

Christ Church Cathedral gets its **welcoming light**

The downtown church has selected the designer for a new bell spire expected to ring in Christmas 2015. Said philanthropist and friend of the project Joe Segal: "We're going to ring the bells to tell the city that God is here." Here are the details:



THE PROJECT

An art glass image of windswept candlelight will wrap Christ Church Cathedral's new bell spire. The image will wrap the top 18 metres of the proposed 30-metre-tall spire. The artist, Sarah Hall, described the spire as "literally a lighthouse" connected to the port city of Vancouver, highlighting the cathedral's role as a guide to the parish and the community.

THE ARTIST

Hall, based in Toronto, is an internationally recognized glass artist who specializes in large-scale installations for places of worship. Other works include the Light of the World and Mysteries of Light windows in Holy Name Catholic Church in Vancouver. She has received numerous awards, including American Institute of Architects awards for the Lux Nova wind tower, a solar glass installation at Regent College on the UBC campus, and Lux Gloria windows at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

THE DESIGN

In Hall's design — called Welcoming Light — the spire becomes a meeting place of land, sea, sky and bells. Hall plans to use special types of glass — opal, transparent and dichroic — to create a "lively, shimmering surface on the spire, like light on water." As the cathedral explained in a news release, dichroic glass contains multiple micro levels of metals that split light and transmit differing and complementary colours on the light spectrum. As viewers change their angle of vision, the effect is that the colours change. That effect is present even on overcast and rainy days.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Hall was the unanimous choice from among four pre-qualified finalists — chosen from 26 submissions — by the cathedral's stained glass advisory panel. That recommendation was passed on to the cathedral's trustees, which made the final decision. "Sarah Hall has so beautifully linked the contemporary and the traditional within the cathedral," Darlene Poole, a panel member and lead donor to the project, said in a release. "Welcoming Light, as she describes her work, will indeed be a beacon for our city."

WHAT'S NEXT

Construction on the project will begin in the spring of 2015, with the spire to be completed in time for the new bells to ring for Christmas 2015. The project is funded by the cathedral's Ring the Bells, Raise the Roof, Feed the Hungry capital campaign. "It's a beautiful artistic expression of the cathedral's motto: open doors, open hearts, open minds," the cathedral rector and dean, Very Rev. Peter Elliott, said in a release. "It is a gift from this generation to future citizens and visitors to Vancouver." For more information on the project, visit raisetheroofthecathedral.ca