



INSPIRED SPACE

FROM FRIENDS OF SACRED STRUCTURES

FOSS Celebrates Twenty Years of Service

Over twenty years ago, concerned citizens and members of the historic preservation community met at City Hall to discuss the recent closings of several churches in Kansas City's inner city neighborhoods. Not only were the abandoned buildings being vandalized, the services that they had provided their surrounding communities were no longer available. In an effort to assist the older historic religious structures that were still open, Friends of Sacred Structures was formed as a not-for-profit organization in November of 1992.

Our research showed that there were several other organizations in the country, similar to FOSS, who addressed the needs of the historic churches in their community. *Inspired Places* in Chicago; *Partners for Sacred Places* in Philadelphia; *The Steeples Project* in Boston were among others attempting to focus their communities on the problems facing the religious structures. *Friends of Sacred Structures* networked with some of them, but many have not survived.

A team of qualified professionals was formed to offer building maintenance assessments at no charge to churches, synagogues or any religious organization located in a house of worship. In some instances the team assisted the groups in their efforts to locate funds for repairs. After working with over 150 congregations over the last 20 years, the Technical Assistance Team continues to offer their services when needed. They have reached outside the city, going to Weston and Sedalia, MO when assistance is requested.

Another FOSS team was formed to help educate the public to the needs of these older congregations. Over the past twenty years we have offered energy and fund raising workshops, brought in nationally acclaimed speakers and held open houses at many historic religious structures. Their mission today is to provide private guided tours, slide shows and Power-Point presentations to any organization that makes a request. Many retirement communities as well as civic and service organizations have cheered our efforts through these presentations.

Our newsletter consistently brings information to our membership about local events in the religious community. Our membership remains supportive of our mission and assists us with funds as we continue to serve the congregations that request our help. Our board is committed to helping these sacred structures keep their doors open for food, clothing, child care and comfort to their neighbors.

To celebrate the successes of the past twenty years, FOSS invites you to join us on Thurs., October 11 at 5:30 at the Village Presbyterian Church, 6700 Mission Road in Prairie Village. Dine with our board; help honor the founders of FOSS; hear the voices of David and Julie Soxman; enjoy the Rev. Eric Williams as Master of Ceremonies; and rejoice with us as we pledge to continue our efforts. Mark your calendar now and respond when your invitation arrives, or call or e-mail the FOSS office (see page 2).

Grand Avenue UMC Temple Celebrates 100 Years

Pastor Ron Brooks always has a smile on his face when you enter. He embodies the spirit of a church whose history is one of success and challenge. He refuses to close the doors on the homeless, rejoices as the congregation grows and always has time for anyone who walks through the door of the huge limestone building that is often unnoticed as cars speed down the hill on 9th street toward Grand Blvd.

Grand Avenue may be his church now, but it also belongs to the present congregation and those who went before and made its history such a unique story. It has survived efforts to demolish the building, offers to purchase it by other congregations and all the stories that make up the history of the last 100 years. The church was packed when Helen Keller spoke from the pulpit in 1915, and in the 1930's hundreds walked through the doors for radio and musical concerts or to hear the mammoth 190 Opus 55-rank E.M. Skinner organ. In the early 1900's, with other congregations moving from the downtown area, the Conference made the decision to build a new church and adjoining office tower on the original site. Kansas City architect, John W. McKecknie, designed the new church in the Greek Revival style and the church was dedicated in February of 1912. The sanctuary, with its stained glass windows, skylights and ornamental plasterwork seated 1,400 and shared a common wall with the office tower, which was supposed to yield revenue for the church. In 1939, tough economic times forced the sale of the tower and it has seen a number of owners since then. With the recent return of downtown residents the church is growing again and continues to be a vibrant source of help to the homeless.

Join the congregation and FOSS as they celebrate the occasion on Sunday, October 7th, from 3-5 p.m. Hear about their unique and colorful history from Bill Worley, Kansas City historian & History Professor at MCC-Blue River; discover the many ministries that Grand Avenue has supported with Pastor Brooks; wonder at the recent renovation headed by artist and architect Paul Helmer and listen to the romantic tonal sounds of the huge organ as you enjoy some refreshments. This special event is open to the public, free of charge and will offer a Sunday afternoon of special entertainment. Call Jane Ramsey , History Committee Chairman at 816-804-3725 for more information.

Centennial United Methodist Church Celebrates Its History

Sometime before 1880 a small group of African Americans met with the hope of forming a church, a goal which was realized and resulted in the formation of what was then called Asbury Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church. From 1880 until 1906 the congregation, led by ten charter members, met at 1918 Cherry Street. By 1906 the Cherry Street property was sold and the church merged with Burns Chapel, 11th and Highland, and the newly organized congregation located at

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Web site: www.fosskc.org

Board Members serve as members of the Communication, Executive, Technical Service, and Finance Committees.

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its current address, 19th and Woodland, changing the name in March of 1907 to Centennial United Methodist Church.

On that site, the original small stone building was razed and replaced by the neo-classical, two story structure of limestone and concrete veneer built in 1928 and now included in the 18th & Vine Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. During church renovations in 1979 a one story wing with gable roof was added to the south façade. More recently an elevator was installed, with maintenance and improvements continuing until the present. FOSS Technical Services Team has assisted with evaluations and recommendations.

After a long succession of ministers over many years, the Rev. David A. Gilmore was appointed its twentieth pastor, following the Rev. Dr. Emanuel Cleaver, who served from 2004 until 2008. Observing his fourth anniversary in July of this year, the Rev. Gilmore oversees a variety of worship forms and outreach programs.

In the spirit of its long tradition, Centennial UMC members celebrated their anniversary on the third Sunday in March of this year, an observance which has become an annual affair. The church remains an important presence for its neighbors as well as an ongoing influence in the Kansas City Metropolitan area.

Max Sherman Is Recent Addition To FOSS Board



Max Sherman is a project manager with Segra, Inc., a power engineering firm in Overland Park, KS. He has over 35 years of experience in the electric power industry, including serving as Vice President, Strategic Initiatives at Aquila, Inc., as Vice President – Project Development and Senior Director with Aquila Merchant Services responsible for developing two power plants built in Missouri and Mississippi; oversight

of nuclear power plant construction in Mississippi while at Entergy Services; asset management of two power plants in Arkansas while at Entergy Power, Inc.; helping develop power marketing businesses in one utility and two utility affiliates; and as a components engineer on a breeder reactor project in Oak Ridge, Tennessee while employed by Commonwealth Edison (now Exelon). Present assignments include leading design teams for power and industrial projects.

Mr. Sherman is a graduate of UCLA and the University of Wisconsin, with MS degrees in metallurgy and nuclear

Recent Addition to FOSS Board, Continued to page 4

Yes, I want to become a Friend of the Friends of Sacred Structures

All members receive a periodic newsletter, invitations to special events and discounts for workshops and events.

Congregational members also receive technical assistance, information and referrals.

- Friend – \$50
- Partner – \$100
- Congregation Partner – \$150
- Corporate Partner – \$200
- Sponsor – \$300
- Patron – \$500
- Sustaining – \$1,000

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- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities with FOSS

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Friends of Sacred Structures
5960 Dearborn, Ste. 215
Mission, KS 66202

Friends of Sacred Structures is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt agency. All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you for your generous support

An organization dedicated to the preservation of older and historic religious structures for active community use. FOSS: Supporting Vital Neighborhood Needs

Friends
of Sacred
Structures



5960 Dearborn, Suite 215
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Recent Addition to FOSS Board, *continued from page 3*

engineering. He is a former Chairman of the Louisiana Nuclear Society and a former member of several committees in the Southwest Power Pool, a regional electric reliability council.

Mr. Sherman's past community activities include volunteering at a number of rehab and construction sites in the Kansas City area (Habitat for Humanity, Community LINC), hurricane relief on the Gulf Coast after Katrina, flood relief in Iowa after the 2008 floods, and on church construction in Ciudad Espana, Honduras. He is a member of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS, leads the Saturday crew of that church's Housing and Construction Ministry, and co-leads an Economic Development Ministry seeking to assist in revitalizing a portion of the Kansas City urban core.

With his wife, the former Miss Diane Lowe of Clinton, TN, Mr. Sherman lives in Overland Park, KS. They have two children, one married and residing near Ann Arbor, Michigan, the other in Seattle, Washington.

SAVE THE DATE:

FOSS TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
OCTOBER 11, VILLAGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(details on page 1)