2)

cynth, St. Mary of the Angels Church rises as one of the finest examples of Roman Renaissance church architecture in the United States, with a dome that bears a remarkable resemblance to that of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Founded in 1899, St. Mary of the Angels parish became one of the largest parishes in the Chicago Archdiocese by 1912 with a membership of 1,200 families.

Like the Basilica of St. Adalbert in

Grand Rapids, all these historic Polish churches are a testament to the strength of spirit of the Polish immigrant community that makes our country great. We hope to see you on the Polska Bus Tour in April to visit some of these sites.

See the reservation form on page 4 of this newsletter for more information and to reserve your seat for the tour.



Saint Mary of the Angels Church in Chicago

April 15 is Filing Deadline for Scholarships and Board Candidates

By Matthew Gryczan

If you are a member of the Polish Heritage Society, April 15 means more than the deadline to file federal taxes.

That date marks the cutoff for submission of names for PHS scholarships and the names of candidates who want to run for office on the PHS board.

Those who are interested in submitting their names for consideration for a seat on the 11-member board must be active members who are current with annual dues or who have lifetime memberships. The names of individuals running for office will be published in the May newsletter before the election takes place on May 20.

An officer position is becoming vacant this year. PHS Corresponding Secretary Elena Chaidez announced at the society's October meeting that she will not be running for reelection in May.

Regarding the Corresponding Secretary opening, society President Teresa Bonham said the society is "encouraging any

member in good standing to consider running for the post. It's a fun position because it keeps you in touch with what society members are doing."

In practice, the Corresponding Secretary shares duties and the workload with Marilyn Lignell, the Echo newsletter columnist who highlights happenings in the community, and the Recording Secretary.

According to the PHS bylaws, the Correspondence Secretary is "to assist the Recording Secretary with his/her duties. The Correspondence Secretary also will keep track of the Society's membership. The person will be responsible for keeping current all of the contact information for the membership including addresses, phone numbers and emails."

However, Lignell manages the contact information for members in her role with the newsletter. Lignell said that she welcomes help from the Corresponding Secretary in writing cards of encouragement to individuals and families as a reminder that they remain part of a caring community. The PHS launched its Words of Encouragement card project in 2021

with great success.

This project sends cards to persons or families who are experiencing milestones in their lives that need to be recognized, such as a shut-in at a retirement home who feels alone, a new birth in the family, a recent marriage, a sudden illness or loss of loved one.

The society has had two types of cards printed, one that highlights a colorfully decorated plate with "Congratulations" in Polish and another that shows a field of poppies with the words "Thinking of You." Active members of the Society can request to have cards sent at no cost to any individual or family who is to be congratulated or in need of encouragement. Recipients do not have to be PHS members.

Nominations for officer and director positions on the 11-member board will close on April 15, and individuals interested in serving on the board can submit their names by writing an email to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com before the deadline. The closing date for nominations was misstated in the November newsletter.

Regarding scholarships, the society annually gives out scholarships totaling several thousand dollars to students attending institutions of higher learning to support Polish heritage.

The board loosened requirements in December to encompass students who plan to attend or are enrolled in post high school education.

After the April 15 deadline, the PHS scholarship committee will review applications and notify recipients of the scholarships and financial aid offices of the institutions by May 15. Winners will be asked to provide a photo of themselves for a story in the Echo newsletter and will be invited to the Dozynki Polish Harvest Festival on Aug. 24 for special recognition.

Applications are available online at <https://polishheritagesociety.com> or from the counseling offices at high schools or post high school institutions. Completed applications can be emailed to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com or physically mailed to Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids, PO Box 1844, Grand Rapids MI 49501.



PHS Polska Bus Trip to Chicago

Saturday, April 27, 2024

8 a.m. EST -- Depart Park & Ride Lot East Beltline and I-96 via Motorcoach to Chicago

10 a.m. CST -- Arrive at Polish Museum of America (PMA) for 2 hour docent-led tour of exhibits.

Noon to 1:30 CST-- Hearty family style lunch at Staropolska Polish Restaurant

1:30 to 4:00 CST-- After lunch, guide-led tour of local historic Polish Churches

8 p.m. EST -- Arrival back in Grand Rapids

MUSEUM ADMISSION, LUNCH, GUIDE AND TRANSPORTATION

INCLUDED IN COST OF TOUR



A Taste of Poland in Chicago



The Polish Museum of America on Milwaukee Avenue in Chicago



Interior of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church

*******Reservation Deadline Saturday, March 30, 2024*******

Make Check to PHS and mail to Richard Panek 6620 Knockadon Drive NE, Rockford, MI 49341

Call Richard with questions at (616) 490-3231 or email rwpanek@gmail.com

Name _____

Phone # _____

of Tickets @ \$60.00 each _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Email _____

PHS Membership News



By Marilyn Lignell

February is a time for showing our Polish/Lithuanian roots in several ways, whether its standing in line for paczkis on Fat Tuesday before the start of Lent, going to a Griffins game on Polish-American night, or stopping by for the PHS Volunteer Appreciation dinner.

But one essential way is for you to make sure you renew your annual PHS dues. If you haven't renewed already, please fill out the form on this newsletter and enclose your check, or go to the www.polishheritagesociety.com website where you can pay using PayPal. New membership cards will be mailed in the April newsletter.

Local bakeries and stores gear up days in advance for paczki mania coming up on Fat Tuesday, Feb. 13!

Bakeries such as Marge's Donut Den on 28th Street and Sandy's Donut House on Leonard Street usually take orders ahead of time because there's often a customer line for paczkis if you haven't pre-ordered. Local stores such as Meijer and area meat markets also often carry paczkis.

We are continuing our cards of caring this year so let us know

if you want one sent to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com

Our condolences go out to member Madeline Fazio and her husband Joe on the loss of Joe's father Brian who died unexpectedly on Jan. 1. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

Past President Andy Budnick and his wife Kim welcomed a baby girl into their family on January 3. Iris Monet weighed 7lbs 10oz and will join her siblings Elysia and Logan, who love having a little baby sister to look after.



Iris Monet Budnick

Christine Sopczynski was at the szopka presentation at Frederick Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park in December where the topic of genealogy came up. She said she used the company Genealogia Polonica with great success in finding out about her family background. Established in 2022, Genealogia Polonica is a paid service with Polish genealogists who can read various languages including Latin. Its website is <https://genealogiapolonica.com/>

We welcome Sylvia Woyehoski to the Polish Heritage Society! Sylvia was born in Krakow and came to the United States in 1996 after graduating

from high school. She lived in Chicago with her extended family before moving to Rockford in 2011. Fluent in Polish, Sylvia is the mom of two boys ages 17 and 11 who also speak some Polish.



Sylvia Woyehoski

"I am very proud of my heritage and enjoy cooking Polish cuisine, going to festivals, and being involved in the community and church," Sylvia said. She is planning on taking a trip to Poland next summer to visit Krakow, Warsaw and Gdansk. We look forward to seeing you at the PHS events, Sylvia!

We welcome new lifetime member Paul Palaszek from Brooklyn, Mich. Along with his siblings Casey and Theresa, Paul was born to Stanley and Cecilia Palaszek on the West Side of Grand Rapids. Paul has retired and enjoys life with wife Barb along with hunting and fishing.

"Although my career kept me on the other side of the state, I have not lost my familiarity with my Polish heritage," Paul said. He added that anyone who would like to contact him and reminisce about old times is

free to email him at Paba70@comcast.net.

Volunteer Appreciation Party Feb. 24 at Diamond Hall

If you gave of your time last year to help at any events of the Polish Heritage Society, the organization is throwing a party in your honor from 4 to 8 p.m. on Feb. 24 at Diamond Hall, 435 Diamond Ave NE.

Those who wish to attend need to sign up for the party by Feb. 15. Go to the PHS website (<https://polishheritagesociety.com>) and click on the "PHS Volunteer Appreciation Dinner" or go to the PHS Facebook page and look for the post on the appreciation dinner. The link will take you to the SignUpGenius posting for the party.

You can also send an email with your name and the number of people attending to the PHS email address at phsgrandrapids@gmail.com.

Call PHS President Teresa Bonham at (616) 706-6181 with any questions.

The fare will be a taco bar, pop and a ticket for an alcoholic refreshment.

"There's no better way to say 'thanks' in Polish than to throw a party," Bonham said. "2023 was a wonderful year for the PHS, and it's due in large part to all the individuals who gave their time to make the Dozynki Festival, the Wigilia dinner, Matka Boska Zielna and our other events successful

"Without the help from volunteers, none of it would have been possible."



Join the Polish Heritage Society to receive our monthly newsletter and other benefits!

Annual Student Membership for full-time students through college \$5

Annual Adult Membership \$20

Annual Family or Business Membership \$35

Lifetime Membership \$150

ONLINE

You can join the Polish Heritage Society online by going to our website at <https://polishheritagesociety.com/>, filling out the Membership form and paying by using the PayPal Button.

MAIL

Fill out this form and send a personal check made out to the Polish Heritage Society to this address:

Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids
P.O. Box 1844
Grand Rapids MI 49501-1844

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____