

The Englewood Christian

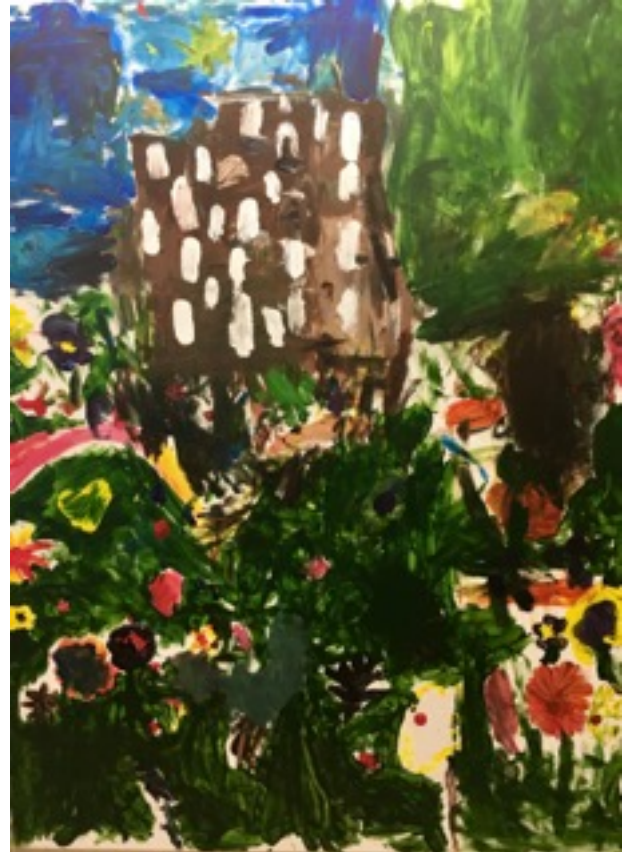
"Seeking the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God"

- Hebrews 11:10 -

Visually Faithful by Katy Lines

What do an iPhone, a cloud column, and a Star Wars mug all have in common? Perhaps as we journey together, we might discover the connection between these images. We step onto the path, first, by recognizing our earthiness as humans, connected as creatures to one another, the rest of creation, and our Creator. Along the way, though, we've forgotten our creature-liness. Though we follow Jesus, we've inherited some fantastic baggage from our Puritan predecessors. Eyes closed to pray, straight orderly pews, our Puritan worship became inwardly focused, a "turn your [spiritual] eyes upon Jesus." As William Dyrness notes in *Visual Faith*, images within Reformation worship settings "necessarily played no role; in fact, they were usually perceived as a distraction from the inward focus on the preaching (and sung) Word."¹

Our ancestors succeeded in turning spirituality inward, gnostically focused on the subordination of sacred space and aesthetics to the preaching of the Word and the "verbal dimensions of spirituality."² And for better or worse, the Restoration Movement, of which Englewood is a part, has its roots in the Enlightenment and Great Awakening, and thus has traditionally valued this piety of inward-focused worship over holistic worship, to the extent that my own memory of church includes a "chart outlining the ages of salvation history" because "only in the form of a chart could the order of the world be made clear."³ Thankfully, those charts have disappeared from our buildings, but our worship spaces remain utilitarian auditoriums for audiences, rather than sacred spaces with visible reminders of God's story.



Cultural contexts are dynamic, always changing. I asked my teenager to respond to this quote from Dyrness:

The Protestant imagination has been nourished uniquely by the spoken and written Word, and therefore, we tend to think that everyone must be spiritually and morally nourished in the way that we (and our forebears) have been. Surely these verbal means are of critical importance. But our children have been raised in a different world; they are often uninterested in our traditional word-centered media. Instead, they are looking for a new imaginative vision of life and reality, one they can see and feel, as well as understand.⁴

Brian agreed, we discussed for a bit how he and his friends prefer visual experiences to audio ones (or the combination of the two, such as a concert), then he returned to playing games on his iPhone. (Turn page to Continue Reading...)

1. William Dyrness, *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 54.

2. *Ibid.*, 59.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, 21.

Visually Faithful (continued from front)...

This visual emphasis unfolds as well within the Englewood building. A sparse worship space, with few sacred symbols has long been adequate.⁵ But with the assimilation of many younger, visually and symbolically oriented members, we are recognizing the value of incorporating more graphic images into our space. As I serve in my new role within this vibrant community, I hope to recall us back to the early Christian community's images, which gave "corporeal expression to the faith of these communities."⁶ This community believes that God has given us what we need to live and serve God faithfully in this place. If that is true, then even the visual expressions we share are valuable. We've begun using art from our community on our bulletins occasionally. We're collaborating on Advent devotionals, which partner daily devotions with artwork and poetry from our church. And our communion plate and goblets were created by Jacob Aldrich, who also makes unique Star Wars mugs.⁷ Madeline L'Engle believed that "the discipline of creation, be it to paint, compose, write, is an effort toward wholeness."⁸ If that is true, then can cooperative art for a faith community be an opportunity for mutual wholeness as well? As we collaborate on these expressions, I want us to imagine the worship space itself as an opportunity to draw us to God and one another. We want to look at the implicit theology of our space—do we keep the artificial plants? Add more banners to our brick walls? This feels like it has great potential to be both fun and formational.



Through creating, we can better reflect on the story of God at work in scripture, in the Church's past, and in our present. Images and action were essential to people in scripture understanding and relating to God. Abraham's altar to sacrifice Isaac wasn't just a mental image of sacrifice in his mind; it was mountain stones ritually stacked. The Israelites didn't simply follow a cloud pillar "in their hearts" but relied on it for GPS directions. And Thomas didn't just symbolically stick his fingers in the risen Jesus' side; his hand touched the resurrection flesh. God truly dwelt as human among humans—incarnated. "The visual experience of God's people was to accompany and elaborate God's Word to them. If one of God's purposes in the Old Testament is to prepare God's people for the actual appearance of God in the incarnation, we can see how vital the visible aspect of God's presence had to be," suggests Dyrness.⁹ If that was true in ancient times, can it not be today as well?

L'Engle reminds us, "The journey homeward. Coming home. That's what it's all about. The purpose of the work, be it story or music or painting, is to further the coming of the kingdom, to make us aware of our status as children of God, and to turn our feet toward home."¹⁰ If we believe that the revelation of the good news of God coming near must perpetually be contextualized, then for the visually-oriented iPhone generation, actual images such as community crafted communion objects are tangible reminders, as real as cloud pillars, that God dwells among us as the Holy Spirit among God's people.

5. Dyrness calls these spaces "unimaginatively empty" (22).

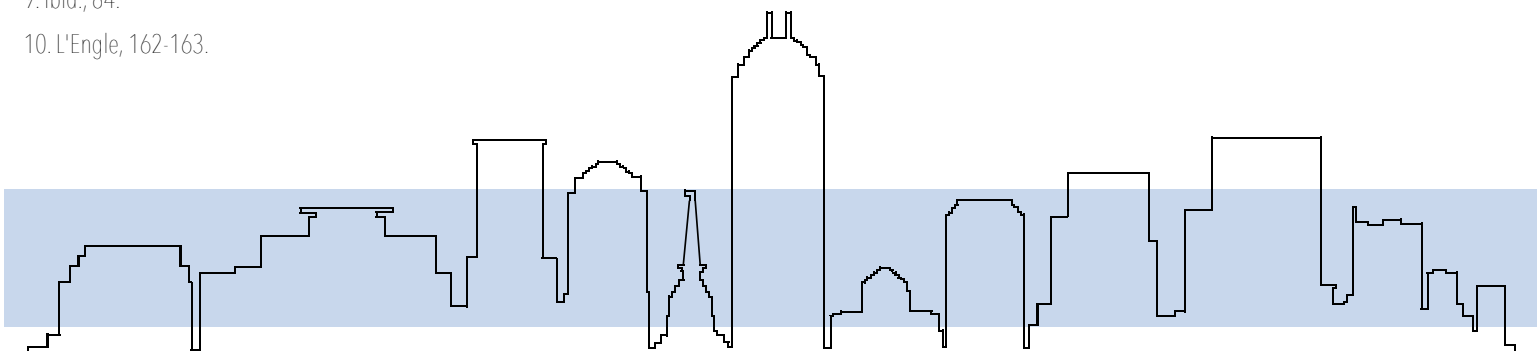
6. *Ibid.*, 26.

7. I should clarify that our communion goblets are *not* Star Wars themed, though that would be...interesting.

8. Madeline L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1980), 70.

9. *Ibid.*, 84.

10. L'Engle, 162-163.



November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			 john bowling 1 Mano De Amistad - 7:00pm AA Group - 8:00pm	2	 rachel bowling kim clanton paula jordan 3 Chili Cook-Off/ Brownie Bake-Off 6:30pm	 chris cook 4
 pauline schrum 5	 melissa benton gwen stephens 6	 becky ramirez 7	 jennifer sosa 8 Mano De Amistad - 7:00pm AA Group - 8:00pm	9	10	11
12	13 Ministry Council - 7:00 pm	14 Faith Circle - 10:00am	15 Mano De Amistad - 7:00pm AA Group - 8:00pm	16	 vanessa arellano 17 ECDC Residents Thanksgiving Meal 6:30pm	18
19 All-Church Thanksgiving Meal	 francisco jimenez 20	21	 robert plake 22 Mano De Amistad - 7:00pm AA Group - 8:00pm	23 Thanksgiving Day	24	25
26	 gage dillehay 27	 becky sluss 28	29 Mano De Amistad - 7:00pm AA Group - 8:00pm	30	31	

playing together

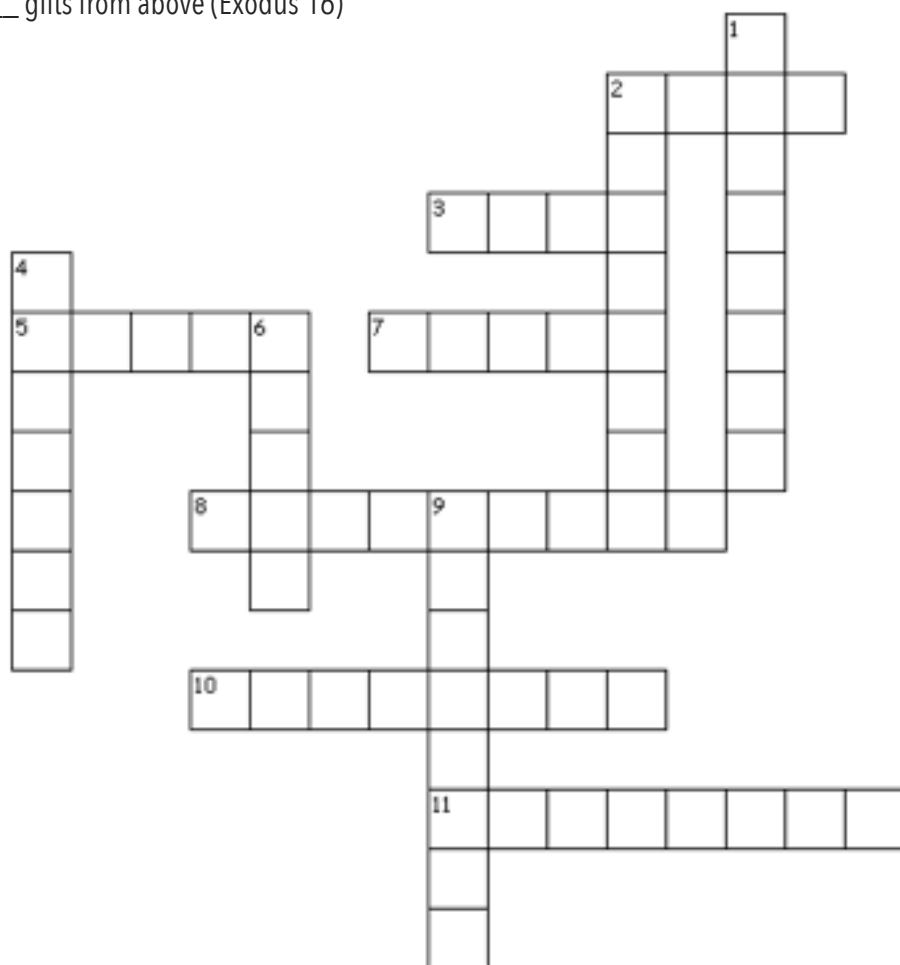
Narrative Lectionary Crossword

Across

2. Elijah's _____ in the wilderness (1 Kings 19)
3. God fills our future with _____ (Jeremiah 29)
5. God's call to _____ the temple (1 Kings 5 & 8)
7. God's _____ shines in the darkness (Isaiah 9)
8. _____ for God's Call (1 Samuel 3)
10. God _____ justice and righteousness (Amos 1 & 5)
11. God _____ gifts from above (Exodus 16)

Down

1. Stolen _____ (Genesis 27 & 28)
2. God's Good _____ (Genesis 1)
4. God provides for _____ (Genesis 21 & 22)
6. God chooses _____ for his heart (1 Samuel 16)
9. Moses is _____ by God (Exodus 2-4)



Englewood Recipe of the Month

DONNA SPURLING'S SEASONED OYSTER CRACKERS

2 bags oyster crackers - ½ tsp garlic powder - 1 cup vegetable oil - ½ tsp dill weed - 1 pkg ranch dressing

Mix oil and dressing in a bowl and add garlic powder and dill weed. Pour over crackers in a large bowl. Stir every 10 minutes for about an hour or until mixed in well. When dry, store in an airtight container. Good with soups or use as a snack.

Sunday Morning Topics:

November 5: Elijah and Elisha - 1 Kings 19:1-18

November 12: Minor Prophets - Amos 1:1-2; 5:14-15, 21-24

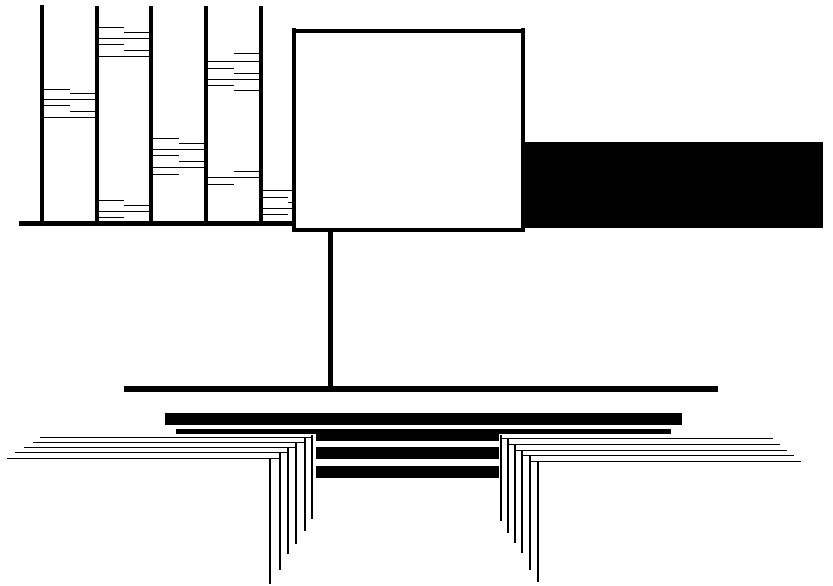
November 19: Isaiah and Hezekiah - Isaiah 9:1-7

November 26: Jeremiah and Josiah - Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14

Thank You!

"Thank you so much for your generosity in giving our East Center two wonderful baby bundles with additional baby supplies for being a blessing to our clients! Our ladies who receive these bundles are so grateful to have these items for their babies! Thank you again for partnering with us in this way. - April Wilson, Director"

"Thank you for your generous hospitality as our group stayed at your mission house in September. The accommodations were perfect for our group. Your mission house is truly a blessing for many. In Christ,
Lisa Law, FAME."



A Note from the Mission's Team

The Missions Team made a commitment this year, as representatives of all of you - Englewood Church - to be a particular support, encouragement and presence at our new Thomas Gregg Neighborhood School. Over the past 3 months we have engaged with them in various ways. In July, we took lunch to all the teachers as they prepared their rooms for school. In August, we took donuts for them for the first day of school. In September, we took some cookies (which many of you made) for them to snack on in their teachers' lounge. In October, Amber Lanman created a warm beverage break station in their staff room with coffee roasted by Gray Street Roastery (aka Micah Aldrich), hot tea, and homemade banana bread. In November Laura Dyke & Jenny Price will come up with a special treat for them. In addition, we have a list of all the teachers and their birthdays and have been taking little birthday bags to each one on their birthday and, we have been praying for them in their work each day. Wanted to share a thank you note that we received:

To whom it may concern, I'd like to thank anyone and everyone who was responsible for the very much unexpected Birthday Gift left for me here at Thomas Gregg Neighborhood School main office. My name is Jose Bello and I work in the ESL department here at Thomas Gregg and I just want to thank the person or people responsible for wishing me well on this special day. So, I know you all must have lots to do, so I'll leave it at this. But, again a big thank you to Englewood Church for their much appreciated Birthday gift this morning.

Sincerely, Mr. Bello - ESL Bilingual Assistant

If you would like to take a month and provide some kind of special treat for the teachers there, let us know and we will assign you a month. We'd love to have you share in joyful work with us.

Laretta for the Missions Team

The Englewood Church Newsletter

57 N Rural Street

Indianapolis, IN 46201-3297



This newsletter was brought to you by the Englewood Christian Church youth group; we appreciate the opportunity to contribute our gifts in this way! You can contact Amber Lanman or Jeni Smith if you have anything to submit for future newsletters. Thanks!

