



FRIENDS of  
HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH

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# The Herald

Spring 2016



## A REDISCOVERED SHAW COMMISSION FOR SECOND PRESBYTERIAN *by William Tyre*

Architect Howard Van Doren Shaw (1869-1926) had a life-long connection with Second Presbyterian Church, including decades of service as a trustee. His masterful redesign of the sanctuary following the devastating fire of 1900 is widely regarded as one of his masterpieces, and is the only one of his projects to be awarded National Historic Landmark status. Recent research has revealed that the 1900 commission was not the first time Shaw was hired by the church. In this article, we will explore the first project he undertook three years earlier, a stunning design that still stands, but had been totally forgotten through the years.

### JOHN CRERAR

In 1889, Chicago industrialist John Crerar died childless and unmarried, leaving his vast estate to a broad range of charitable institutions across the city. (The Ascension window was given in his memory by his long-time friends, the Blackstones). Bequests included a \$100,000 endowment to Second Presbyterian Church and a second endowment of \$100,000, the income of which was to be used to support mission Sunday schools. For several years, this mission endowment was used to support the church's existing Sunday schools.

In 1897, however, the Trustees voted to establish a new mission Sunday school in the Washington Park neighborhood, an area that had been annexed to Chicago in 1889 and had experienced rapid growth since the World's Columbian Exposition, held nearby in 1893. The Trustees purchased land at 5831 S. Indiana Avenue, and provided Howard Van Doren Shaw with a budget of \$3,500 to design and oversee construction of the new Crerar Sunday School chapel.

### CRERAR SUNDAY SCHOOL CHAPEL

The design for the chapel shows Shaw's early mastery at interpreting buildings from the English Arts & Crafts movement for which he became so well known. The chief design element of the façade is a pair of front-facing gables, a detail he used in a number of

buildings throughout his career, including his summer estate, Ragdale, constructed the same year as the chapel. The base of the building is faced up to a height of about six feet with brick, enlivened with blackened headers at irregular intervals and supported by shallow buttresses. The upper portion of the walls is covered in smooth white stucco, the brickwork extending up from the base to form a simple band around the windows. Diminutive rafter ends set at regular intervals are set beneath very shallow eaves.

The overall composition of the façade expresses balanced asymmetry. The left gable contains the main chapel window, a curiously placed chimney placed directly overhead. The right gable holds the projecting entryway, set beneath a smaller window, the top of which aligns exactly with the larger window to the left.



The entryway is constructed almost entirely of wood, including a gently scalloped fascia board. Panels of brickwork in a herringbone pattern tie the entryway visually to the rest of the building. To the right of the double gables, the south end of the building is set beneath a broad roof sloping toward the street, with a band of three windows set beneath.

All of the windows are simple in design. The main window is divided into nine panels set within a grid of wood timbers that tie to the surrounding brick frame with slight horizontal extensions of the brickwork. The window comprises simple rectangular glass panes in blues, greens, and yellows, with "Norman accents" - small irregularly shaped pieces of glass that are made to look like repairs, but are original to the design. The window over the entryway is set with clear diamond panes, with a meandering fruit-laden branch continuing up through the sections.

Just two years after the chapel was completed, Shaw was hired to double the size of the building. The main chapel room was nearly doubled in length, the double gable motif carrying through to the back of the building, but in this case, covered in cedar shakes rather than stucco. The remaining part of the addition is a much more utilitarian design consisting of a one-story L-shaped wing faced in Chicago common brick wrapping the back of the building.

## CRERAR MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Sunday school continued to prosper, and in 1908 it was organized as an independent church – named Crerar Memorial Presbyterian Church. Land was purchased at 5700 S. Prairie Avenue, less than two blocks from the chapel. Not surprisingly, Howard Van Doren Shaw was hired as architect once again, and this time was provided with a budget of \$40,000 to design a much more substantial building.

The design is simplified Gothic Revival, with clean lines and minimal ornamentation. Decorative carved stone panels set around the main front window feature designs such as the Tudor rose, which are very similar to designs Shaw used in the Second Presbyterian sanctuary. The brick walls are enlivened with interesting brickwork, including several windows that feature headers and soldiers (the short and long sides of bricks set vertically) set beneath shallow blind arches.

## LATER HISTORY

After Crerar Memorial Church was completed, the chapel was sold to St. Edmund's Episcopal Church (which added the cross to the front of the chimney). In 1948, it was purchased by St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, the first African American Lutheran Church in the state of Illinois. Since 1958, it has been home to St. Augustine's African Orthodox Cathedral.

Crerar Memorial left their building in 1928 at which time it was sold to Church of the Good Shepherd Congregational, which

still occupies the structure. Crerar Memorial is now located at 8100 S. Calumet Avenue.

## SHAW'S OTHER CHURCHES

Shaw designed a number of additional churches in the years following his commissions for Second Presbyterian. Chief among these are the Sunday school wing, parish house, manse, and cloister for Fourth Presbyterian, in collaboration with his friend Ralph Adams Cram, who designed the main church building. Other churches include the First Presbyterian Church in Forsyth, Montana (a much simplified version of Fourth), the University Church of the Disciples of Christ in Hyde Park, and the Lake Forest Methodist Episcopal Church (now Church of the Covenants).

## SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 22 FRIENDS HISTORY EVENT

Mark your calendar for our annual event, "Friends Celebrates Chicago History." Diane Dillon, Director of Undergraduate Programs at the Newberry Library will lecture on the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. The lecture will be held at 6:00pm, with a reception and tours of the church beginning at 5:30pm, and then again following the lecture.

*Friends of Historic Second Church is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. All donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

## WALL SCONCES RESTORED

On Wednesday March 23rd, the four leaded-glass wall sconces were reinstalled on the east wall of the balcony after extensive restoration work by Peter Janko of Lumenelle. Work involved gently flattening the glass panels, which had deflected badly over time, and then adding vertical support rods to the back side to prevent future deflection. All of the brass surfaces were thoroughly cleaned, and due to extensive pitting, the brass was sealed with a tinted lacquer to both conceal the pitting and approximate the warm patina the brass would have achieved over time. The sconces were also fully rewired and new LED bulbs, replicating the look of the historic carbon-filament bulbs, were installed. Our thanks to Friends members for their generous donations which made this latest restoration project possible. Be sure to check out the restored fixtures next time you visit the church!



### ***Friends of Historic Second Church***

#### ***gratefully acknowledges \$100-\$499***

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September 21, 2015 -  
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## EXTERIOR WORK UNDER WAY

On March 7th, crews began erecting scaffolding around the bell tower, signaling the beginning of extensive work on the masonry and windows. The project, anticipated to take about three months, will involve the repair and replacement of numerous pieces of three types of stone including a Joliet limestone (the original was quarried on the north side of Chicago), an Indiana limestone, and sandstone. Selected pieces will be replaced in their entirety, others will have "Dutchman repairs" when only a small section is in need of repair, and some will involve retooling to match the existing architectural detailing. Work to the windows will include extensive epoxy repairs to the original 1874 wood tracery openings, and replication of the original sashes, as well as repainting in the historic colors. The work is being done by Bulley and Andrews Masonry Restoration and Jensen Window, under the supervisor of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.



## FRIENDS 2016 EVENING LECTURE SERIES BEGINS IN APRIL

Join Friends for the first lecture of the year on April 14. Jeffrey Nigro, lecturer, art historian, and educator, will present on Frederic Clay Bartlett, the artist who painted the murals in Second Presbyterian Church, and Helen Birch Bartlett, his wife, and their contributions to Chicago's art community. Mr. Nigro will discuss the Bartletts as collectors, how the artwork they acquired became part of the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, and what the individual works illustrate about the Bartletts' tastes and interests.

On September 8, architectural historian Kathleen Cummings will lecture about Louis Comfort Tiffany's work in Chicago during the 1890s.

All lectures are \$10, are held at Second Presbyterian Church, and begin at 7:00pm, preceded by a reception with light refreshments and free tours at 6:00pm.



Vincent Van Gogh  
Dutch, 1853-1890  
The Bedroom, 1889  
Oil on canvas, 73.6 x 92.3 cm (29 x 36 5/8 in.)  
The Art Institute of Chicago Helen Birch  
Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.417

## SAVE THE DATE: AUGUST 6 LAKE FOREST WALKING TOUR

Friends will lead a walking tour of Shaw's historic architecture in Lake Forest on August 6. Mark your calendar and plan to join us for a tour of the historic North Shore suburb.

## Second Presbyterian Public Tour Schedule:

Wednesdays  
1:00-3:00pm

Saturdays  
1:00-3:00pm

Sundays (after worship service)  
12:15pm



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## Mission Statement

*The mission of Friends of Historic Second Church is to preserve and restore the art and architecture of Chicago's Landmark Second Presbyterian Church, educate a worldwide audience about its historical and cultural significance, and share those resources with the community.*

### JOIN FRIENDS NOW

2016 promises to be an exciting year for Friends of Historic Second Church, dedicated to preserving Second Presbyterian Church, a National Historic Landmark. Join Friends now and you will partner in the restoration work planned for this year: the repair and cleaning of a Bartlett mural and the repair and painting of the plaster surrounding this beautiful pre-Raphaelite artwork. Join now and participate in our first-rate 2016 lecture series and walking tours. Join now and receive our newsletter, "The Herald," with interesting research on the art and architecture of the church and the Arts and Crafts movement. Friends' preservation work is made possible by people like you: our members and supporters. Complete the membership form included in this newsletter or look for our membership mailing in your mailbox in April.

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

All members receive the newsletter *The Herald* and are recognized as donors in the newsletter.

**Tiffany Circle:** \$40 Individual; \$55 Family; \$25 Student/Senior (62 yrs.+)

*Benefits include:* Free tours during regular tour hours, 25% discount on Friends' merchandise.

**Arts & Crafts Circle:** \$100 and above

*Benefits include:* Free tours during regular tour hours, 25% discount on Friends' merchandise, and invitations to special members-only tours and programs.

I/we wish to become a member of Friends of Historic Second Church or renew a current membership.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for membership at the following level:

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\_\_\_\_ **Art & Crafts Circle:** \$100 and above

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No You may acknowledge my contribution in Friends' publications.

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No I prefer to receive my newsletter by e-mail.

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No I am interested in volunteering for Friends' activities.

If you wish to discuss sponsoring a restoration project, contact Friends of Historic Second Church at 1-800-657-0687.

Please return completed form with check made payable to:

Friends of Historic Second Church 1936 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60616.

Or renew online at [www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org](http://www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org).



**FRIENDS of**  
**HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH**

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**THE “POWER OF TEN”**

2016 marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of Friends of Historic Second Church and we invite our readers to help us celebrate. Since the first meeting of Friends in March 2006, ten years’ of progress has been made toward the goal of preserving and restoring Chicago’s landmark Second Presbyterian Church.

While more than ten restoration projects have been completed, here are ten highlights:

1. Restoration and reinstallation of an original Renwick bell tower window;
2. Analysis of cleaning techniques, partial cleaning and conservation of a north balcony Bartlett mural;
3. Cleaning and conservation of a complete south balcony Bartlett mural;
4. Refinishing of original Renwick old-growth walnut front doors;
5. Globe light fixtures restored;
6. New protective Lexan for both Burne-Jones windows;
7. Sanctuary northwest corner plaster repaired and painted in original Shaw colors;
8. Four exterior doors repaired and painted in original color;
9. Original John A. Colby & Sons narthex chair repaired;
10. Four balcony leaded glass wall sconces repaired and cleaned.

Important studies have been conducted, original research has uncovered fascinating new facts about the art and artists of the church, and the tour program has welcomed 20,368 guests from forty-three countries worldwide. We sit poised to undertake several large and important restoration projects during 2016 and 2017.

These past accomplishments and the ongoing progress toward restoring Second Presbyterian to its 1901 glory are all possible because you, our readers and friends, have given generously to Friends. For our tenth anniversary, we ask that you consider a gift to “The Power of Ten” by making a donation in a multiple of ten: \$1 X 10 for \$10; \$10 x 10 for \$100; \$25 x 10 for \$250; \$100 x 10 for \$1,000. Thank you for moving Friends forward into the next ten years.