



THE BLADE/ANDY MORRISON

The steeple atop the Historic Church of St. Patrick, 130 Avondale Ave., has been a fixture since 2007, some 27 years after the previous one was destroyed by fire.

## Steeple, spires have topped churches for centuries

By ROSE RUSSELL  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

You recall the children's rhyme that you say and make hand gestures about church steeples?

"Here's the church (interlock your fingers, pointing downward).

"And here's the steeple (put up both pointers).

"Open the door (uncross your thumbs),

"And see all the people!" (turn your hands up and wiggle your fingers).

That little ditty was the inspiration recently to glance upward at church steeples and spires. In the greater Toledo area, there are a good number of them on buildings of many denominations — including Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Unitarian.

The centuries-old architectural feature was brought to these shores by the early settlers. While they wanted their buildings to be as grand as those in their European homelands, they also wanted them to project a good measure of consecration. That helps explain why some steeples and spires are finished off with crosses.

Steeple and spires top decades-old and some of the not-so-old churches in this region's urban, suburban, and rural communities. You can see them up close, as you might if you're by a church that's near a neighborhood, such as Union Grove Baptist Church. And you can catch a glimpse of them from a distance while motoring about. The Historic Church of St. Patrick can be seen from the Anthony Wayne Trail, and St. John's Lutheran Church and Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church near downtown, not far from each other, can be seen from I-75.

Church steeples are typically ornamental towers that may include a belfry which houses the church bells (when there are bells). And though many people — and some dictionaries, too — refer to the structures that pierce the sky as steeples and spires interchangeably, spires are actually found on top of steeples. Spires taper to a point, enhance a church's design, and direct a viewer's eye heavenward.

After all, where there are steeples and spires, the goal is mostly to keep observers in a heavenly mind-set.

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First Presbyterian Church, 200 E. Broadway, Maumee.



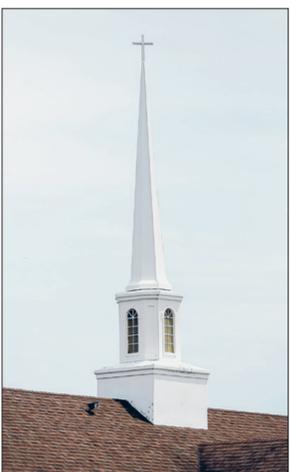
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The tip of the steeple of the Historic Church of St. Patrick.



THE BLADE/KATIE RAUSCH

First Unitarian Church of Toledo, 3205 Glendale Ave.



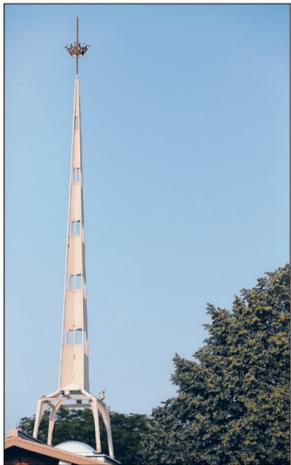
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New Life Assembly of God, 3230 Dustin Rd., Oregon.



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Warren AME Church, 915 Collingwood Blvd.



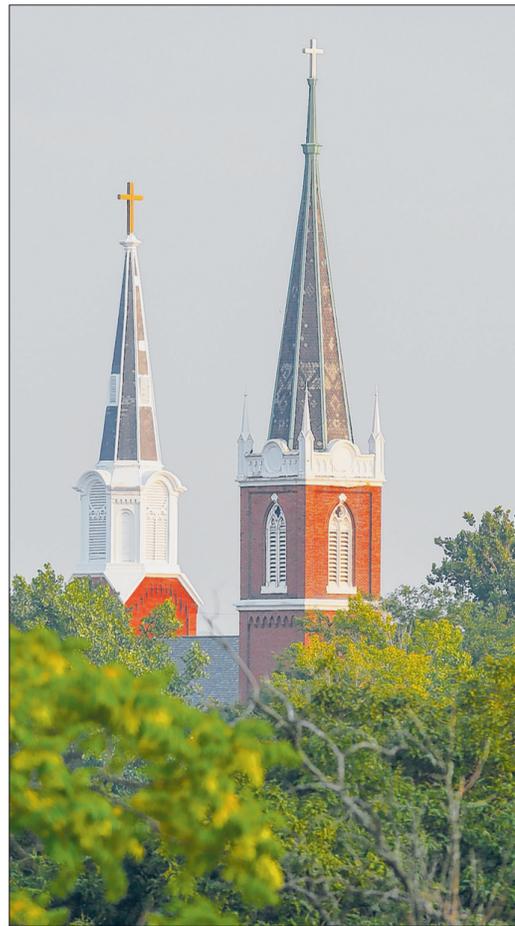
THE BLADE/JEREMY WADSWORTH

First United Methodist Church, 7000 Erie St. in Sylvania.



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Pilgrim Church, 1375 W. Sylvania Ave.



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Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, 728 S. St. Clair St., left, and St. John's Lutheran Church, 708 S. Erie St.