

## DID UU KNOW

### Ambulatory Luminaries

Have you noticed that the numerous rooms off the Ambulatory of our church are named after (you might have guessed) various Unitarian or Universalist luminaries? This is the eleventh of several articles that will attempt to shine a light on who these Ambulatory Luminaries were and why they merit the honor of being named to these locations.

Henry Whitney Bellows, 1814-1882 (Room 3)  
by Toni Gold

Henry Whitney Bellows was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1814. His first preaching was in the South, and he was invited to settle in Mobile. "But the awful shadow of slavery frightened me away." He feared, too, that so much personal kindness and consideration might dull his sense of the enormity of human servitude. He became pastor of the First Congregational (Unitarian) Church in New York City, which later became All Souls Church.

Here Bellows acquired a high reputation as a pulpit orator and lyceum lecturer, and was a recognized leader of the Unitarian Church in America. For many years after 1846 he edited *The Christian Inquirer*, a Unitarian weekly paper, and also was for some time an editor of *The Christian Examiner*. In 1849, he was elected to the National Academy of Design as an Honorary member. In 1857 he delivered a series of lectures in the Lowell Institute course on *The Treatment of Social Diseases*.<sup>[1]</sup>

At the outbreak of the Civil War, he planned the United States Sanitary Commission, of which he was the only president (1861 to 1878). He inspired the organization of chapters of the USSC in cities across the country, and recruited thousands of volunteers to help Union soldiers. The organization raised millions of dollars for the war effort and support of soldiers and veterans.

In 1865 Bellows proposed and organized the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian churches, and from 1865 to 1880 was chair of its council. He was the first president of the Civil Service Reform Association organized in the United States (1877), and was an organizer of the Union League Club of New York and of the Century Association in New York City. Together with his parishioner and friend, Peter Cooper, he established Cooper Union, the design school that was free for students until the 21st century.

Bellows died in New York City on 30 January 1882. A bronze memorial tablet by Augustus Saint-Gaudens was unveiled in All Souls church in 1886.