ACT Turns 45

When Adults and Children in Trust (ACT) started, 45 years ago, the guiding philosophy was “We learn best that which we enjoy doing,” or as one staff member put it, “Freedom without chaos.” This is still the core of ACT. The summer camps play sports, experiment in arts and crafts, and visit out-of-town spots. They go camping at Stokes State Forest, exploring the world of plants, insects, squirrels and birds in its nature garden center. Thunder and Sunshine.

Yet there have been welcome changes in the last few years.

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Ethan and Lori Kent, ACT parents

ACT has a new PlayStation gym, open for six hours a day all winter at a cost to families of $6 per day. It’s something that makes a big difference to urban parents who would otherwise have nowhere to take their kids for exercise and fun during inclement weather. There is a new class, Minnows, for 9- to 18-month-olds, and their parents, a development initiated by both parents and staff members. The Minnows join the Guppy, Caterpillar and Butterfly league. The Mommy and Me toddler classes have had record-breaking enrollment this year, and the pre-kindergarten classes are holding steady, in spite of the fact that, starting in 2015, city public schools offer free pre-kindergarten. Considering the effect of school costs on family budgets, this is a solid thumbs-up from satisfied parents. Recent praise includes this from Ethan and Lori Kent: “Month after month, we watched [our daughter] thrive emotionally, socially, and intellectually. She was challenged at her level and encouraged to go beyond. Her passions grew, as did her confidence.”

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Mr. Torres emphasized how important parents have always been in the development of ACT—offering ideas, volunteering, acting as ambassadors to their kids’ schools or to neighborhood parents programs, like Morningside Heights/Harlem’s Mocha Moms. “It’s wonderful to see our staff work so closely with parents to form long-lasting relationships.” He went on to talk about how many children grow up to send their own children to ACT (or come to work as staff members), further cementing the family feeling of the program. In fact, this summer, an ’80s ACT alumna, actor/musician/mom Esther Crow (Silverstein), is bringing her band, Thunder and Sunshine, to play ’70s funk rock for the kids.

To commemorate the opening of ACT in 1971, the theme during the first week of July will be “How I Love my Hippie Life,” celebrating the earth awareness, playfulness and spontaneity reminiscent of the best of that gone-but-never-forgotten era. Body painting, flower art, gardening, a Block Party and a Disco Party are just a few of the ways Generation Z will get their groove on. Many people lament that childhood today doesn’t have the freedom and magic that they remember from their own years growing up in the ’60s, ’70s or ’80s. At ACT, this has never been an issue. Creativity and free spirits are nurtured without sacrificing safety or risking boredom. Arts, crafts, drama, dancing, tumbling, sports, and the great outdoors make for spectacular summers.

There will also be a lot of medieval-themed activities: a “Carnival in the Olde Square” on July 21 and 22, featuring jugglers, puppet shows, game booths and more. In August, sculpture classes will be making gargoyles and jousting shields, a comic book class will be guided by medieval illumination, and special courses, in partnership with Public Education and Visitor Services (PEVS), include “A Knight’s Tale,” a drama that takes children on a quest for the Holy Grail, both on campus and at Stokes State Park. Other new courses this summer include Claymation, Sports League Tournaments, Video Production and Mosaic Tiles Design.

The recent exhibition The Value of Food, October 2015–March 2016, was a natural fit for ACT. The kids have learned lessons
Celebrating America: Stained Glass

With the Fourth of July approaching, it’s appropriate to remember the many ways in which the Cathedral celebrates American life and history. This is a huge subject, of course; programming, liturgy, music, and the American Poets Corner are, in whole or in part, celebrations of American culture. But since the stained glass of the Cathedral continues a tradition much older than the United States—and since, in this election year, our thoughts are more than usual on the future of “the home of the free”—we thought it would be interesting to take a look at the specifically American images in the windows.

The desire for religious freedom was a major force in the European settlement of North America. The Anglican History Bay shows the beginnings of what became the Episcopal Church. The major medallions of the right lancet depict two New World sites where church services were held—Dakies Bay, California, and Jamestown, Virginia. Take a moment to imagine America as it was then: great forests full of game, no cities or automobiles, skies cleaner than you have ever known them.

In the American History Bay, the medallions in the arcade level contain images of the Declaration of Independence (1776), the inauguration of George Washington (1789), and Thomas Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase (1803). They also depict the Battle of Lake Erie (War of 1812), Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (1863), the return of soldiers from the Spanish American War (1898), and the signing of the armistice after World War I (1918). The four corners at the base of the two lancets offer portraits of Henry Hudson, explorer; Betsy Ross, credited with sewing the first American flag; Francis Scott Key, who wrote the “Star Spangled Banner”; and the sinking of the Titanic (1912). The ubiquity of war is no reason to stop fighting for peace; and the inevitability of disaster reminds us to beware nature’s surprises and human error.

Four windows in the North Transept celebrate American achievements in science: the Louisiana Purchase (1803). They also depict the signing of the armistice after World War I (1918). The four corners at the base of the two lancets offer portraits of Henry Hudson, explorer; Betsy Ross, credited with sewing the first American flag; Francis Scott Key, who wrote the “Star Spangled Banner”; and the sinking of the Titanic (1912). The ubiquity of war is no reason to stop fighting for peace; and the inevitability of disaster reminds us to beware nature’s surprises and human error.

Looking Ahead

Other American images in the Bay windows include the Constitution in the Law Bay; Native American cultivating corn in the Labor Bay; Samuel Morse sending his first telegraph in the Communications Bay; and American military history in the Armed Forces Bay, including George Washington at Valley Forge at Christmas time, and U.S. Civil War generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. The Motherhood Window depicts George Washington and Abraham Lincoln kneeling in front of their mothers.

Summer is here again, bringing the scent of roses, peonies and herbs; children’s laughter and the humming of bees; and staff news of weeks and weekends at the beach, the mountains, and other near and far-flung places.

Summer is especially important for Cathedral staff to prepare the many programs that take place between September and May. Hard-working teams in all the departments that make up this bustling Cathedral use these summer months to prep and refocus, working on new ways to bring our plethora of programs; the art exhibitions; and much more to the many and varied audiences who will fill this immense space come autumn. Visitors may see the first iterations of new signage, as Public Education & Visitor Services roll out new ways of connecting with Cathedral guests. Our dedicated Staff & Maintenance staff and the green thumbs of the Cathedral Gardens Conservancy will be refreshing and renewing the grounds, keeping our lawns, gardens, and buildings in top condition for next season’s slate of special programs.

The current season has its own joys; although long summer days see a lighter roster of events, our annual programs shine all the brighter. The annual Spirit of Pride Evensong begins the season on a musical note on June 5. This special choral evensong, featuring the works of LGBTQ composers, celebrates community and the Cathedral’s historic legacy in the LGBTQ rights movement. 

The following week (June 9–19), a Sing for Hope Piano Festival begins the season on a musical note on June 5. This special choral evensong, featuring the works of LGBTQ composers, celebrates community and the Cathedral’s historic legacy in the LGBTQ rights movement. This event, supported by the Brooklyn Community Foundation and a community of patrons, allows a broad cross-section of the community to perform their music in the Cathedral. Sing for Hope is a music program that brings professional musicians to New York’s iconic public spaces for all to play and enjoy. Once the pianos are in place, professional musicians may stop by and offer a song, leading to a musical note on June 5. This special choral evensong, featuring the works of LGBTQ composers, celebrates community and the Cathedral’s historic legacy in the LGBTQ rights movement. This event, supported by the Brooklyn Community Foundation and a community of patrons, allows a broad cross-section of the community to perform their music in the Cathedral. Sing for Hope is a music program that brings professional musicians to New York’s iconic public spaces for all to play and enjoy. Once the pianos are in place, professional musicians may stop by and offer a song, but the most fun comes from watching and listening as ordinary people, with or without training, sit down and pick out a tune. In previous years, the Cliffs piano has heightened the days of staff and clergy, brought strangers together, and given children a first opportunity to explore a professional instrument. The 21st annual Summer Solstice Concert is on June 18, featuring the Paul Winter Consort. For those willing to get up early for a rare experience, this is a magical event, with the first sunrise of the summer lighting Cathedral windows as sweet music bids the long days welcome. The concert will feature Eugene Iglieses, cellist; Paul McCandless, English horn and oboe; Jeff Holmes, piano; Ray Nagem, pipe organ; Paul Winter on soprano sax; and multiple percussionists. The concert is followed by a tea and coffee reception, to which all are invited.

Also on June 18, Cathedral Community Cares (CCC) offers its summer Resource Fair, sponsored by CCC in partnership with Brightpoint Health. Free health screenings for many conditions, including hypertension and diabetes, plus nutrition, health, and wellness information, will be available for all, as well as music and games.

June 29, singer, dancer and percussionist Alessandra Belloni and her company I Giulari Di Piazza return to the Cathedral, inviting you to celebrate the ancient night of the tarantula, featuring excerpts from the musical Tarantella: Spider Dance about the myth of the spider and ecstatic rites of Dionysus. Performers include Alessandra Belloni, lead vocals, ritual dance, tambourines, frame drums; Joe Deninnoz, electric and acoustic violin; Wilson Montiotti, electric and acoustic guitar; Susan Eberenz, flute, piccolo, recorders; Peter Abazia, drum set, percussion; Giuseppe de Falco, Neapolitan singer and dancers; Peter de Genonimo in the role of Dionysus, Francesca Silvano in the role of the tarantata, and Greta Campo Amara in the role of Aracne Stilt dancer. For the first time this performance enlivens the authentic trance dance and healing ceremony as it was done for many centuries in Apulia for the feast of St. Paul.

The ACT 45th Anniversary (see article) will enliven Cathedral life all this summer, campers laughing, playing, competing and learning on the Close and indoors (when they aren’t roughing it in the mountains with Jose V. Torres, Executive Director, ACT). Like the peacocks, the hawks, the bees and the summer flowers, ACT kids remind us of the pleasures of the earth’s fecund season.
The Cathedral Invites You to Take a Pause to Consider Climate Change

“Instead of the old mentality of “getting bigger,” there is another way and it is working for millions more farmers every year. It is called agroecology and it combines the best of the new agricultural science with traditional farming methods. It is not just an agricultural method but a way of life that respects the people, land, the water and the farm communities. It depends on community, people helping each other. …With very little resources these farmers are doing what industrial farming can never do, not only grow more food in the long run but improve the land, water and air and respect the local people and their communities.”

Bill Ayres, co-founder of WhyHunger, most recently spoke at the Cathedral on March 30, 2016 at the closing of Value of Food: Sustaining a Green Planet.

The excerpt above is taken from “Agroecology: Growing Food From the Grassroots Up,” originally published May 7, 2015.

ACT Turns 45 (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

on waste, and will continue to recycle snack containers into art projects. Gardening—always a part of the program—now means a little more. Campers grow radishes, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, peas and herbs (just to mention a few). This year, in honor of the medieval theme, time-tested herbal potions will be explored in the ACT Apothecary. Another summer addition will be a worm pit, a squashed-off area full of wigglies where kids can learn what phylum Annelida does for the soil and the food we eat—and presumably carefully transport individuals to the parts of their gardens that need their expert assistance.

ACT has sent out a fundraising appeal, hoping to raise $20,000 dollars. As of July 1, you are in a position to help, consider that $450 provides one with a week of life-changing experience at ACT summer camp. There are many children who want and need our program but can’t afford it. Although we have always offered financial aid, this year the demand far outweighs what we can offer. That child will form indelible memories of freedom, creativity, and camaraderie to sustain him or her throughout life. Friendship and other lasting friendships are made for life. And if you want to see ACT in action, put July 22, Camp Visiting Day, on your calendar. Families from the community are welcome to bring the kids and share in the fun on enormous blow-up water rides. To reserve your spot, please RSVP to act@stjohndivine.org by July 13th so we can reserve tickets for our games and rides.
OEWINING PROGRAMS, TOURS, WORKSHOPS

The Great Organ: Midday Monday
Cathedral organists provide a 30-minute break for mind, body and spirit at 1:00 pm with an entertaining and informative demonstration of the Cathedral’s unparalleled Great Organ.

The Great Organ: It’s Sunday
The Great Organ: It’s Sunday invites established and emerging organists from across the U.S. and around the world to take their turn at the Great Organ and present a free 5 pm concert.

PUBLIC EDUCATION & VISITOR SERVICES

Public Education & Visitor Services offers Cathedral Highlights, Vertical, and Spotlight Tours. All tours meet for registration at the Visitor Center inside the Cathedral entrance, at 121st Street and Amsterdam Avenue. Highlights Tours: $12 per person, $10 per student/senior. Vertical Tours: $20 per person, $18 per student/senior. Spotlight Tours: $15 per person, $12 per student/senior (except where noted).

Highlights Tours

Mondays, 11 am–Noon & 2–3 pm
Tuesdays–Saturdays, 11 am–Noon & 1 pm–2 pm
Select Sundays, 1 pm–2 pm
Explore the many highlights of the Cathedral’s history, architecture, and artwork, from the Great Bronze Doors to the seven Chapels of the Tongues. Learn about the Cathedral’s services, events, and programs that welcome and inspire visitors from around the world. $12 per person, $10 per student/senior. No prior reservation necessary. Meet at Visitor Center.

Vertical Tours

Wednesdays & Fridays, Noon–1 pm; Saturday, Noon–1 pm & 2–3 pm
On this adventurous, “behind-the-scenes” tour, climb more than 124 feet through spiral staircases to the top of the world’s largest Twitter and Instagram! Tours are available Tuesdays–Saturdays, 11 am–Noon & 1 pm–2 pm and Wednesdays and Fridays, Noon–1 pm. All participants must be at least 12 years of age and reservations are recommended. For reservations visit the Cathedral website or call (866) 811-4111. Bring a flashlight and bottle of water. Meet at Visitor Center.

Spotlight Tours

Select Saturdays and Sundays
Spotlight Tours are especially created by Cathedral Guides to give visitors a closer look at unique aspects of the Cathedral’s extraordinary architecture, art, and history. $15 per person, $12 per student/senior, unless otherwise noted. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. For reservations visit the Cathedral website or call (866) 811-4111. Meet at Visitor Center.

TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS

Unless otherwise noted events do not require tickets or reservations. Tickets for all performances other than free or “suggested contribution” events may be purchased directly from the Cathedral’s website, stjohndivine.org, or by calling (866) 811-4111. Your contributions make it possible for the Cathedral to offer the many programs listed below. Please fill out the enclosed envelope.

Please visit the Cathedral’s website, stjohndivine.org, or call the Visitor Center (212) 316-7540 for updates and additional event and tour information.

Don’t forget to become a fan of the Cathedral on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

SERVICE TIMES

Sunday Services

8 am Morning Prayer & Holy Eucharist
9 am Holy Eucharist
11 am Choral Eucharist
4 pm Choral Evensong
12:15 pm Holy Eucharist
5 pm Evening Prayer

Daily Services

Monday–Saturday
8 am Morning Prayer
8:30 am Holy Eucharist
(Tuesday & Thursday only)

TOURS AND CHILDREN’S WORKSHOP

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Medieval Birthday Parties

Saturday & Sundays, by availability
Celebrate your child’s birthday with a two-hour party in the Medieval Arts Workshop, where children sculpt gargoyles, weave, make brass rubbings, carve a block of limestone, and more!

For children ages 5 & up. Call the Public Education & Visitor Services Department at (212) 932-7347 for more information and reservations.

NIGHTWATCH

The Nightwatch series offers two exciting and innovative programs: Nightwatch Crossroads and Nightwatch Medieval, overnight adventures designed to bring people from throughout the world together in this great Cathedral. For more information visit stjohndivine.org or contact: (212) 316-7518 / nightwatch@stjohndivine.org.

ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN TRUST (A.C.T.)

To learn about the many nurturing year-round programs for young people offered by A.C.T., please call (212) 316-7630 or visit www.aactprograms.org.

Children’s Quest Fund

Help us to invite children from many countries, religions and economic levels under the shadow of the beloved Cathedral. While any amount will help, $1,000 enables a child from a low-income family to participate in a premiere summer camp experience. Please send donations to the Cathedral, designated “A.C.T.’s Children’s Quest Fund.”

Divine Saturday Celebrations

Celebrate good times with A.C.T.’s new and improved Divine Saturday Celebrations, with a variety of birthday activities for kids to enjoy! It’s a great time for parents and children alike. Speak to a party manager for details at (212) 316-7530.

CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY CARES (CCC)

All programs meet in the CCC office, the Sunday Soup Kitchen or the Cathedral A.C.T. gym unless otherwise specified. Please visit stjohndivine.org for more information on CCC programs.

Nutrition, Health and Clothing Center

The Center hosts monthly HIV testing (in partnership with Care for the Homeless), as well as blood pressure, heart health, diabetes, and other screenings throughout the course of the year. Please visit our website for upcoming screening dates. Contact: Lauren Phillips, Director, (212) 316-7581.

Clothing Closet

Gently used men’s, women’s, and children’s clothing can be donated to the CCC office Monday through Friday 10am-5pm. Tax receipts are available upon request. Contact: Lauren Phillips, Director, (212) 316-7581.

Sunday Soup Kitchen

Every Sunday in the A.C.T. gym.
Breakfast, 10 am; Lunch, 12:30 pm
Contact: Thomas Perry, Food Program Manager, (212) 316-7519 (Tues/Thurs or after 12 noon)

SNAP/Food Stamps Program

In partnership with the Human Resources Administration, The Food Bank for New York City, New York City Coalition Against Hunger, and Columbia University-ShoYTUdays Tuesdays and Wednesdays (by appointment only)
Pre-screening and, if eligible, help with online applications and recertification is available. Contact: Lauren Phillips, Director, (212) 316-7581.

NEW YORK CHORAL CONSORTIUM BIG SING

Monday, June 13, 7:30 pm
Join the New York Choral Consortium and the Cathedral for the annual Big Sing! All singers are invited to take part; no auditions or reservations are needed. Visit NYCC’s website for the full repertoire and more information.

21st Annual Summer Solstice Celebration

Saturday, June 18, 4:30 am
Join Cathedral Artist in Residence Paul Winter for an epic sunrise concert as musicians and audience share the experience of the journey from total darkness into the dawn of this longest day of the year. The full glory of sight and sound will come alive with the light of this first sunrise of the summer.

BRILLIANT WALLS OF LIGHT: SPOTLIGHT ON STAINED GLASS

Saturday, June 18, 10:30 am
Each window contains a unique style of stained glass drawn from the English, French, and German traditions. Explore the beautiful narrative and geometric windows by modern English and American artists and view the memorial to a stained glass artist. Ascend over 100 feet of spiral stairs for a closer look at windows dedicated to medical and communications achievements. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide John Simko.
The Cathedral spurred the growth of Morningside Heights into becoming one of Manhattan's most unique neighborhoods. Go back in time on an illustrated walking tour of the neighborhood with a vivid description of the Battle of Harlem Heights, fought in 1776. Conducted since 1990 by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek.

Gateway to the New Jerusalem: Spotlight on the Iconography of the West Front
Saturday, June 18, 2 pm
The Cathedral's western façade provokes much comment and curiosity as well as the occasional conspiracy theory. This stimulating one-hour tour decodes the thematic programs underlying its art and architecture. $12/person, $10/student or senior. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek.

Cathedral Community Cares Resource Fair
Saturday, June 18, 11 am
Cathedral Community Cares (CCC) offers its summer Resource Fair, sponsored by CCC in partnership with Brightpoint Health. Free health screenings for many conditions, including hypertension and diabetes, as well as nutrition, health, and wellness information, music and games, will be available for all.

Adults and Children in Trust Summer Camp: Session 1
Monday, June 27–Friday, July 29
Adults and Children in Trust's 45th day camp season! Programs are available for toddlers through teenagers. Come and explore the outdoor magic and fun offered under the shadow of the world's largest gothic Cathedral. For more information, visit actprograms.org.

Tarantata: Spider Dance
Wednesday, June 29, 8 pm
Dance, “a sensual and mystical show about the healing act,” shares with the great medieval cathedrals of Europe? How does it depart from that tradition? Join Senior Cathedral Guide Rafael Guastavino’s beautiful spiral staircase to incredible views view down the entire length of the world’s largest cathedral. Participants are responsible for carrying all belongings throughout the tour. Photography is welcome, though tripod use during the tour is prohibited. If you have concerns regarding claustrophobia, vertigo, or a medical condition, please call (212) 932-7347 before purchasing tickets. $25 per adult and $20 per senior/student.

Gateway to the New Jerusalem: Spotlight on the Iconography of the West Front
Saturday, July 9, 10:30 am and 1 pm
This extended vertical tour features “behind-the-scenes” climbs in both the eastern and western ends of St. John the Divine. In the east, descend into the unfinished crypt and then ascend Rafael Guastavino’s beautiful spiral staircase to incredible views high above the altar. The western climb presents an amazing view down the entire length of the world’s largest cathedral. Participants are responsible for carrying all belongings throughout the tour. Photography is welcome, though tripod use during the tour is prohibited. If you have concerns regarding claustrophobia, vertigo, or a medical condition, please call (212) 932-7347 before purchasing tickets. $25 per adult and $20 per senior/student.

Great Music in a Great Space
A Preview of Next Season's Highlights
Great Music in a Great Space is looking forward to an exciting sixth season under Kent Tritle. Highlights of the schedule so far include Rose of the Compass returning to the Cathedral to collaborate with the Cathedral Choir on October 25 in a program of Middle Eastern repertoire. About an earlier collaboration, the New York Times (May 6, 2013) wrote that Rose of the Compass “displayed impeccable sang and world music credentials.” On November 15, Great Music in a Great Space will present the U.S. premiere of Vigilia, by Einojuhani Rautavaara, Finland’s preeminent composer, known for his symphonic and choral music. This exquisite piece, devoted to St. John the Baptist, uses a unique harmonic language to convey its spiritual message, and stands with Rachmaninoff’s All-Night Vigil as one of the finest settings of the Orthodox service. In February, the Manhattan School of Music presents

An American Cathedral: Spotlight on American History
Saturday, July 2, 10:30 am
Celebrate Independence Day at the Cathedral! This tour considers the Cathedral as a nexus of medieval traditions and democratic values. Discover celebrated Americans who appear in the art in the Cathedral along with the traditional saints and apostles. The tour will discuss the Cathedral's history and architecture within the context of American history, beginning with a vivid description of the Battle of Harlem Heights, fought on and around the Cathedral’s site in 1776. Conducted since 1990 by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek.

The Cathedral in Context: Spotlight on Morningside Heights
Sunday, July 3, 1 pm
The Cathedral spurred the growth of Morningside Heights into becoming one of Manhattan’s most unique neighborhoods. Go back in time on an illustrated walking tour of the neighborhood and its historic architecture and institutions, and learn about its development into the “Acropolis of Manhattan.” The tour begins at the Cathedral and ends at Riverside Church. Led by Cathedral Guide Bill Schneberger. Must be 12 years of age or older. This tour requires extensive outdoor walking and use of stairs. Bottle of water recommended.

Within the Walls: Exploring Hidden Spaces
Saturday, July 9, 10:30 am and 1 pm
This extended vertical tour features “behind-the-scenes” climbs in both the eastern and western ends of St. John the Divine. In the east, descend into the unfinished crypt and then ascend Rafael Guastavino’s beautiful spiral staircase to incredible views view down the entire length of the world’s largest cathedral. Participants are responsible for carrying all belongings throughout the tour. Photography is welcome, though tripod use during the tour is prohibited. If you have concerns regarding claustrophobia, vertigo, or a medical condition, please call (212) 932-7347 before purchasing tickets. $25 per adult and $20 per senior/student.

Gateway to the New Jerusalem: Spotlight on the Iconography of the West Front
Saturday, July 16, 10:30 am
Please see details for June 18.

August

Medieval 2.0: Spotlight on Traditions Transformed
Saturday, August 6, 10:30 am
What does New York’s Cathedral of St. John the Divine share with the great medieval cathedrals of Europe? How does it depart from that tradition? Join Senior Cathedral Guide John Simko for a tour of architecture and stained glass that focuses on St. John’s unique blend of modern New York and medieval Europe.

Gateway to the New Jerusalem: Spotlight on the Iconography of the West Front
Saturday, August 6, 2 pm
Please see details for June 18.

The Cathedral in Context: Spotlight on Morningside Heights
Sunday, August 28, 1 pm
Please see details for July 3.

July

An American Cathedral: Spotlight on American History
Saturday, July 2, 10:30 am
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The Cathedral spurred the growth of Morningside Heights into becoming one of Manhattan’s most unique neighborhoods. Go back in time on an illustrated walking tour of the neighborhood and its historic architecture and institutions, and learn about its development into the “Acropolis of Manhattan.” The tour begins at the Cathedral and ends at Riverside Church. Led by Cathedral Guide Bill Schneberger. Must be 12 years of age or older. This tour requires extensive outdoor walking and use of stairs. Bottle of water recommended.
Looking Back

Spring brought its perennial showers and flowers and, at the Cathedral, an array of diverse events. On March 7, Working Theater presented To the Bone, by Lisa Ramirez, a close-up look into the lives of Central American food workers through the experience of five female characters, presented as part of The Value of Food.

On March 10, another Value of Food program, Soil and Sacrament: Fred Bahnson in Conversation, featured a fascinating dialogue about finding God in food, gardening and community agriculture. Theologian Fred Bahnson, author of Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith, was joined by Shamu Chadha, Director of the Adamah Fellowship, a three-month leadership training program for Jewish young adults that integrates organic farming, sustainable living, community building and contemplative spiritual practice, and The Reverend Canon Julia E. Whittworth, Canon for Liturgy & the Arts at the Cathedral. Public Education and Visitor Services offered Super Seeds Children’s Workshop on March 12, a chance for kids to create art from seed packs, decorate seed packets, and design a garden plant matching game.

On March 15, Great Choir: Bach, Vivaldi, and Schütz ended the Lenten season with three pieces from the Baroque: the moving Musikalische Eeuwen van Heinsz Schöntz; the Stabat Mater of Antonio Vivaldi; and J.S. Bach’s greatest cantatas, Christ lag in Todesbanden. The concert featured soloists Amy Justman and Michele Kennedy, sopranos; Katie Geissinger and Kirsten Sorlie, mezzo-sopranos; Michael Steenberger and Marc Day, tenors; and Malcolm J. Men Newman and Peter Stewart, baritones. Kent Tittle, Director of the Cathedral Music, conducted.

On Wednesday, March 16, Amir Vahab & Ensemble returned to the Cathedral with An Evening of Spiritual Music and Narrative in celebration of Nowruz, with melodies drawn from a number of Middle Eastern countries and traditions, intertwined with the poetry of Hafiz and Rumi. Nowruz, a New Year tradition celebrated for over 3,000 years, includes the setting of a symbolic table, known as the Haft Sin, a spiritual meal that touched on many of the themes being explored in The Value of Food.

On Thursday, March 17, Karena Gore, director of the Center for Earth Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, and Catherine Flowers, an activist from Lowndes County, Alabama, discussed how our waste impacts the planet: the intersection of morality, climate, environmental and social justice with special attention to the spiritual implications of this issue.

Holy Week brought its many unique services, including the Maundy Thursday liturgy of Danti Alighieri: A Reading, where poets, scholars, translators and friends read selected cantos in several languages to an audience of hundreds who stayed up very late to reflect on the joys and challenges this side of the grave. Raymond Nagem, Associate Diocesan, closed the evening just after midnight with a moving organ medallion. The following night, visitors came for Choral Lamentations, the drama of Good Friday, relived through music across centuries and traditions, featuring the diocesan Choral Group directed by Kent Tittle. On Saturday, the Great Vigil of Easter and Holy Eucharist began in total darkness as the congregation joined the clergy in illuminating the Cathedral by candlelight to observe the Paschal mystery—the passage from darkness into light, from death into life—toiled through scriptural readings and chanted psalms. Easter Day found the Cathedral bimming with joy, as the great hymns were sung with glorious brass accompaniment.

On April 7, the Cathedral under the baton of Kent Tittle welcomed back the Manhattan School of Music Choral Symphonics, the Manhattan School of Music Women’s Chorus, the Oratorio Society of New York and the Cathedral Choiristers for an adaptation of the February 2016 orchestral performance of “The Symphony of A Thousand.” Gustav Mahler’s Symphony No. 8. In the place of an orchestra, this performance featured the world premiere of a new organ transcription by David Briggs, who performed on the Great Organ. The choruses were joined by soloists Rachel Rosales, sopranos; Blynn Holdsworth, soprano, Janna McIntyre, soprano; Benjamin Butler, mezzo-soprano; Sara Murphy, mezzo-soprano; John Tintano, tenor; Tim Murray, baritone; and Adam Lau, bass.

On April 12 and 19, the Congregation of Saint Saviour offered a two-part adult education seminar on Christian mysticism. Students discussed assumptions about what we mean when we talk about “mysticism” and looked at some examples from authors who wrote about their own experiences, including Origen of Alexandria, the first Christian author to use the kind of language that is now familiar from the writings of Christian mystics, Thomas Merton; Howard Thurman; and Dorothy Soto. The course was led by Professor Celia Deutic, a Catholic nun and scholar who taught at Barnard College from 1985 to 2012, and is now a Research Scholar in Barnard’s Religion Department.

On April 13, Krista Tippett was Dean Kowalski’s guest for the Cathedral series, Enter the Conversation. Tippett, a Peabody Award-winning broadcaster and host of NPR’s On Being, discussed the evolution of her new book Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living. The book, a fiercely hopeful vision of human life for this century, has been lauded by Publishers Weekly as “… an incantatory trip into the paradoxical and profound.”

On April 19, Raymond Nagem, Associate Organist at the Cathedral, showcased organ music from Germany and France. The program included Johann Sebastian Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in D Major, BWV 532; Paul Hindemith’s Sonata III, Op. 70; and Dieterich Buxtehude’s Praeludium in G Minor, BuxWV 149; and Charlie-Marie-Widor’s Symphonie Gorgique, Op. 70.

April 30 brought the beloved annual Blessing of the Bicycles, a special ceremony, offered by Canon Whitworth, that celebrates the lives and journeys of the city’s intrepid bike riders, whose emissions-free, fitness-building transportation is ever more praise-worthy. After the blessing, a bike-less ceremony was brought forward during a moment of silence in remembrance of those who passed away in cycling accidents during the past year. The morning closed with a rousing ring of bicycle bells in celebration of the cycling season to come.

On May 10, Dean Kawalki welcomed professor Robert Thurman, world-renowned authority on religion and specifically Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, and author Susan Brink Morrow, for Enter the Conversation: The Dawning Mind of the Mind, an exploration of Morse’s radical new translation of one of the world’s earliest and most complex bodies of writing, the 4,000 year old Pyramidal Texts.

On May 23, the Spirit of the City Gala honored renowned actress, singer and Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle award winner Patti LuPone. Lin Manuel Miranda, a five-time Tony award winner for her portrayal of Evita Perón in Evita (1979) and one for her portrayal of Mama Rose in the 2007 revival of Gypsy: She is currently starring in the Showtime series Penny Dreadful.

On May 30, the annual Memorial Day Concert brought the glorious sounds of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra to the Cathedral—inside and outside—with a program that included a New Orleans funeral march with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, the drama of Good Friday as portrayed by the Student Choristers, and the poignant Sacred Song of Israel” from Elijah and Breshans’ Symphony No. 2. The great baritone Thomas Hampson took part in the evening, which was conducted by Alan Gilbert.

Cathedral Community Care wishes to acknowledge the generosity and support of all those who made the winter and spring seasons a success for CCC clients, particularly the Congregation, Columbia Community Service, and students from Florida Gulf Coast University.
Voices of the Cathedral

While the Cathedral certainly impresses with its soaring architecture, carvings, tapestries, grounds and artworks, the heart of any church is the people involved in it—the stories they share with one another and the stories they carry with them of the moments that shaped their lives. Early this year, the Cathedral joined forces with Bill Smith, oral historian, to put together a book of the voices involved in the Cathedral from its beginning until now.

There are, undoubtedly, more voices with something to say about the Cathedral than can be accommodated in one book. Many of the people we would like to speak to are no longer with us. And in the course of putting together words and pictures, some themes may be more fully explored than others. But the intention is to reveal what it is that defines the Cathedral; to sketch its role as a sacred space in Morningside Heights, New York City and the world through its liturgy, education, arts and activism; and to celebrate a venue that has hosted some of the most important conversations of the last century. Cathedral clergy and staff expect this project to inform their thinking as the course is set for the coming decades.

“A story is a way to say something that can’t be said any other way, and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is.”

Gifts from Cathedral friends and supporters allow the Cathedral to plan for the future. Please take the time to fill out the contribution envelope in the pages of the newsletter. Your generosity is needed and is always appreciated.

**Summer at the Cathedral 2016**

**Development: Spring Flowers**

The tradition of making floral donations to honor or remember someone at Easter and Christmas extends personal and family love to the wider Cathedral community. This Easter, the floral bouquets and abundant palms on the altar and decorating the Cathedral were especially glorious.

Spring is always welcomed happily on the Cathedral Close. Students from the Cathedral School and ACT frolicked in the playground and chased each other joyfully around the lawn as the brown grass of winter gave way to April's green.

Amid this energy, the Cathedral's three resident peacocks strutted calmly, admiring the spans of their new feathers that reach lengths of three and four feet. The peacocks' cries, the songs of sparrows, the star magnolia trees in full bloom, the yellow daffodils that replaced the early forsythia greeted visitors to the Cathedral, school children and their parents, staff and clergy.

The generous donations by many of our visitors and community members allow the Cathedral to maintain this pastoral landscape in Manhattan. We also benefit from the gifts in-kind of individuals who garden and labor on the grounds year-round.

**The West Staircase: Restored**

One of the great pleasures of the summer season will be walking up the newly cleaned and restored front steps of the Cathedral. Age, ice, and the feet (shoes, boots, sandals) of millions had taken a toll on the Grand Staircase until Cathedral Capital Projects Manager John MacKay decided something needed to be done. Bids were taken, The Laymen's Club raised $16,000 for the project, and after Holy Week, the steps were scrubbed, stones out of position were reset, and the risers and tread joints were cleaned and caulked. New steps were also added to the staircase to extend it around the north side to allow access to the cloister between the Cathedral and the new apartment building, the Enclave, whose lease payments will do much to sustain Cathedral finances, and whose residents are warmly invited to join our audiences, congregation, educational programs and organizations. The cleaning of the staircase is just one of many recent projects to keep the Cathedral buildings in good repair, protected from the weather, conserved for the future, and welcoming to all.

The Laymen's Club, founded in 1908, has been a continuing and significant source of support for the Cathedral. Through member contributions, legacy gifts, and targeted fundraising, the Club has come to the aid of the Cathedral on many projects, including repairing the Great Bronze Doors in 2014, contributing railings to the Great Choir in 2012, and creating the stunning Pilgrim's Pavement in the Nave in 1934. If you wish to know more about the Laymen's Club, please visit thelaymensclub.org.

We extend our gratitude to those who give their work and gifts so we may offer this to all to enjoy this summer and year-round. Visit the Cathedral's website to donate for the care of the Cathedral. A gift for general support will make this happen.

**In Memoriam**

John R. “Jack” Miller, 1946–April 25, 2016

Mr. Miller served as a member of the Cathedral’s Board of Trustees from 2002 to 2014.

**Stay in Touch**

We welcome your suggestions and thoughts on the newsletter. Please write us at editor@stjohndivine.org.