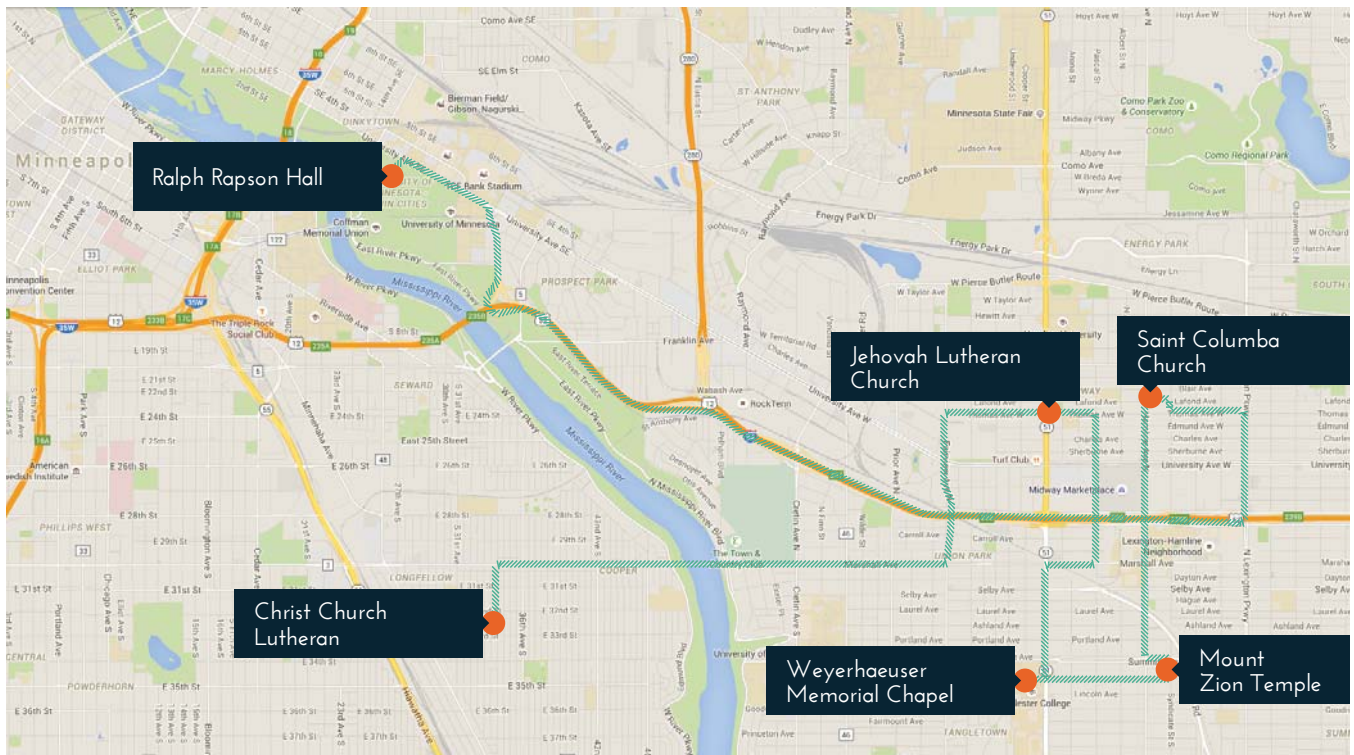


MODERN WORSHIP



1. Ralph Rapson Hall
89 Church Street SE
Minneapolis

2. Saint Columba Church
1327 Lafond Avenue
Saint Paul

3. Mount Zion Temple
1300 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul

4. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Chapel
1604 Grand Avenue
Saint Paul

5. Jehovah Lutheran Church
1566 Thomas Avenue W
Saint Paul

6. Christ Church Lutheran
3244 34th Avenue S
Minneapolis





Modernism on the Prairie

Docomomo National Symposium: Modern Worship Tour

June 4, 2015

2:30 - 5:30

Tour Guide: Tim Quigley, AIA



Church of St. Columba, Barry Byrne, 1951
1327 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul, MN



CHURCH OF ST. COLUMBA

Tucked away in an unassuming working class neighborhood is this monumental limestone-clad church by one-time Prairie School architect Barry Byrne. Byrne, who practiced in Chicago, once worked for Walter Burley Griffin, then had a notable career designing Catholic churches sprinkled throughout the country (Racine, WI and Tulsa, OK have expressionistic brick marvels from the early 1920's). Here the ecumenical fish shape generated the plan; the tower derives from an Irish castle source (his patron bishop was from Ireland). A sister church was built in Kansas City, MO.



Mt. Zion Temple, Erich Mendelsohn, 1956
1300 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN



MT. ZION TEMPLE

Mendelsohn's later career in the United States produced buildings in Cleveland, St. Louis and San Francisco as well as St. Paul, which was completed after his death. A German Jew, Mendelsohn achieved commercial success and acclaim in Berlin by the early 1930's. Hitler's rise led to a productive exile, first in London, then the US. St. Paul's oldest Jewish congregation built ambitiously: two copper clad volumes rise vertically to express the worship spaces within; a school wing forms the main mass, all set on an ample Summit Avenue site.



Weyerhaeuser Memorial Chapel, Cerny Associates (Dewey Thorbeck), 1968
Macalester College, 1600 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, MN



WEYERHAEUSER MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Macalester College is a small, liberal-arts college nestled in a genteel neighborhood in St. Paul's West End. The chapel is a serene little jewel: a glass hexagon floating above a dry moat. Its interior is of brick and natural wood; the tree-like structural supports are reminiscent of Breuer at St. John's, though executed in wood. Robert Cerny was a leading Twin Cities architect of the 1950's and 1960's. His most noteworthy contribution was in developing talent: a great many noteworthy local architects trained in his firm, Thorbeck included.



Jehovah Lutheran, Harold Spitznagel, 1963
1566 Thomas Avenue W. St. Paul, MN



JEHOVAH LUTHERAN

This deftly-composed modern church is the work of Harold Spitznagel of Sioux Falls, SD, who had a national reputation. "Hidden in plain sight" might describe this building, which sits on a busy street completing a commercial block. Like Mt. Zion, it is of an ambitious scale, with a large educational wing and small chapel to compliment the main worship space. The exterior of the crisp form is animated with precast concrete panels. The working class congregation has dwindled over the years as neighborhood demographics have changed.



Christ Church Lutheran, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, 1949; 1962
3244 34th Avenue S. Minneapolis, MN



CHRIST CHURCH LUTHERAN

Minnesota's finest modern religious structure is now a national landmark, yet the commission only went to "Papa" Saarinen because a Gothic church was deemed too expensive and "modern" was less expensive (this too was a working class neighborhood and congregation). Saarinen's understated essay in brick and local Kasota stone is typically Scandinavian: not showy nor flashy, but pragmatic, with real substance. The detailing and morning light in the chancel are noteworthy. This is a sister church to Saarinen's masterful First Christian in Columbus, IN (1942). The expansive education wing was designed a decade later by Eliel's son, Eero.

