

PSALMS

Reflecting as a community through the arts

STATEMENTS AND BIOS



ALL SAINTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GALLERY • SUMMER 2019

MELISSA BERNARD - melbern48@gmail.com; Instagram @melmckb

STATEMENT: Psalm 61 spoke to me. David is calling out to God from the ends of the earth. He says God has been his refuge and tower. David is growing faint as he says, "Lead me to a rock that is higher than I." This is a whimsical collage of fabrics and papers and ribbons depicting a huge rock created by paper shapes of sheep. David is standing with his 3 sheep as a lone bird flies above, perhaps offering shelter.

BIO: Creating all kinds of things fulfills me. I enjoy watercoloring, rughooking, cooking, knitting and writing. Learning about new techniques of creativity inspires me. Teaching children's art classes has been such a joy. I taught Kindergarten and first grade many years ago. I grew up in Houston, lived most of my adult life in Dallas and have lived in Austin for 9 years where my two sons and daughter-in-law and 4 wonderful grand kids live.

NANCY DONALDSON - n.donaldson@sbcglobal.net

STATEMENT: The woman in my painting was from a photograph my brother-in-law took when he visited Cuba prior to the lifting of US travel restrictions. I see much resignation in her face, but an unexpected beauty in the manner in which she adorned herself. Having seen the drabness of much of the Soviet influence in other countries of the world, I was struck by her contemplative beauty; While she appears somewhat hopeless, I wonder if her willingness to adorn herself was an expression of hope. Only one Psalm is an expression of true despair from beginning to end. In all of the others the Psalmist may express some despair and hopelessness, but at some point he always testifies to God's faithfulness, love, mercy, justice and hope in Him.

BIO: I grew up in southwest Louisiana and considered becoming a medical illustrator during college at LSU, until I found out I would have to go to medical school for a year. My recollection of my "first" painting experience was a watercolor of a farm near my hometown when I was 9 or 10 years old. I have always loved to create; I experimented with acrylics and tole painting in my teens and early twenties, designed and made Christmas ornaments, and illustrated a book on the plants of Palm Beach County. I only dabbled for a number of years after that. I fell in love with oil painting a little over 15 years ago when a friend encouraged me to take a class. I have always said painting is better than therapy, as it requires a level of concentration that enables me to block out everything else.

BECK FORRESTER

STATEMENT: I made this quiver, because I wanted to construct something I could use. It was a fun project to work on.

Psalm 18:14

He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,
with great bolts of lightning he routed them.

BIO: My name is Beck. I am 12 years old. I like hunting, fishing, and books about fish.

GUS FORRESTER

BIO: I like to draw battle scenes using pencil and paper.

STATEMENT: This is a picture of an Ancient Greek battleship that sailed on the Mediterranean.

LAURA FORRESTER - forresterfamily@me.com

STATEMENT: I was looking for a way to make prayer less daunting and with less decision fatigue. The cross was given to me as a part of a Via de Cristo weekend. It reminded me of crosses I've seen on Rosaries, which led to the idea of making a Protestant Rosary. Looking online I found different ways to use prayer beads to pray the Lord's Prayer and the Jesus Prayer or to use them to pray through a specific Psalm.

Mostly though, the Protestant Rosary has been hanging on a hook by the kitchen. I notice it while doing other tasks, and it reminds me that I am called to pray to a God who loves us and cares for us!

BIO: Sinner, saved by grace.

RUTH ANN FORRESTER

STATEMENT: The words to this song are Psalm 117. I picked the title *There Are More Than 117 Reasons To Praise the Lord* because Psalm 117 is all about praising and there really are more than 117 reasons to praise the Lord!

BIO: My name is Ruth Ann. I have played the piano for a little less than 4 years. I enjoy composing short songs and poems, some with and some without musical notes.

WINNIE FORRESTER

STATEMENT: Psalm 98:7

Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

Psalm 148:7

Praise the Lord from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,

BIO: I am a girl, who is 8 years old. My mom and dad love me.

MARY FREIBERGER

STATEMENT: Psalm 139 speaks of God “knitting me together” and how we are “woven in the depths of the earth.” I like the image of God as a great Divine knitter, stitching together all creation but particularly man with great care and delight in every stitch.

BIO: Mary has dabbled with the occasional poem and short story over the years. Although her formal creative writing has been on hiatus of late, creative expression through writing of some form never ceases to be an outlet both therapeutic and amusing! She has a keen interest in playing with words.

LUIS GUERRA – luisguerra@earthlink.net; FB: Luis Guerra, GaleriaGuerra.com

STATEMENT: My painting is part of a series that I created expressly to generate peace and light in the home. Amulets for the home, if you will.

The images are intended to serve as focal points of meditation and contemplation, awakening and eliciting a range of emotions. They are my offerings, my songs, my way of praying, of giving thanks to the Creator after coming back from death’s door. And my wish is that they will, in some small way at least, help mankind find peace.

These works are very simple images, inspired by nature and culture, that I hope are charged with emotion and meaning that comes from universal truth. *Gracia I*, is an image of the eternal dove, the Holy Spirit, alighting, bringing peace – and includes an actual poem.

BIO: Luis Guerra is a painter and sculptor based in Austin. His work is in several museums and collections, including the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Benson Latin American Collection at UT Austin, and the Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame. A mural that he created with his students at Austin Community College hangs at the Northridge Campus.

Guerra has won awards in several juried shows, including the Siqueiros-Pollock Award from the Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes; and a Juror’s Commendation from Deborah Sokolove, director of the Dadian Gallery, Luce Center for the Arts and Religion, Wesley Theological Seminary.

Guerra recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Austin’s Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center. His artwork has also been featured in numerous publications, including the definitive series on Chicano art published by Bilingual Press.

Guerra is a storyteller as well: for two decades, he narrated his “Cuentos de la Sierra” on NPR’s Latino USA. In 1984, after teaching art for ten years, Guerra turned full-time to his artwork. He began this phase of his career by traveling to Japan and Korea, where he immersed himself in sumi-e and Zen calligraphy.

DELIA HUNT - deldonsf@aol.com

STATEMENT: Psalm 93:3-4

“The seas have lifted up, O Lord,
the seas have lifted up their voice;
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.

Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea -

the Lord on high is mighty.”

BIO: I began painting in high school and continued throughout college. My major was art history and commercial art. I was able to put my husband Don through medical school and residency with my background. I love to sketch, draw, and paint with all mediums and have had the advantage of taking from several well known artists all over the U.S., and showing in as many galleries. Meeting other artists in the process is part of the reward. Living across the road from Andrew Wyeth was another.

ERIN KELLER - 2kellers@gmail.com; #emkellerart on Instagram

STATEMENT: I am drawn to pieces that have lots of layers because just like with people, they are the most interesting.

BIO: Erin started painting in 2017 and hasn't stopped since. She has three kids and one husband.

JOSH KELLER - jkeller@allsaintsaustin.org

STATEMENT: Within the scriptures, a psalm of praise often takes the created world and its beauty and uses it to urge the congregation to praise God. Here I've tried to reverse that somewhat asking the creation instead to rise up and sing out praise to God. In the end the congregation is asked to join in with all the earth, even the atoms, praising God for his playful and sometimes whimsical way of communicating to us His glory and stunning means of redeeming all things.

BIO: Josh has been a pastor at All Saints for the past 6 years. He has from time to time over his life flirted with poetry as a necessary creative outlet.

SONYA MENGES - smenges@allsaintsaustin.org; [@sonyabergmenges](https://www.instagram.com/sonyabergmenges); sonyamenges.com

STATEMENT: I paint scenes of landscape to evoke a sense of unease, between our necessary participation in nature and our ultimate lack of control in the result. We create diversions, build up shorelines, carefully manicure environments, but a power beyond us challenges our work with chaos, and we are overwhelmed by natural phenomenon. This tension between humans and nature is evident to all, but Psalm 104 tells us it is the very great Lord who “set the earth on its foundations.” It is God who appointed the place for mountains and valleys, who moves the waters. It is the Lord, who is good, who cares for the earth, providing water, food, and shelter to all who live on it, and renews the face of the ground.

This piece, Intervention II, is one three paintings based on found Polaroid photographs from the Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve in Austin. The original photograph was probably used as a documentation of restoration work in the early 80’s. The light-colored posts that break up the dark division in the land were most likely an effort to restore or divert a stream that would flood the dry creek bed.

BIO: Sonya received an MFA in painting from The University of Texas at Austin in 2010, and a BA in Studio Art from Messiah College in 2005. She has had multiple solo and group shows all over the country. She currently works on staff at All Saints and paints portraits in her home in South Austin, where she lives with her husband Austen and their two young daughters.

JENNY NOEL - noeljennifer49@gmail.com

STATEMENT: Psalm 66:1-3a says, “Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; Sing the glory of his name; Make His praise glorious. Say to God, ‘How awesome are Thy works!’” The Grand Canyon is more beautiful than any cathedral I have ever seen, and I’ve seen many of the famous ones! This painting is based on a photo taken by Claudia Springer

BIO: I took up oil painting after moving to Austin eight years ago. I am continually awed by the beauty of God’s creation and enjoy being a “sub-creator” as J.R.R. Tolkien describes man’s efforts.

MATT OSBORNE - matthew.r.osborne@gmail.com; Instagram [@ozphotographs](https://www.instagram.com/ozphotographs); matthewosbornephotography.com; Artfromthehills.com/Matt-Osborne

STATEMENT: Psalm 121 - A song of ascents - The travelers’ Psalm. In my travels, I’m made aware at the majesty that is God’s creation. I lift my eyes up to the mountains, and see that the Maker is watching over me. He protects me in my comings and goings now and forevermore. When I look upon this photo that was taken in Iceland in Winter 2016, and think of the beauty and harshness of this place, I am struck by what the Lord created and how he speaks to us through it.

BIO: A geologist-turned-photographer from east Tennessee, I began taking photos as a creative outlet from my boring life as a scientist. My day job lets me travel all over North America. I love to explore the diversity of landscape, culture, and cuisine across this continent and the world. I love to capture landscapes and architecture, I prefer symmetry and single point perspective (shout-out to Wes Anderson), and learned most of what I know from a sports photographer.

ABBY SNELLING - asnellinggirl@gmail.com

STATEMENT: Psalm 91:4 “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

In the book of Psalms, God’s protection of His children is often compared to a bird’s wing. While this is not the first means of armor I’d expect, I do think it’s a beautiful image to demonstrate his protection. Mother birds protect their babies behind their wings to shield them from wind and rain. This is how I imagine God shielding me when I face the storms and struggles in my walk with Him.

BIO: My name is Abby Snelling and I’m originally from Dallas. I just finished my freshman year at the University of Texas at Austin studying education. I have two older brothers who also attended UT and guided me to All Saints. I have loved getting involved and having the opportunity to intern for the youth group here.

When it comes to my art, drawing has always been something I love to do. I enjoyed art in middle school and taking Advanced Placement art classes in high school. It’s always been a hobby and something I’d do here and there.

JAMIE TAYLOR - jamieson.taylor@gmail.com

STATEMENT: The commissioning of “We Lift Our Eyes” was a delight of the sort only God’s clear providence can give you in this life: surprising, a little unnerving, and filled with joy, despite the serious tone. The whole project had the “glittering darkness” of Lent about it. There was a lot of laughter, and tears, as I worked with a dear friend and my former student to make a piece of worship from 6 centuries ago find a new form in the modern world.

The commission had a clear beginning for me. It was about one year ago when I heard our composer’s setting of this poem by Sara Teasdale. The impact was instantaneous. That poem described how I felt about the Psalms, how God has used them in my life to hold me near to him and sustain my hope. I don’t know that I’ve ever had so precise, so complete, and so unforgettable a moment of recognition in my life. My heart just kept saying: “It’s the Psalms. This is what they do.”

This is a slightly adapted version of the speech I gave before the world premiere on March 25th.

BIO: Jamie is a member of All Saints Music and Arts ministry. She has served as the choir director since 2016, and as a singer off and on since the first service, held in the old St. Micheal’s building 15 years ago. Jamie has taught music to delightfully dramatic teens for 15 years, sings with the Austin Opera chorus, is a graduate of the Butler School of Music at UT Austin, and a proud owner of a soprano Ukulele that she is far too fond of playing.

COLEMAN THRASH - coleman.thrash@gmail.com

STATEMENT: This first work of mine is titled "Darkness and Light." It's a juxtaposition of where sin led me and where Christ's light shined and ultimately rescued me from the dark depths of sin. The psalms repeatedly spoke to me after being confronted with my sin. My sins were before me, I deserved punishment, Christ's grace was difficult to receive, and I was left weeping knowing that only He could atone for my sin against Him. To me the Psalms are full of emotional honesty with God and I feel that the psalmist's emotional honesty with God about sin allowed me to express my emotions to God about not only my sin but His saving grace.

BIO: As someone who considers himself married to a true artist, submitting this is somewhat out of character for me. My career is centered within the confines of the cold and sterile operating room, so my love of the arts has always made me feel somewhat different than the rest of my peers. I have always appreciated music not only for its sound but also for how the artist can communicate whatever they're feeling through their work. This idea became even more evident to me as I watched my wife, Courtney Thrash, create her works of poetry. By reading her work I was able to see what was going on deep inside her soul even if she didn't know it at the time. After observing her writing and reading some of her work during this redemptive season, I decided to express part of my journey through the lens of the psalmist in order to express how I experienced utter darkness only to be saved and brought out of it by Christ's light.

MÓNICA TORNOÉ - mtornoe@gmail.com; monicatornoe.com

STATEMENT: It is based on Psalm 91:1-2:

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust.'"

In this abstract painting I want to reflect the Lord as our GUARDIAN; he is our mysterious yet safe dwelling-place. He is seen as a shadow, which implies great nearness, because we must walk very close to a companion, if we would have his shadow fall on us. His children are golden to him, therefore he protects, comforts, and cares for us and covers us with his shadow.

BIO: Mónica Tornoé was born and raised in Guatemala, Central America. There she graduated from High School and at a pivotal moment in her life, she chose to attend Law School, while pushing to the side her passion for art. She graduated as a lawyer and public notary from the Universidad Francisco Marroquín.

While in college, she continued to attend art classes and workshops, but her art was put on hold again when she and her family moved to Austin, TX where she focused on raising her two children. After living there for a couple of years, she started working with wood and was moved to begin creating art again and this time, she started to pursue it seriously.

Mónica has had solo shows in Antigua Guatemala's Ezenario Histórico, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and at Mocha Café in Austin, Texas. She has been a part of collective shows at VAM Gallery, Soul by Southwest, Mexic-Arte Museum, All Saints Gallery, Russell's Bakery, La Peña Art Gallery, and Fair Bean Coffee in Austin, TX, as well as Watson Books & Coffee in Paseo Cayala, Guatemala.

ASHER WOOD - woodsquaredart@gmail.com; IG @woodsquaredart; woodsquaredart.com

STATEMENT: Psalm 74:13: "It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters."

This piece looks at a schism in the waters, a split ocean. I feel this in a few ways. It seems macro, as if an aerial photo of an ocean experiencing a massive tectonic plate shift. And, it feels micro, as if we could cut and peel back the waters to dissect the ocean. Mainly though, it feels like navigating an eddyline in a river - that moment when fast downstream water runs alongside slow water coming upsteam behind a rock. This split of water is precarious, but navigated correctly, getting into that eddy can provide some stillness before a kayaker gets back into the action.

As we navigate the Psalms, we see David encountering a broad spectrum of God's power and gentleness. It's the same God who inspired young shepherd David to sing songs to calm his sheep, who also brought the destruction of Goliath through a single flung stone. God creates with nurturing, knitting us in our mother's womb, and He protects us as a fortress and a shield. He leads us to still waters for introspection and recharging, and he also is capable of flexing his supernatural strength over nature to destroy, win wars, or just to remind us of his power.

BIO: Asher grew up in Dallas and after studying art at Davidson College, lived in Scotland, Nashville, NYC, and Nashville again, before moving with his wife Missy and their 3 kids to Austin in 2016. Artmaking continues to be a passion of his, especially encaustic painting.

MARLON WOOD

STATEMENT: I painted a shield because a shield saves you from getting hurt. I painted a star because a star is like God - because a star shines and we move.

Psalm 28:7: "The LORD is my strength and my shield..."

BIO: My name is Marlon and I am 5 years old. I like going to the park, playing with Legos, and doing art every day.

PRESLEY WOOD

STATEMENT: Psalm 59:15 says, "...they wander about for food and howl if not satisfied." David is talking about people who want to kill him, and he makes them seem like wolves. He knows that he needs God's help. God is his strength and his fortress.

BIO: My name is Presley and I am 10 years old. I like comics, Legos, and wolves. I painted this wolf purple to be different from other wolves. Wolves are cool, but also scary.

MARK ZIEHR

STATEMENT: This was a quick one. I was definitely painting in the Spirit. It was started May 27th and I finished on May 29th. I build out of reclaimed wood from scrap piles at various Home Depot or Lowes - I'm one of their regular dumpster divers! I mention it because that's what Christ did for us - he found us buried in the trash heap of our sins and He, the Master Painter, makes us into something beautiful.

Psalm 139:13: "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb." Also Psalm 139 has always been a magnet that draws me over and over to read it, dwell on it, and now finally paint it. The baby is in its mother's womb, encased in our Heavenly Fathers loving creator hands awaiting their joyous arrival. The basket weave is first attributed to the words, "You knit me together..." and it also harkens back to Exodus chapter 2, when baby Moses was placed in a basket, sending him down the Nile, and being saved by the Princess of Egypt. The golden light cascading down into the womb is related to Job 33:4 "The Spirit of God has made me; the Breath of the Almighty gives me life." God breathes life into us at the moment of conception and sustains everyone's life all the days of their life.

BIO: According to my mother, I've been painting and drawing since I was 4. My first formal lessons were at 11, and I felt then that I found a form of expression that came from deep inside of me. Since then there was always that longing in my being to paint or draw or write.

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