



The Irish Cultural & Heritage Center (ICHC) is housed in the former Grand Avenue Congregational Church on West Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee.

About the Grand Avenue Congregational Church

In 1847, seeking freedom of expression, twenty-two abolitionists from two prominent Milwaukee churches joined forces to create what became known as the Grand Avenue Congregational Church. The site of the church, originally part of the “Old Cemetery” Catholic burial ground, was purchased by the congregation in 1886. The church itself was built the following year, designed by architect Edward Townsend Mix. A principle feature of the building was the remarkably large church auditorium, equipped to seat 1,300 persons. For over 60 years this remained Milwaukee’s largest auditorium for public use. In 1986 the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Early in 1996 the ICHC board of directors began meeting with the Church council, with the aim of making the building home to the Center we had long dreamed of. On December 2, 1996, title of the Grand Avenue Congregational Church was transferred to the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center of Wisconsin, Inc.



Did You Know?

- The ICHC is **home to five organizations** and hosts many others, including: *Avenues West Association*, *St. Andrew Society*, and *Ancient Order of Hibernians*.
- More than **200 entertainment acts** have performed at the Center since 1997 — such as *Cathie Ryan*, *Aoife Clancy*, *Cherish the Ladies*, *The Wolf Tones* and *Gaelic Storm*. *Black 47 & the Trinity Irish Dancers* broadcast live for PBS from the Center, and *Larry King* did a remote interview with 2004 presidential candidate *Howard Dean* after his town hall meeting in the Hallamór. Author *Morgan Llewellyn* lectured here during a Celtic Women International conference.
- Visiting dignitaries from Ireland include **President Mary McAleese** and **Minister of State Bernard Allen**.
- More than **75,000 people** have attended public events, dances, classes, and concerts at the Center.
- Since 1998, we have proudly recognized a “Volunteer of the Year” for their support of the ICHC mission.
- The Center is home to **two libraries**:
The ICHC Irish Library is a collection of nearly 1,000 donated titles of Irish interest which circulate to members. These include works of fiction, memoir, history, language, travel and culture.
The Irish Emigration Library, offers unique resources and knowledgeable volunteers to help people trace their Irish roots. Sponsored by the Irish Genealogical Society of Wisconsin, the library is free and open to the public each Wednesday from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- The ICHC has a gallery, three performance spaces (*The Hallamór*, Parlor B and upper hall), two relaxing bars (*Quinlan’s Pub* and the lower level pub), a board room and several meeting rooms.
- The Center’s premiere space — *The Hallamór*— boasts a grand arched three-sectioned stained glass window, 34 paired stained glass aisle windows, a cruciform floor plan with three balconies and 172 pews, and an operational 4000-pipe Kimball organ.

The Irish Cultural & Heritage Center

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP



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