

# Trinité

VOLUME 9 N 1

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN CATHEDRAL IN PARIS

FALL 2013

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Abbey's triptych

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FOR OUR FUTURE

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# The American Cathedral in Paris

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Lucinda Rawlings Laird

**Canon Pastor**  
The Reverend  
Elizabeth Hall Hendrick

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**Director of Music**  
Zachary Ullery

**Canon for Administration**  
Giles Williams

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## Trinité

FALL 2013

The Magazine of The American Cathedral in Paris

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# Together we got started

## Beloved in Christ,

It has been a whirlwind six months: arrival, Holy Week and Easter, my institution as Dean and our celebration of our new space during Trinity weekend, summer planning, my first *rentrée*, and now we are hurtling into a new program year. The fall is beautiful in Paris, and there is a wonderful sense of energy, new possibilities and joy at the Cathedral. The construction is 99 percent done; if you have not had a chance to see our new or renovated spaces, all I can say is: come! THANK YOU to so many who have worked and prayed and planned and given and endured. We had a parish celebration on October 13 and handed out buttons saying *Together we did it!* And so we did.

One thing that has become abundantly clear in my time here is how very good the leadership at the Cathedral is, and how much we are building on the past efforts of many, known and unknown, laity and clergy. It's probably a bad idea to single out individuals, but the two canons - The Reverend Canon Liz Hendrick (Canon Pastor) and Canon Giles Williams (Lay Canon for Administration) - are, purely and simply, worth their weight in gold. It is thanks to them, plus the excellent leadership and commitment from Jeb Seder and Mike Seeley (wardens), the rest of the Vestry, and the rest of the staff that the Cathedral has come so successfully through an interim period that was also a time of construction and physical upheaval.

Now there's a sense of promise and possibility, and the presence of the Holy Spirit pushing us

in new directions – some clear, some as yet to be discerned. It is essential, I think, for all of us not to rush into doing things piecemeal, but to pray and think together about the Cathedral's future. I hope that the congregation here in Paris AND our friends near and far will commit to prayer for the Cathedral on a regular basis, and to increased involvement in our life together.

Here follows, in no particular order, a few thoughts/ideas/questions for consideration, always bearing in mind that God is apt to surprise us and to lead us to places we have not even considered.

How can the Cathedral be a place of transformation? From long-time members to newcomers to Paris, from the casual tourist to the short-term student, from someone who wanders in for a concert to someone who comes in despair or distress, how can we offer care, hope and possibility? How are we all open to God at work in us and our parish?

How does the Cathedral make a difference in the city of Paris, and not only to our parishioners? Where are we called to meet Christ in those most in need?

Can the Cathedral build on our wonderful heritage of music and art and become more and more a center for the arts?

I'd like to increase awareness among all Episcopalians of the Cathedral as OUR Cathedral in Europe. I think a good percentage

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of Episcopalians in the U.S. know that the National Cathedral in Washington is OUR Cathedral in our capital; I want the American Cathedral in Paris to be equally well-known. This means, among other things, increased involvement with parishes and dioceses in the United States (and elsewhere!)

The Cathedral needs to be more financially stable. This means increased participation and responsibility for our life together, and less reliance on "them" (endowment, a few large donors, etc.) As we are saying in this year's Annual Call: "Our Cathedral - Our Joy - Our Responsibility."

Finally - or foremost - how can we go deeper spiritually, and grow together in our journey of faith? We have a wonderful metaphor in having just gone deeper physically with our construction project. We have more space for ministry as a result. I find a yearning here for the same spiritual digging.

There are so many more ideas, possibilities and surprises! This is an incredibly exciting time to be at the Cathedral. I am blessed to be your Dean at this moment in our history.

Yours in Christ,  
**Lucinda+**

P.S. There is one change this fall that is already proving to be a gift to all of us: The 6:00 p.m. Sunday service, re-named "Eventide at the Cathedral," is now a quiet meditative service of candlelight, silence, instrumental music and one or two simple hymns or chants. A meditation (musical or spoken) is offered in place of the sermon. The liturgy draws from a number of different sources (Celtic prayers, poetry, a variety of prayerbooks). It may be just what your soul needs. ☺



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Together in Faith

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# Building a success story, from start to finish

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I cannot help thinking of John 14:2: “In my Father’s House there are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”

There’s some contextual license here, but seeing the results of the construction project, with the 500 square meters of newly created space, a safe building well in conformity with building codes, room for expanding ministries, and proper facilities for our dedicated Cathedral staff, I cannot help looking toward the many opportunities that this provides our vibrant community.

And think of our heritage. This magnificent Cathedral was consecrated in 1886, built with the vision and resources of a few very wealthy Americans who wanted to create a place of

worship for the growing population of their compatriots in this great city.

During the roughly 130 years since it was built, there have been a number of smaller renovations, the creation of the old basement-level kitchen and upper-level office space the most notable. But nothing of great substance or scope was done, and unfortunately, despite the best efforts of those involved, the result was a bit of a rabbit warren of compromised solutions.

So, by the early 2000s, while our great neo-gothic nave served as a glorious place of worship, and while we had a wonderful towering façade, the inner workings of the Cathedral and campus were at the breaking point.

Peter Fellowes, then Senior Warden, had



THE NEW RAMP IN  
THE CLOISTER PROVIDES  
WHEELCHAIR ACCESS  
TO THE PARISH HOUSE



practically a full-time job dealing with the Paris Prefecture because of a long and growing list of building code violations.

“We knew we had many problems to correct,” said Peter, “but we wanted to address them as a part of a larger renovation. After several years of fruitless negotiations with the Prefecture, enough time had passed to enable us to achieve compliance consistent with the plans we had developed by then to reconfigure the Parish House and Deanery.”

So in 2006, under the leadership of Dean Zachary Fleetwood and the Vestry, an architectural study was commissioned for renovating and remodeling the site, which led to the Capital Campaign that was launched in 2008. We couldn't have known that the financial markets would come crashing down, perfectly timed with our fund-raising.

But despite the dire economic environment, we secured pledges totaling €5.8 million and we were able to achieve the first major and fundamental renovation in the history of the Cathedral.

By 2009, with the pledge income starting to flow in, stimulated by a lead gift of \$1.3 million, the Capital Project Steering Group, or CPSG, was formed and tasked by the Vestry with overseeing the project. A team of 10 members, from the Vestry and beyond, was formed. They included parishioners with experience in construction projects, real estate, law and finance.

Next was defining how we would work together, how we would keep the community informed, how we would put financial controls in place and how we would set the standards for our operating behavior. We invested a great deal of time ensuring that we remained true to the promise of the capital campaign and to the expectations of our donors and our parishioners.

We appointed a professional representative with extensive experience in construction projects in Paris and beyond to help us identify contractors and suppliers. Gilles de Craecker remained with

## The sequel: onward in faith

As the Vestry reached final decisions about the expansion project, it voted unanimously to go ahead and create the second basement level under the Dean's Garden. The members realized that it was literally a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create space for storage that was deemed essential.

If plans for the expansion didn't include the second level from the outset, there could never be a second level. The Cathedral would forever be squeezed into its small campus and its potential squeezed as well.

Another ambitious early decision was to commit the campaign's full goal to infrastructure and major construction. For fixtures and fittings, the idea was to make do with what we had and address upgrading them later.

The decision led to a shortfall of 700,000 to 1.1 million euros, depending on the success of negotiations with suppliers and the level of delinquency in pledge payments.

A loan from the endowment will largely cover that for now, but the debt costs impose a burden on the Cathedral's always tight budget. In the spring a sequel to the capital campaign will begin raising 1.4 million euros both to pay off the loan and equip the new space adequately.

### **As the CPSG wound up the first stage of its mission, these were the members:**

Mike Seeley, *Chair* - Sophie Belouet - Kim Bradley  
Mark Carroll - Gilles de Craecker - Peter Fellowes  
Nancy Janin - Lucinda Laird - Marc Lempérière  
Jeb Seder - Mary Lee Turner - Giles Williams



the project until the end as our principal interface with the builders. Experts in the administrative process for projects of this scope were consulted on how best to secure the approval of various independent authorities, of national agencies, of the city and the Prefecture of Police, and of other interested parties like the *Monuments Historiques*.

Kim Bradley, a parishioner and member of the team with professional experience in real estate and construction matters, provided a steady and knowledgeable assist. “These kinds of projects are the most interesting but also the most challenging,” he said. “Even with detailed plans and specs you’re working with an existing structure and you find surprises throughout the process that require new solutions. A good project team needs energy, good humor and resiliency in equal measure to cope with the frustrations. I’ve been grateful for the opportunity to participate in the project with both the committee and construction team.”

## What users of a building respond to is what they see, not the expensive infrastructure

We interviewed architects, construction engineers and other specialists as well – security architects, masons and carpenters – before choosing candidates who we felt really understood the special needs of the Cathedral and who would be able to deliver what we wanted. One of our early goals was to ensure that we did not lose the nature and feel of the Cathedral and campus. When it was all done, we wanted it to look the same. There would be no glass pyramids or other pharaonic touches.

To maintain rigor and sensitivity to the site, an aesthetics subcommittee was created, and we relied on the demanding and watchful eyes of Nancy

Janin, Peter Fellowes, Mary Lee Turner and Susan McCabe, who was our expert for the garden, to guarantee that execution would be the way we wanted.

“The different needs of the communities that use the spaces presented particular challenges,” said Mary Lee. “Adjustments were made along the way to be as responsive as possible within the budget constraints. As we go forward, sharing and flexibility will be key, as most of our new spaces, from the classrooms to storage, are designed to be multi-user spaces.”

Nancy said: “The aesthetics group was cognizant of – and somewhat terrified by – the reality that what users of a building respond to is what they see, not all the expensive infrastructure underneath. We were cognizant also that there is virtually no way to please hundreds of individual tastes. Yet we pressed on, determined to find harmony between the brand new spaces and our historic rooms, and a consistency throughout all the spaces. For instance, we used the design and colors of the marble floor in the choir area of the nave as the inspiration for the multiple new WCs – whether they are in existing or new space. When dropped ceilings were required to accommodate wiring, we used the plainest tiles available to match traditional ceilings. We chose a single color for the entire campus, a bright white, so that underground areas would be airy and light and that touch-ups, whenever they might be needed, would be uncomplicated.”

Clearly there were huge challenges at the outset, including:

- A site the size of a postage stamp.
- A limited budget.
- Our listing as a historical monument.
- The need to keep basic Cathedral operations going throughout construction.

So over many a long week and month we met with the external consultants to pore over potential plans, literally centimeter by centimeter, figuring out solutions to physical obstacles and



the constraints of the space. We worked up detailed costing projections and budgets, making trade-offs and discovering opportunities. And we divided the project into two phases: the first being the excavation and major construction, and conversion of the Canon's residence into offices; the second being the Parish House makeover.

Finally we began negotiating contracts. We also began concentrating on communications through posters, the weekly newsletter and bulletins, and presentations during and after Sunday services. In parallel we compiled the colossal dossiers to secure all approvals required for construction to begin. There were 16 dossiers, each about 30 centimeters high (one foot) and each requiring a signature on every page. Talk about writer's cramp!

Submissions were made, we received visits from

the senior representatives of the *Monuments Historiques* and others, we answered questions, and in the summer of 2011 we got the green light to start.

The first order of business was to put up a sign on the front of the Cathedral on Avenue George V announcing the project and giving our neighbors the opportunity to review plans and file any objections. All was well, with no reactions, until on a sunny October day, three days before expiration of the notice period, we received a formal objection! That launched a process of consultation between lawyers and our construction experts and resulted in a three-month delay, and of course additional costs. In the end the issue was resolved, our plans were accepted without modification and finally in January 2012 the excavators arrived, hoisted by giant cranes



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GATE ON STAIRCASE NEAR PARISH HALL  
COFFEE HOUR IN THE PARISH HALL  
THIRD FLOOR STAFF OFFICES  
PARISH HALL WITH NEW CEILING AND LIGHTING





over the top of the building and into the Dean's Garden. At last we were under way!

Marc Lempérière, a member of the Vestry and of the Paris bar, put into context the rare delicacy of the situation: "Between the listing of the Cathedral as a historical monument and our position right in the middle of the Golden Triangle, this project could easily have turned into a judicial nightmare. A lot of the credit for avoiding this goes to Gilles de Craecker, the project manager, and Gilles Berthier, the architect. Without forgetting of course our own Giles Williams."

Once we actually broke ground, things started to move very quickly. The excavation of the two-story space below the Dean's Garden, removing literally hundreds of tons of earth, turned up no hidden treasures. But in earlier soil testing we had discovered that the Cathedral was built on a landfill of soft porous earth. There was also a subterranean stream running across the site that required sophisticated construction on stilts and protection against water and humidity. We also got to see for a fleeting moment the very high quality of the original construction, with very interesting arched foundations, preserved on camera by Nancy and circulated in her weekly bulletins.

"Working within the existing structure which we all know and love posed many challenges," said Giles Williams. "Not the least of them was maintaining the character and integrity of the original building while making it fit for contemporary purpose. Time and again as later additions were removed and parts of the structure revealed after being buried for more than a hundred years, the superior quality of the original work and the attention astounded the professionals engaged on the project. It was quite unlike anything they had seen before."

The excavation was by far the most expensive and technically challenging part of the project, carrying with it the highest risk for delays and cost overruns. But it was completed on time

and on budget. The lower of the two new levels, 125 square meters for archives and storage, went into use in February 2013. The archives were transferred from the Library, and the general storage area was made available to the various ministries that will share it. Each will have its own designated storage space, allowing us to get rid of mountains of things stashed in all corners of every office and cupboard.

Above this level and directly under the garden – with natural light through skylights – there are two new Sunday school classrooms. Separated by a folding partition, they can be converted into a single room for large meetings, and during the week they fill part of the endless need for meeting space.

## **The Narthex Reception Room quickly became a favorite venue for small meetings**

On the same level, new bright and spacious public toilets also went into use.

The other aspect of Phase 1 was to convert the Canonry into offices for the Dean, the Canon Pastor and the Canon for Administration. What was once the Canon's living room is now the Narthex Reception Room, accessible from both the offices and from the main Cathedral entrance. It can be used for small meetings or as a private area during marriages and funerals. This room, a delightful bright space with leaded windows, hardwood paneling and a new parquet floor, was put into use in October 2012 and quickly became a favorite and convenient venue for small meetings.

Once the excavation and basic construction were finished, the Dean's Garden was reinstalled. The cross was put back in the middle and, under the guidance of Susan McCabe, new planters were built and the plantings begun. Other features –



a new memorial fountain and putting the child's statue back in place – were added to the final checklist.

One of the key aspects of this phase was to dispose of the creaking, unreliable boilers from the World War II era and to connect with the environmentally friendly Paris steam grid. All that took place during a particularly cold November. We shivered through services wearing overcoats and, it is suspected, thermal underwear. On some occasions hand-warmers were provided by a creative and considerate member of the Vestry. Getting rid of the boilers freed up 50 square meters that was used in carving out a new music suite. (Article, page 14).

The challenge of finding a use for every inch of space allowed us to have a lot of fun figuring out how to do something with the alley along the north side of the building, a strip that was hitherto wasted. The winning idea was to house the flower workshop there. (Article, page 15). Plus there's a new wheelchair entrance, the laundry and some additional storage. The area is accessed from the nave by new door installed in the north wall, a real work of art and a bespoke creation by masons and carpenters who specialize in historic monument renovations.

Our goals in renovating the Parish House were:

- Moving the kitchen from the basement up to the same level as the Parish Hall. This new professional standard kitchen will transform the Friday Mission Lunches and upgrade the catering capacity for community events and ultimately generate revenue for the Cathedral. "I've been talking to a lot of the regular Cathedral cooks, and we're all very excited to move into the new kitchen," said Mark Carroll, the Cathedral's treasurer, a Vestry member and a CPSG member also. "A lot of thought went into planning the space, and it shows, from the wall-mounted spigot for filling the big, heavy pots with water right on the stove, to the non-skid floor. It's going to change our lives – at least the cooking part of them!" (Article, page 17)

- Renovation of the Parish Hall with the installation of a new lowered acoustic ceiling, designed to strike a balance between eliminating the "chicken coop" sound during events, with good music acoustics for performances and rehearsals. Great care was taken to preserve the window arches and architectural detail, maintaining the original look.
- Installation of an elevator serving all floors from the first basement level up to the top-floor offices.
- Combining areas of the third floor into coherent office space for the Cathedral staff and the Bishop and Convocation. The result is a beautiful space, bright and practical, and we were able to recover the very attractive wooden floors, as we did in the Library. It was a pleasure to see these beautiful features coming back to life and to their original splendor. It is hard to believe that they had been covered with carpeting all these years and sealed with thick layers of glue!
- Creation of a new music suite on the site of the old kitchen and boiler room.

Beyond managing the construction, managing the finances was also filled with challenges. Highly detailed tracking and information tools were put in place to ensure constant rigorous control. One of the early demands was balancing a relatively short construction period, about 20 months, against a five-year pledge period. There was an obvious cash-flow gap to contend with. Negotiations were launched for bank loans to finance the gap, but in the end it was covered by an interest-free loan from a former parishioner and member of the Friends of the Cathedral.

This very generous (and anonymous) provision allowed us to move straight through the construction project with no interruption. It has been heartwarming to see the involvement and generosity of our community.



With the cash-flow gap resolved, there still remains an overall funding gap (box, page 7), even though the basic construction costs are within or even slightly below budget.

There was a contingency budget, a tight one of 4.5 percent, and it was exceeded for numerous reasons, including the three-month delay at the outset as well as many small decisions taken in the course of construction either to enhance the project or overcome unexpected obstacles. In the end, contingency spending remained below the 10 percent benchmark for projects of this magnitude.

Sophie Belouet, a member of the CPSG, former Senior Warden and still Assistant Treasurer, kept a watchful eye over the cash flow throughout. She had these comments about the financial picture: “The decision to proceed with the extensive project was a leap of faith by the parish and its leaders, coming as it did in the midst of a severe financial crisis.

## **Special thanks for a new chapter for both the Dean and the Cathedral**

“However, the project has inspired widespread enthusiasm and generosity, as witnessed by the breadth of contributors and contributions: 335 families responded to the call and pledged 5.8 million euros, of which almost 4.8 million euros has already been received. The final challenge will be to fund the residual gap, and I am confident that will be met with equal commitment.”

The CPSG remains in place, and closing that gap is its new goal. Eventually it will yield to a Building and Grounds Committee that will deal with the traditional aspects of maintenance as well as explore new opportunities to enhance the wonderful work done at this place.

It has been quite an adventure so far! Hats off to everyone in the community for the patience and support. A special word of thanks goes to the Cathedral staff for their stoic tolerance of noise and dust and for the good-humored manner in which they “kept the show on the road” throughout.

Dean Lucinda Laird joined us near the end of the actual construction, arriving to witness the parish’s patient endurance. “I feel like the laborer who came in at the 11th hour, when others have borne the heat and burden of the day (Matthew 20). When I think about what this congregation has done – and put up with! – over the last five years I am incredibly grateful.

“Even more, I am excited about all the new opportunities we have. It’s a great gift to begin a new chapter in my own ministry as we begin a new chapter at the Cathedral. My very, very special thanks to the CPSG and to the staff for the vision, patience and dedication that has resulted in such good work and such amazing new possibilities for the Cathedral.”

Senior Warden Jeb Seder also expressed gratitude: “I can only echo the remarks of Dean Laird and my colleagues and mention my pride in having participated in the middle phase as a member of the CPSG, because of the rigorous and regular work it provided during a period that included clerical and lay leadership changes. The CPSG was consistent in its efforts to keep the project on track and budget, disrupt as little as possible the life and activities of our beloved Cathedral, improve the physical assets of the full campus, and consider the wishes and interests of a wide range of constituencies and users of the space. They are to be congratulated on their work and the elegant results.” ☺

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*Mike Seeley, Junior Warden of the Vestry, is chair of the Capital Project Steering Group.*



By Nancy Janin

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# New music suite? Noted!

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How do you fit 80 choir robes, more than 40,000 pieces of music (1,000 works times the 40 copies we hold of each plus voluminous scores for major choral works such as *The Messiah*), the music director's desk, chair and office files, and up to 50 choristers needing to robe at the same time into 18 square meters – about 200 square feet? Only with great difficulty and loads of goodwill and patience.

This is the cramped situation the Cathedral music program has lived with for years, with music file cabinets squished into a closet requiring racks of robes to be pulled out to access the music. There was true chaos on Sunday morning with the music director's desk doubling as the table that held both music binders and robes as everyone jammed in trying to vest in a few minutes.

In fact, the space couldn't hold the music program. The Parish Hall caught the spillover of music and binder storage and robing activity. And of course the Parish Hall was also taken over by the choir as its rehearsal space. Those days are thankfully past. The campus expansion and renovation created a music suite of 90 square meters (950 square feet), carving the facility out of the area once occupied by the kitchen, boiler room and butler's pantry. And not a moment too soon. The music program

has grown steadily since Zachary Ullery arrived five years ago, first as assistant director and now as the director. We now count more than 80 singers in the Cathedral choirs, with members as young as 5 years old and going to "you-name-it."



The new space has a dedicated rehearsal room of 40 square meters (450 square feet). The resonance is enhanced by a resin floor, and furnishings include a baby grand piano (a generous donation). There is also soundproofing to dampen the sound that carries to rest of the Parish House.

All the choirs can rehearse there – the Children's Choir on Wednesdays, the Youth and Adult Choirs on Thursdays. On Sundays, before the 11 o'clock service, the choir of the day will rehearse there rather than in the nave. (That will free up the Parish Hall for the Sunday Forum.)



By Susan Greig

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As big as the new suite is, there's not enough room for rehearsals by the 100-voice Paris Choral Society, which is separate from the Cathedral choirs but related because it includes many of the same voices and is also directed by Zach. It will continue to rehearse in the Parish Hall.

The new space will also serve as a home for music classes – the Introduction to Music class for our 5- to 7-year-olds on Wednesdays, and individual piano and voice lessons. Likewise, sectional rehearsals will be held there when different voice parts need to work on their own. There is an office suitable for the desks of the music director and his assistant and their files, a robing room with storage for all the robes, and other areas for filing cabinets and folders, all on the same level.

## Improvements to come — adjustable choir desks and a dedicated computer

While choristers and music staff will no longer have a cramped space working against them, there are still some improvements to make: adding risers and adjustable choir desks to hold music during rehearsals (standing or sitting), and buying a dedicated computer with software to manage the extensive database of music and to ease the entering of music (in order to change the key, for example).

“I am thrilled with the new suite,” said Zach. “It makes a beautiful home for the Cathedral’s ever growing music program.” And every chorister is thrilled to have an appropriate space for doing what they love to do best – making beautiful music together to the glory of God. ☺

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*Nancy Janin, a parishioner and member of the choir since 1988, is co-editor of Trinité.*



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# The north alley in bloom

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For the Flower Guild, the renovation provided a new work area along the north side of the church, accessible to the nave through the new door and, for deliveries, to the streets on both ends.

We may talk of the space as being “for the Flower Guild,” but it’s really for the Cathedral. Our mission is to intensify and support worship through the beauty of plants and flowers. It is often messy work, with wet leaves, faded flowers, staining pollen and other debris.

Working in the sacristy, as we did before, was particularly messy. We shared the space – and the single table there – with the priests, the Altar Guild, the office staff and volunteers. It was a challenge to keep our mess apart from the pristine liturgical robes and the fair linen, the books and papers, not to mention from the copying machine that was next to the one shared sink.

In addition, our closet in the sacristy (the one whose door kept coming off its hinges) did not hold all our equipment, so the spillover was piled messily behind the cupboard or stashed in various crannies around the church, in the undercroft of the nave or in a cupboard near the crypt.



INTENSIFYING WORSHIP THROUGH FLORAL BEAUTY  
AT RIGHT, A WELL-USED CORNER OF THE NEW SPACE

We are thrilled to be in a separate space where we can muck about at will. We were able to recycle the old sinks from the kitchen that are wonderfully deep and perfect for our buckets and for conditioning flowers. As a work surface we also saved the old zinc table from the kitchen. With some simple shelves and cabinets under the sink, we have easy access to all we need regularly, though the voluminous Christmas decorations remain stored in the undercroft.

The Flower Guild consists of 13 volunteers, at least half of whom live in Paris only part-time. We provide regular flower arrangements for the altar for approximately 44 Sundays every year. (During Advent there are no flowers, only greens, to signify a period of introspection and quiet before the celebration of Christmas. During Lent there are no flowers either; this year at Canon Hendrick's request we put dry branches on the altar to signify the time in the wilderness.)

We prepare arrangements for weddings and funeral services, and for special occasions such as the Trinity Weekend, holiday meals and other events. We also provide boutonnieres each Sunday

for the ushers. Our busiest times are at Christmas, when we erect the Christmas trees, garlands and wreaths, and Easter Sunday, with glorious flowers to celebrate the joy of the Resurrection and the annual rebirth that the coming of spring brings.

Parishioners often make donations for flowers for our major festivals or to mark a special event, an anniversary, a major birthday, the birth of a child, a wedding, a christening or in memory of a beloved family member. To the extent possible we honor special requests – for white lilies, for red carnations, for peonies. The entire congregation shares the benefit of our donors' generosity, and we on the Flower Guild are deeply grateful to be able to help in these expressions of love.

We usually buy our flowers at the Saturday market on Avenue du Président Wilson, just around the corner from the Cathedral. However, for major holidays and weddings we go to the wholesale market at Rungis, a feast of beauty and choice that we adore (although you have to go out very early to get the best choice).



Some of our more experienced and talented members give workshops and training sessions to the others, but we all learn by working together and borrowing each other's best ideas and practices. New members work as part of a team before they are expected to make arrangements on their own, and we are always happy to welcome new recruits. 🌱

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*Susan Greig is a parishioner and chair of the Flower Guild.*



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# A wellspring of spiritual nourishment

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The time it takes to bring a very large pot of water to a boil makes a big difference when you are cooking 10 kilograms of frozen green beans. Speed is just one of the advantages we have gained for the Friday Mission Lunches as the kitchen volunteers move back to the Cathedral's newly designed, newly equipped and well-placed kitchen.

The Mission Lunch Program is a vital ministry for a church in the heart of Paris. Every Friday of the year, 10 to 20 volunteers make and serve a three-course meal for 64 guests. Historically, the lunches have been served at the Cathedral, but during the construction the venue moved across the Seine to the American Church. Our guests never missed a meal.

The program not only serves people who are down and out in an opulently rich city, but it also focuses the charitable desires of five English-language congregations. Besides the Cathedral and the American Church, the other participants are St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church; the Vintage Church, an evangelical congregation in the Paris suburbs; and Kehilat Gesher, the American Synagogue of Paris.

Moving back into the new kitchen, the advantage

we will appreciate most is having the kitchen and serving area all on the same floor. Both in the old Cathedral kitchen and in our temporary home, the food, dishes and supplies had to be moved upstairs and downstairs several times during each service.

I asked my colleagues to list of other top reasons to thank everyone involved in planning the new kitchen and putting it into service, and here are the main ones they listed:

- Gas burners that heat big quantities quickly and evenly.
- A pastry oven! Plus other state-of-the-art ovens, refrigerators and dishwashers.
- Separate areas for cooking and cleaning.
- Plates and supplies stored on the same floor.
- A beautiful Parish Hall for our guests

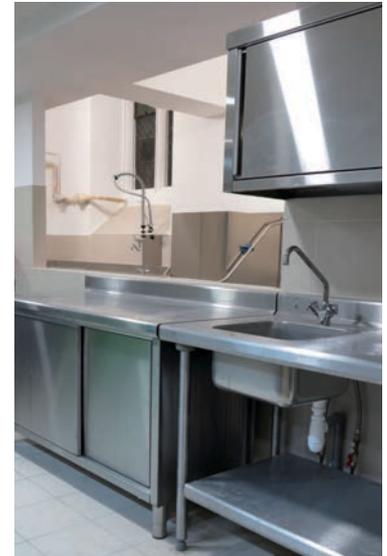
I first volunteered in early 2012 with the team in the original Cathedral kitchen. My first impression was "how is an area so small with so many people inside milling around going to feed all those guests?" Having never worked in a professional kitchen, I only had my own kitchen to compare, and the task looked overwhelming. I was quickly handed a cutting board and some potatoes to peel.



GLEAMING STAINLESS STEEL MEETS  
THE HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS



JOANNE BLAKEMORE,  
AN EARLY USER OF THE NEW KITCHEN



Sure enough, each week an absolutely gorgeous meal was pouring out of that space: roast pork tenderloin with caramelized onions, homemade apple pie with ice cream, herb-crusted fish with beautiful fresh vegetables, cherries jubilee.

What I noticed most, however, was the camaraderie in that space. These were people who seemed so relaxed, chatting away about their weeks and sharing funny stories – clearly a group that had known each other for a long time, but happy to talk to new faces.

Since March of this year, I have had the honor of serving as co-chef each month on behalf of the Cathedral. The congregations rotate the responsibility of chef each week. Costs are split four ways, with Kehilat Geshar taking the fifth Friday in a month when one comes along. The synagogue provides the financial backing, while members of the American Association of Wives of Europeans do the cooking.

For a novice “large meal” chef like me, my weeks as a volunteer meant numerous opportunities to watch and learn from the other team members and see how they dealt with the equation of feeding 64 guests and five church staff members a

delicious, hot meal with a salad/cheese course and dessert in only two to three hours of preparation time and at a budget of 150 euros for each lunch.

On my first day I met Raymond Harding, a trailing spouse from New Zealand who, since he did not have working papers, decided to pursue postgraduate qualifications in theology and in finance as well as run the Paris Marathon. “Sometimes you end up with free time that is given to you when you may not have expected it,” he said. “But you can use it to help people, to give something back, to learn something new and meet new people along the way.”

Raymond is now the go-to guy for desserts. “I never cooked desserts in New Zealand, but here I just kept watching and learning new techniques from the other volunteers and then began experimenting on my own.”

There are a few cherished professionally trained chefs who share their knowledge, recipes and techniques. “I just love coming here,” said Anne Des Jardins, a professionally trained chef and member of St. Joseph’s Church who spends six months of the year in Paris and comes to volunteer as often as possible. Her Asian fish sauce



and technique for cooking rice in the oven are legendary among the chefs.

There are also recipes that are so well-liked that they are used over and over, like “Jeff’s creamy pasta,” invented by Jeff Plowman from Vintage Church.

I quickly learned that Mark Carroll, professionally trained in kitchen hygiene (among his many talents) runs a very tight ship. “Have you washed your hands?” was heard so often that we rarely forgot after the first couple of times coming back from serving in the dining hall. We also have a favorite saying, “Time to lean, time to clean,” passed down from chefs past, which often reminds us to “organize that spice drawer if you do not have anything else to do!”

My fondest memories to date are the special meals prepared at Christmas time (with gifts for each guest), as well as other occasions like the Fourth of July or Bastille Day. Italo Marchini, former coordinator of the program for the Cathedral and an accomplished orchestra director and baritone, sang “Silent Night,” “God Bless America” or “La Marseillaise” before these special meals were served. We have also had professional and amateur piano and guitar players provide background music for the group.

“It is all part of the vision of the Friday Mission Lunch – not only to provide a hot meal, but also to provide a dignified social setting to talk and catch up with friends,” says Kristie Worrel, coordinator for the American Church and kitchen staff coordinator. Our guests have also written and recited original poems before meals.

After observing in the kitchen several weeks, I became curious – how do these amazing meals come under that budget? I befriended Kristie and asked her about how the chefs planned the menus and shopped. What seemed the most daunting was the quantity of food and size of the pots and pans in which they were to be cooked. She assured me that it was not as complicated as it appeared. “Think of a great family recipe that you would

serve for 6 to 8 people and just multiply that by 10.” Also, from observing the others, I picked up that finding good prices on meat and produce was key to staying within budget.

I continue to be amazed at the quantity of great food turned out each week. To give a few examples of the absolutely delicious and creative recipes, there has been *tartiflette*, Asian-style chicken, lamb curry (with homemade curry powder) and *choucroute à l’Alsacienne*. This is not a soup kitchen, the program coordinators are quick to point out.

My first “under the hood” look at the meal was a trip with Kristie to do the shopping. The menu – spaghetti bolognese, a side of carrots, with garlic bread and brownies. I was impressed how quickly and easily Kristie whipped around her local discount market and found a special on ground beef.

“I always check the meat first. I try to keep it at around 50 euros total, vegetables and starch at around 40 euros and dessert between 20 and 30,” explained Kristie. The remaining budget is needed to cover weekly essentials like coffee, napkins, sugar, ingredients for salad dressing and cheese. (Yes, there is a cheese course!)

Each chef does his or her own shopping a day or two prior to the meal and delivers the food to the church. “Everything we serve has been prepared by volunteers in the morning,” said Kristie. I can attest to the amazing speed at which three people can peel and chop 20 kilograms of potatoes, often while humming ABBA tunes!

Although it seemed intimidating to cook for such a big group at first, things go very smoothly with such a great team. When we have an occasional hiccup, there is always someone in the team who has an idea for solving it. God’s presence is felt in the kitchen, no matter what the location. 🍷

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*Judy Nicault is a parishioner and coordinator of the Cathedral’s Mission Lunch Program.*



By Thom Burns

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RIGHT:  
MARY MAGDALENE  
AT THE TOMB, THE  
FIRST TO ENCOUNTER  
THE RISEN LORD.

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# A backdrop in the forefront

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The Cathedral's triptych by Edwin Austin Abbey is a singular, beautiful work. But does it establish the painter as the artistic peer of John Singer Sargent? After research for his thesis at Yale, Thom Burns argues that it does.

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Edwin Austin Abbey wanted his triptych to be as essential to the Cathedral as the columns that George Edmund Street designed to hold up the roof. And toward that end he called it a “reredos,” by which he meant a permanent wall behind the altar, not a portable altar piece that could be taken away.

The enduring presence of the reredos for more than a century (and through two world wars) attests to Abbey's success. Strangely, however, though the triptych is a familiar backdrop for our worship, it has not figured in scholarly examination of his work. The oversight has not been to the benefit of Abbey's reputation.

Abbey was at the pinnacle of acclaim when he moved to England from the United States in 1878. His illustrations for newspapers and books had made him financially comfortable and gained the accolades of other artists. He was the first American artist to settle in what would be the

Broadway Group of the Cotswolds, and he later bought the historic manor, Morgan Hall.

But after his death in 1911 his reputation suffered. Critics dismissed him as only an illustrator, and the destruction of his letters and manuscripts has relegated most of his art to museum storage. The papers were lost in shipment to Yale, where they were to complement nearly 4,000 artworks that his widow had bequeathed to the university in 1937. Without the historical documentation, the enormous Abbey Memorial Collection at Yale has become a figurative time capsule, in need of some key that would make sense of many of his works. The loss meant that the original Yale cataloguers had no idea of the reredos's existence. This fact has kept the reredos out of scholarly consideration.

The prominence of two of Abbey's contemporaries, John Singer Sargent and James Abbot McNeil Whistler, has been solidified in the narrative of art history. Both were American





A backdrop  
in the forefront

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

THE THREE MARYS, FROM THE EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY MEMORIAL COLLECTION, YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

THE PROPHETS, FRIEZE FROM THE JOHN SINGER SARGENT MURALS THE TRIUMPH OF RELIGION AT THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY. PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM KIPP FOR THE STRAUS CENTER FOR CONSERVATION AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

THE PLACEMENT OF THE ABBEY REREDOS AT THE CATHEDRAL'S ALTAR, ITS COMPELLING PRESENCE IN THE NAVE, AND DETAIL FROM THE CRUCIFIXION PANEL



expatriate artists whose lives followed paths similar to Abbey's.

Like Abbey, they created paintings that scandalized Paris. *Whistler's Mother*, 1871, an American icon, was nearly kept from exhibition because of Whistler's insistence that it be called an "arrangement," or still life. Sargent's infamous *Portrait of Madame X* shocked the Paris Salon of 1884 and continues to be a sensation at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Abbey's avant-garde piece was meant to be the reredos, but he was forced to tame his work.

Does Abbey deserve the comparison? Does he have a rightful place alongside these artists? I argue that he does, and that the Cathedral's reredos confirms that he is their artistic peer. At the very least it sheds new light on his body of work: In just the last year, I have found hundreds of drawings, pastels and paintings at Yale that were not previously identified as studies for the reredos.

New light is shed as well on the working relationship between Abbey and Sargent, clearly a relationship of collaboration and intellectual exchange. The men began working together in 1890 when they were asked to paint murals for the Boston Public Library. Designed by the prolific American architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, the great Renaissance Revival palace on Copley Square was intended to assert America's cultural significance, both educating people of all classes and serving as a physical monument as inspiring as the books on its shelves.

The murals were to be essential to that inspiration – among them, Abbey's *Quest of the Holy Grail* for the circulation room and Sargent's *Triumph of Religion* for the Special Collections Hall.

In 1891 Sargent moved into Morgan Hall and Abbey built the largest studio in England so they could work together on their murals.

Abbey, in residence full time, worked continually on the Boston project. Conversely, Sargent spent summers in London painting society portraits,

returning to Abbey's studio in the winters to work on his murals.

Thus it was over a rather long time, from 1890 to 1919, that they worked on their Boston commissions. Abbey finished his last installation in 1901, and Sargent in 1919 (angrily abandoning work there after a stormy reception of some elements as irreverent).

## **In the work of Abbey and Sargent, critics see parallels in poses, style, pallet and emotion**

During many of those years Abbey was working on the reredos. The earliest written reference to the work is in a letter to his father in 1896, when Abbey writes that he has begun making studies even before getting the commission.

It was in 1899 that Dr. John Brainerd Morgan, rector of the Cathedral (and a first cousin of J. Pierpont Morgan, the American financier who was a significant early donor to the Cathedral) commissioned the reredos.

In 1905 when Dr. Morgan saw the work in England it gave him great pause. The Magdalene was too «mundane,» he said. Dr. Morgan apparently found the rendering to be too challenging for the mores of the time and he asked Abbey to repaint it. Abbey struggled with the unwanted revision for a year. It was not until the Easter Eve service of 1907 that the reredos was dedicated.

Thus the entire time that Abbey worked on the reredos (1896-1907), Sargent was working on later elements of his only religious masterpiece, the *Triumph of Religion* (1890-1919).

An examination of the two men's work turns up many similarities between the triptych and



Sargent's mural, some of them surprising. For example in the reredos, the floral patterns in the *pastiglia*, or the three-dimensional gilded plaster of the halos, match those in Sargent's mural.

Their studies for Christ utilize an identical pose and even the face is the same. The model Abbey used in painting one of the magi was also used by Sargent as Zephaniah in his mural. Finally, it is telling that a single sketchbook includes both Sargent's studies for his crucifix and Abbey's designs for his own work. The obvious shared ideas that came from that long period of sharing space are once again evident.

## It is telling that a single sketchbook includes studies by both Sargent and Abbey

In the Yale collection there are two full-size studies for the central panel of the reredos depicting the Three Marys at the Cross instead of the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist that we see in the finished work. In the last stages of the design process Abbey changed the composition for reasons that are yet to be known.

A finished painting of the Three Marys at Yale is as striking as it is moving. This painting depicts three female figures in black garments, each wrought in anguish and grief. One stands, another kneels, and the third sits. The pale skin of their faces and hands seems to pierce the enveloping black clothes.

This painting seems to be the feminine partner to Sargent's Frieze of *Prophets* in poses, style, pallet, and emotion. Specifically, the west panel of Sargent's *Triumph of Religion* containing Zephaniah not only recalls classic triangular positioning but uses very similar composition. Both works have standing figures with a single hand pulling the cloak close around their

faces, while a second pair of figures holds open their mantles.

In an early version of the Resurrection on the right panel of the reredos Mary Magdalene was rendered in the same clothes that Abbey used in the Three Marys painting. She cloaks her body, revealing only her face. The same portrayal is found in versions of Sargent's prophet Joel.

Recent conservation studies of Sargent's frieze show that he painted more of the figures with mantles dramatically draped from their heads, just as in Abbey's designs.

It is even more interesting that Sargent gilded the background of the frieze, like the reredos, only after Abbey's death.

Both the historical and visual evidence indicates that Sargent and Abbey drew from each other in creating these two supreme examples of religious works by American painters. In the last decade, three major books have treated Sargent's *Triumph of Religion*, none of them reflecting any apparent knowledge of the reredos.

As art scholars come to know the painting and the rich similarities in the two artists' work, the importance of the reredos will likely grow. Its recognition underscores Abbey's historical importance and calls for a full survey of his career.

But most significantly, it illustrates an important moment in the history of art that the Cathedral has fostered. 

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*Thom Burns, a Yale graduate, is an art historian who specializes in British and American art. He spent three days in March 2013 at the Cathedral doing research on the reredos.*

*The Archives Committee, and its chair, Nancy Webster, were especially helpful in his research and indeed with Trinité for this article and the accompanying photos.*



By Sigun Coyle



## Christian Rivière's story of Mission and Outreach

# An Unsung Hero

Everybody who attends Sunday morning services has seen Christian Rivière: At the 9 o'clock service he's at the altar in his white alb, handing the wine to the priest. Before the 11 a.m. service, you will see him scurrying around, making sure everything is ready at the altar, delivering the heavy silver collection plates and the elements to the ushers in the back of the church, then often taking his place behind the choir in the procession.

When not serving he usually sits in the first row on the left side. If a microphone does not work properly, he jumps up to fix it. If someone forgets to close the door leading to the Sunday school, he jumps up to close it (especially important on cold Sundays). He seems to be everywhere taking care of

everything and solicitous about everybody.

Sometimes you can see him wearing a *boubou*, a long, bright, multicolored tunic with matching pants. He proudly told me he got these costumes during his trips to Benin, the tiny francophone country in West Africa. And that's where Christian's other life lies.

Benin? In Africa? Yes indeed. But before going there, let's get to know this remarkable parishioner, for whom the idea of Mission and Outreach is personal and unassuming.

Christian is a former Roman Catholic, who, after the death of his half-brother and his own retirement from an insurance job in 1998, fell into despondency. As he said, "*Ces deux coups m'ont anéanti.*" (The two blows almost destroyed me.)

He tried to find solace in his faith, he said, driving in from his home in the suburbs to visit a different church every Sunday but finding solace in none.

Then one day he passed our Cathedral, just before the 9 a.m. service. It looked beautiful from the outside, he said, and as he walked in he was overcome by a feeling of peace. And he was reassured by the welcome he experienced. As he related this, his voice broke and his eyes filled with tears. He had felt so despondent, and now he felt reborn. He stayed for the service, and he was hooked.

Growing up in Tours, he had been *enfant de chœur* until 17, helping to get everything ready for the mass. So his childhood Catholicism had prepared him for service at the Cathedral.

When he asked how he could help, Barbara Johnson, now living in Savannah but then the head of the Altar Guild, agreed to have him join. Then he offered to do the altar linen. Lois Kumpers taught him how to fold it crisply, with the embroidered cross precisely in the center. Then he became a chalice bearer for the communion.



HERE AND ON FOLLOWING PAGES, CHRISTIAN AND MEMBERS OF HIS BENIN FAMILY

An especially proud moment came the day he was confirmed as an Episcopalian. To help the new francophone parishioner integrate into parish life, Bishop Pierre Whalon organized private English lessons with Laurence Moachon, who was then assistant to the Bishop.

Christian came a few times, but abandoned the effort, admitting he was not gifted for languages. He feels fortunate that most



parishioners speak at least some French, so his difficulty with English has never hindered him in his duties.



And now to the Benin connection.

Working in Paris, he often visited his mother in Tours, where on Sundays they went to her church. It is there that he met Jean-Claude Agodony, a priest from Benin who spent each August filling in for the parish priest. Having become friends, they promised to stay in touch.

Several times when Christian called Father Jean-Claude, a young man named Vincent answered the phone, and over the months Christian got to know the young man through those telephone conversations. He learned that Vincent, 16 years old at the time, was the cook for the church community, that he had five brothers and sisters, and that his father had died the previous year. And, one day, over the phone, Vincent asked Christian whether he could call him "papa." Christian choked up when the young man said that. He finally would have a son.

The next chapter began after Father Jean-Claude ended up settling in France. His successor in Benin was given permission to study in Italy for two years. To keep his Benin connection alive, Christian agreed to meet the priest at his hotel in Meaux, not far from Paris. When Christian arrived he heard the distressing news that two hours earlier the priest had drowned in the swimming pool.

But 24 priests came from Benin for the funeral, and Christian became friendly with all of them. Every year, when one or two of them visit France, Christian picks them up at the airport and brings them to his apartment for a two- or three-day stay. And he brings them to worship at the Cathedral.

Christian wanted Vincent to come for a visit as well, but somehow the papers could never be collected and Vincent could not get a visa. So Christian

decided to go to Benin himself. He studied Benin's geography and history. He got a passport. He bought an airline ticket. He got on an airplane. The year was 2007. Vincent and his whole family were waiting at the airport, and that was the beginning of a beautiful and productive friendship.

*Le Yovo* ("the white") became "papa" to everyone. Suddenly he had a big family, and everyone who had some sort of trouble sought him out. He became something like the revered judge of the village. He decided to live like the natives, sleeping on a mattress on the floor, eating as they did, wearing their kind of clothes.

By this time Vincent had left the cooking behind and had started to work for a government microfinance program. His job was to go to the villages, giving





out and collecting payments from the borrowers. Under a program overseen by the Benin Finance Ministry, small loans are made for starting businesses, for example, or more typically so that women can buy fertilizer and grow vegetables for sale.

Papa Christian went with him, sitting on the back seat of his motor scooter. Christian said that they traveled 10,000 kilometers during his six-week stay, going to villages without running water, without electricity, dirt poor. But there were churches everywhere, even sometimes in the middle of a field.

At one point on the road he saw gorgeous colored coffins, one brighter than the next (no black ones). Vincent explained that there was a coffin maker close by, and this was his way of showing off his wares.

Christian waited until 2010 to return, this time for a three-month stay. He became deeply involved in the family and in village life.

One thing bothered him, though: Vincent had two children, but was not married to their mother. Because they weren't married, the priests would not baptize the children.

Four other little cousins in Vincent's family were in the same predicament.

So here comes Papa with the solution: He found a priest who had spent time in America and was more open-minded than the local ones and persuaded him to baptize the children. So in one day Christian became the overjoyed godfather of six tiny tots. What a celebration they had!

During that time the village, Covè, also asked him to become its official sponsor. It was a responsibility and honor he accepted with pleasure.

Soon after his return to Paris his mother passed away. The pain of his grief was deepened by a legal conflict over her funeral expenses. The late Paul Bishop, a lawyer and Vestry member whom Christian knew because both attended the 9 o'clock service, took the case on a pro bono basis.

Paul won the case, and with the proceeds Christian invested in land in Covè and in building a guest house to be run by Vincent.

In the meantime, Christian faced serious health issues and was unable to get to Benin and see the progress of the project. But

he was there when the house was finished and blessed. A government minister showed up, as did the "king" of the village, Vincent, and the priest who performed the blessing. How proud this made our Christian!

Through his big heart and his generosity, Christian has helped a young man in Benin get on his feet and make a reality of his dream to run a small hotel. And not only that – a handful of locals have jobs at the guest house.



Christian learned recently that land next door to his guest house is for sale. He hopes to buy it and possibly build a library for the children of the village. It's a dream that he will be pursuing during his next visit, this time for six months, and we can all hope that it comes true. 🙏

*Sigun Coyle, a member of the Vestry for more than five years, is a former president of the Junior Guild.*



*Oil on Linen*

*32 x 32 inches*

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