

DUNEDIN CITY CHURCHES

The number and beauty of Dunedin's inner-city churches reflects the importance of religion in the city's life. Walk this trail to appreciate them.

Trail listed by: Southern Heritage Trust

Location: Dunedin Central

Duration: 2 hours

Terrain level: Easy



St Pauls Cathedral

First Church

PDF designed by Southern Heritage Trust, 2006

1. St Pauls Cathedral 1915 (Anglican)

Directions: On the corner of Stuart St and the upper Octagon, next to the Visitors Centre.

Description: Built of limestone and reinforced with concrete, this cathedral has the only stone vaulted roof in New Zealand. The windows above the altar are thought to have come from a demolished Christopher Wren church. The first Anglican woman bishop served here.

2. Trinity Methodist Church 1870

Directions: Continue up Stuart St until you come to the corner of Moray Place and Stuart St. On the corner is the Trinity Methodist Church; today it is known as the Fortune Theatre.

Description: The original plans for this bluestone and Oamaru stone church included a spire on the tower. Its fine acoustics were appreciated during choir work and also now in its new incarnation as a theatre.

3. St Joseph's Cathedral 1886 (Roman Catholic)

Directions: Continue up Stuart St. Turn left at Smith St. Keep walking until you come to the corner of Smith St and Rattray St, where St Joseph's Cathedral and the Dominican Priory are situated.

Description: FW Petre's design, drawing from Notre Dame Cathedral and other French Gothic buildings, transformed a gully into an imposing corner. There was Protestant glee that the Catholic cathedral's towers could not be seen from the centre of the city.

4. St Matthew's Church 1874 (Anglican)

Directions: Follow Rattray St, Broadway and Manse St down the hill to the corner where Manse St and Stafford St meet Princes St. Turn into Stafford St. St Matthew's is on the corner of Hope St and Stafford St.

Description: The Anglican group who founded this church wanted an impressive church when there were few Anglicans in the city. Designed in the Adapted Gothic style and built in bluestone, the church served one of the city's oldest areas.

5. St Andrew's Church 1871 (Presbyterian)

Directions: Continue up Stafford St and turn left down Melville St. St Andrew's Church is on the corner of Melville St and Carroll St. It is presently the Coptic Orthodox Church of the Archangel Michael.

Description: Designed by RA Lawson, this church was built as a mission in a poor area. Unusually for a Lawson church, it lacks gothic lines and originally had crenulations. The Rev Waddell, a famous social reformer, preached here for 40 years to packed congregations.

6. Farley's Hall 1863 (Open Brethren)

Directions: Return to Princes St. Continue up the main street past High St and MacLaggan St until you get to Dowling St. On the corner of Dowling St and Princes St is what was known as Farley's Hall.

Description: Occupied by the Brethren in the 1860s but owned by Henry Farley, promoter of the notorious Vauxhall Gardens. A bushranger called Henry Garrett was 'converted' to the Brethren but was caught robbing the chemist shop downstairs. The Brethren were mortified.

7. Salvation Army Fortress 1891

Directions: Continue up Dowling St until you come to a back-packer on the left. This used to be the Salvation Army's Fortress.

Description: The fortress has a castellated front similar to many Salvation Army buildings built in Britain at the same time. The opening was attended by General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, who came to New Zealand for the occasion.

8. Garrison Hall 1877

Directions: Cross Princes St and continue down Dowling St until you come to a building with a lion and a unicorn carved above the entrance. This was Garrison Hall, now the Natural History Film building.

Description: The Brethren also met here and had popular services. On one occasion George Muller spoke here to 2,800 people about his famous orphanage in Bristol. Tea meetings for hundreds were frequent, no liquor served, of course.

9. First Church 1873 (Presbyterian)

Directions: Continue to the bottom of Dowling St, make a sharp left turn into Burlington St and walk up the hill (with the rear of Garrison Hall on your left). At the top, turn right into Moray Place. First Church is on the right.

Description: Building a large and expensive church in a community less than 20 years old wasn't universally approved. Robert Lawson had won the competition for the church design with his Gothic Revival church but he had to wait 10 years until it was completed in 1873.

10. Dunedin Synagogue 1863

Directions: When you leave First Church at the Moray Place gateway, turn left up Moray Place and cross Princes St, continuing up

Moray Place until you get to the Temple Art Gallery on the left. This building was Dunedin's first synagogue.

Description: Early Dunedin had a vibrant Jewish community. The Theomins of Olveston were one of the more prominent Jewish families who would have visited this synagogue. By 1875 it was too small for the congregation and was sold to the Freemasons.

11. Congregational Church 1864

Directions: Continue up Moray Place until you come to View St on the left. The Congregational Church is on the corner of View St and Moray Place.

Description: The Congregationalists originated in Elizabethan England, believing that each 'congregation' should be autonomous. This church was the centre of congregationalism for 102 years. Originally of red brick, it was cemented over soon after it was built.

12. Church of Christ 1926

Directions: Follow Moray Place across Stuart St before turning left into Filleul St. The Church of Christ is on the corner of Filleul St and St Andrew St.

Description: The architect, DC Mowat, deftly overcame the utilitarian nature of the building and restrictions of the site with a small but lovely tower and cupola reminiscent of some of Wren's London churches. The green wooden dome is painted to look like copper.

13. Baptist Church 1910

Directions: Walk down St Andrew St to George St. Turn left there and walk up the block before turning right into Hanover St. The Baptist Church is on the corner of Hanover St and Great King St. It is now a nightclub.

Description: The gold-rush brought the first Baptists to Dunedin. Edmund Ancombe's new red-brick church was built in 1910 next to the 1880 Sunday School. A vigorous inner-city church, it provided a popular free reading-room when there was no public library.

14. Knox Church 1876 (Presbyterian)

Directions: Retrace your steps to George St and, turning right, walk to the corner where London St and Pitt St meet George St. There you will find Knox Church.

Description: From the start, Knox Church was a contrast to the formality of First Church. Built of bluestone with an Oamaru stone spire, the Gothic concept was designed by Robert Lawson, but, unlike First Church, it has not needed repairs to correct design faults.