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# PLACES OF WORSHIP

Presbyterian mission services were probably the first religious services to be held in southern Montgomery County. They began in 1723 in the Cabin John and Potomac areas. A "preaching station," the Captain John Meeting House, was constructed on Falls Road in the 1740s. The Presbyterian congregation prospered, and in 1820 moved to the Rockville Pike north of Cedar Lane. There they built the Bethesda Meeting House, which became a focal point for the community and is now listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. In 1926 the **Bethesda Presbyterian Church** moved to its present location, 7611 Clarendon Road.

**St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish**, Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Lane, was the first church to be established in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. "Cottage" services were initiated in nearby homes in 1873. A year later, a frame chapel was erected. The Parish Hall added in 1902 created an "L." This entire complex was destroyed by fire in 1914. A Gothic (stone) church served the congregation from 1915 to 1947. The current red brick colonial church was completed in 1948. Ten years later, the education building was dedicated. For more than 70 years, St. John's has been our town's good neighbor to the west, and has allowed the town to use its facilities.

**Chevy Chase United Methodist Church**, 7001 Connecticut Avenue, is right across "The Avenue" from our town. For 77 years it has been a center for community activities. To name a few, it has provided meeting rooms for all age groups, from Cub Scouts to the Fossils retired men's club. It assists with the Meals on Wheels program. A nursery school was established there in 1967. The Chinese Methodist and the Ghanaian congregations hold services in the Methodist chapel. In 1912 the first segment of the property, including a small brown-shingled church, was purchased from the Baptist Church. The first sanctuary of the present stone complex was dedicated in 1935. Phillips Hall was consecrated in 1954 and the education building was opened in 1961.

**All Saints' Episcopal Church** was the first of four churches to grace the Chevy Chase Circle area. It was established in 1897 on the west side of the circle. Services were instituted in a little school house where the present rectory now stands. A new church was formally occupied in December 1901. The Kingan Chapel was completed in 1914. The present complex of buildings was completed in 1953.

**Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church** on the east side of the circle was officially organized in January 1908.

The first meetings were held in the library north of the circle. Funds were raised for the building of a small frame stucco church, and the first services at the present site were held on Christmas day of 1910. Services in the existing sanctuary began in April 1924. The first church school building was dedicated in 1932 and the current building in 1958.

**Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament**, 6001 Western Avenue, was organized by the Catholics of Chevy Chase in 1909. They built a small pebble-dash church in 1911. The present Gothic parish church was dedicated in 1927. The Blessed Sacrament School began classes in September 1923. The church has participated in many community activities, including the sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 90 for more than 60 years.

**Chevy Chase Baptist Church**, 5671 Western Avenue, was the fourth to be built in the Chevy Chase Circle area. The church was organized in 1906, originally located on Connecticut Avenue, one mile north of the circle. That property was sold to the Chevy Chase Methodist Church in 1912 and members of the Baptist congregation worshipped in other churches for more than a decade. In 1923 services resumed and were held in the Chevy Chase (Avalon) Theatre. The present property, one block west of the circle, was purchased the next year. On Christmas day of that year, the first service was held in the new chapel. The present sanctuary, the Clark Chapel, was completed in 1949 and the matching red brick education building ten years later.

**Our Lady of Lourdes**, East-West Highway and Pearl Street, is on corner property purchased by the newly-created parish in 1926. It included a handsome 1880s home which had once served as a summer residence for the Chinese Embassy. This was converted into a church and rectory. The parish soon outgrew the structure, and in 1930 a small white church was transported to the Bethesda site from southeast Washington. A new church, school, and convent was completed in 1941. The existing church and addition to the school was dedicated in 1951.

**Christ Lutheran Church of Bethesda**, 8011 Old Georgetown Road, held its first service in the State Theater (later the Baronet) in December 1934. Four years later, the congregation, which included many Chevy Chase residents, moved to its first church home, the Garrett Mansion on Old Georgetown Road. The education building was dedicated in 1955 and the existing church was completed in 1956.

Between 1940 and 1980, the number of religious fa-

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cilities steadily increased in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. New congregations were established here and others relocated from the District of Columbia. Many were denominations new to suburban Maryland.

Among the best attended of these churches and synagogues are:

**Chevy Chase Church of Christ Scientist**, 7901 Connecticut Avenue

**Ohr Kodesh Synagogue** (Conservative), 8402 Freyman Drive

**Beth El Synagogue** (Conservative), 8215 Old Georgetown Road

**Temple Sinai Synagogue** (Reform), 3100 Military Road, D.C.

**Temple Shalom Synagogue** (Reform) 8401 Grubb Road

**North Chevy Chase Christian Church**, 8814 Kensington Parkway

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints** (Mormon), Chevy Chase Ward and Rama Latinia (Spanish Speaking) Ward, 5460 Western Avenue

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints** (Mormon), Kensington, Rockville, and Rock Creek Wards, 10000 Stonybrook Drive

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## SHOPPING IN THE CHEVY CHASE AREA

What a difference a day, a year, or a decade makes! Shopping and shopping districts in this area have changed so much that it is difficult to write about them or find many records of the changes.

In the early days, since there were zoning restrictions against businesses in the new suburb, the Chevy Chase Land Company provided freight service for its customers. It had an electric car which made two trips a day from a freight station at 18th and U Streets in the District of Columbia to Chevy Chase Lake. Washington merchants delivered all kinds of merchandise ordered by residents, from pins to medicine and household goods, to the freight station. From there it was taken on the freight car and left in boxes at various corners on Connecticut Avenue. This service was maintained for about a dozen years until automobiles became the way to travel.

Until suburban shopping malls and department store chains began to develop in the 1950s, residents of Chevy Chase went "downtown" to do most of their shopping. This northwest D.C. commercial area was roughly bounded by Pennsylvania and New York Avenues between 7th and 15th Streets. Shoppers usually traveled by street car, and by bus after the tracks were removed.

There were major department stores such as Woodward & Lothrop, the Hecht Co., Kann's, Lansburgh's, and Palais Royal and specialty stores such as Garfinckel's, Frank R. Jelleff, and Raleigh Haberdasher. Each store had its own trucks with uniformed drivers which made two or three trips per week to deliver customers' purchases.

Days spent downtown shopping, having lunch, and attending a movie and stage show were special events. One especially looked forward to the Christmas holiday season when the stores and their outside display windows were beautifully decorated.

### The Shops of Old Bethesda

The closest shopping district to the Town of Chevy Chase was on Wisconsin Avenue from Bradley Boulevard to East-West Highway. This Bethesda area was commercially developed well before World War II. The first traffic light in Bethesda was installed in July 1930 at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and East-West Highway, and this was followed by a "Buy in Bethesda" campaign to attract businesses to the area.

Community Paint and Hardware was one of the first buildings on Wisconsin Avenue. The front portion was built in 1880, and a brick structure was added in the rear in 1941. It was first operated by the Wilson family, and from 1922 to 1931 was called Bradley's Hardware Store. During the 1920s, the Bethesda Post Office was located in the building.

The Broadhurst family operated the store as Community Paint and Hardware from 1931 to February 1986, when its life came to an end to make way for a high-rise building. Five brothers and numerous other family members participated in its operation over this period.

Homeowners from Chevy Chase, Bethesda, and surrounding areas came in for "hard to find" items such as