**REVIEW - ART FOR A SPIRITUAL SEASON**

Art Exhibit on Display at Peace Lutheran Church through January 6, 2022

1525 Glen Creek Rd. NW, West Salem, Oregon

No trip to Europe is complete without a visit to a Cathedral or two, or historic churches. Why? Because that’s where the art is – or at least the bulk of artwork created in the years before our modern time. Art was commissioned for worship spaces, and for the private enjoyment of nobility, and the wealthy. International museums now fill the gap for we who want to see art, and a lot of it! But, art seen, and experienced in the place for which it was commissioned – a place of worship – takes the experience to the next level.

Peace Lutheran Church in West Salem, at 1525 Glen Creek Rd NW, has a unique mission in art, partly due to Artist-in-Residence Joel Nickel, and partly due to the congregation’s own joy in the experience of art. Their commitment to original art as part of their collective spiritual journey is something they share with each of us when we tour their “Room One Gallery” throughout the year.

This Advent season, as the world moves towards remembrance of the moment of Incarnation – Jesus’ birth – Christ the world changer walking the earth with us – Peace invites us to journey with “Art for a Spiritual season.” Make yourself the present of an hour to sit in the Room One Gallery, moving your chair from place to place, allowing the art of 7 different artists to touch your heart in a poignant way.

Each ‘work on display considers the biblical texts for the seasons of Advent & Christmas, along with the landscape in which life unfolds, in the land of Israel, and in the land of Oregon’. You are invited to spend some time marveling at Paula Carlson’s winter landscape watercolors, which convey to me great serenity, as well as the starkness of cold days in the woods. Larry Gross has provided acrylic, wood, and giclee prints which explore a 1st century Bethlehem, as well as the ineffable movement of the Holy Spirit. Janet Neuburg’s Fused Glass creations include icicles and snowflakes, as well as fluid platters and vases that speak of water and sky. Geraldine Goetz has created 3 images of the Magi, in pastel, each focusing on a different wise person and along with it, warm and cool hues that speak of grace and generosity. Greg Lewis has created 4 Advent digital collages, which evoke joy, hope, peace and love. Robin Christy Humelbaugh offers watercolors where the natural world encounters the spiritual – doves, and lambs, waterfall, light and fire. Joel Nickel’s signature abstract gouache invite us to encounter a ‘Cosmic Nativity’, and his mixed media collages sing out 3 songs for Advent to speak to our soul.

As the world emerges from a pandemic somnambulance, art may be the pathway we need, to remember our soul’s yearnings, and imagination.

In modern times, my visits to churches, and noticing the artwork in place there often meant enduring the same Nordic-blue eyed Jesus portrait in the hallway (Warner Salmon’s ‘Head of Christ’), or even Jesus ringed with little blond European children on display in the Nursery. It is a joy to see a modern church like Peace Lutheran move away from the pedantic on to the diversity represented in “Art for a Spiritual Season” on display now, until January 7, 2022. Call the office at 503 362-8500- before venturing out to make sure the building is open! May you be blessed with Art and Spirituality this season.

– The Rev. Patricia Wolf Hughes, BCC

*Patricia Hughes is a retired Lutheran pastor and board-certified hospital chaplain who makes her home in Silverton, Oregon. The exhibit is open Sundays. 9:00-noon or by appointment through the church at 503-362-8500.*