

People's History Tour of Elkhart

Note from
Mission
Commission

The Mission Commission invites you to participate in a “People’s History Tour of Elkhart” on Saturday, October 14. This tour is led by Cyneatha Millsaps, the executive director for the Goshen College Center for Community Engagement, and Jason Shenk, a community organizer and leader in the Poor People’s Campaign.

Cyneatha has a multi-generational heritage in the City of Elkhart, is a Black leader and advocate for the rights and culture of people of color in Elkhart and in the Mennonite Church. Jason is clerk of Elkhart River Worship Group (Quakers), and has been leading tours of South Central Elkhart since 2009.

This tour provides an overview of Mennonite history in Elkhart as it intersects with the surrounding neighborhood and its multiracial realities over the last 150 years. It also focuses on the history of industry and city planning and its impact on racial minorities. A major focus of the tour will include discussion regarding the Benham West neighborhood that was dismantled as a part of the Federal Urban Renewal Program.

We will begin the tour near Prairie Street Mennonite Church (the original location of the Elkhart Institute, which became Goshen College), visit the newly constructed Tolson Center and end in the Benham West area. Folks from Walnut Hill Mennonite Church and Eighth Street Mennonite Church will join us in this tour. Please plan to meet at 12:15 p.m. at Berkey and we will carpool to Elkhart. The tour takes approximately two hours.

In preparation for the tour it is suggested that you read an overview of “The People’s History of Elkhart.” A link to that document is [here](#).

You may have the option of participating by walking or driving between sites, or participating via zoom. Please [sign up here](#) to indicate if you will participate by walking, driving between or join by zoom.