

Our Story Part IV

Chapel Part 2

Although the new church's architect, Harold C. Whitehouse, lived in Spokane and graduated from Cornell in upstate New York, he had grown up in a city proximate to Boston where some of St. Peter's most artistically significant decorations and furnishings were designed and made. Among the decorations with a Boston provenance are the stunning stained-glass windows by Charles J. Connick Studios. Rendered in intense medieval blues and reds the windows illuminate--physically and metaphorically--the nave, chancel, baptistry and chapel with biblical stories, figures and symbols associated with those to whom the windows are dedicated.

Two of the Chapel of St. Michael and All Angels' windows, flanking either side of the altar, are dedicated to the memory of Ruth Kane Crum (1914-1943) who died of a ruptured ectopic pregnancy while vacationing with her husband and six-month old daughter in Costa Rica from their home in Panama. The southeast window depicts, at its top, the archangel Raphael who protects travelers and probably alludes to the Crums' living thousands of miles from Helena. In that window's lower right corner, a young woman playing a lute likely references Ruth's cello studies at Minneapolis' MacPhail School of Music. The archangel Uriel, whose Hebrew name means "God is my light" and who holds a rayed orb that emits God's truth, is the southwest memorial window's subject.

The northwest window depicting the archangel Gabriel is dedicated to the memory of Rev. Richard Whitehouse (1862-1926) who, like its lily-carrying subject, was a messenger of God in his decades-long service to congregants in the Black Hills, Walla Walla, Darby, St. Ignatius and Thompson Falls. A native of Birmingham, England, Rev. Whitehouse's last call was as rector at St. Paul's in Hamilton. (He is no known relation to architect Whitehouse.)

The window at the center of the chapel's west wall is dedicated to the memory of Major Archibald A. Cabaniss (1859-1925), a California native, whose Montana ties included marrying a Fort Benton resident in 1888 and his posting at Fort Missoula from 1903-1906. Given his career, it is fitting that St. Michael, armed with a sword, is the subject of his memorial window donated by his sister-in-law, Leonora Bowers, one of St. Peter's most engaged parishioners during its design and construction phases.

Other objects in the chapel that embody the Arts and Crafts movement principles of honesty in materials and process include the circa 1970 sculpture of Our Lady of Walsingham on the west wall. An interpretation of the apparition of the Virgin Mary experienced by a noblewoman in Walsingham, England in 1061, this figure was carved by a priest formerly at St. Stephen's in

Billings and dedicated to the memory of Mary Carmichael Snyder (1930-1969). Mrs. Snyder married at St. Peter's in 1952 and died during heart surgery at the University of Alabama seventeen years later.

The most recent memorial in the chapel is an oak votive candle stand designed and made by Reverend Herb Buckley, a cabinetmaker, to the Glory of God in memory of Katy Delano (1927-2005). Her obituary noted: "...she was involved in every aspect of St. Peter's Episcopal Cathedral, from the Altar Guild and Episcopal Church Women to Bible studies, Christmas bazaars and the Episcopal Women's annual output of plum puddings..."

In addition to the Charles J. Connick Studios windows, a second renowned enterprise associated with Arts and Crafts movement values is represented in the chapel: the Pewabic Pottery founded in 1903 by Mary Chase Stratton in Detroit and still operating today. The sanctuary's floor tiles exemplify the desirable vagaries of the hand-made in their surfaces and iridescent glazes the Pottery is known for. A rondelle composed of a cross with what may be a dove at its center and a variety of randomly placed tiles with raised curvilinear designs ornaments the sanctuary's floor.

Whitehouse's original designs for the chapel called for the altar against the south wall, an oak communion rail, and pews. Just a few months before the Easter 1932 dedication, he asked that the chapel's ceiling—that had mistakenly been painted blue—be returned to its original brown as it was in the nave. But scarcely two weeks had elapsed before he wrote Leonora Bowers proposing a ceiling decoration similar to that of the chancel with a blue and gold ceiling, heraldic shields and 8-pointed stars that would "[make] this chapel a gem." The cost of this additional decoration was calculated to be \$378.90 but evidently Mrs. Bowers' prospect to accomplish this did not materialize.

The chapel remained on Whitehouse's mind, however, as he sent Reverend Daniels his design for a cross to match the candlesticks that he likely made in his home shop and still grace the altar. Nearly a year after St. Peter's dedication, he asked Reverend Daniels to consider adding an altar and reredos to the chapel as they had recently designed ones for churches in Pasco, Washington and St. Paul and were doing the work themselves in their own drafting room. But it seems in Daniels' mind, the chapel was complete and required no further decoration.

Nonetheless, Whitehouse's vision of the chapel as "...a place of real retreat and [to] give an atmosphere that would be absolutely quiet and worshipful" has persisted for over 90 years due to the solemnity, understated beauty and craftsmanship evident in its furnishings and decoration.



Chapel altar looking south



Lute player detail in Ruth Kane Crum southeast memorial window



Our Lady of Walsingham sculpture
Whitehouse's design for chapel altar candlesticks