



Friends of Historic Second Church

THE HERALD



VOLUME III, NUMBER 1 WINTER/SPRING 2009

“ANGEL IN THE LILIES” WINDOW

The “Angel in the Lilies” window holds the unique distinction of being the only window in the sanctuary to have survived the devastating fire of March 1900. At the time of the fire, the window was installed in the fifth bay from the chancel on the south wall. The sky portion was extensively damaged and replaced when the window was moved to its current location in the fourth bay from the chancel on the north wall in 1901. Fortunately, the angel figure and field of lilies survived intact. To this day, heat cracks are visible in the figure of the angel, the most tangible reminder of the fire. The donor of the window is unknown, as there is no memorial inscription.

The history of this particular window has been the subject of much speculation through the years. What is known is that the design was exhibited during the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition by the Tiffany Glass & Decorating Company, within the pavilion of Tiffany & Company (the jewelry firm started by Louis Comfort Tiffany’s father). The window was part of a large chapel created by Tiffany to showcase the firm’s ability to produce high-quality ecclesiastical goods ranging from vestments to furnishings, and mosaics to leaded-glass windows. The 800-square-foot Byzantine style chapel was said to have so moved visitors that men instantly removed their hats upon entering. The chapel won numerous awards at the fair, and helped establish the firm’s reputation worldwide.



Photo courtesy Martin Cheung.

Church legend has long suggested that the window in the sanctuary is in fact the actual window from the Exposition, but this is probably not true. The design was very popular, due to its viewing by millions of visitors to the Fair, and its illustration in numerous printed sources of the day. As such, the design can be seen in a number of churches around the country. The history of the chapel itself would also indicate that the window could not be the actual window that was displayed by Tiffany. After the close of the Exposition in October 1893, the chapel

was dismantled and removed from the fair grounds. In 1898, the entire chapel was purchased by Celia Whipple Wallace, a wealthy widow who gave it to The Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, then under construction in New York City. Although not installed in its entirety due to space constraints, presumably the chapel was sold intact. After many years of neglect, the chapel was restored and reinstalled in the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art in Winter Park, Florida, where it can be seen today.

Regardless of whether or not this window is in fact the window from the Tiffany display at the Exposition, it is an important window both in the development of Tiffany’s reputation, and in the history of the church as the only sanctuary window that survived the 1900 fire.

TOUR SCHEDULE JANUARY THROUGH MAY

PUBLIC TOURS OF SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARE GIVEN AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES:

FIRST AND THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH AT 11:00 A.M. AND 12:00 NOON. COST \$5.00.

EVERY SUNDAY AFTER CHURCH AT 12:15 P.M. FREE.

EVERY WEDNESDAY FROM 2:00 – 4:00 P.M. FREE

BARTLETT MURAL RESTORATION

Friends is excited to announce that a large portion of one of Frederic Clay Bartlett's arch murals was restored in December 2008 in a project funded by a grant from the Terra Foundation on behalf of Norm Bobins. The cleaning and restoration was undertaken by the Chicago Conservation Center, under the skilled hand of lead mural conservator Dr. Margaret Nowosielska, assisted by Dorota Bobek.

Over the course of 100 hours, approximately 75 percent of the west half of the mural, located in the fourth arch bay from the chancel on the north nave wall, was painstakingly cleaned, exposing Bartlett's color



palette and charming detailing that have not been visible for several decades. The restoration process involved three steps, proceeding from

gentlest to most aggressive. The first process was a dry eraser cleaning to rid the surface of dry dirt. The second process involved the use of a mild detergent carefully applied with cotton swabs. Next, a stronger solvent was used due to the level of dirt; however, this could not be used on areas of red, blue or green. Any previous restoration was also removed at this point. After cleaning, a matte finish varnish was applied and then retouching was completed.

The top section of the mural containing the figures is painted canvas which would have been created off-site and then glued to the wall. The bottom section is done in what is called fresco secco, paint applied to dry plaster.

The theme of the mural is "abundance." Winged maidens bear the fruits of the earth; in the background bunches of grapes hang from the tree of life and form a decorative background. Below, against a conventionalized grapevine is painted, "*Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*" (Proverbs 3:9-10, King James Version)

In addition to the beauty revealed, this restoration work also provides Friends with a blueprint for future mural restoration efforts. To our relief, the work revealed a solid structure for this mural. No underlying plaster work was needed. With the process to clean and conserve the murals now revealed, it is possible to accurately predict the cost of mural preservation and to begin to plan for further restoration.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2008

As Friends begins a new year, we reflect on a few of the highlights of 2008.

- Increased revenue by 58 percent over 2007
- Hosted 57% more tour guests than 2007
- Increased trained docents by 26 percent
- Restored the bell tower window
- Completed conservation analysis of Bartlett arch mural
- Partially restored one arch mural
- Assisted with church boiler campaign
- Conducted regular cleaning days
- Saw membership increase to 86

Here is an easy way you can help. If you have not already done so, please join in the work Friends is doing by completing the enclosed form to become a member of Friends of Historic Second Church. With your help and support, we look forward to an exciting and successful 2009.

BECKER SPEAKS ON PRESERVING CHICAGO MURALS

On Saturday December 6, Heather Becker, CEO of the Chicago Conservation Center, spoke at our final tea and lecture for 2008. This interesting program traced the development of the Center, now one of the largest in the country, as well as the history of the mural movement in the United States. Historic murals tend to fall into one of three periods: the Progressive era beginning in the 1890s which was heavily influenced by European precedent; the Mexican mural movement of the 1920s; and finally the New Deal era of the 1930s and early 1940s. Chicago is fortunate to possess a huge inventory of murals covering all periods, including more than 400 murals in Chicago Public Schools which were restored by the Center as part of the largest mural preservation project in U.S. history. The Center has also restored 52 murals in Chicago Park District field houses. Following the lecture, Becker led attendees up to the balcony where she talked in detail about the recent restoration of the Bartlett arch mural. (See preceding article for information about this important project.)

CHURCH BOILER CAMPAIGN WARMLY RECEIVED

It is inspiring to see grimy murals come back to life with professional cleaning and restoration. At the same time, practical improvements to the church's infrastructure also call out for attention. In 2008, Second Presbyterian Church undertook a capital campaign to replace two aging inefficient boilers. Friends of Historic Second Church is proud to have made a \$6,000 contribution to this campaign. The new boilers were installed in the fall before the worst of winter's blasts hit Chicago and the church is now warm and comfortable. Clean and consistent heating of the church is also kinder to the building and its art treasures than extreme changes in temperature. Adding to the temperature improvements are five new windows installed in the west wall of the church gymnasium that replaced leaky inefficient Plexiglass ones. Congratulations to Second Presbyterian Church for these major improvements.

HISTORIC TIES TO CHURCH EXPLORED

A Wednesday afternoon visitor to the church was happy to find informed docents and hosts available to give him a thorough tour. Raymond G. Hardenbergh Seitz wanted to see where his grandparents Helen Stewart Johnson and First Lieutenant Raymond W. Hardenburgh were wed. Before stopping in, he hadn't realized his grandparents were married in such a gloriously beautiful and historically significant church. Follow-up research by Board member William Tyre revealed several newspaper articles written about the society wedding that took place the evening of May 16, 1903. The wedding was followed by a reception held at the home of Miss Johnson's aunt Mrs. George M. Pullman at 1729 S. Prairie Avenue. Family ties to the church run deep as Miss Johnson's mother's family was closely identified with the church since its beginnings when prayer meetings were held in her grandfather's house which stood at State and Washington streets.

SEND US YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

As the circle of Friends' supporters grows, we plan to deliver more of our communication via email. We will be providing email notices of upcoming events, as well as sending email newsletters. Please send your name and email address to historic2ndchurch@yahoo.com; we will gladly add you to the growing list.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING MEMBERSHIPS AND GIFTS RECEIVED FROM SEPTEMBER 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2008:

\$2,500 - \$4,999:
West Charitable Foundation

\$1,000 - \$2,499:
Raymond G. H. Seitz
Howard & Jane Tiffen

\$500 - \$999
Mr. & Mrs. John Berry

\$250 - \$499
Kathleen A. Carpenter
Robert Schrade

\$100 - \$249
E. Carol Beck
Trish Cassidy & Andrew Wycislak
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Edith Sebelik-Kozakiewicz
Nancy Lischer
Alister MacDonald
Ron & Beverly Offen
Hilda Robinson
Jane Tuma
Bonnie Bartlit Vickrey

NPS RUSTIC: THE ARTS & CRAFTS STYLE IN NATIONAL PARKS, PRESENTED BY ROBERT BLYTHE

When: April 25, 2009; tea at 1:00 pm; lecture at 1:30 pm

Where: Second Presbyterian Church (use Cullerton Street entrance)

Cost: \$5.00 per person

Come and join us for our first tea and lecture of 2009. Enjoy hot tea and scones in Fellowship Hall, and then hear a wonderful program on a little-known aspect of the Arts & Crafts Movement.

In its early decades, the National Park Service embraced the principles of the Arts & Crafts Movement for many of the agency's lodges, museums and other buildings. The Service sought to use natural materials, notably wood and stone, and locate buildings to harmonize with their natural surroundings. This approach, sometimes called the NPS Rustic Style, resulted in well-known treasures like the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park as well as thousands of smaller structures like trail shelters and entrance signs.

Robert Blythe received his Master's in the History of Architecture from the University of Illinois, Chicago. He had a 14-year career with the National Park Service, retiring as Chief of History for the Service's Southeast Region in 2006. Bob is the author of numerous history studies published by the Park Service. At present, he is an independent historian and a docent at historic Second Presbyterian Church.

FRIENDS THANKS
THE FOLLOWING
INDIVIDUALS FOR
THEIR IN-KIND
CONTRIBUTIONS TO
THE ORGANIZATION,
FALL 2008:

Heather Becker
Gini Kondziolka
Heather Plaza-Manning
Anne Sullivan
Mel Theobald

MISSION STATEMENT

*THE MISSION OF FRIENDS OF
HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH IS
TO PRESERVE AND RESTORE
THE INTERNATIONALLY
RECOGNIZED ART AND
ARCHITECTURE OF CHICAGO'S
LANDMARK SECOND
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND
TO EDUCATE A WORLDWIDE
AUDIENCE ABOUT ITS
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL
SIGNIFICANCE.*



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