

Summer 2014 at the Cathedral

Open Doors

Doors have always been both physical and metaphorical constructs. Today, as well, many of our doors are virtual ones, as the Cathedral, like other cultural institutions, reaches out to people around the world through its website, music recordings and video. Yet to stand in this space, sunlight filtering through the stained glass windows, to get close to the massive phoenixes that are visiting this year (and have turned the Cathedral into, among its many other august functions, a fantastic aviary), to come through real doors into living history is an experience that must be felt in the body. Doors are so redolent of passage, welcome and sanctuary that it is not surprising any grand architectural project pays attention to those mediators of entrance.

The Cathedral's Great Bronze Doors are one of its finest treasures: imposing, magnificent, durable, packed with story. Immense effort—in this country and abroad—went into their design and construction. They were cast in the Paris foundry Barbedienne, which also cast the Statue of Liberty. Conserving them for future generations requires further effort, and is a responsibility the Cathedral bears gladly. When the Cathedral discussed having two of the doors repaired, The Laymen's Club, an organization devoted to the maintenance of the Cathedral for over a hundred years, one that has come through with needed support over and over again, responded promptly with a generous gift of \$35,000 so that the doors could open for Easter. The Laymen's Club is responsible for the Cathedral's stunning Pilgrim's Pavement—three aisles of bronze floor medallions depicting key pilgrimage sites, important dates in Anglican history and the miracles performed by Jesus. Over the decades, The Laymen's Club has raised funds, given tours and lectures and printed books (most recently *Strangers & Pilgrims: A Centennial History of The Laymen's Club of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine*, by Francis J. Sypher Jr., available at the Cathedral gift shop). The Cathedral is grateful for all the specific gifts of The Laymen's Club, and for its unwavering enthusiasm and support.

New Yorkers will be aware of the continuing restoration of St. Patrick's Cathedral on 5th Avenue. St. Patrick's nine bronze doors, which were also cast by the Paris foundry Barbedienne, have been fully cleaned and restored and were unveiled in

August 2013, to much acclaim. Bronze doors decorated with bas-reliefs of biblical scenes are found in many of the great churches and cathedrals of the world, from the 11th century Church of St. Michael in Hildesheim, Germany to the 15th century doors of the Florence Baptistery, crafted by Lorenzo Ghiberti and described by Michelangelo as "the doors of Paradise." Most of the medieval doors in European churches were made in Byzantium. The bronze door itself is a tradition that goes back to ancient Rome: the Pantheon in Rome, a temple to all the Roman gods, built by General Agrippa circa 125 AD, has bronze doors. Grace Cathedral in San Francisco has bronze doors that are replicas of the Ghiberti doors, copied while the originals were hidden during World War II.

The Cathedral's Bronze Doors, dedicated on February 2, 1936, were given in honor of Haley Fiske, CEO of Metropolitan Insurance Company and philanthropist, who contributed significantly to the Cathedral. They consist of four doors, each of which is 18 feet high and six feet wide, and weigh three tons. They required six years of international collaboration between the Cathedral architects Cram & Ferguson; Henry Wilson, an English sculptor; and the Barbedienne foundry. Mr. Wilson produced only four sets of bronze doors in his lifetime; this was the final set. He spent the last three years of his life designing and preparing models of the door's sixty bas-relief panels depicting intricate scenes from the Old Testament (north panels) and New Testament (south panels), including the Book of Revelation. On the inside panels there are images of birds, flowers and other natural forms.

The bronze doors are composed of finely wrought, highly ornamented, gold-plated bronze castings attached to strong steel frames. They were carefully engineered to "readily be moved by a slight pressure of the hand." Surrounded by the Portal of Paradise and opened only on special occasions, the Great Bronze Doors remind us of the power of ritual and solemnity, the long history of Christian art and sanctuary, and the enduring ties of story. And not least, their size is a testament to the power of congregation, to those great occasions when many come together in prayer, mourning, celebration or crucial conversation.

"Be an opener of doors
for such as come after thee."

*Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1892),
inducted into the American Poets Corner in 1987.*



Ruth Mueller-Maerki and Christopher Johnson, of The Laymen's Club, with Dean Kowalski. Photo by Isadora Wilkenfeld.

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American Poets Corner: Emily Dickinson



Photo: Cathedral Archives

A Something in a Summer's Day
no 122

A something in a summer's Day
As slow her flambeaux burn away
Which solemnizes me.

A something in a summer's noon—
A depth—an Azure—a perfume—
Transcending ecstasy.

And still within a summer's night
A something so transporting bright
I clap my hands to see—

Then veil my too inspecting face
Lets such a subtle—shimmering grace
Flutter too far for me—

The wizard fingers never rest—
The purple brook within the breast
Still chafes its narrow bed—
Still rears the East her amber Flag—
Guides still the sun along the Crag
His Caravan of Red—

So looking on—the night—the morn
Conclude the wonder gay—
And I meet, coming thro' the dew's
Another summer's Day!

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886), inducted into the American Poets Corner in 1984.

Emily Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, in the house where she lived her entire life. She rarely left home and visitors were few, mostly members of her intimate family and social circle, which together with her piercingly emotional poems has made this very reclusive poet an object of mystery and fascination. Her work was not published in her lifetime, although poems were shown to friends, other poets and critics, including Ralph Waldo Emerson. After her death, her family found 40 handbound volumes of nearly 1800 poems, most of which had never been seen by anyone but the writer. The first volume was published in 1890 and the last in 1955. In the early days, her punctuation was “cleaned up” by editors, but now her poems are generally read as she wrote them, with her signature dashes. Dickinson's reputation continued to grow throughout the 20th century. Today she is one of the most beloved and influential of American poets.

The Cathedral appreciates the generosity of the Drue Heinz Trust and Mrs. Edward T. Chase, whose support ensures that poetry continues to be an important part of arts at the Cathedral.

Quilts: Across the Centuries, Across the Continents



Photo by Robin Berson

Recent tragedies in garment factories around the world remind us that one of the deadliest fires in U.S. history—the Triangle Fire, which occurred in March, 1911, at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory, just east of Washington Square Park, killing 146 young women workers, most recent immigrants—still has lessons to teach us about what we value. The contribution of labor to the wealth and well-being of the nation could not be more obvious, yet the American worker and the global worker are often not treated with the respect they deserve, nor given the safe and comfortable working conditions human dignity demands and activists have fought for.

This summer, the Cathedral will exhibit two quilts made by Robin Berson for the Triangle Fire Coalition. One quilt memorializes the young women who died in the Triangle fire. A second quilt memorializes the 1,129 people who died in the 2013 Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh—the deadliest accidental structural failure in modern human history. The factory produced clothing for many well-known fashion brands; upon investigation, significant safety violations were found. Both quilts are representative of the Coalition's work supporting the creation of innovative participatory activities to build the muscles of active social engagement. The Cathedral is pleased to partner with this like-minded organization.

Textile Conservation Lab is Awarded NEH Grant

The Cathedral is pleased to announce that the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded a substantial grant to the Textile Conservation Laboratory for the upcoming exhibition of *The Barberini Tapestries: Woven Monuments of Baroque Rome*, under the directorship of the Lab's Marlene Eidleheit. The set of 12 exquisite 17th century tapestries is one of the Cathedral's greatest treasures, recently

restored to its full glory. As described in the Winter 2102/2013 Newsletter, the exhibition will open at the Cathedral and then travel. Italian Renaissance and Baroque tapestry scholar Dr. James G. Harper of the University of Oregon is collaborating with Ms. Eidleheit on the exhibition, an exploration of the art of tapestry-making and the life of 17th century Europe.

A Message from Susan Cannon



Photo by Sonam Zoksang

As you read this, I will begin retirement from being Coordinator of the Cathedral Dean's office. The story starts many years ago. In 1969, following work in retail sales and personnel, I entered a large national corporation that offered a wide range of experiences. Over the course of almost 11 years, I wrote insurance-related training materials; taught English as a Second Language; led workshops and trained trainers in supervisory communications and career development for women in management in regional offices country-wide; and assessed HMO operations and future development. Meanwhile I studied to become a New York State Licensed Massage Therapist and eventually headed out of the corporate world. I was among the first LMTs to volunteer in the early 1980s

when the NYC Marathon began to offer massage in the finish line's First Aid tents.

At that same time I began yearning to reconnect with a church community. Although raised in the Episcopal Church, I had become disheartened and stopped going to church when I started college. It would take almost 20 years to find my way home, and the particular route led straight to the Cathedral. The sermon series in 1981 with several of the newly freed American hostages released by Iran drew me Sunday after Sunday. Kathryn Koob spoke of being upheld by her faith through the long ordeal and of the great comfort she found in the Bible. I wished for a similar relationship and wondered if it was possible, given my wariness and skepticism. Although my connection with God felt strong, I needed to live it out with other people, and there were plenty of people at the Cathedral. One of them was Artist in Residence Paul Winter, whose work I had already loved for years. When I heard his soprano saxophone reach the highest vaults, I was assured that the Cathedral could be a spiritual haven. That assurance is reconfirmed whenever he and another resident artist, Judy Collins, offer their music in church.

The utterly amazing Violet Drakes recruited me to help her dust, polish and carefully tend the Cathedral's nooks and crannies on Saturday mornings. We always closed our work with prayer. Violet frequently carried peanut butter sandwiches to give to her bus driver or any hungry person. She illuminated for me a life lived in Christ. Then Rupert Rogers gently and graciously called on me to usher. I participated in The Laymen's Club,

The Cathedral Invites You to Take a Pause to Consider Climate Change

“The climate crisis portends drastic changes to our way of life. The last two decades of the 20th century were the hottest in 400 years...For this generation of Americans, climate change is our Space Race. It is our home-front mobilization during World War II and it is our response to the Great Depression.”

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Former Secretary of State Clinton has visited the Cathedral on several occasions

A Taste of Honey

Anyone who pays attention to the news has heard of the mysterious decline of honeybees over the last decade, what is now called “Colony Collapse Disorder.” Scientists suspect the culprit is a combination of factors including parasites, infection and insecticides. Because the honeybee is so vital to food production (the Department of Agriculture estimates that one of every three bites of food the average American takes depends on the labor of honeybees), this issue reaches beyond concerns over wildlife and ecosystems to the more immediate concern of our society: what's for dinner?

Bees have been blessing human life since our earliest beginnings. Honey is the original sweetener, and both an old and new medicine for ulcers, wounds and burns. The industry of bees, the sweetness of honey and the buzz that means warm days have arrived are staples of literature, including the Old and New Testaments. The Cathedral considered all of these things when beekeeping was first suggested by NYC Beekeeping. It was a natural fit for a cathedral concerned since its founding with issues of stewardship and sustainability—concerns that have increased greatly in recent decades—for the Biblical Garden with its tempting flowers and bushes, and for an institution

that devotes so much time and thought to educating the next generation. Many ACT and Cathedral School students have limited access to the country, but their teachers make excellent use of what the Close has to offer to teach them the processes of soil and water; the life cycles and interdependence of plants and insects; and the temperament of peacocks. Now they have direct access to the ancient society of the bees, who toil all summer to create what the Cathedral calls “Divine Honey.” The bees are happy in their uptown home and the honey is, as expected, delicious.

“The honey of heaven may
or may not come,
But that of earth both
comes and goes at once.”

*Wallace Stevens (1879–1955),
inducted into the American Poets Corner in 1989*



Photo by Karen Kedmey

Close Friends

The Cathedral is pleased to welcome many new staff members this season.

Nancy Bosler has joined the Finance Department as Director, Budget; and Susan Wilson as Controller. Nancy comes to the Cathedral from the Museum of the City of New York and a career in non-profit finance and administration. Susan was previously Controller at the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center.

In the Development Department, Priscilla Bayley is now Director of Individual Giving, and Ann O'Grady is Coordinator, Office of Philanthropy. Priscilla previously held senior positions at the 92nd Street Y, Natural Resources Defense Fund, Global Partnership for Afghanistan, and Coalition for the Homeless. Ann worked at TD Securities, Société Générale/SG Cowen and was Parish Manager for the Church of St. Francis Xavier Cabrini. The department also has a new Development Assistant, Christopher Wankel. Christopher worked for two years at the Harvard University Development Office, doing donor research and prospect profiles.

Kalie Kamara, who started at the Cathedral as an intern several years ago, and has been working part-time at Cathedral Community Cares, is now with CCC full-time.

In all my professional life, this is the work in which I have been most fully myself. It has been a gift to be part of the Cathedral, which offers to all what it has given to my family and me: a refuge in loss; a sanctuary for prayers raised in need and in thanks; a place for jubilant celebration and solemn observance; a surpassingly beautiful space, lovingly crafted and cared for by thousands of hands, that enfolds everyone—no exceptions. It has been a privilege to work with and know the dedicated Trustees and to be part of the staff who, with notably limited resources but great heart, create magnificent worship and programming.

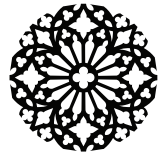
When Judy Collins sang from the pulpit this Easter, “For everything—turn, turn, turn—there is a season—turn, turn, turn...,” she spoke to my deepest feelings about leaving my role—the end of this season. Long-postponed projects, dreams and plans call me—to be with family, garden, build (with hammer in hand), and explore more of Creation. I know that God will nourish a quiet spaciousness in me and will surprise me with something interesting and joyful that I can't yet even imagine. I offer to you all a heart full of gratitude for an astonishing season among you.

This is written in loving memory of Violet, Rupert, Jeanne, Wangari, Peggy, and many other Cathedral citizens.

Episcopal Church Women and the ecologically oriented, multifaceted Earth Community, sponsored by then-Dean James Morton. One Earth Community member was Ruth Ray, who worked as part-time assistant to Jeanne Lee, Coordinator of the Dean's Office. In late 1988 Ruth asked me to substitute for her briefly. In March 1989 I returned to the Dean's Office as fulltime assistant to Jeanne. Because of Dean Morton's global connections, even basic tasks were not necessarily mundane. The first fax I ever sent was to Moscow. I recall telephoning Africa and speaking with Wangari Maathai—long before she became a Nobel Laureate.

When Jeanne retired in 1992, I took on her responsibilities, which included being a corporate officer as Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees. Peggy Harrington became the Dean's other fulltime assistant. During the 1990s I volunteered as an acolyte, lay reader and member of the laying on of hands ministry.

Dean Morton and Peggy left in early 1997 to start The Interfaith Center of New York. I was delighted that Dean Harry Pritchett asked me to assist him through his tenure, until he retired in March 2001. An interim year without a Dean followed, during which the Cathedral became a focal point for grief, prayer and solace after 9/11, and then was beleaguered by the December 18, 2001, fire. The Board had elected Dean James Kowalski that November, and he was due to take office the following March. As the Cathedral burned, he came immediately to be with the distraught staff and stand with the Cathedral. We have worked together ever since.



The Cathedral
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the **Divine**

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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.

Great Music in a Great Space



Photo by Angel Gardner

Our next season of sacred music concerts featuring the Cathedral Choirs and Orchestra under the direction of Kent Tritle is in process. GMGS will once again explore the spectacular acoustic and visual benefits of presenting great sacred music in our Cathedral. There will be choral concerts, holiday concerts and organ recitals. The season kicks off with Mr. Tritle's organ recital on October 14 and culminates in a St. James Chapel program with the Cathedral Choir and Compass of the Rose on May 14, 2015. In between lie Verdi's *Requiem* with the Manhattan School of Music Symphony and Symphonic Chorus and the Oratorio Society of New York combined (March 26) and a focus on Messiaen by Associate Organist Raymond Nagem. Details will be on the website soon.

Stay in Touch

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

Pellettieri in MAD Biennial

The work of Cathedral Sculptor in Residence Chris Pellettieri (profiled in the Winter 2013/2014 issue) will be included in exhibition at The Museum of Arts and Design titled *NYC Makers: The MAD Biennial*. The exhibition (July 1–October 14) will showcase the work of approximately 100 highly inventive artisans, artists, and designers who create objects or environments through exquisite workmanship and skill.

Chris will come back to the Cathedral this summer to lead one of his popular stone-carving workshops. Details will be posted on the website once they are confirmed.



Photo by Isadora Wilkenfeld

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