

William & Main Streets

The three buildings at the intersection of William and Main Streets have been important social and cultural centers in Geneva. Originally built as churches, two have filled many roles, illustrating Geneva's commitment to adaptive reuse. The third remains a church and a prominent part of the Geneva cityscape.

380 South Main Street New Future Manor

The building at 380 South Main Street was built in 1832 as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. The church closed in 1885, and the building was vacant for several years.

The village of Geneva purchased the property in 1889, but local leaders couldn't agree on what to do with it. In 1890, St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church bought and renovated the building. When the local parish split in 1904, it housed St. Stephens Church until 1912, and then its parochial school.

From 1917 to 1985 the building was the Ark Lodge Masonic Temple. It was converted into apartments and since has been housing for Hobart and William Smith Colleges students.



Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, c. 1870-1885.



Geneva Masonic Temple, c. 1940-1985.

361 South Main Street

The building at 361 South Main Street was built in 1839 as the Methodist Episcopal Church and was renovated in 1885. In 1911, the congregation outgrew the building and built a new church across the street at 340 Main Street.

The building then became a garage and car dealership. The spire was removed, and an automobile display room and large front show windows were added. During World War II, the building was the USO Center for Geneva and nearby Sampson Naval Base. It then became the Geneva Civic Center. From 1951 to 1956 the USO returned when the U.S. Air Force reopened Sampson.



Geneva USO, c. 1943-1947. Note showroom and front windows from time as car dealership.



Methodist Episcopal Church, c. 1870-1885. The pillars were enclosed during the 1885 renovations.

By 1973, the Civic Center was falling apart and many youth programs moved to local schools. In 1978-79, the city renovated the building, including removing the auto display section and front show windows. The Senior Citizen Club, Human Rights Commission, and Veteran Service Agency then occupied the building.

In 1984, Finger Lakes Community College established its first Geneva location in the building. It occupied the site until it moved to the old high school on Pulteney Street in 2005. The building was vacant until 2008, when it was purchased and converted into offices and apartments.

340 South Main Street

First United Methodist Church

The First United Methodist Church was built between 1912 and 1914, when the congregation outgrew its previous church at 361 South Main. The original plans were altered on suggestion of the city council to include a larger tower and an electric Seth Thomas clock, which the council agreed to pay for.

The congregation went into substantial debt to build the church and frequently implored the citizens to fulfill their “moral obligation to the Methodist Church Tower.” They also formed a Tithers Association to help raise funds. The debt was paid off in 1943, and the church was able to paint and renovate the interior for the first time. In 1963, further renovations added offices, classrooms, and a kitchen.

Over the years, the church has not been just a place of worship and an architectural highlight of the city, but a community center. Since 1993, the Catholic Charities’ Community Lunch Program has operated out of the church, serving 10,000 free lunches a year.



First United Methodist Church under construction, c. 1913. Note the previous Methodist Church across the street.



First United Methodist Church, c. 1922. The building on the corner was purchased and demolished in 2000.