

Place. New York City, New York.

Nº 4148

Building. Riverside Church, 122nd Street and
Riverside Drive.

Date of
Completion

June or July 1959.
12/23/58

Persons Interested

Price. \$7500.

Profit 34% \$4062.60

Minister

Denomination

Architect

Vents

Position

in Church. Mosaic for Youth Chapel on east wall, opposite the west windows.

Height
from floor

Protection
Glass

Groove
Rabbit

Metal
Stone
Wood

Exposure

Footage

Inscription

Design wanted

Staging

Templates

Blueprints

General Information. Mosaic to symbolize the Church Meeting of the Challenge of the modern world. The theme to be a modern one rather than a Biblical interpretation. Windows to be subordinate to the Mosaic.

IMPORTANT: We are to eliminate the upright bars, and carry the baseboard across the bottom of the Mosaic - and bring the mosaic down behind the altar. (September 26, 1958). (Mr. Willis thinks it is too big a jump from the rough sketch to the full size drawing. Thinks we should make an intermediate further developed drawing. He suggests that we send the sketch and get a definite price.).

9/16/58 - Harriton gave tentative estimate of \$4200 set in place on rough plaster, put up in sections. We estimated \$1000 for the drawing, and \$800 for the sketch, then added \$1000 and suggested \$7,000 as the complete cost to Mr. Willis. 9/16/58.

THERE IS TO BE NO ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING IN RELATION TO THE CROSS.

~~*11/21/50 - we are to plan for an iron frame for the cross in the mosaic. Mr. Willis will help us get a figure, and we would supply the red glass back with gold or silver leaf, and include it in our over-all cost.~~

Oct. 17, 1957.

The effect of color and line would be to provide a sense that faith can find fulfilment and that out of darkness, God can bring light.

The creative idea is expressed in Revelation 21:1-5a.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away'.

"And he who saw upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new'."

~~But the little further discussed the mosaic which were to go~~

Mar. 17, 1958. Mr. Willis would like us to make a final study for the Mosaic, along the lines of his last report, avoiding the brown colors, keeping them all brighter, golden sky. He has a plan for a very simple panelling of marble at either side, to fill out the wall about to the width of the room.

Jerusalem

Mosaic for Youth Chapel.

O.E.S. report of his visit to Willis' office. August 22, 1958.

Svendsen and I went to see Willis, with the latest sketch. He thinks we are really getting somewhere with it. Likes the general plan, and we should go ahead and develop it.

We should be careful about the color of the surrounding pink marble, and the band brings the altar too high at the bottom. The floor line should be higher by the width of the band.

He thinks there should be more vertical feeling. This might be helped by the two vertical lines through the mosaic that he had earlier suggested; and also by vertical set-backs in the wall at either side.

The cross might set out a little, but no artificial lighting.

Might be made of wood or metal with shiny glass set in at angles to catch and reflect the light from the side windows.

preferable
surround
the theme
in front

It is s
forms and
buildings
intercommu-

and carillon bells singing the message of worship above the crowded city streets.

The color palette includes ruby of Divine Love, white of Purity, blue of Heavenly Contemplation, and gold of Achievement.

There might be broken lines, suggesting the separation and competition, the strains and hostilities that pervade phases of the city.

Broken lines might move toward the harmony of continuous, flowing lines suggesting that the redeeming power of God will bring renewal and unity among people of many classes and races.

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As the ministers suggested, we have substituted a radiant cross in place of the Christ figure in our very rough sketch for the Mosaic in the Chapel of Challenge, and are sending it to you to accompany the rough sketches for the windows of the same chapel I left recently.

Of course we are not yet sure of the exact size and shape of this panel, but it may help to start our thinking about the enrichment of this particularly significant chapel.

May 28, 1957 U.S.S. report:

Showed them the designs for the Chapel of Challenge, and they were very well pleased with them; that is, with the over-all plan, but they do not like the lion or other animate objects. They suggested the chalice in place of the lion.

I left the 3-section window designs with them, so that they could show them to others interested.

Ministers, Architect, and Mr. Heidt: "They would like us to make a sketch for the new idea for the Mosaic; and a typical Youth Chapel group of windows according to the latest plan.

Have only about three medallions in each group, unevenly balanced. Very simple fields and backgrounds of light tints.

Dec. 27, 1957

Youth Chapel
Mosaic

There are rough studies (1, 2, 3, and 4) for the Mosaic over the altar of the third floor Youth Chapel to symbolize God's Redemptive Power at work in the life of the city. In each, the cross takes the dominant position. It might be part of the Mosaic, in which case it would be made the most brilliant and radiant feature of the composition; or, it could stand out from the mosaic, being illuminated from the back, so that light would spread from it. It would have a golden tone, either lighter or darker, depending upon whether or not it stands forward from the mosaic.

In any case, it would be the source of light, and the composition, both in color and line would radiate from it, with a generous dose of light gold mosaic around the cross.

The city is symbolized by vertical lines and forms, suggesting straight highways, and curves implying the intercommunication within the city's life. Some are broken, symbolizing separation and competition, while strains and hostilities are implied in color as well as line, but all move toward the redemptive power of the cross, building for renewal and unity of classes and races.

There are suggestions of the Statue of Liberty, and a rainbow, all contributing to the creative idea of the first verses of the twenty-first chapter of Revelations.

Youth Chapel
Windows

There is a study for a typical window in the Youth Chapel (D), in rather simple leaded design, accented with medallions representing various vocations for youth in which they will have opportunity to express their Christian faith and service.

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Both mental and physical work is suggested, the student, and those who delve in the earth, as well as the family group. Their common interests are united by a decorative grapevine, suggesting the words of Our Lord,

"I am the vine, ye are the branches."

Sketch III, suggests a development of this theme in three of the windows, and in varied tones, with cooler colors near the entrance, becoming warmer toward the altar.

The over-all plan of the medallions would include Mining, Carpentry, Masonry, Medicine, Law, the Ministry, the Arts, Social Work, Transportation, Communication, Industry, Public Service, and Missions at home and abroad.

Note: Willis rough plan for Youth Chapel, altar wall in red line. The altar would be marble, also marble at either side, and a narrow border around the mosaic, a marble that we will pick out.

They want to remove the symbol of the lamp, etc - see report of 4/2/58.

In relation to that particular window - the fillet line in the window opposite the entrance (side choir), should be the same color as the field, blue-gray, and Willis would like it carried across the bottom. It should be designed and look like the other choir and chapel windows. Willis wants the outer filled line carried around everything - even the rest of the Youth Chapel windows. Willis doesn't think we need to pay too much attention to their feeling that the windows will cast too much light on the Mosaic. He is going to write them that the leaves or foliated pattern are needed on the vine, a sort of Jesse Tree Effect, and he doesn't think there should be any transparent pieces to look out of." 4/4/58

Re: Mosaic: 1/7/58. Willis writes: "...There was much discussion of your mosaic designs. The two committees agree with me that the decorative value of this mosaic as a focal piece of color for the front of the Chapel is quite as important as its symbolism. The radial rays of the designs 2 and 3 were approved.

Continue to have some lines which are not radial and not directed at the cross as in design No.2. In general, treatment of buildings should be abstract and should not recall any New York City Building.

The Committee like a design which is not too symmetrical as was design No.4. The cross on Design No.2. was preferred.

In a somewhat contradictory sense, approved use of the Statue of Liberty in the extreme distance plus possibly part of the George Washington Bridge.

All gold or mostly gold sky background was approved. All mosaic must be kept luminous and colorful and predominately warm in color which you can create.

We are now planning to use the mosaic in the kind of reredos over the altar with two light colored wooden wing pieces which will suggest a Tryptic. Altar and Retable will be definitely marble and might well be incorporated into your design.

5/2/58. Architect says, The lectern is on the right side of the altar, near the windows, and they feel the light is going to be too bright there, so Willis suggests making the upper window light, and the lower window somewhat darker, to prevent glare for the minister. - Advise Architect about color of marble at either side of the Mosaic.

7/22/58 - "...the Ministers feel that the Mosaic design doesn't have enough life or color. The Church's Mission is not to Architecture dead buildings - but to living struggling people, although they

10/27/58. Mr. Willis writes: Please note that the crescendo of light from the cold, somewhat obscured light at the back, to warmer light of much clearer color at the front is to be followed.

Note that the medallions symbolizing professions, trades and crafts are to be all mixed up so there will be no caste arrangement.

BE SURE TO HAVE LIGHT FILLET LINES AROUND EVERYTHING, EVEN ~~XXXXX~~ ACROSS THE BOTTOM. THIS IS MR. WILLIS'S PET IDEA.

The Foscatto Mosaic Company of Long Island City will execute our design of the Mosaic back of the altar in the Youth Chapel of the South Wing; and we have given Mr. Willis the ~~total~~ cost \$7,500, including complete installation at the Chapel.... We will prepare the full size working drawings, including the coloring, and will carefully supervise their work. They have asked for a Portland cement scratch coat to within a half inch of the finished surface on which to install the mosaic. The Marbles we suggested for the mosaics were -

For the Altar - Supreme Dolcetto Perlato

For the Walls - Supreme St. Charles Rose

Both from Colonna & Company, 34-46 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City 6, N.Y.

For the Border - Ozark Rouge,

From the Carthage Marble Co., Carthage, Missouri.

(See proposal from Foscatto, 10/3/59.

Contract reads: "Furnish all labor, material, tools and equipment to furnish and install complete the Altar wall mosaic in Youth Chapel, Space #325, as authorized by Mr. Harold B. Willis of Collens, Willis & Beckonert, Architects. All work shall be in accordance with sketches, drawings, etc., approved by Mr. Willis and all work when completely installed shall be entirely acceptable to Mr. Willis. All the above for the sum as follows: For MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT RENTALS (delivered to site including all charges, exclusive of New York City Sales and/or Compensating Use Tax or Gross Receipts Tax) \$5600; For LABOR and other costs of ~~erection~~ erection, \$2,000 - Total \$7500."