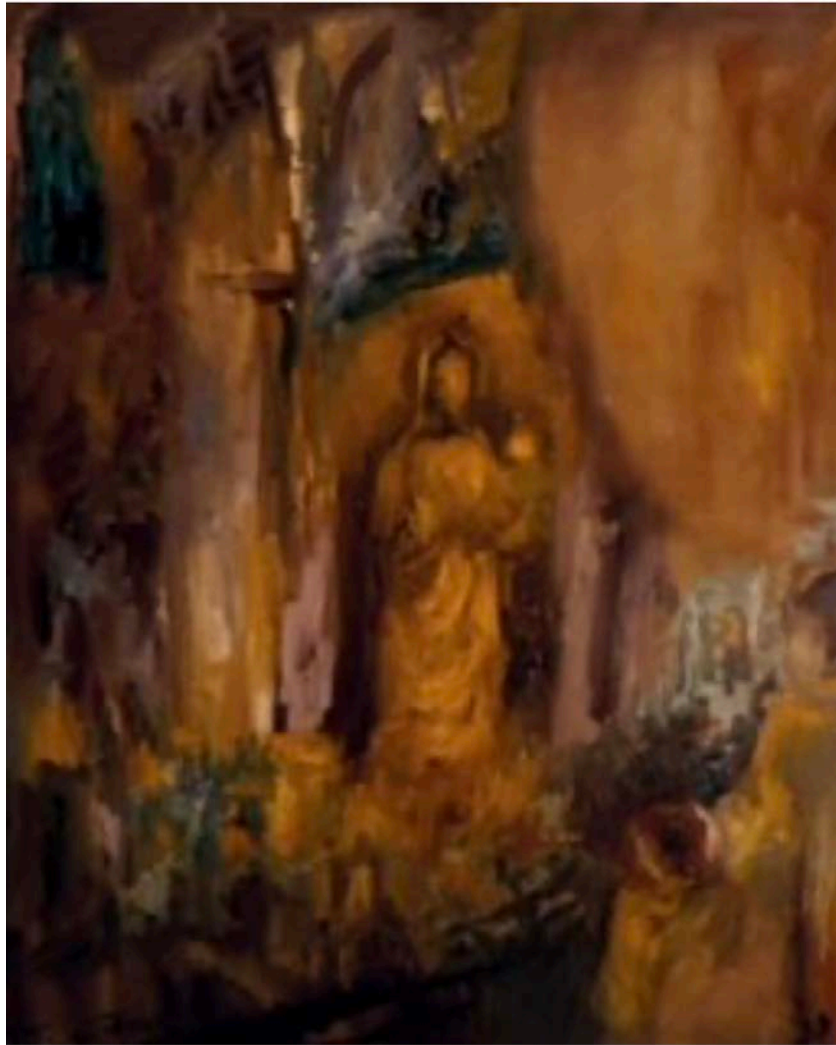


THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH & VISUAL ARTS

Christmas Newsletter 2023



*Reims Cathedral
Mothers and Children
painted by Joy Jennings
from her recent trip to France.*

A Prayer For Artists

by Frank T. Griswold,
25th Presiding Bishop and Primate,
The Episcopal Church, USA

“The Holy Spirit speaks many languages, among them the language of art in all its forms. As Christians, we are people of incarnation and therefore prepared to encounter the divine mystery in ways that engage our senses.”
AMEN

The Mission Statement of the Episcopal Church and Visual Arts (ECVA) is to encourage artists and organizations to engage the visual arts in the spiritual life of the church. ECVA values the significance of faith, and encourages those who are engaged in using the visual arts in spiritual life.

In this Christmas Issue You will Find:

- Letter from President, Joy Jennings
- Know Your Board of Directors
- ECVA's Mission Statement
- Finding an ECVA Artist
- A Prayer by Frank T. Griswold, 25th Presiding Bishop
- A Collect for Advent by Thomas Crammer
- Incarnation and Christmas - A Collection of Art and their authored Collects
- An 18th Century Bulgarian Nativity Icon Defined
- ECVA Conversations: Connect and Create
- Contemplative Painters Guild
- Renew your ECVA Membership

Welcome to the ECVA Newsletter which appears in your email five times a year during, or around each of these seasons: Advent, Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost. A fifth newsletter, Extraordinary Artists during Ordinary Time will be sent out sometime after Pentecost and before the coming Advent as we will still be busy doing extraordinary thing during Ordinary days. This year, due to timing we have chosen to create a Christmas Issue rather than an Advent Issue. Please feel free to contact me at any time with your comments or questions. The newsletter is also available in a printable version on the ECVA website.

--Jeanne Harris Weaver, Editor
ecva.newsletter@gmail.com

Your Board of Directors Are:

Joy Jennings - President and Exhibitions Director

The Rev. Robert Tate - Treasurer

Mel Ahlborn - Vice President and Secretary

Members of the Board

Jeanne Harris Weaver - Newsletter Editor

Jorin Hood

For their contact information and to find out more about them,
please go to the "Contact" page of the website:

<https://ecva.org/about/contact.html>



Letter From the President December, 2023

image to the left is St. Germain de Pres, in the 6e arrondissement, Paris.

The Gifts of God

I have recently returned from a trip to France, spending a few days in the Champagne region in Reims and then returning once again to Paris.

Throughout the trip I was reminded of our connection to the earth, to our dependence on the ebb and flow of the world around us, and to our connection to one another as the people of God.

As you know, often people think of the more glamorous side of life when they remember France; the high fashion world, the gastronomy, the glamorous world of the super rich. But, the heartbeat of France, the soul of France, is not this world. It is rather in the terroir, the land, the deep connection with nature and with agriculture. It is more about the quality of life with the appreciation of the gifts of the earth and truly enjoying these gifts to the fullest. As Episcopalians, we hear each Sunday: The gifts of God for the people of God. Take these and be thankful.

(con't next page)

In so many ways, as we partake of these gifts at the Eucharist, we can feel our connection to God, to one another, and to our earth. And so, during this season of Advent and Christmastide, I feel it is important to spend each day living the Eucharistic life, a life of grateful thanksgiving, a life filled with the glorious gifts of this season and every season as we are drawn nearer to the heart of God, a life lived in the holy presence of God in us and all around us.

These are the gifts of God.

Wishing all of you a very meaningful and merry Christmas and a truly happy New Year.

*Joy Jennings,
President and Exhibitions Director of ECVA*

A Collect For Advent

Archbishop Thomas Crammer wrote this Collect for the 1549 prayerbook. He believe it should be prayed everyday during the Advent Season.

Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (The Collects of Thomas Crammer by C Frederick Barber and Paul F. M Zahl)



Color and Form

Art delights and awakens

'Our Lady of Good Counsel' Interior, Erin McGee Ferrell

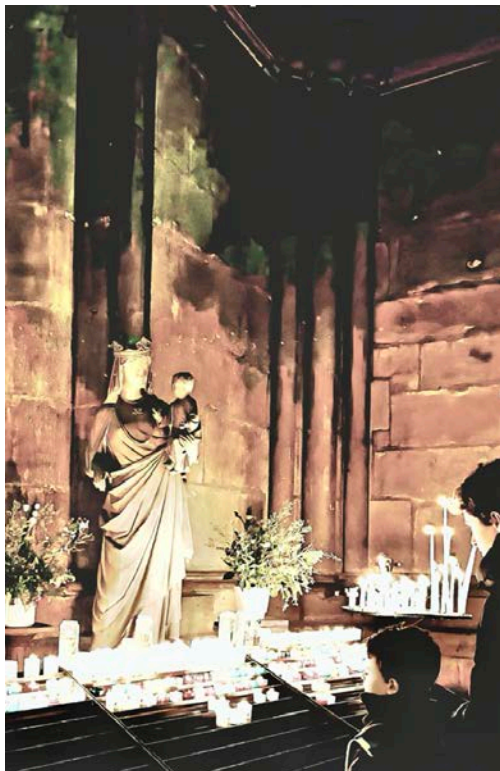
FIND A MEMBER ARTIST

The Artists Registry is a directory of artists working at the intersections of art and faith. Artists have a variety of experience levels, from working **professionals** to the highly accomplished and emerging students. [Search All ECVA Artists](#) below, or select from one of the professional specialties

- Banners
- Calligraphy/Manuscript Illumination
- Chalice and Paten Sets
- Digital Design
- Iconography
- Liturgical Furnishings
- Mosaics
- Paintings
- Renovation Consultation
- Sculpture
- Stained Glass
- Vestments/Paraments

Incarnation and Christmas

A Collection of Artwork and Collects by ECVA Artists

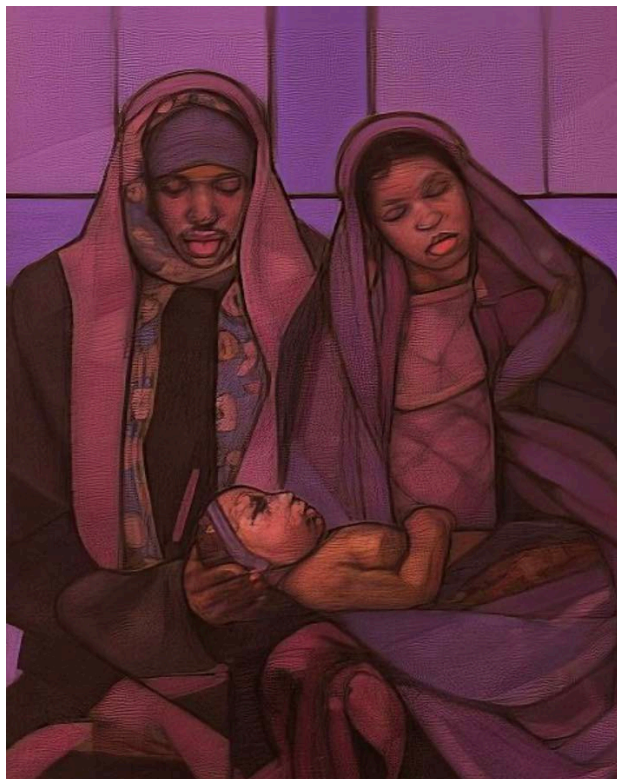


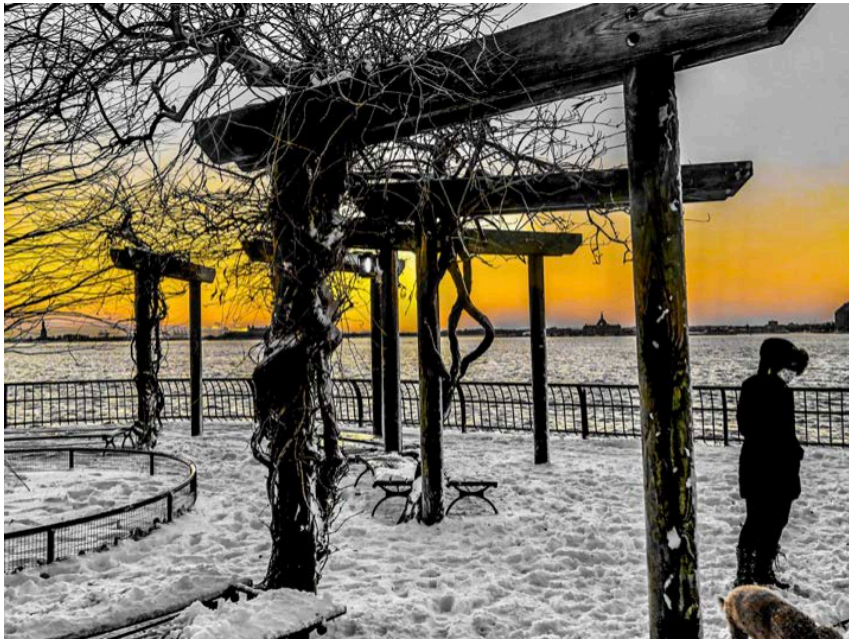
O God, who has given us Hope on this night of the Blessed Birth of Your Son, give to us courage and faith to love and serve you throughout this Holy New Year in faithful observance of your Holy Presence in our Church and throughout the world. Make us stewards of your Creation and creators of art and beauty as our humble gift to honor You and your gift of your Son to this world. In Christ's Holy Name, we pray. **Amen.**

Joy Jennings, Photo from Notre Dame de reims, France, 2023

Almighty God, let each one of us serve as pure reflections of the unconditional love Mary and Joseph had for their radiant Child, the Christ Child. Please guide humanity toward love, justice, and peace. With hope and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Janet McKenzie, "The Adoration of the Christ Child", oil on canvas, 24x36 in.





Kathy Bozzuti-Jones

"Portals"

Digital Photography

Whirlwind Spirit,

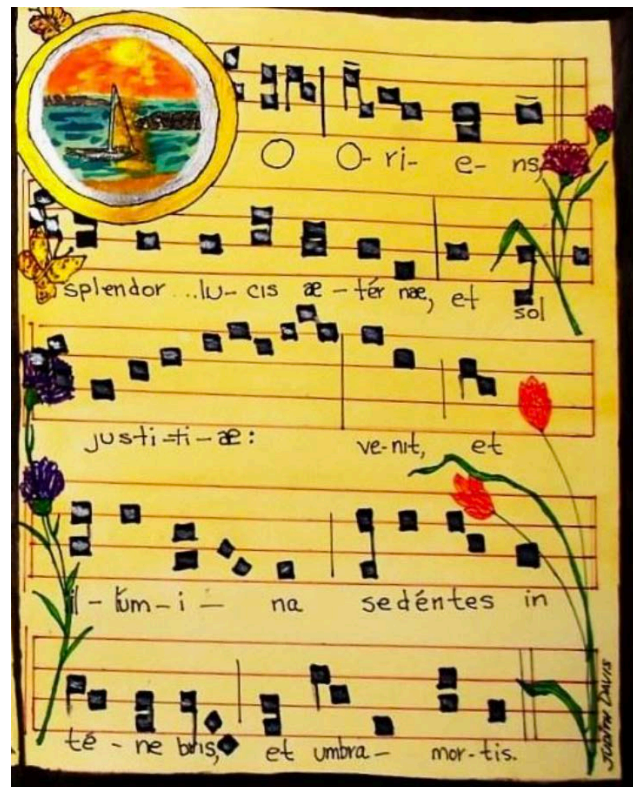
Blow through this humble house
 And make me a portal of righteousness,
 Flung open and emptied of entitlement,
 So that You might sweep my heart
 Of violence and injustice
 And incarnate, here, the Prince of Peace
 At the threshold of another year.

Incarnate Word, O Radiant Dawn, who has come among us with brilliant light to warm our hearts and give us hope, may we at Christmas be so inspired with your love that we reflect your never-ending light to warm others. Empower all of us to shine your light out into the world, offering hope and love to those we meet, through the blessing of your living among us, even Jesus Christ, born long ago in Bethlehem and even now, in our hearts. **Amen.**

The Rev. Judith A. Davis
 "O Radiant Light"

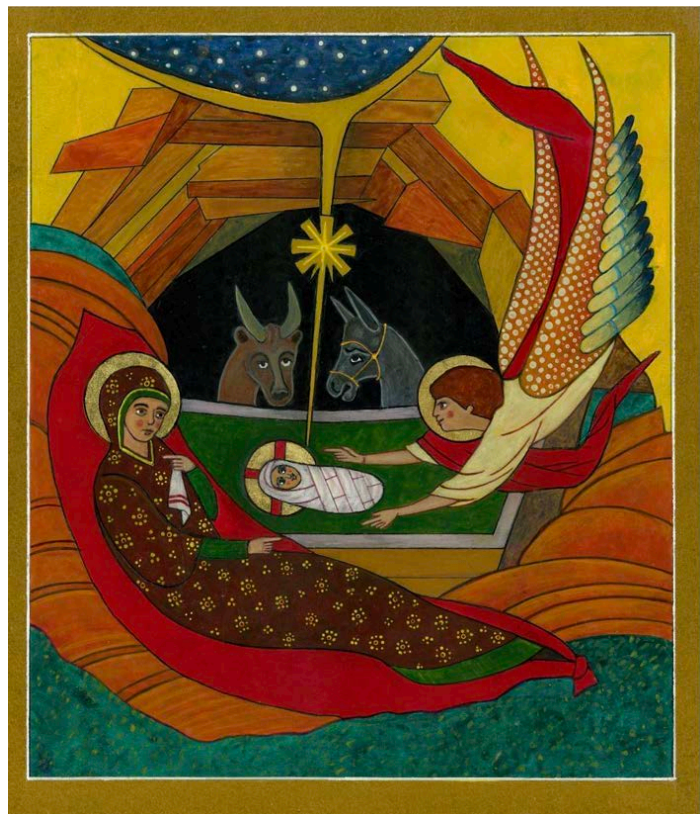
An O antiphon

Illuminated manuscript,
 watercolor and gouache on watercolor **paper**





Gay Cox
"Theotokos at the Stable Door"
Mixed media and collage
50 x 60 inches



John Pachuta
"Nativity Icon"
After Pedro Pl Kholodny
(1902-1992)
Acrylic, gouache on wooden
board



Kelly Best Bourgeois
"Lift Time"
oil on panel, 16x12



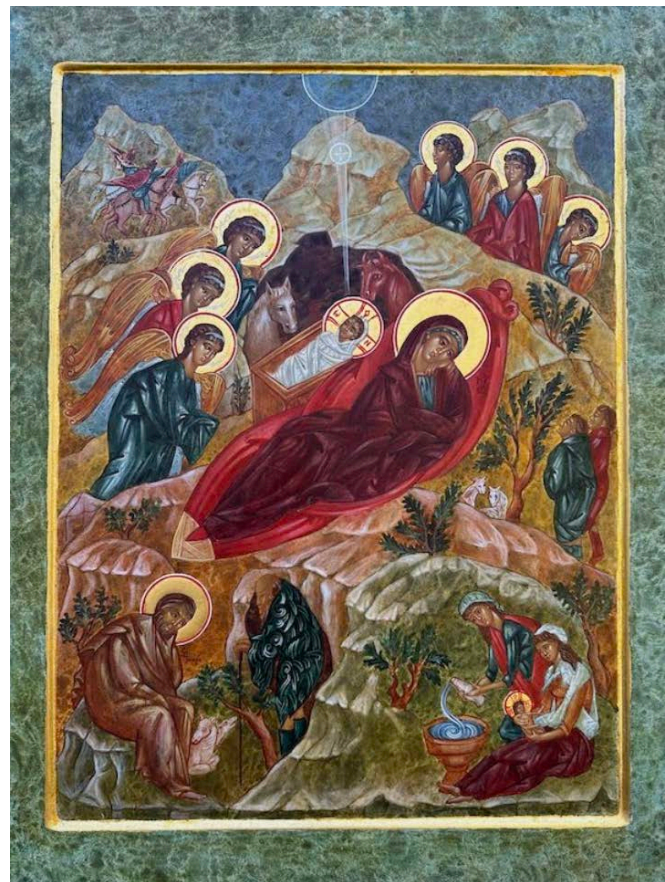
Christian Saj
"Holy Family"
mixed media
12x12



O God, who rules over all the earth and the people and creatures who inhabit it, Give us peace and rest this season from war, hunger, illness, violence, storms, and all that may trouble us. Let this be a time of joy as we remember the birth of your son to the blessed Virgin Mary in a lowly manger, surrounded by the animals you entrusted to our care. Let us respect our planet, our home in the universe, so that generations to come may do the same. Through Jesus Christ our Lord who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever, **Amen**

Caroline Furlong, 'Nativity of Christ'
Egg Tempera

O God, we thank you for sending your Son into our earthly world with the consent and grace of his mother Mary. Grant that we may emulate his deep humility and love for all humanity. This we ask in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**



Dorothy Thane
Icon of the Nativity
Egg Tempera on poplar wood



Mary Jane Miller. "Receive Nurture Release". Egg Tempera on Poplar

RECEIVE- She is a fountain of love grounded in imagery, triggering deep reflection and contemplation. She contains the Creator of the Universe in her womb, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign...” Mary of the Sign is a portrait of the Cosmic Christ Consciousness internalized in her being. Mary stares out in silence, knowing, a female and mother receiving the fullness of joy and pain. Mary receives God’s greatest gift in human form, created by love.

NURTURE- The heart of a mother’s love for her child mirrors how humanity is called to nurture creation. Mary is the feminine energy that tenderly nurtures Jesus to become a teacher, rabbi, master, and lord. She is the icon that reminds us to love one another, to love life, and to love creation. Icons of the Theotokos remind us to be tender and kind in everything we do, think, and say.

RELEASE - The Hodegetria is a Greek title for Mary, meaning “Mary who shows us the Way.” Mary calls us to release to the world what we most love and cherish. Our wealth, kingdoms, egos, knowledge, power, security, and our very self. She is able to release the most cherished existence she has known in Jesus her son. Released for our benefit.



Judith McManis
 "Incarnation"
 Fabric, Sewn Assembly

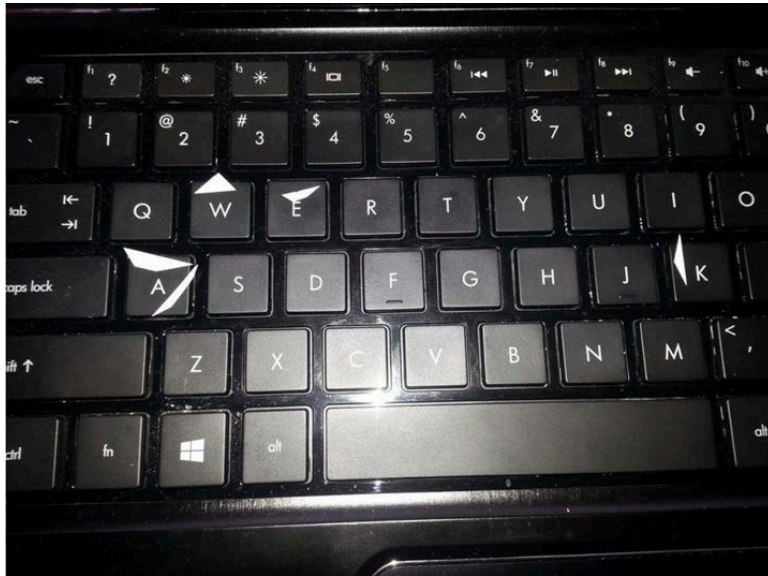
Paraments used at Christmas in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington, VT. We often have the Bishop with us at Christmas and even the mitre (obviously not being worn at this particular moment, but part of the vestments included in this set) has the rising red and gold lines, surrounded by stars.

As the Celebrant stands behind this altar, raising arms & hands during the Consecration, the chasuble rises with them completing the circle (where all the lines come together) at the moment of Incarnation - and the starburst just above them proclaims it!



Posey Krakowsky
 Nativity Quilt

Loving God who broods over us as a mother hen over her chicks, we thank you for the gift of your incarnate presence, Jesus, your son, who comes to us with healing, peace, and kindness. Be with us in this season of incarnation. Remind us that you are present with us in the light of each other's eyes, in the touch of each others' hands, in the sound of each others' voices. And abide with us even to the end of the age. In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen**



The Rev. Dr. Joyce Beaulieu
"Awake"
Photography

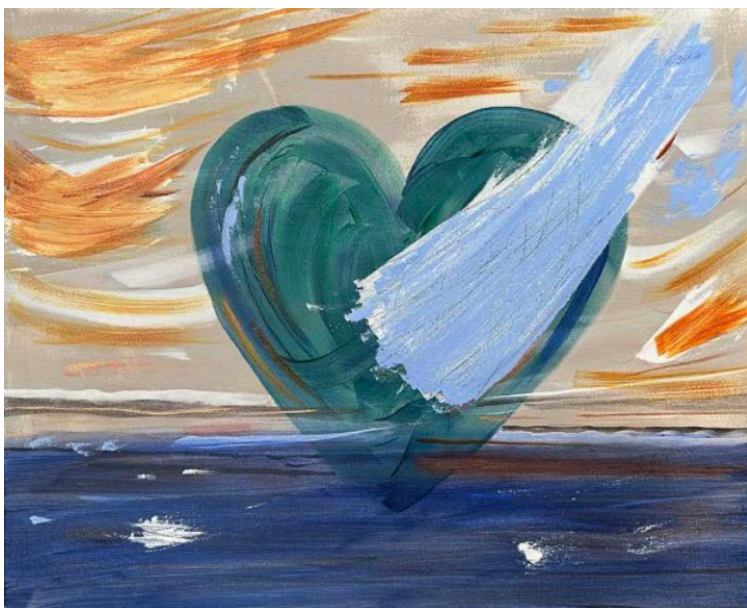
O God of Light and Life, keep us awake, open to your spirit, waiting for your grace, and ever hopeful of your promises. In Christ, **AMEN.**

O Lord, by whose determination and love all things come to be, in the fullness of time you and a Virgin named Mary brought forth the holy child born of heaven and earth, who with Joseph you together protected and raised. Grant that our celebrations of this birth may express good will towards all people and open hearts and minds to live in the love and peace from which true joy flows, through Jesus Christ who with you and the Holy Spirit stir up heaven and earth for ever and ever. **Amen.**



Richard Bellows, TSSF, Photography, Bush Bearing Gifts

The gifts are love and peace given to the world by means of a Rose of Sharon tree. The Rose of Sharon tree holds in peace and love gifts to the child and to all humanity. The tree and Jesus Christ ultimately are the gifts through which true joy flows.



Catherine Jo Morgan
"All My Plans"
Acrylic on Stretched Canvas

O Magnificent God, who sees into all the hopes and plans in our hearts: Give us the grace to trust in your plan for us when our own plans are blown away, whether dismantled by your Spirit, or by circumstances that grieve you. Bless our chaos and grief as the path we planned has disappeared, and help us follow the new path you set before us, with gratitude and rekindled faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God of infinite power and might,
Creator of the Universe,
Source of all life,
Help us to embrace and manifest
the light of your Divine Love
with each breath we take.

We ask this in the name of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is our Strength and Salvation,
who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit;
one God, world without end.

Amen



Claudia Smith
"And So It is..."
oil on stretch canvas from my Creation Series.

O Lord Jesus Christ, son of Mary and Immortal Word of God,
born in Bethlehem and yet without beginning,
who sits at the right hand of God yet is God with us,
restore in us the wonder that attended your birth
that our hearts may know true joy.

In your holy name we pray, now and ever, until the ages of ages. **Amen.**

--Sally M. Brower PhD
Creative-at-large



Almighty and most merciful God, whose will is always for peace, we lift up before you all those throughout the world who suffer from injustice and violence: for those killed, wounded, or grieving; for Ukrainians, Palestinians, and Israelis; for the peoples of Myanmar and Sudan; for the women and girls of Afghanistan and Iran; for people in our own divided country. We beseech you to cast your mantle of blessing over all this sad and war-torn world and be yourself the Herald of Peace: in Jerusalem, in Gaza, and in every city and town and countryside. All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Lord and Prince of Peace. **AMEN**

Margaret Adams Parker,
“Bedouin Christ Child and Mary”
sketch for Jerusalem Triptych
acrylic on paper, 2023

Amy Bright Unfried, Nativity,
Bronze using the lost wax
method, 6 inches tall



Jaroslaw Gamrot
The Dawn
Acrylic on board
31-16

**Almighty Father, Creator of heaven and earth,
in the fullness of time you have sent your Son,
recognized as the Light to the world, to guide us
and sanctify our lives. Grant that illumed by this
Light, we may recognize and contemplate your
love in all the creation. And after our journey of
faith, may we rejoice for ever in your presence,
with Mary mother of your Son, and all the
saints, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**



Alisa E. Clark
He Is Alive
Photography

You are alive: revealing Yourself in all things. Be everywhere at once- in everything around us. Let us notice You extraordinarily in the ordinary. Reveal glimmering glimpses of Your glory in unexpected things. Make it so we can't possibly overlook Your presence. Through God made human for us. **Amen.**



Terry Gay Pukcttt
Santo Nino de Atocha

An 18th Century Bulgarian Nativity Icon Defined

I purchased this reproduction, while living in Sofia, Bulgaria. Zvete Pentcheva created this icon after the original icon from the 18th century, created perhaps at the Rila Monastery high in the Rhodope Mountains of southwestern Bulgaria. Icons are symbols of faith or windows to the divine world to aid a person in becoming more mindful in prayer, meditation and life. They are a visual language of spiritual realities. An icon is free from space and time as you will see with this icon which brings together events from different times. —Jeanne Weaver

In the icon, The Nativity, an 18th c. icon from Bulgaria, the theme is visually interpreted. It blends together Saint Joseph's doubts with the gifts of the Magi and David as a Shepherd. It is filled with symbols of faith.

At the center, Mary kneels by Jesus, who is lying in a manger. Jesus came to offer us spiritual food for our souls. The cave in which they are housed is the area just outside the animal shelter. The cave and the manger foreshadow the death of Jesus.

The sharp pointed rocky atmosphere denotes the cruel state of the world into which Christ is born. At the same time those stepping stone mountains are known in iconography to be steps to heaven.

Jesus is wrapped in swaddling cloth, which are strips of fabric that allowed

for only sections to be removed if dirty. The swaddling cloth also foreshadows His burial Shroud, also strips of cloth.

High in the sky is the Heavenly Disc Star with three rays representing the Trinity. The middle ray rests on Jesus. (con't next page)



(con't from page 15)

In the upper left, the Multitude of Angels praise God saying ““Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.” (Luke2:14)The upper right depicts the Angel of the Lord speaking to the Shepherd saying “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people.” (Luke 2:10-14)

The ox and the donkey date back to the 4th century as Christian symbols which represent total opposites - heaven and earth, pure and impure, Jew and Gentile - all created in the person of Jesus. “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”(Eph 2:14)

In this icon the Magi are shown to have arrived at Bethlehem and are offering their gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh for a King born so humbly.

On the lower right David sits at the Tree of Jesse, showing that, as promised, Jesus is a descendent of the line of David. David is shown as a young shepherd before he becomes King (Isaiah 11)

And for the sheep, We are the sheep and we are to follow him as our Lord and Savior and listen for his voice. “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27).

On the lower left, Joseph is depicted with a halo indicating his sanctity. He looks perplexed as the devil has appeared and is tempting him as if saying, if this was the son of God, he would not be born in such a lowly status. Matthew tells us that the Angel of the Lord appears to Joseph and explains Jesus’ divinity. Joseph depicts how very difficult it is to have unconditional faith in God.

The icon and its symbolism go far beyond the scene we all know. (Mat 1: 19-25)

On behalf of the board I wish to thank Jorin Hood and Sally Brower, curators of our most recent exhibit for their work and time creating a first class exhibit and introducing ECVA to short- film productions. We look forward to more such exhibits in the future. As always we are thankful to John Rollins for his work to publish our exhibits on our website. We are looking to new and wonderful works through ECVA's exhibits, Conversations, and Contemplative Paintings in the coming year. We also look forward to new members and an active membership in 2024. In the New Year introduce ECVA and all it offers to an artist friend.

Watch for the release of our new exhibit, Holy Presence, in January.

--Jeanne Weaver
Newsletter Editor

2023 SUPPORTING + SPONSORING MEMBERS

ECVA Depends On Your Support

ECVA gives thanks for the generosity of all of our members - your member fees help to fund ECVA programming for ECVA Exhibitions, the Artist Registry, and ECVA Conversations. We extend special thanks to our Supporting and Sponsoring artists who choose to fund ECVA through their membership at the \$50 and \$100* levels:

David Allen
Jimpsie Ayres
Geraldine Benfante
Kelly Best Bourgeois*
Elizabeth de Sherbinin
Kay Deffenbaugh
Jaroslaw Gamrot*
Lynne Grifo
Posey Krakowsky
Ann James Massey
Pat Merriman
Maxine Mueller
Margo Nagle
The Illuminators of St. Mary's, Phoenix
Jack Pachuta
Margaret Adams Parker*
Claudia Smith
Melissa Strickler
Lisa Thorpe

To renew your membership, step up your member level, and make a donation, visit The Artist Registry <https://theartistsregistry.camp7.org/page-289528> ECVA, Episcopal Church and Visual Arts, is a 501(c)3 Corporation.

CONNECT + CREATE

ECVA Conversations 2023 and 2024

“The Holy Spirit speaks many languages, including the language of art in all its forms.”

- Frank Tracy Griswold (1937-2023), 25th Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church
-

When Mrs. Phoebe Griswold gathered artists together in 2000, her vision was to form an organization that would encourage the visual arts in the life of the Episcopal Church. Today, almost 24 years later, ECVA continues to explore ways to fulfill Mrs. Griswold’s initial vision.

The 2023 ECVA Conversations program offered ECVA members a variety of opportunities to listen, learn, share, and reflect on art-making and on the call of the artist of faith. Each session was a richly creative session filled with color and form and insights:

Alisa Clark - Painting Memories

Jeanne Weaver - The Power of Creating a Series

Posey Krakowsky - Spirit Driven Stitching

Jorin Hood and Sally Brower - Storytelling with Smartphone Video

All Members - Summer Open Studio

Mel Ahlborn - Practice the Presence of God in Your Art

Lynn Underwood - Spiritual Connection in Daily Life

Image: Jeanne Weaver, from “The Power of Creating a Series”



The 2024 ECVA Conversations program is in the planning stages. And I’d love to hear from you! What topics would you like to see? What guests would you like to hear from? Do you have a project or technique that may be of interest to ECVA artists? Some ideas include ‘preparing to submit to a curated exhibition,’ ‘the difference in various mediums for oil painting,’ ‘finding inspiration in nature,’ ‘the perfect crop for photography and art.’

Calendar of Upcoming Events

EVCA Contemplative Painters Guild meets the last Wednesday of the month at 11 am EST, 10 am Central, 9 am Mountain, 8 am Pacific.

Stay Tuned for a new schedule of events in the New Year.

*Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year*

Visit and Join the ECVA Artists Registry.

The Artists Registry | A Division of ECVA, Inc.

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encouraging visual arts in the life of the Episcopal Church

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