

Welcoming Light

Bell Spire, Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver

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The new bell spire at Christ Church Cathedral will be a beacon for the community: living light that reinforces the identity of the Cathedral as a community partner open and responsive to change. This welcoming presence extends to the surrounding city and invites connection to the light of the Holy Spirit. The message of Christ Church Cathedral is expressed in the spire – a meeting place of land, sea, sky and bell chime.

Following a thread that goes back to medieval glass, and more recent historical images such as Holman Hunt's "Light of the World," the art glass brings windswept candlelight to the spire, and highlights the Cathedral's role as guide to congregation and community. A colour palette of opal red, blue, gold, green and violet stand in contrast to the white dichroic glass and black tower structure. The materials and leaded glass technique provide a connection to the Cathedral's historic windows.

The spire is literally a lighthouse and brings a deep connection to the history of the Cathedral and the port city it resides in. This new lighthouse will shine out as a constant reminder of God's presence – the light of all people. At the top of the spire the light is transformed into intertwined trees, evoking trees of life - whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

The art glass for the spire weaves colour and light through the existing framework, with flowing shapes that surround the bells then open up to reveal and frame them. The opal, transparent and dichroic glass gives the spire a lively shimmering surface like that of light on water. This effect is present even on overcast and rainy days.

Dichroic glass has the unique ability to both reflect and transmit sunlight, while producing vivid, highly visible colours. The "shimmer effect" will come about when the transformed sunlight plays across the fins and the inside of the tower, changing through the days and through the seasons. *Welcoming Light* is an invitation to Christ Church's community and a message: *"The light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never mastered it."* John 1:5