

Volunteers mark end of an era at Faith Chapel

It was a cool, grey afternoon when I stopped by to visit Faith Chapel on Sunday, Jan. 31. There were 35 people gathered in Faith Chapel to visit and to celebrate the volunteers on the last day before Jekyll Island Authority begins the fee-based tour program.

At 3:30 there was a mix of residents, many of whom were Faith Chapel volunteers, and island visitors who just came in to see the Chapel and the magnificent windows. Trish Clements graciously

gave the group her last Faith Chapel visual tour, explaining the history and architecture of the building, the grotesques inside and gargoyles outside and, most of all, a beautiful interpretation of each of the two stained glass windows. Trish's presentation was interactive, engaging the group by asking questions of them and they in return asked her a few questions.

Even though the posted hours showed Faith Chapel closing at 4:00, the group kept Trish going

until about 4:30. Then it was time for folks to sign the guest book and make their way outside. Many of the guests gathered on the front steps for a photo. It was a sad moment when Trish took down the "Open 2:00-4:00" sign and prepared to lock the door one more time.

Monday, Feb. 1, JIA began charging \$5 for entry to the Chapel from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. It is unclear what \$5 will get you, but they promise a "professional interpretation." What I expect is a canned, scripted speech by a staff person who could care less about Faith Chapel and is just doing a job. How much will they know about the window details and the story behind the ram's head grotesque? While the presentations done by the volunteer sitters may not have been perfectly scripted (and thus not "professional"?) they were presented in a warm and loving manner by someone who really

cared about Faith Chapel. The volunteers deserve a standing ovation for giving their time to this lovely building.

I noticed a plaque in the narthex dedicated to former Jekyll resident Helen Yeager, placed after major renovation: "In honor of Mrs. Helen Yeager on the occasion of the re-opening celebration for Faith Chapel in recognition of and sincere appreciation of her dedication, devotion and perseverance to assure that this beautiful Chapel remains open to all. Presented by Jekyll Island Museum Association,

June 7, 1991."

Remember, if you are an early bird, you can enter for free from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. for prayer/meditation/reflection. But if you sleep a little late and want to visit Faith Chapel, be prepared to pay. A JIA letter states: "A \$5 walk up admission charge will apply to adults who decide they only want the guided tour of Faith Chapel. We do not anticipate many folks being included in this category." If this is what JIA believes, why charge the fee at all?

-Beverly Hopkins

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Scene from 2015 auction.

Friends of Historic Jekyll plan charity auction Mar. 6

The Friends of Historic Jekyll Island (FOHJI) will hold their annual auction at the Morgan Center from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Mar. 6.

The auction will feature items ranging from a two-night stay for two people at the Lodge on Little St. Simons Island, to meals at many of the area's finest restaurants, golfing opportunities, fine wines and countless other outstanding goods and services donated by area residents and merchants. All bidding starts at well below the retail price valuations. In addition, there will be entertainment by Eddie Pickett, snacks and a cash bar for guests. Admission is free.

Beyond the hundreds of items and services on sale, the auction has grown to become a true social event where long-time friends meet and greet and many new friendships are born.

FOHJI is a non-profit organization that provides financial assistance for the preservation and interpretation of the natural and historic heritage of Jekyll Island. Over its years of existence FOHJI has contributed over \$600,000 to the history museum. The annual auction is the organization's primary fundraising event.

For more information on becoming a member of the Friends of Historic Jekyll Island, please visit its Facebook page or website friendsofhistoricjekyll.org or contact Membership Chair Cathy Dillon at 912-635 9414.

Thank You!

To all the VOLUNTEER DOCENTS who took turns sitting in Faith Chapel two hours a day. Thank you! You graciously gave your time so people could visit for free while you shared the story of the Chapel and the beautiful windows.

I learned a lot from you.

*Thank you all for giving us so much,
Beverly Hopkins*