

# Rebuilding the Ruins: The Story of Zion Lutheran Church

How can we use primary and secondary sources to research, write, and produce an original work of public history?

## Description

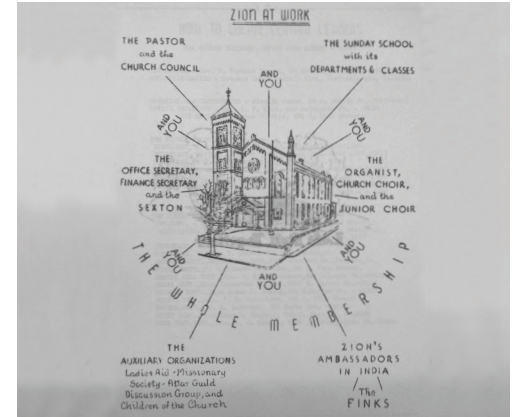
This project engaged students from various majors in a place-based research experience in downtown York. Early in the spring 2025 semester, Kim Hogeman, Assistant Vice President of Economic and Community Development at the York County Economic Alliance (YCEA), directed a tour of the historic site for Dr. Beatty's class. Hogeman pointed out family names in the stained-glass windows and connected students to additional historical resources. From there, students began a months-long, self-directed research process under Dr. Beatty's supervision. The eventual theme and vision for the exhibit were student-driven.

## Final Product

Students worked collaboratively to create an exhibit that explores the legacy of Zion Lutheran Church and the broader theme of building community through three lenses: history, church design, and the individuals and groups who have been influential throughout its history. Each section of the exhibit examines an aspect of the church's impact on the community, including its long historical timeline, its notable figures and parishioners, and its architectural evolution.

*"This teaching style allowed me to be more immersed in the learning experience due to the entire process of creating, designing, and researching an unknown topic, along with choosing the focus for the exhibition."*

- Erin Igo '26, History



## Geography



Museum Studies  
HIS 303  
Spring 2025



Taught by  
Jacqueline Beatty,  
Ph.D.



## Students

### Why THIS project for THESE students?

HIS303: Museum Studies encourages students to create historical exhibit projects for the benefit of the local community. This course connects community stakeholders—in this case, the YCEA—with students to demonstrate the ways in which public historical work can instigate meaningful change. The YCEA is working to resurrect the Zion Lutheran Church's historical York City building so that it can serve the community (in conjunction with the newly redeveloped Yorktowne Hotel). The course often brings together history, public history, political science, fine art, and graphic design students who pool their skill sets to create an exhibit from the point of original research through organization, writing, design, and installation.



## Learning Outcomes

### What skills did students develop through completing this course?

**Communication:** Students hone their written and oral communication skills through regular class reading, discussion, essay writing, and through the final exhibit project.

**Teamwork:** Students work with their classmates in various teams, taking on various roles and leadership positions. Students are given a great deal of freedom in organizing and dividing labor.

**Project Management:** Students work together to define the scope of the exhibit project, given only a very broad topic and a vast array of primary sources. They read and organize their notes, create goals and a vision/big idea for the project, and divide research, writing, and labor for the project



## Context

### How does this project support the community?

The *Rebuilding the Ruins* exhibit highlights the long history of York's Zion Lutheran Church with a particular focus on the organization's role in creating, building, and sustaining community. Installed in Marketview Arts, it is free and available to the public for viewing, demonstrating the centrality of this institution in serving the local York City community throughout its centuries-long history as well as demonstrating the broader significance of such programs in serving the community.