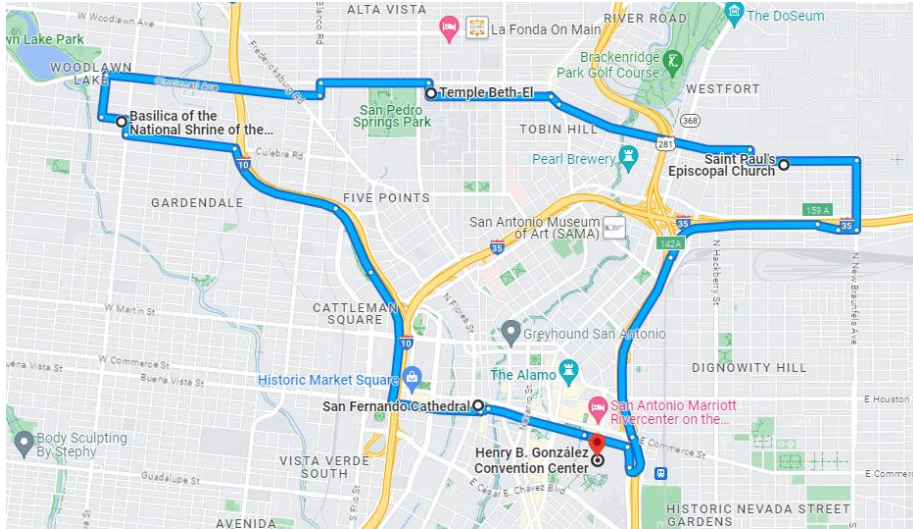


American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting
San Antonio, Texas, November 20, 2023
Sacred Sites Tour
Meeting place: Entrance to the Grand Hyatt



David R. Bains, Samford University,
Daniel Sack, Washington, D.C.

Schedule (times are approximate depending on conditions)

1:00 Depart (by bus) Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center

1:15 Arrive St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1018 East Grayson Street, San Antonio, TX, 78208.

2:00 Depart St. Paul's

2:15 Arrive Temple Beth-El
211 Belknap Place, San Antonio, TX, 78212

3:00 Depart Temple Beth-El

3:10 Drive by Basilica of the Shrine of the Little Flower
1715 N Zaramora St, San Antonio, TX 78201

3:25 Arrive San Fernando Cathedral
115 Main Plaza, San Antonio, TX 78205

4:10 Depart to Return to the Convention Center

San Antonio overview:

European settlement in the San Antonio River region dates to 1718, when the Spanish established Villa de Bexar, consisting of a mission and presidio (fort). By 1731, upon orders from the Spanish government in Havana and Vera Cruz, fifteen Spanish families from the Canary Islands had moved to the region, and a town called Villa de San Fernando, after the Spanish King, was laid out. A mission to the Payaya Indians of the region, San Antonio de Velero (later known as the Alamo), was established by Fray Antonio de Olivares in 1744 near the head of the San Antonio River, which had been named for San Antonio de Padua. Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, and Tejas was formed as a state of Mexico, with San Antonio as the provisional capital. The General Colonization Law of 1822 encouraged white settlement. In 1836 Texas gained its independence from Mexico after bloody battles at the Alamo (February 23–March 6) and San Jacinto (April 21). A year later, the new Constitution of the Republic of Texas declared the region a county, Bexar, with San Antonio as the county seat. In 1845, the region was annexed by the United States as the State of Texas, leading to war with Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 required Mexico to cede the territory, along with most of what is now the southwest region, to the US.

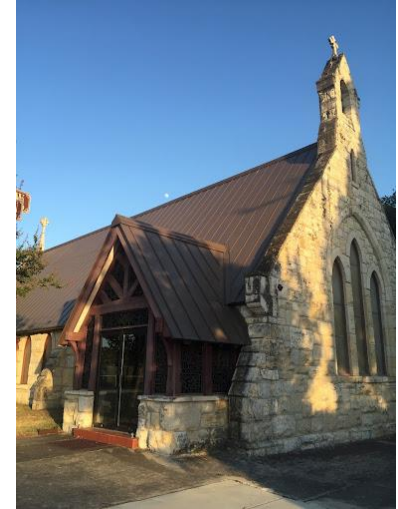
By start of the Civil War, the population of San Antonio had grown to some 15,000, including many German immigrants. After the war, in which San Antonio served as a Confederate depot, native-born Anglo immigrants, mostly from southern states to the east, moved into the frontier town, resulting in a mixed population of Hispanic, German, and Anglo. Soon, it became the largest city in the state, a position for which it would vie with Galveston over the next several decades. As the southernmost city on the Chisholm Trail, San Antonio provided supporting manufactures for the cattle industry, including barbed wire. These were central to economy of the city. It was also a key transportation, distribution, and military hub for points west.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

1018 East Grayson Street

<https://www.stpauls-satx.org/>

The St. Paul's Episcopal Parish was established in 1883 to serve the Fort Sam Houston community. Construction of this U.S. Army post, now part of Joint Base San Antonio, began in 1873. Formally named Fort Sam Houston in 1890, it had almost one hundred buildings by 1893. the middle of the previous decade.



Since San Antonio's existing Episcopal church, St. Mark's was strongly associated with Confederate and Southern identity, St. Mark's was funded by Mary Coles of Philadelphia as an alternative for Northern soldiers stationed at the fort. Immediately following the organization of the parish work began to erect the church. The land was donated by Robert W. B. Elliott, the first bishop of the Diocese of West Texas. The church was erected in native stone in the early English Gothic style and was dedicated on October 25, 1885. The building embodies many of the characteristics of the type of buildings championed by the Ecclesiological Society in the England and America as they sought to resurrect the forms of "correct" medieval Christian architecture.

The stained-glass windows were crafted in the 1960s by Orco Studios of San Antonio. They depict scenes in the history of the Christian church from the Annunciation to the establishment of St. Paul's. Of particular interest are the last six which depict scenes from Anglican history: the planting of the church in Britian, the Council of Arles (314), the mission of St. Augustine of Canterbury (597), Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, the consecration of Samuel Seabury as the first bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States, and the establishment of St. Paul's parish. The Council of Arles is regarded as a significant event in Anglican history because it was attended by three British

bishops, showing the orthodoxy and catholicity of the celtic church in Britain prior to the pope sending Augustine to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons.

Today the parish identifies as an Anglo Catholic parish, inspired by the nineteenth-century English Tractarian movement and emphasizing the identity of Anglicanism with the catholic tradition prior to the Reformation. The parish website states, "Anglo-Catholic churches provide an outlet for Western Christians who are drawn to the mystery and awe of the ancient Catholic faith without having to give their obedience to Rome" Practicing what it calls an "affirming Anglican liturgy," the church explains that in its vision "Anglicans have always been free thinkers and have encouraged theological exploration, questioning even the most important dogmas and even doubt - in a healthy way."

Temple Beth-El

211 Belknap Place

(210) 733-9135

<https://www.beth-elsa.org>

Congregation: Jews came to San Antonio in the mid-nineteenth century with other immigrants from Germany. Galveston was the second



Temple Beth-El from Brownings at the English language Wikipedia

busiest port for Jewish immigration at this time and many immigrants found their way from there to the bustling mercantile center that was San Antonio. As elsewhere in America, many of the early Jewish immigrants developed careers as merchants and bankers. Forty-four men came together in May 1874 to found Temple Beth-El. The new synagogue became a charter member of the Union for Reform Judaism which had been organized only the year before.



Temple Beth-El, c. 1877, UTSA Special Collections, MS 362

The early history of Temple Beth-El was shaped by the assimilationist ideals of the Reform movement, which emphasized social justice and ethical practice more than tradition ritual. Even before a building was constructed, the congregation had resolved to ban hats inside the synagogue. Prayer shawls were nowhere to be seen. Rabbis were referred to in the same manner as Protestant clergy as "reverend" ministers. The community's first temple, the term itself a mark of Reform Judaism, was dedicated at 202 Jefferson Street on Sept. 10, 1875. The congregation grew quickly, so the first building was razed and a second on the same site dedicated on Sept. 18, 1902. Many of the community's rabbis were leaders in progressive causes. Ephraim Frisch (1923–42) was an outspoken supporter of teaching evolution in schools and of workers' rights, and an opponent of the poll tax and Zionism. Not all of his congregation appreciated his confrontational style. He was forced to retire in 1942 after a controversial letter decrying arrest of labor activists. His assistant and successor, David Jacobson (1938–76) was a persistent advocate of racial desegregation. The congregation was on the forefront of women's ordination hiring the first woman to serve in Texas as an assistant rabbi in 1979 and in 2014 hiring Mara Nathan as its senior rabbi.

Architecture: In 1927, Temple Beth-El opened its third building located slightly out of the heart of downtown. It was designed to seat 1000 people. The congregation has remained committed to remaining in this building in the center city rather than following many of its members to the suburbs. The stunning neo-classical,



auditorium-style synagogue is typical of many Reform synagogues of the period. Especially noteworthy is the contrast between the earth tones of its dome and the whitewashed stucco of its exterior walls. The large, simple dome is visible from all approaches to the site and has become a commanding symbol of the congregation.

Iberian-Renaissance-style ornament extending to the top of the wall accents the tri-partite entrance. Tablets representing the Ten Commandments are at the top, Hebrew inscriptions appear above the side doors, while on either side of the front wall large tablets declare in English, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:7b). The building was designed by the local firm of Seutter and Simons. Malcolm G. Simon was a member of the congregation. Albert S. Gottlieb of New York, a specialist in synagogue architecture, served as consultant.

The soaring interior is light in color. The ark containing the Torah scrolls has bronze doors with seven-branched candlesticks recalling the ancient Jerusalem temple and is set in a huge classical marble frame. The arch above the ark declares in English "Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" (Lev. 19:18b). This socially concerned theme is echoed in the scriptures set in some of the building's art glass windows. Originally a pulpit desk stood in front of the ark. Now it has been replaced with a more open arrangement.

The various additions to the synagogue complex include the Dreeben Family Pavilion, a twenty-seven-foot square structure with glass walls and a dome that echoes the synagogues'. It was designed by the San Antonio firm Marmon Mok Architects.

Useful sources:

Temple Beth-El's 125th Anniversary video (1999) may be viewed at https://www.beth-elsa.org/125th_Anniversary_Video

"San Antonio, Texas," *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*
<http://www.isjl.org/texas-san-antonio-encyclopedia.html>

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower

1018 East Grayson Street

<https://littleflowerbasilica.org/>

Also known as **Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse Church** this church dates to 1926 when the Discalced Carmelite Friars from Mexico began serving this area of San Antonio. The cornerstone of this Spanish Baroque revival church was laid

on October 15, 1929. Thérèse de Lisieux of the Child Jesus (1873-1897) was a French Discalced Carmelite nun known for her piety who was canonized as a saint in 1925. In 1998 the church was added to the National Register of Historic Places and named in 1998 and named a minor basilica by Pope John Paul II.

San Fernando Cathedral

115 Main Plaza

<https://sfcathedral.org/>

The cathedral was founded on March 9, 1731, by a group of families from the Canary Islands and claims to be the oldest continuously functioning religious community in Texas. The first church on the site was erected between 1738 and 1759 and its walls form the sanctuary of cathedral. The cathedral was considerably enlarged in a Gothic style in 1868 under the direction of Francois P. Giraud. The stained-glass windows were added in 1920.



1 Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. Photo by Zereschk, 2007, Wikimedia Commons



2 San Fernando Cathedral, photo by Daniel Schwen, 2009, Wikimedia Commons

In 1874, The Diocese of Galveston was divided, creating the Diocese of San Antonio with San Fernando as its cathedral. The diocese was raised to an archdiocese in 1926.

A major restoration of the cathedral, including construction of the adjoining Cathedral Center took place in 2003. In 2011 a minor renovation, under Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, reversed some of the 2003 changes to the liturgical plan and placed the altar back within the sanctuary.

Significant shrines in the church include (in the narthex) those to St. Toribio Romo, a Mexican priest martyred in 1928 during the Cristero war in Mexico. He is known for appearing to migrants cross the board into the United States, and (in the sanctuary) Our Lady of Guadalupe (the patroness of the Americas) and Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria (Our Lady of the Candle), a Black Madonna who is patroness of the Canary Islands, from whence settlers of San Antonio came.