

The Museum of Christian & Gospel Music Receives Official Designation as a Site on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail

The Museum of Christian & Gospel Music is designated as a site along the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, announced by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development.

NASHVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, March 2, 2026

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Museum of Christian & Gospel Music is now officially designated as a site along the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, announced by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDTD). Alongside the Museum of Christian & Gospel Music, the Jefferson Street Sound Museum was also recognized this year, bringing Tennessee's total to 17 sites featured on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail.

"There are more intersections between Gospel Music and the Civil Rights Movement than you can imagine," said Museum Executive Director Steve Gilreath. "Music fueled the protesters, defined the moral structure of the effort and gave a national voice to the struggle. The Trail is powerful to follow through the museum, which we call the Soundtrack To The Movement."

The Museum of Christian & Gospel Music showcases the role gospel music and its artists played as a source of hope during the fight for Civil Rights. Now proudly part of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, the museum, just months after officially opening its doors in October 2025, stands as a tribute to the past. Through state-of-the-art exhibits, personal artifacts, and dynamic storytelling, guests discover how gospel music sustained faith-based communities and amplified the call for justice.

A sample of the exhibits that are noted on the Civil Rights Trail include the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who, beginning in 1871, preserved spirituals while breaking racial barriers through their performances, to Mahalia Jackson, whose stirring voice rang out at the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the March on Washington, and the Selma to Montgomery march, gospel artists used their platforms to inspire action and unity. In Detroit, Mattie Moss Clark lent her extraordinary



arranging talents to mass choirs at NAACP Freedom Fund gatherings, strengthening the movement through song.

Celebrating its official landmark designation, community leaders, supporters and partners gathered last Friday for an inaugural ceremony honoring the Museum of Christian & Gospel Music's inclusion on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail. Co-presented by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, the event welcomed distinguished guests and friends of the museum for this historic recognition.

Opening the special event with a joyful prayer was Frank Stevenson, Special Projects Administrator for the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, and a word from Mark Ezell, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. Gaither Homecoming artist Lynda Randle delivered a moving performance, and Dr. Chris Williamson of



Photos ID (L to R), Steve Gilreath, Lynda Randle, Jackie Patillo, Dr. Chris Williamson, Howard Gentry, Mark Ezell

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Steve Gilreath, Museum Executive Director

Strong Tower Bible Church offered remarks, as well as Howard Gentry (Metropolitan Government of Nashville as the Criminal Court Clerk of Davidson County and Metro Nashville-Davidson County's first African American Vice Mayor), commemorating a milestone moment in the museum's history. GMA President Jackie Patillo closed out the event with a fervent prayer.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CHRISTIAN & GOSPEL MUSIC AND MIKE CURB PRESENTS GMA GOSPEL MUSIC HALL OF

FAME: The Museum opened its doors in October 2025 in downtown Nashville and is a must-see family destination. Designed to honor the legacy and future of Christian & Gospel music, the museum combines innovative technology with live experiences to unite faith and music like never before. From personal testimonies to iconic recordings, The C&G invites every visitor to experience the gospel in sound, spirit, and story. In February 2026, the museum was designated as part of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail. Visit www.cgmmuseum.org.

ABOUT GOSPEL MUSIC ASSOCIATION & FOUNDATION: Since 1964, the Gospel Music Association's mission has been to expose, promote and celebrate the Gospel through music. The GMA serves the richly diverse creatives and professionals within the Christian and Gospel music

industry by preserving the legacies of those who've gone before us and celebrating the work of today's artists through events like the GMA Dove Awards, GMA Easter Celebration, and GMA Christmas Celebration, which reach millions of people around the world annually. For more information about the Gospel Music Association, visit www.gospelmusic.org.

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Two new Tennessee museums on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail: The Museum of Christian & Gospel Music and Jefferson Street Sound Museum. Photo ID (L to R): Steve Gilreath, Jackie Patillo, and Lorenzo Washington and Karen Coffee of Jefferson Street Sound Museum

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