



AMERICAN FRIENDS OF CHARTRES

December 28,

2024

TRUSTEES EMERITI

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TRUSTEES, ADVISORS,
FOUNDING MEMBERS

In Memoriam
Servane de Layre Mathéus
Dennis Aubrey
Michael Klug
Pierre-Louis Roederer
David Whitehouse

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the board of American friends of Chartres, I wish to thank everyone, and especially our donors, for making this another successful year at AFC – a year marked the beginning of the celebrations of the 1000-year jubilee of Chartres Cathedral. Your enthusiastic participation in the events we organized and your generous contributions highlighted the continued relevance of our missions: the conservation of Notre-Dame de Chartres Cathedral for future generations and fostering the cultural radiance of Notre-Dame de Chartres in the United States.

Visitors and pilgrims flooded the city of Chartres in 2024, to celebrate Bishop Fulbert's reconstruction of the crypt in 1024, after the fire of 1194 had almost entirely destroyed the cathedral. The cooperation between the French government, the municipality, and the bishopric enabled the embellishment of the crypt, the development of new artistic programs, and a new pilgrimage journey that starts in the crypt and leads to the choir, marking the passage from shadow to light, from darkness to the light of heaven, in keeping with the original intent behind the original cathedral's design.

The millennium celebrations will continue in 2025, in Chartres and in the United States. We will post events on our website. We encourage you to register so that you can receive new postings: www.friendsofchartres.org, (scroll down to **subscribe**). You are also welcome to contact us (friendsofchartres@yahoo.com) if you'd like us to help organize a special experience in Chartres or if you'd like to share your Chartres experience as part of our monthly lectures and conversations.

Restoration efforts of the North Transept of the Cathedral has continued and is now scheduled to be completed by the first quarter of 2025. AFC is therefore proposing to organize a donors' trip from February 5-12, 2025 so that you can witness, from the top of the scaffoldings the last transept windows to be reset in their place after restoration and the protective glass installed. It truly is a unique experience. Detailed information on the program will be posted on the website as soon as the confirmation is received from the French cultural authorities. ***If interested in participating in this trip, please email us as soon as possible: friendsofchartres@yahoo.com.***

The Cathedral's Treasury reopening took place on September 22nd, and a group of AFC donors was privileged to be part of the celebration. The Treasury had been closed for 25 years. The 14th C. St Piat Chapel, host to the Treasury, was beautifully restored. Impressive 14th C. wall paintings, including one with the only depiction of the cathedral, were discovered once the 19th C. paint was removed, and new magnificent modern stained-glass created by the South Korean artist Bang Hai Ja was installed in the upper Chapel. The brilliant museology curated by Fabienne Audebrand and Irène Jourd'heuil gives its full value to the collection of sacred objects and lapidary, including the column-statues restored with AFC financing.

AFC's core activities in 2024 consisted of the launch of a significant cultural and educational program in the United States to celebrate the millennium of the cathedral. On March 19, 2024, we launched our first **online and in-person conference** at the French Embassy in Washington under the aegis of the Ambassador, H.E. Laurent Bili. Video-conference speakers included Monsignor Christy, Bishop of Chartres, Mrs. Anne Embs, of the DRAC Centre-Val-de-Loire, and Cora Klug-Bern, a student at Seattle University. Since then, monthly on line conferences, attended by about 700 participants, have allowed us to present and discuss themes relating to the architecture and stained glass of the cathedral and the cultural wealth of the Middle Ages. Most of the lectures were recorded and are available on our website (<https://friendsofchartres.org/learning/lectures/>). We are so grateful to the outstanding speakers from both the United States and France who gave us their time to share their unique knowledge.



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Thanks to a grant received from the Consulate General of France in Washington, we were able to launch an **educational program** with 3 educational institutions: a Montessori preschool, the Lycée Français International Rochambeau which serves the Washington DC region, and the Alliance Française of Washington. We worked with more than 250 children and adults, providing: presentations in different classes, stained glass making workshops, an exhibition of facsimiles of manuscripts, an introduction to medieval music, visits to the Washington Cathedral and an in-depth course on Chartres Cathedral offered by the Alliance Française. This educational program is to continue in 2025 not only in Washington but in other places in the United States and will include exhibitions visits in various institutions as well as concerts and lectures.

AFC granted the third Servane de Layre Mathéus **research grant** to Jean Bouvier, a French medievalist, for his research on "Comme un paradis »: Ornamentation at the service of faith in the choir of Chartres Cathedral. Thank you to all those who have given to the research fund. Its value was so well illustrated by the lecture given by Dr. Shelley Williams, our first recipient.

Partnership Agreement with the CIV- Centre International du Vitrail. AFC was delighted to sign a participation agreement with the International Stained Glass Center for the magnificent **De l'Écrin à l'Ecran project**. This agreement will allow to capitalize on the CIV-APP into AFC's Cathedral tour application to access detailed information on the stained-glass windows. Thank you to all those who earmarked their contribution for this project.

September donor trip. It is always a joy to introduce or reintroduce to American donors to both the splendors of the cathedral and the cultural wealth of Chartres: stained glass workshops, manuscripts collections, and the progress of the restoration of the transept. As a special Millennium event, AFC organized a meditative musical moment on the theme of Peace and Dialogue in the cathedral crypt, under the aegis of Msgr. Christory, with world-famous guitarists Arnaud Dumond and Elenita Romàn. AFC is particularly grateful to those who enabled this event: Père Emmanuel, the cathedral administrative staff, and CSM members. The concert was also an opportunity for AFC to thank all the people of Chartres for their welcome over many years and for their friendship. Donors also participated, in Lèves, in the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the liberation; Lèves, where Colonel Welborn Griffith was killed on August 16, 1944, after he had contributed to saving the cathedral from shelling during the liberation of Chartres. His grandson, his great-grandchildren and several members of his family were present at this moving ceremony.

Celebrating the Millennium: our Million Dollar Goal. Dear friends of AFC, thank you again for your friendship, loyalty, and generosity. As the year (yes, including the tax year) ends, it is time to make sure that all your qualified contributions are counted in tax year 2024. **So kindly send us your donations now.** As usual, you can contribute:

- through the website: <https://www.friendsofchartres.org/> and clicking on "donate" at the bottom of the page.
- by check payable to American Friends of Chartres, PO Box 5921, Washington, DC 20016.
- stock donations (*Raymond James - DTC #0725*). Don't hesitate to contact us for more information if needed, at friendsofchartres@yahoo.org, and include your phone number so that we can call you back with the relevant information. AFC is a 501(3)(c) non-profit organization. Thus, all contributions are tax deductible in the United States to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you all very much, and on behalf of AFC's Board I wish you Peace, prosperity and health in 2025.



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Dominique Lallement, President

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