



AMERICAN FRIENDS OF CHARTRES

Washington, December 28, 2025

Re: Newsletter and Solicitation!

Dear Friends,

As I look back on 2025, I see a year rich in accomplishments, marked above all by the celebration of the **Millennium of the Crypt of the Cathedral of Chartres**. The restoration of the **North Transept** was completed, and its stained-glass windows now glow once again with extraordinary light. Our cultural program flourished, strengthening learning and friendship through monthly video lectures, while our partnerships and educational initiatives continued to grow.

My heartfelt thanks to each one of you who enabled us to achieve our goals: our generous donors, devoted volunteers, faithful friends, and committed Board members who make American Friends of Chartres such a dynamic organization. Thanks to your support we were able to meet our **\$500,000 commitment** toward the restoration of the transept windows and to sustain both the conservation of the cathedral and our cultural programs throughout the year.

Highlights of the year 2025!

Photos and recordings on our website – www.friendsofchartres.org

Completion of the North Transept.

After nearly two years of meticulous work, the restoration of the **North Transept** was completed in August 2025. The transformation is striking. Those who were able to climb the scaffolding witnessed firsthand the remarkable skills of the restorers. The transept is now resplendent, its stained-glass windows once again legible and, as Laura Hollengreen beautifully noted, *“electrifying in their clarity and brilliance.”* The renewed dialogue between stone and glass powerfully echoes the intentions of the cathedral’s medieval builders.

Cultural and Educational Programs

We inaugurated the year with an event of great significance: the **medal ceremony** at the French Consulate General in Boston honoring **Madeline Caviness**, AFC’s longtime adviser and world-renown medievalist. Madeline was named *Officier des Arts et des Lettres* in recognition of her lifelong scholarship on Chartres and other medieval buildings and of her generous commitment to the conservation of French heritage. We thank her warmly for her enduring inspiration.

Under the coordination of **Claire Simon**, our *lecture series* continued to attract an average audience of eighty participants per session, exploring diverse aspects of the cathedral’s history and rich and meaningful interior and exterior decors. With renewed support from the Consulate General of France in Washington, we expanded our educational programs with schools in the Washington, DC area, doubling participation among first- and seventh-grade students. The stained-glass works created by the seventh graders were exhibited for a month at Bonjour Books, a French bookstore near Washington.

To complete AFC’s contribution to the celebration of the millennium of the cathedral, we partnered with the **Maison Albertine DC** and **the DC Duke Ellington School of the Arts**, and organized on July 17, 2025 a magnificent concert in Chartres Cathedral by **The Vocal 5**: five high-school students entering their senior year. Attended by several hundred people from Chartres and vicinity as well as visitors, the singers performed a deeply moving concert under the direction of **Dr. Danielle McKay** whose artistry and carefully designed program carried a powerful message of hope, harmony, and friendship between France and the United States. We are grateful to the staff and clergy from the Cathedral and from the Ministry of Culture who facilitated the concert.

Partnerships

Building on work begun in 2024, we strengthened partnerships in the United States with Maison Albertine DC, several Alliances Françaises, educational institutions, and cultural organizations. New collaborations were launched with the Federation of Alliances Françaises, the Alliances Françaises of Miami and Chicago, and community organizations in Washington, DC.

In Chartres, we continued close collaboration with the **DRAC Centre-Val de Loire** and **Chartres, sanctuaire du Monde**. Our support of the **Centre International du Vitrail (CIV)** culminated in the release of the French version of its stained-glass APP in November, with the English version forthcoming. We also developed new partnerships

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PROJECT &
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Claire-Noëlle Simon

TRUSTEES,
ADVISORS,
FOUNDING MEMBERS

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





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with the **Municipality and Médiathèque of Chartres**, and with the **Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (IRHT)** in Paris. These collaborations have expanded AFC's reach and strengthened the impact of our mission.

Donors' Trip to Chartres

Our February donors' trip offered a final opportunity to visit the North Transept up on the scaffoldings and observe the restored windows up close, including the application of gold leaf on the keystones. Guided by experts from the DRAC, participants gained insight into the complexity of the conservation process and the discoveries it enabled. Additional highlights included tours of the crypt, the treasury, the roof, medieval manuscripts at the Médiathèque, the Ateliers Lorin stained-glass workshop, and a visit to the newly reopened **Notre-Dame de Paris**.

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Looking Ahead: AFC's 20th Anniversary!

In December 2025, American Friends of Chartres marks **20 years** since its founding. Over two decades, AFC has raised more than **\$1.5 million** for the conservation of stained glass, sculpture, and painting, while developing a robust cultural and educational program.

To celebrate this milestone, we are planning events in the United States and in Chartres throughout 2026, including exhibitions, concerts, and virtual gatherings. We will also launch the "**Visit Chartres**" APP, designed to help visitors prepare for and enrich their experience of the cathedral and the city. Looking further ahead, we are increasing our fundraising goal to **\$2 million** to support the conservation of the **north and south aisles of the nave**, with completion targeted for 2029—the **50th anniversary of Chartres' inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage site**.

We invite you to engage with the projects that resonate most with you—specific windows, concerts, exhibitions, educational initiatives, or lectures (information will be posted on the website)—and to help us broaden our community by organizing fundraising events and introducing new supporters. The Board stands ready to assist with materials and resources.

Once again, on behalf of American Friends of Chartres, I thank you for your generosity, your participation, and your steadfast encouragement. We send our wishes of Peace in the world and an inspiring year **2026**.

Dominique Lallement, President

Donations: You can contribute through the website: <https://www.friendsofchartres.org/donate>, 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. 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.