Sanctuary Restoration Update, June 20, 2022

On June 10, the First Church of Christ received a $100,000.00 State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) grant from the State of Connecticut for the Phase One plaster repair and trompe l’oeil/grisaille decoration of the sanctuary ceiling and north wall that was completed by the John Canning Company of Cheshire, Connecticut. A mandatory 15-year historic easement on the sanctuary will be filed at the Town Hall.

During their inspection visit in January, SHPO encouraged us to complete the sanctuary and narthex restoration. They will allow us to use Canning for this Phase Two work without going out to bid, will allow Canning to subcontract others to do the non-decorative work (which will save us money), and will allow us to apply for up to $200,000 in matching funds. Items for discussion/inclusion/exclusion and costs can be found below.

The estimated cost for completing the decorative work, painting the pews, repairing plaster and painting the narthex and three stairwells, sanding and refinishing the original fir wood flooring in the narthex is $246,100. If we secure a SHPO matching grant (never guaranteed), $123,050 would come from SHPO, perhaps another $10- $15K from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, there is $15,100 already approved in the capital budget for Mr. Catalan, and currently $12,400 in the Sanctuary Fund. The church would need to raise a further $85,550 to complete the entire repair and repainting of the sanctuary and narthex.

[FYI. The Phase One costs were $250K, of which $110K was grant money and $140K was raised by the Sanctuary Fund ($70K was from the wider community and $70K came from church members). No church operational or capital funds were used for the decorative trompe l’oeil painting.]

Four steps must be taken to complete Phase Two: 1) the congregation must determine the desired scope of work and approve the costs for the work, 2) a SHPO historic preservation grant application must be made, 3) once the grant is approved, a contract with Canning would be made, 4) a renewed campaign to raise the necessary funds would need to take place - even though memorial gifts and donations to the Sanctuary Fund can be made at any time.

We are hopeful that church members and persons in the wider community will contribute to and support the completion of this beautiful historic project. Comments and questions welcomed.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Joyce Simpson

Al Jarvis

Quote of the month: “It is an important and valuable space, and its preservation is an important responsibility and legacy. An oasis …. during life’s happy and sad moments.”

PRELIMINARY, PROPOSED SANCTUARY PHASE TWO SCOPE OF WORK AND ESTIMATED COSTS. DISCUSSED WITH DAVID RICCIO (CANNING) AT THE FCCW, 1 PM, FEBRUARY 25, 2022, TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE CONGREGATION.

 JOB CONTRACTOR/SUBCONTRACTOR ESTIMATED COSTS

1. PAINT APSE AND WALLS CANNING $196,800 (2023)

 (DECORATIVE TROMPE L’OEIL)

1. PAINT PEWS CANNING/CATALAN $25,000 (2022/23)
2. PAINT NARTHEX

AND STAIRWELLS CANNING/CATALAN $18,300 (2022/23) (2022/23)

1. REMOVE TILES AND REFINISH FIR

WOOD FLOOR IN THE NARTHEX CANNING/SULLIVAN $6,000 (2022/23)

 SUBTOTAL: $246,100

Removal of front and back pews to make more space and better meet ADA and Fire Department regulations might be undertaken with a future grant from Preservation CT. ($9k)