

## Day One: Sacred Places in Art and Nature

**Morning:** Your morning begins just outside Carthage, Missouri at “America’s Sistine Chapel”, artist Sam Butcher’s Precious Moments Chapel. Surrounded by over 3000 acres of Ozarks beauty, the park is adorned with bronze statues and fountains and is home to a gift shop, chapel, the Samuel J. Butcher Museum, and Taste of Italy restaurant.

**Lunch:** Head into Carthage where groups can choose to dine on the charming town square, at the Historic Phelps House, or at Red Oak II, where you can stroll through yesteryear along the gravel path to view the re-creation of an early country church, one room schoolhouse, town hall, a 1920s cottage-style Phillips 66 gas station, Belle Starr’s home, and much more.

**Afternoon:** Travel south to Diamond, Missouri and George Washington Carver National Monument. Dr. Carver had a deep Christian faith that guided his life and work. Learn the story of his inspiration and what he credited for his success. Experience the Visitors Center with its interactive and hands-on exhibits of life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, explore the trails and the Moses Carver house and cemetery, enjoy a presentation on Carver’s various endeavors, or make a sample of peanut butter in the Carver Laboratory.

**Evening:** Enjoy a sunset in the countryside of southwest Missouri while sipping on locally made wine at Keltoi Winery or Christine’s Vinyard. Bring in a local musician to provide background music as everyone dines on a locally catered meal. On your way to the vineyard, take a short detour to visit the Praying Hands Memorial in Webb City. This 32-foot depiction of hands in prayer is a monument to faith and peace.

\*Alternative plan: Experience the new Cornell Arts and Entertainment Center in Downtown Joplin. Cater lunch at Spiva Center for the Arts on the center’s second floor, where you can dine in the main gallery amongst nationally recognized artists’ works. Then explore the Center’s galleries and gift shop. Visitors will enjoy a staff presentation about the current exhibits as they dine.

## Day Two: Sacred History, Places, and Architecture

**Morning:** The day starts in Downtown Joplin with a visit to historic City Hall, right in the heart of Joplin’s Route 66. Hear about Joplin’s history and view the murals located in this renovated department store, including the last signed Thomas Hart Benton mural *Joplin at the Turn of the Century 1896 – 1906*. Walk a block down Joplin’s Main Street for a photo op at the Route 66 Mural Park.

The tour continues with visits to historic Joplin places of worship that represent unique styles in architecture. Options include:

- St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church, built in 1907
- United Hebrew Congregation, built in 1916
- Joplin First United Methodist Church, built in 1906
- Handy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1903
- St. Phillip’s Episcopal Church, built in 1908
- Central Christian Center, housed in the former Fox Theater, built in 1930

Learn about the churches' history and architecture, and how they played a role in the rough and tumble mining town of Joplin in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Lunch: Groups can enjoy lunch in Downtown Joplin, right on Route 66, with its unique restaurants and shopping. Or head to the Joplin History & Mineral Museum and cater in lunch, while a local historian shares Joplin's colorful history. Take time to enjoy the exhibits, including artifacts from Bonnie and Clyde's visit to Joplin, and meet the resident cats, Roxy and Crystal.

Afternoon: You can't visit Joplin without stopping for a treat at Candy House Gourmet. Your group will receive a behind the scenes tour of the factory, which uses original family recipes handed down over 75 years.

A step on guide joins your group for a driving tour of Joplin's Route 66, Historic Murphysburg neighborhood, and sites of the devastating 2011 tornado that destroyed one-third of Joplin. Stops include the cross at the former site of St. Mary's Catholic Church, which was the only piece of the church left standing after the tornado, and Cunningham Park, with its memorial to those lost and tribute to the 182,000 volunteers who helped rebuild Joplin. Butterfly gardens, water features, and panels depicting the timeline of the tornado make this park a place of reflection and hope.

Dinner: Dine under the historic neon of Wilder's Steakhouse on Route 66 in Downtown Joplin. Wilder's has been an art deco icon on the Route since 1929 and serves elegant meals in this venue built in 1908.

Local Legend: Joplin's "Butterfly People"

Butterflies are depicted throughout Joplin in the form of murals and metal sculptures. The butterfly is a symbol not only of Joplin's rebirth after the 2011 tornado, but also of divine intervention during the storm. Many survivors of the tornado zone, especially children, told stories of "butterfly people" - beings who resembled everyday humans but who had large colorful wings that shielded them during the tornado, or pulled them from tornado debris.

Local hint: Plan your group's visit during a First Thursday Art Walk or Third Thursday community cultural event which takes place in Downtown Joplin between March and October.