

A CELEBRATION AND REDEDICATION
OF THE HISTORIC 1822 BELL TOWER

Sunday, October 20, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.



SAINT JOHN'S CHURCH

LAFAYETTE SQUARE • WASHINGTON, DC

*St. John's is a church for people of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations,
and viewpoints grounded in love. Whoever you are, we welcome you.*

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, LAFAYETTE SQUARE

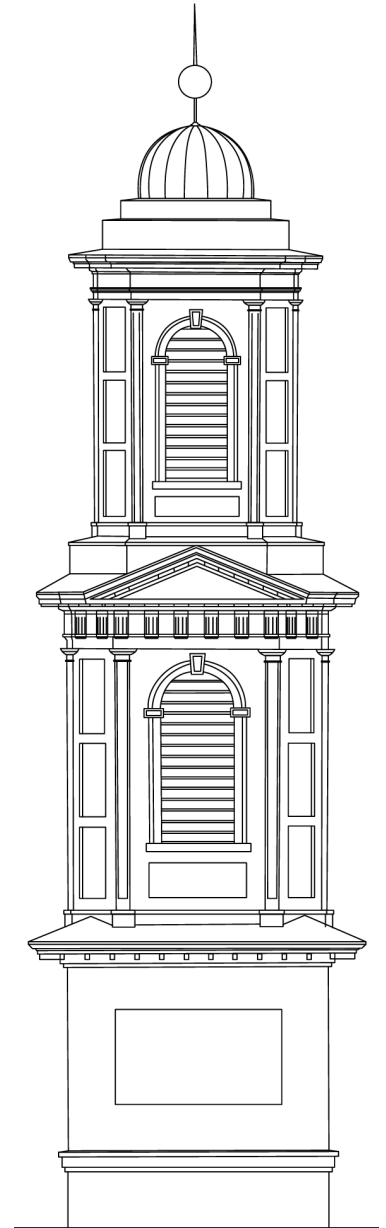
St. John's Church lies opposite the White House on Lafayette Square. For more than 200 years, the church and its bell tower have been a continuing witness to the history unfolding in the president's neighborhood. The bell tower was built as part of an expansion of the original 1816 Federal-style church building designed by architect Benjamin Latrobe. On November 30, 1822, a bell cast by the Revere Foundry of Boston was installed in the recently completed tower.

The bell, weighing 964 pounds and costing \$400, was purchased through parishioner donations and a contribution of \$100 in public funds, authorized by President James Monroe. The bell not only served church purposes, but was also a fire alarm for neighborhood residents, businesses, and nearby public buildings, including the White House. St. John's bell is one of two Revere bells in Washington, and the only one that has been in continuous use since its installation.

St. John's Church is a National Historic Landmark. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and a contributing property to the Lafayette Square and Sixteenth Street Historic Districts. The church and the White House itself are the oldest buildings in the neighborhood, and the only buildings from that era that remain in their original use.

Known as "the Church of the Presidents," St. John's has welcomed every president to worship in its sanctuary beginning with James Madison. In June 2020, St. John's stood at the epicenter of a historic moment when spontaneous demonstrations against police brutality captured the attention of our nation and world. Throughout that time St. John's was known to be a place that offered grace and the healing love of God, and today the church continues to strive for the dream of racial reconciliation, justice, and equity for all people.

For more information, visit stjohns-dc.org.



WELCOMEThe Rev. Robert W. Fisher, *Rector of St. John's Church, Lafayette Square***ANTHEM**

O how amiable

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Sung by the St. John's Choir and Choristers.

O how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young: even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. They will be always praising thee. The glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper thou the work of our hands upon us. O prosper thou our handiwork. O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

*—From Psalms 84 and 90***REMARKS**Carol Quillen, *President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation***RECOGNITIONS**

The Rev. Robert W. Fisher

HYMN 657 *Sung by all from the Hymnal 1982.*

Love divine, all loves excelling

REMARKSSean Wilentz, *George Henry Davis 1886 Professor of American History at Princeton University***REMARKS**Muriel Bowser, *Mayor of the District of Columbia***CLOSING REMARKS**

The Rev. Robert W. Fisher

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Our Father, who hast set a restlessness in our hearts, and made us all seekers after that which we can never fully find: Forbid us to be satisfied with what we make of life. Draw us from base content, and set our eyes on far-off goals. Keep us at tasks too hard for us, that we may be driven to thee for strength. Deliver us from fretfulness and self-pity; make us sure of the goal we cannot see, and of the hidden good in the world. Open our eyes to simple beauty all around us, and our hearts to the loveliness men hide from us because we do not try enough to understand them. Save us from ourselves, and show us a vision of a world made new. May thy spirit of peace and illumination so enlighten our minds that all life shall glow with new meaning and new purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

This prayer was written by the Rev. Oliver J. Hart, Rector of St. John's from 1934 to 1940, and delivered during the inaugural prayer service of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt loved the prayer, sharing it with the country by way of her syndicated "My Day" newspaper column. After she heard it at St. John's, it became her practice to say this prayer every night before going to sleep.

THE RINGING OF THE BELL

*All are invited to a reception on the Plaza, weather permitting,
or in Togo West Parlor on the first floor of the Parish House.*

TEN THINGS ABOUT THE RESTORATION OF THE BELL TOWER

In 2022, St. John’s Church embarked on a much-needed preservation project for the bell tower and installed a new church roof. Restoring the bell tower will preserve a key feature in this iconic skyline, and reroofing the church will safeguard one of our nation’s most historic structures.

The bell tower was in visibly poor condition, with significant exterior weathering and warping, and cracks that let in the elements and birds. It was critical to complete this work now to prevent further deterioration of the tower and to safeguard structural elements for the future. As a historic structure and a prominent central element in the White House viewshed, all work was reviewed and approved by federal and District agencies to meet rigorous historic preservation and building standards.



I. The Dome

The dome required substantial work. First, overlapping pieces of wood were bent to shape, after which a copper/metal dome was overlaid, which in turn was coated with a special paint. This was then painstakingly gilded by hand, with workers applying thin layers of gold leaf. The gold leaf alone cost \$10,000. The original (and still spinning) weathervane was also regilded.

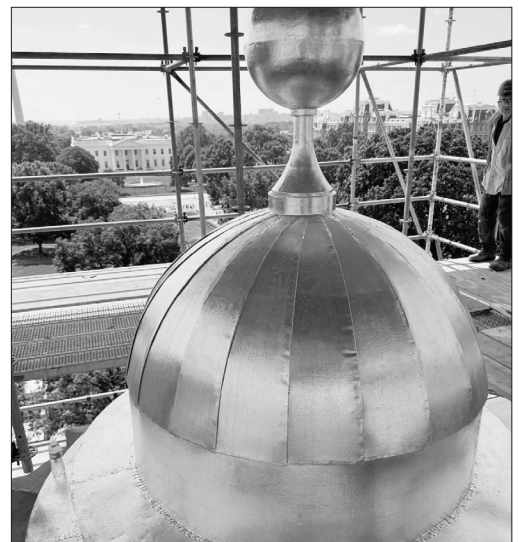


II. The Eaves

When work started on the tower, we were prepared for surprises. What appeared as painted wood along the eaves was in fact metal. New zinc-coated copper in a color called Freedom Gray replaced the old metal and is now visible, just as it was in the original tower.

III. The Paint

Why are we enthusiastic about paint? Well, this mineral paint, from the KEIM Company, lasts a long time and looks great. The tower is difficult and expensive to reach, since special scaffolding is needed that ensures no load is transferred onto the structure, so we selected a long-lasting paint to reduce maintenance. And soon, you’ll see the rest of the church and parish house re-painted in the same yellow hue.



IV. The Exterior

The exterior of the tower is made of an innovative material called Boral (trade name: poly-ash) that has been used in other historic properties. It doesn’t expand or contract, can be milled like wood to exacting standards, and lasts a very long time—hopefully between 50 and 70 years.

V. The Detailing

Using detailed building drawings from 1914 and modern scanning tools of the tower once scaffolding was installed, workers were able to exactly match the tower exterior, including the elegant Greek Revival detailing.

VI. The Bell

You can't see the original Revere bell, which has remained operational since its installation in 1822, but it was carefully inspected and pronounced to be in great shape! While the bell remains in its wheel support, it does not move, and is rung through an electromagnetic system, installed in the twentieth century, that strikes the lip of the bell. The same company that installed that system inspected our bell.

VII. The Inner Supports

The original beams on the inside of the tower were in great shape. To ensure the tower's structural integrity, workers installed new reinforcing. In addition, two steel "I" beams were carefully installed at the base of the tower to provide extra load support.

VIII. The Old Wood

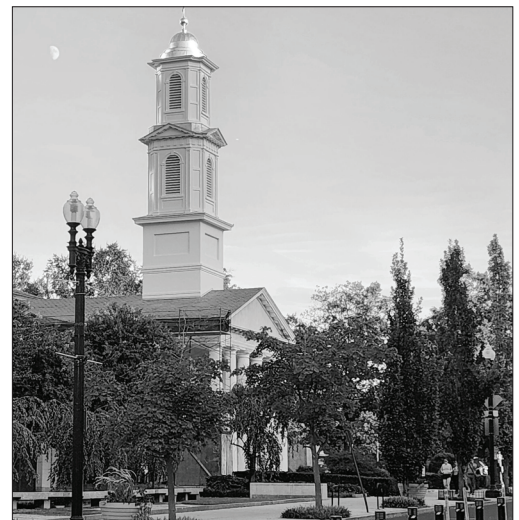
Once the scaffolding was up and work began, damage to the wood exterior was revealed. Several pieces of the original old growth yellow pine, vintage 1822, were salvaged. Two pieces will be on display in the church: One is restored and the other sealed but unrestored. Along with the wood came a number of the original handmade square nails.

IX. The Roof

There is still scaffolding along the sides of the church. Once the bell tower work was completed, we started work to replace the church's slate roof. The roof and drainage systems have been carefully inspected and repairs made to ensure a leak-free building.

X. The Team

It takes a dedicated, skilled team to undertake the meticulous, sensitive work to restore a National Historic Landmark. Even with heat waves and Washington's famous street closures, the project was completed on schedule and within its \$1.8 million budget.



*It took vision and commitment to move the bell tower restoration from idea to reality.
St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, thanks all who provided their talent, resources, and encouragement.
The restored tower serves as a renewed physical symbol of our commitment
to be a beacon of grace and service in this neighborhood.*

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Regan Associates, LLC
DLR Group
Worcester Eisenbrandt Inc.
Andi Adams
SGH
Gold Leaf Studios
The Verdin Company
James R. Walls Contracting

ST. JOHN'S BELL TOWER TEAM

Julia Koster, <i>Coordinator</i>	Fundraising Committee
Building Committee	David Gallalee, <i>Chair</i>
Chase Rynd, <i>Chair</i>	Chandler Battaile
Rick Busch	Stephen Crochet
Lauren Edwards	Wendy J. Fibison
Cliff Elmore	Richard Grimmett
Fruzsina Harsanyi	John Herzog
Michelle Mangrum	Carter Keithley
Sharon Park	Robert Mosbacher
	Gail West

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Stewart D. McLaurin,
White House Historical Association, for steadfast guidance
Andrew Clarke and Asia Pacific
for designing and providing commemorative boxes
Mike Ryan for his woodworking skills
in preparing recognition gifts

*We are deeply grateful for the generous support of the following,
whose gifts enabled the restoration of the 1822 bell tower at St. John's.*

Alison Adkins
Sarah & Amanda Akes-Cardwell
Jason Albright & Roberto J. Ruiz
John & Kathleen Alison
Philip & Annette Anfinrud
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In memory of Richard Doege
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Stephen Faris
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Wendy J. Fibison
In memory of her husband, Samuel J. Watson III
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In memory of John Whitmore

The Latrobe Fellowship
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All listings based on donor forms. For corrections, please contact Sharlyne Griffin using the About: Leadership tab of our website (stjohns-dc.org).

ASSISTING WITH OUR CEREMONY TODAY

SPECIAL EVENT COORDINATION

Sarah Agnew
Susan Feaster

USHERS

Capt. James H. Czerwonky, USN (Ret)
Jeff Agnew
Midshipmen of the U.S. Naval Academy

SPECIAL EVENT SUPPORT

Joseph Gawler's Sons

MEDIA SUPPORT

Veronica Tejera
Jeff Agnew

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Sharon Park
John Schutz

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The Rev. Robert W. Fisher, *Rector*

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Brent Erstad, *Director of Music and Organist*
The St. John's Choir and Choristers

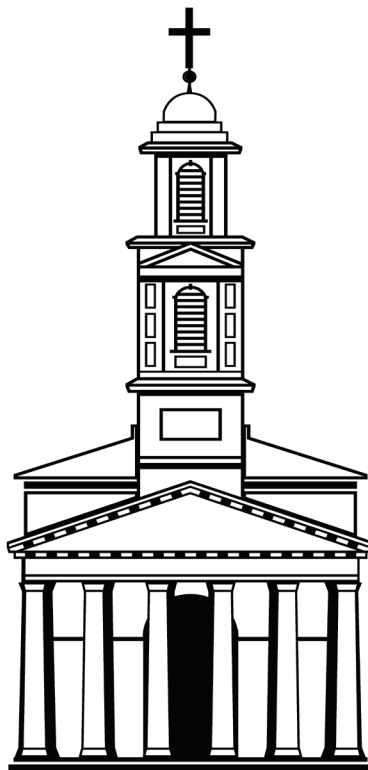
SPECIAL THANKS TO

Our neighbors at the AFL-CIO for opening their building
for viewing the bell tower during the reception

The Hay-Adams for providing a reception cake

David Trebing for displaying his Childe Hassam painting of St. John's

Matthew Taylor for his LEGO® rendition of St. John's



ST. JOHN'S MISSION STATEMENT

St. John's shines as a beacon of God's love through faith, worship, care, and community,
and offers a place of grace at our historic corner in the nation's capital.

Parish House

1525 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-1005

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