

BROWN BUTTER FOR THE BLEAK MIDWINTER ■ KINTSUGI AND THE GOSPEL
PSALMS OF WISDOM AND WAITING ■ UNEXPECTED GIFTS ■ POTS AND PLANTS
EMERGING YOUNG ARTISTS ■ ...AND MUCH, MUCH MORE. THIS IS VISUAL HYMNAL.



visual hymnal

ISSUE NO. 1

Letters From the Editors

I want to say thank you to everyone for bringing their excitement for *Visual Hymnal* and making this project a reality. Around two years ago, I had the idea to create a zine (a self-published mini magazine) featuring my church community's creative endeavors. I didn't have the resources or community interest to make this idea a reality until I came to Center Point. It's my sincere hope that *Visual Hymnal* is first and foremost pleasing to God. This is intended as a form of worship—we were made in the Creator's image, and so we ourselves are creative. I hope that everyone who reads this will be encouraged to explore their own creativity with a humble and thankful heart.

Again, thank you to everyone who submitted, supported, edited, and especially to those reading. The *Visual Hymnal* team received so much enthusiasm and I can't wait to see how this grows and evolves through future issues.

Leah Shewmaker

I've been a graphic designer for almost 15 years now, and this very magazine in your hands is my biggest single project I've taken on to date! Working on one thing for hours and hours, I noticed something. Story after story, spread after spread, rolling up my sleeves and thinking about how to present these—each of your marvelous musings, this kinda feels similar to how I feel when I'm cooking. Feeding people is one of my favorite things in the world. Sprinkling salt into pasta water or caramelizing onions are my hugs and kisses.

A moment of vulnerable transparency: I have outlandish expectations for myself (hello, firstborn!) and ridiculous thoughts float through my head while I'm kitchening. Things like, "Oh, this is going to be just the best, most comforting baked potato ever," "This frittata will get us out the door on time this morning," and "They will want to be my friend if this comes out right."

As I sit in my squeaky chair at the desk in my cubby-office looking over the beautiful pieces of work from my friends, I can't help but feel that same warm fuzzy bubbling in my chest. Except now it's, "Oh, [Name] is going to be so excited to see this!" And "Oh, just add another page, this [photo, artwork, etc.] must be bigger so everyone can see these details!" I'm honored to be working on this with you all. I'm amazed at your creativity, your doodles, your meditations. And too, that you've pinned them down on paper, in words or on canvas or thread or pixels or even cookie crumbs, and let us all peer in.

Thank you for sharing these pieces of yourself, for trusting this little team here at *Visual Hymnal* to package your worship into a collection. It's an encouragement to my heart to see the things you've felt moved to make. How magnificently creator-ly, you Creator-reflectors, you.

And so, here's my contribution. It's been a pleasure worshipping with you.

Sara Davis

I am grateful to Leah Shewmaker for showing up at Center Point Church with the inspiration and energy that a project like this takes, and for bequeathing upon this magazine a fitting name: *Visual Hymnal*, a title she'd had in mind for some time. And I am grateful to Sara Davis for employing her time and graphic design expertise to bring this publication to life. What a privilege to be on the same team as you ladies.

Early on, we decided to loosely tie this magazine to the seasons of the liturgical calendar. As it happens, our first issue will see the light of day during the season of Epiphany, which turns Christians' attention toward themes like, well, light. Light that scatters darkness; light for all peoples everywhere; light that is enlightenment itself; light that comes bearing gifts of grace and truth, wisdom and faith.

Following on the heels of Christmastide, Epiphany arrives in the bleak midwinter, so its light isn't sunshine and rainbows. It's not a day at the beach. Rather, the light of Epiphany is candles, warm fires, and most of all, stars. Like the star that led the Magi across the world. Like the Bright Morning Star himself.

When we were expecting our third child, we knew she would be born during Epiphany, so we gave her a name that means "light." One recent evening, she said a funny thing to me. "If my name means 'light,' why does it sound like darkness?" I thought a minute, then offered a line from a favorite Coldplay song: "Maybe because you aren't the sun—you're a sky full of stars." This pleased her, as she had seen "Sky Full of Stars" performed by a sweet gorilla in the movie *Sing 2*. But there is a line in Coldplay's original that didn't make it into the gorilla version: "You get lighter the more it gets dark." That's Nora's favorite line.

The light of Epiphany, too, gets lighter the more it gets dark. It is bold and courageous, is not afraid to be what it was made to be, do what it was made to do, make what it was created to make. It does not shrink back, but enters the terrible darkness of Gethsemane and says, *I will do what you sent me for*.

When we announced this project, I wasn't sure if we would get any submissions at all. But as they came rolling in, I was delighted by the bold, courageous, creative work—ranging from poetry to pottery to plants—happening right here in our congregation. I am honored that you all would trust us to bring it to light.

May the work of the people of Center Point, showcased in this inaugural issue of *Visual Hymnal*, lighten your darkness. May it help you see Christ more clearly, that your love for him would burn more brightly. And may it help us see and treasure each other, too.

Katie Hautamaki

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ED WOOD

A *renga**

By Brian Douglas

The director said:
 I should be a millionaire!
 Oh so much wasted

Over fifty movies made
 Yet I will die with nothing

It is all solely
 My own fault, he acknowledged
 As he sat alone

He'd had old friends who loved him
 But their kindness was long spent

Who can be a friend
 to someone like me who has
 wrought such suffering?

Would that there was one such man!
 Relief would be to meet him

**Renga is a genre of Japanese poetry, typically written collaboratively, in alternating stanzas of 5-7-5 and 7-7 mora (thought-units or, in English, syllables).*

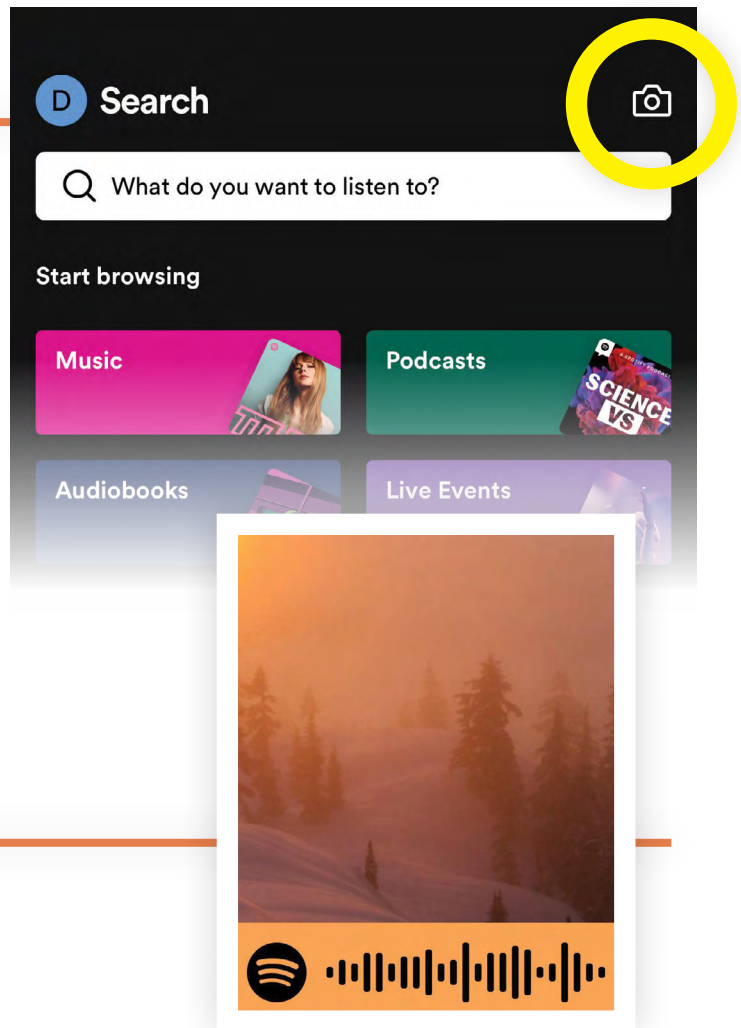


"A CUP OF YOUR LIGHT"
 LEAH SHEWMAKER

Let's set the Epiphany mood with some tunes.

Grab a mug of cozy tea, coffee or anything you fancy and enjoy spending time in this zine. As you peruse, feel free to listen to this playlist, curated in theme with Epiphany. Some of these songs are clearly Epiphany songs, while others are linked to the concept of light out of darkness through lyrics or musical themes.

To play, go to the Spotify search bar, click on the camera next to it, and scan!



Illuminate Every Shadow

Curated by Leah Shewmaker

Little Light

The Eagle Rock Gospel Singers

everything and more

Citizens

Fumbling Towards the Light

John Mark McMillan

You Have Searched Me

Citizens

Arise, Shine, For Your Light Has Come (Is. 60:1-19)

Cardiphonia Music, Jered McKenna

Radiant Reason

Kings Kaleidoscope

Yahweh Elyon

Tekoa, Nathan Staggers

In the Arms of God We Sleep

Sarah Sparks

Teach Me

Citizens

We Bring You All Our Sorrows

Paul Zach, Tenielle Neda

Joy Will Come

Paul Zach, Liz Vice, Charles Jones

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

Darla Baltazar

Catch You

Isla Vista Worship, John Jin Han

I Am One

Sandra McCracken, Citizens

Something Bright, Something Shining

Praytell, Jon Guerra

O Gracious Light

Liturgical Folk

Beautiful Star Of Bethlehem

Ralph Stanley

Cherry Blossoms

Andy Squyres

Blueprint

Jon Guerra

Breathing Infinity (The Rush, Pt. 1)

Kings Kaleidoscope

Jumping from Jaded Heights (The Rush, Pt. 2)

Kings Kaleidoscope

On to the Light (The Rush, Pt. 3)

Kings Kaleidoscope

Burn This as a Light

Tom Wuest

Canticle

TAYA, Jon Guerra

Running for the Light

Wilder Adkins



PHOTOS BY JEFF MAIN

It's a New Dawn, Dad

By Katie Hautamaki

When I was young, my dad used to tell me how the band Jefferson Airplane took the stage at Woodstock in the early morning as the sun was coming up. Lead singer Grace Slick opened the set by stepping up to the microphone and announcing, "It's a new dawn!" to all the sleepy, high, hungover people there. Some days he would wake me for school by flipping on the light and making this proclamation. When my parents drove away after moving me into college, I came back to my dorm room to find a note on my desk: those four words in his slanted script.

When I told my dad about this magazine, he said, "I have something to submit." He sent me these photos, taken in the woods, his longtime place of work. My dad built his company, doing all things forestry and land management, from the dirt (literal and figurative). He uses words like "procurement" and "appraisal." He knows trees by their common and scientific names. He tracks the growth of pine stands over decades—measuring them by height as they take root in raised rows, by circumference once they overtake his six-foot frame. He can drive the latitudes of North Florida saying, "I planted those, I planted those, I planted those."

Forestry as my dad practices it, as I grew up knowing it, has become what is called a "mature industry," which means not many people do it anymore, and even fewer people are learning to. Nowadays it's numbers on a screen, maybe a drive-by of the property. Perhaps his great-grandchildren will consider my dad's forestry a lost art. Perhaps they won't consider it at all. Probably they won't turn the word "loblolly" over and over in their mind, the way I did as a kid hanging out his truck window as we made our bumpy way through a timber tract. But they might play among trees he put in the ground or climb on wooden furniture he built. There might've been a chance they'd fashion paper airplanes out of lumber he sent to the paper mill, but the mill closed this year.

When my dad decides it's time to close out his own storied career, I imagine it will feel like an uprooting. Or maybe something like the end of Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*—a feeling of having given everything you could out of great love, and not knowing if it was enough?

I can't pretend to know what it will feel like. But it will be a new dawn for my forester father. Who can say what the day will bring? ■





"EPIPHANY STAR"

DESIGNED AND STITCHED BY DANICA MIDDLEBROOK

THREAD: "GOLDEN STAR" BY CRESCENT COLORS

FABRIC: "NIGHT SKY" BY FIBER ON A WHIM

PHOTO BY DANIEL HAUTAMAKI

How the Light Gets In: Accidental Epiphany Songs

What do you call stories, music, words, art, and ideas from outside the church that illuminate the truth of Scripture? Some call them “lesser lights,” alluding to Genesis 1:16. Lesser lights reflect the truth as the moon reflects the sun— sometimes intentionally, sometimes inadvertently, always incompletely, but often insightfully. The following musicians may not have had Epiphany in mind, but the songs on this playlist reflect on its themes: *light, wisdom, journeying, seeking and finding.*



How the Light Gets In

Curated by Daniel Hautamaki

Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing

Beyonce

I Still Haven't Found

What I'm Looking For

U2

The Seeker

The Who

Graceland

Paul Simon

A Little Light

Sturgill Simpson

Beautiful Star of Bethlehem

Emmylou Harris

Star Carol

Simon & Garfunkel

Lights in the Valley

Carolina Chocolate Drops

A Sky Full of Stars

Coldplay

Hymn #101

Joe Pegg

Shine A Light

The Rolling Stones

The Brightest Lights

*King Charles, Mumford
& Sons*

Guiding Light

Foy Vance, Ed Sheeran

Winter Song

Leslie Odom Jr.

Stars

fun.

Winter Eclipse

Beta Radio

This Little Light of Mine

Sam Cooke

The Pearl

*Conor Oberst, Shawn Colvin,
Patty Griffin*

Even the Darkness Has Arms

The Barr Brothers

When the Stars Go Blue

Ryan Adams

Not Dark Yet

Bob Dylan

Anthem

Madeline Peyroux

Be Thou My Vision

David Ramirez

Bright Morning Stars

Abigail Washburn

Cast Down But Not Destroyed

On Cracks, Kintsugi, and New Creation

By Katie Hautamaki

Last year, Center Pointers Kim Houghton, Mike Houghton, and Tara Gardner took part in an art workshop at St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral. The class was an introduction to kintsugi, the ancient Japanese art of mending broken pottery using gold lacquer.

"The word kintsugi comes from the Japanese words kin, meaning 'gold' and tsugi, meaning 'to mend' or 'to pass on to the next generation,'" Mike wrote in an email to *Visual Hymnal*.

In recent years, kintsugi has grown increasingly well-known to Western Christians, thanks in part to the work of artist Makoto Fujimura, who sees in the art form a metaphor for God's work in a broken world.

"Kintsugi bowls are treasured as objects that surpass their original 'useful' purpose and move into a realm brought on by the Kintsugi master," Fujimura writes in his book *Art + Faith: A Theology of Making*. "Thus, our brokenness, in light of the wounds of Christ still visible after his resurrection, can also mean that through making, by honoring the brokenness, the broken shapes can somehow be a necessary component of the New World to come."

The workshop at St. Peter's was led by Kurt Caddy, an artist and pastor from Missouri who credits Fujimura as a strong influence. *Visual Hymnal* sat down with Kim, Mike, and Tara to hear about their experience. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

VH: What drew you to kintsugi when you first learned about it?

Kim: I think it is profoundly beautiful, the idea that when something is broken, to accentuate what is broken, rather than considering that a lost piece or something to be discarded. And the metaphor of the sacred work of God creating beauty in broken places. And that the finished piece is in some ways more beautiful, because of the broken lines and the veining, than it was before.

Mike: Related to that, one of the bits that I'm learning about kintsugi is that it's not just restoration—it's also creation, happening together. So yes to restoration and redemption, but also new creation, happening simultaneously.

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies."

—2 Corinthians 4:7-10 ESV

VH: Tell me about the workshop. What was the process like?

Tara: There were all these pots on the table, and you had to pick. And it's funny, I had a hard time picking. I got one and then I was like, "Ugh, that was a bad choice." But I stuck with it. I remember running my hands over it and thinking, "This is the last time it's gonna be like this."

Kim: We put our bowls in a Ziplock bag, and he came around each table and hit each one with a railroad spike. The whole room was silent, and it was just the sound of him coming around—"thump, thump"—and the sound of the breaking.

I liked the bowl that I picked—it was really pretty! And I remember before he hit it, I had this moment of panic, like, "Please don't break my bowl."

Tara: I can still feel it right here, how it felt to have it break in front of me. It was: (exhaling) "O-kay."

Kim: But he broke them, because he knew how to break them in a way that you could put them back together a little easier, with fewer fragments.

Mike: The normal way of kintsugi is, the cherished thing—this teapot, or whatever—is broken accidentally, and the value, even in the broken pieces, remains. When they come to the artisan, the individual pieces themselves are beheld. Then there's this process of reassembly. I watched a recent video where, after an earthquake in Japan, many people were bringing things to these artisans that had been shattered. So the traditional way is: life happens, things break, and we don't discard the broken pieces. We hold them—for generations in some cases—until the time is right and they're restored.

VH: What happened next?

Kim: We had to fit the puzzle pieces together and glue them. Where there are voids, you can choose to leave the voids if you feel like it's structurally going to stay together, or you can fill the voids with an epoxy. And then you sand all the glue residue off of the joints.

Mike: In traditional kintsugi, they use lacquer from a tree—it's kind of like the blood of the tree—and the lacquer is like a glue. And then they use gold dust. In this case, we used a gold-colored mica powder.

VH: So you glued it back together, then you painted over the cracks with gold paint?

Kim: Yes. Everyone's was a little different; like you can see Tara did a thicker line.

Tara: I remember at first I had [the cracks] very thin, and I was like, "You can't see what I went through on this," you know what I mean? And I even offset the edges a tiny bit on purpose, because I wanted the texture.

Kim: There's a limitation in the beauty of "perfect" in some ways. These are just more interesting because they're broken and something new was made out of them.

Mike: This is a little geeky, but there's a Japanese word, "wabi-sabi," and it means to embrace imperfection. Kintsugi is of that family, of that way of thinking.

KINTSUGI BOWL BY TARA GARDNER
PHOTO BY DANIEL HAUTAMAKI



"Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in."

—Leonard Cohen, "Anthem"

VH: Have you continued repairing pieces since the workshop?

Mike: [Our contractor] Chris Dunn mentioned that a friend of his, a man and his wife, sadly lost a child. And as a memory, a birdbath was given, and the dad broke it and felt terrible. So Chris was trying to buy a new one. We started talking, like, "Well, there's this crazy thing called kintsugi and—I'm game, you wanna give it a try?" He talked to the family and they said, "Yeah, sure, let's do it."

Tara: What did you use on it?

Mike: I used a different kind of glue. It's called E6000, it's amazing, and you can't paint on it. Oops. But then I tried the mica powder and the epoxy resin as paint, and thankfully it did adhere and it worked. But it looked dumb. It was yellow.

Kim: It looked like mustard.

Mike: So I scraped it flat. And then I found some really cool gold paint, and so that's what I went over it with. So I did three different passes through, but I think it turned out pretty well.

Kim: And what I think is so cool about that is, if Chris had found a replacement, it wouldn't have had the same meaning as the original birdbath that was given in memory of their child.

Tara: There's something about when I know something's broken. I've got this little Easter thing, it's got the ear broken off. I don't know where the ear is. But I don't want to get rid of it... And for a long time, I've been like, don't have nice things. Right? Just don't get anything breakable.

Kim: Until your kids are out of the house. But then they come back and they still break it.

Mike: I am curious about how I think kintsugi could maybe go sideways, when you restore this thing with all this love and effort and care, and now it's precious again and you're scared to death it's gonna break. But things keep breaking, keep being restored. So I'm interested in this perpetual redemption. I don't want to be scared of things breaking. ■

BIRDBATH REPAIRED BY MIKE HOUGHTON
PHOTO BY MIKE HOUGHTON



Humpty Dumpty Kintsugi

Tara Gardner

We were at Rabbit Creek Market and they had these beautiful real eggs that had been blown and painted, and Sophie fell in love with them. When she picked one up, it broke on accident. When I asked the sales clerk how much for the eggs, the lady just gave them to us. So they were so precious to Sophie.

We were sitting in the kitchen talking, and Sophie was looking at them in their little tin. They were accidentally knocked over and they all fell to the floor, and Sophie was just sobbing and sobbing. And her brother and sister picked them up and tried to put them back together. They had glue, but they were eggs, it was so hard. But we sat there for hours and worked with it, and it was really beautiful to see their tenderness. When they realized they weren't going to become whole again, they asked if they could make new ones for her. I taught them how to pierce both ends and blow out the contents. It takes effort and patience and a soft touch. They kept at it, and then they decorated them in their own way. She still has a container of all of it—the pieces that wouldn't fit, the half-assembled eggs, and the ones made by her siblings.



KINTSUGI BOWL BY KIM HOUGHTON
PHOTO BY DANIEL HAUTAMAKI



kintsugi

By Autumn Kloth

broken pottery pieces
once perfect at the start
crash
drop
how the pieces fall apart

utterly broken
perfections too few

thrown out by many
replication ensues

but The Maker
who molds from clay


sees value
not mistakes, not decay

enlays our broken pottery
pieces
with gold, with beauty

and fixes us
with a Father's duty

broken imperfections
now His perfect design

twinkle
sparkle
let those golden pieces shine



Chiaroscuro

By Leah Shewmaker

Light out of darkness—the idea is integral to beauty. There is a concept in the art world called “chiaroscuro,” literally translating to “light-dark.” The term originates from the Italian Renaissance. In visual art, chiaroscuro is the use of strong highlights juxtaposed against dark shadows. An example would be *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Johannes Vermeer, or many of da Vinci's paintings.

Chiaroscuro also applies to opera. Singers need both dark and light to achieve the most beautiful sound, balanced by both brilliance and depth. The darkness creates color and warmth in the voice, but without a brightness, it would sound hollow and dull. Without darkness, an overly bright voice would sound shrill. The voice needs darkness for the brightness to sparkle.

In a way, chiaroscuro reminds me of a theological concept: *felix culpa*, which is Latin for “fortunate fall.” The idea is that we would not know the redemptive beauty of God's grace without the fall of mankind. We would not know and fully experience Jesus' salvation without the fall. I think of this on a smaller scale as well. For example, there are aspects of my body that are a result of the fall, but it is a better body for it. My scars, aches, stretch marks and flaws all point to God's redemptive story and of what is to come. It's similar to the idea of kintsugi—a broken plate becomes more beautiful than it was because it is molded back together by gold lacquer.

Light shines because there is darkness. Yet, I don't believe it is a balance of light and dark. It is not yin and yang. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:5) I don't know if there will be night and day as we know it when heaven and earth become one. But at least metaphorically, darkness will be eradicated.

“And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there.” (Revelation 21:23-25)

“And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 22:5)

All suffering will turn to joy. But the joy will shine so much brighter because we knew sorrow. ■



In Light of Him

My Story, My Song

Music and Lyrics by Scott Drury



On Unexpected Gifts: An Umbrella And A Note

By Holly Hawkes

The closest I've come to international missions was volunteering at a daytime church ESL (English as a Second Language) program with twenty adult students from Saudi Arabia, Columbia, India, South Korea and Mexico.

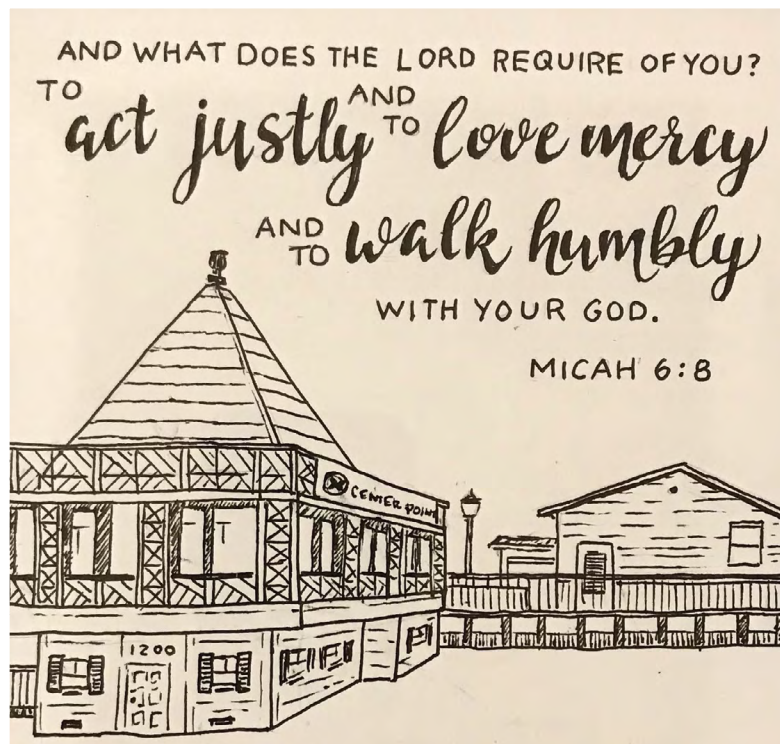
Joo was very quiet. A mom of two kids, smartly dressed, she had good English, but was not a confident speaker. Her husband was stationed in Tampa to get an advanced degree at USF.

We went through Mark 4, the Parable of the Sower, in simplified English. Joo told us her belief was that at death, people became clouds and peacefully passed from existence. She listened and asked a couple of questions. We became friends. The other teacher, Gertrude, also checked on Joo, asking about her children, praying for her.

And then her husband's program was over. It was time to leave for South Korea.


Joo gave me an umbrella and a thank you note. She told Gertrude and me that she believed in Jesus and that she was going to find a church.

This was a friendship of few words. Just being in each other's presence and showing an interest. Just reading the gospel of Mark. And a lot of prayer for Joo. It was enough. Joo is on my list of people to hug when I get to heaven. ■



PEN ILLUSTRATION BY KAREN HAWKINS

Wreath-Making



Wreath-making allows me to flex my creative muscle with a very forgiving medium while giving my overactive mind a break. I find it satisfying to create something beautiful that I can enjoy and share with others. I usually start the wreath-making process with a vague idea—vague meaning anything from, “It’s Christmas, I need a new wreath!” to “I like the color blue.” Then I go shopping for decorative pieces that fit with that idea. Sometimes I do not find what I am looking for, or I change my idea, or I find exactly the things that will fit my plan. The next step of putting together the wreath is a lot of trial and error; I just feel it out. For this wreath, I started with the theme of “light” and found items of glitter and gold which both reflect light beautifully and work well in a Christmas wreath. Then I added red flowers and berries to emphasize the Christmas motif. The final version is one of elegant asymmetry and a touch of extravagance while still holding to the theme of light.

PHOTO BY DANIEL HAUTAMAKI

By Kristin Webster

A Psalm of Praise

By Madeline Jeffes

Come, let us wonder at the order of our Maker
He has molded the corners of creation with his hands;
His face may be sought in the majesty of the universe
Sing of the way creation declares His glory!

Seek him in Mathematics!
He has imbued creation with quantity;
numbers speak being in the purest sense,
the clearest declaration of "I am."
His beauty is displayed in its elegance.
From four simple acts,
addition, subtraction, multiplication, division,
arise the intricate rules of algebra, geometry, and calculus.
From the essentials to the ends,
its foundations and layers build a temple to His glory.
Its presence in nature declares His unity.
The sunflowers that bask in His light,
the fruit of the vine that feeds His people,
the shell of the nautilus swimming in His depths,
and the swirling galaxies that light the heavens
sing His praise in a Fibonacci spiral.

Seek Him in Physics!
Its invisible forces declare his mystery;
Electricity and magnetism, unseen movers of creation,
hold matter together in a balance of attraction and repulsion.
Only a mighty God could keep the myriad particles in place,
unobserved and uncontrollable by man.
Its principles demonstrate His reliability.
The world is cursed with the din of chaos;
the laws of thermodynamics and conservation of energy silence the
fury with order.
They tell of a God who will not be moved.
As the fabric of the universe obeys His unbreakable laws,
declare His worthiness by following the statutes in His Word!
His gravity unites all things together;
the attraction of all bodies to one another
links creation across light years to join in the dance of the heavens.
Man to man, planet to planet, galaxy to galaxy,
all move together to declare His sovereignty.

"BEAUTY THROUGH DESERTS"
LEAH SHEWMAKER
PAPER COLLAGE





Seek Him in Chemistry!

From three basic particles come the one hundred eighteen atoms known by man.
His mystery draws us to further discovery,
seeking the elements He has created.

Each with its own character, every element declares His fascinating being;
the exploration of their properties may never end.

As we seek the farthest reaches of matter, so we thirst for knowledge of His infinite character!

It declares His beauty;

with the combination and division of molecules comes vivid color
and intricate structure;
deep blues, lively greens, brilliant reds,
perfect hexagons, extensive polymers, and exquisite crystals
leave us in breathless wonder at His artistry.

It demonstrates His grace;

though the shadow of death stretches over the earth,
He has provided this tool to pull life from its clutches.

The malfunction of our bodies is reversed by the creation of medicines
that hold back the baleful enemies of disease and time.

Seek Him in Biology!

It declares His vibrant being;

breath is passed from father to son in an outpouring of His infinite life.
thousands of genera, millions of species, billions of lives
belie the one true source from which their days extend.

The beasts emulate facets of their Creator;

the noble tiger emulates his regality,
the steadfast penguin cherishes its egg as the Father watches over His children,
the swift cheetah displays His action and power;
each piece of clay bears the mark of the Potter.

It declares his Providence for those He loves;

across unique biomes, from the heights to the depths,
each creature is given means of life.

Fur to temper the cold,

wings to reach a home in the mountains,
gills to pull breath from the waves,
each creature is magnanimously designed to thrive in its place.

Stand in awe of the Master who sets existence in order!

He condescends to give man dominion over this creation;
the jewels in His storehouses of wonder are entrusted to dust.

He is worthy of the highest honor and exuberant praise!

Declare His glory to the farthest reaches of his works!



Ten Days

By Cody Sherman

Last summer a pair of cardinals built a nest in the bush outside our living room window.

It's a Sunday when I first notice it. I rush outside to see if there are eggs. Don't scare the mother away says my wife, who is the mother of my daughter.

The sound of the back door scares the mother away, and I put it on the list of things I'm sorry for.

There are no eggs: rather, lumps of flesh, a few damp feathers, large dark eyelids. Three children are in the nest. I've never seen baby birds in real life before. I take a lot of pictures.

On Monday I keep looking at the nest from my living room. The mother is there every time and she doesn't even flit around like birds do. She's the ten commandments written on pale brown stone, and she keeps looking back at me. Her eyes are not kind.

The next day is the one I've been waiting for. The mother isn't at the nest, so I swoop my daughter up in my arms and we fly to the backyard. I introduce her to our young neighbors. There are a lot of leaves in that particular bush and she can't find the nest, but I take a lot of pictures, and I notice the birds have many more feathers.

It's Thursday or Friday when I see round heads on toothpick necks appear above the edge of the nest. Their eyes are open, but I think they can probably only see their mother. Beaks strain wide, begging to be fed. I pick up my daughter to show her through the window and she sees them for the first time.

Sunday comes again. I wonder how many feathers they have now so I look out the window to check for the mother. I don't see her, or beaks or heads or toothpick necks.

A few years ago a pair of cardinals built a nest in the bush outside our bedroom window. Each morning I looked out the window at the eggs in the nest, and I took a lot of pictures, until the morning that the nest was sideways and I guess a cat or raccoon wasn't hungry anymore.

It took us six years to have a child.

So I look up cardinals and it turns out that it only takes about ten days for them to leave the nest. Which is good news I suppose. I say to my wife Guess how long before cardinals leave the nest? Ten days! and we are both surprised and we agree that it was just last week that they were lumps of flesh with damp feathers and eyes that hadn't opened yet. So we sit down on the couch and look at the pictures we took when she was a baby.

PHOTO BY CODY SHERMAN

Rachmaninoff

Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano, Op. 19

Natalie Sherer (Schamp), pianist

Anne Richardson, cellist

This is a recording of one of my favorite performances with cellist Anne Richardson. The piece has immensely moving moments of dark, suspenseful music that contrast with moments of blissful beauty, joy, and a sense of triumph at the end after everything has unfolded. I am thankful for the opportunity to glorify God through music and give audiences a meaningful experience.

Natalie's Notes on the Piece

Extended melodies, breathtaking harmonies, virtuosity, and orchestral textures describe Sergei Rachmaninoff's Sonata for Cello & Piano equally as much as his piano concertos, the second of which was premiered very shortly before this sonata. Rachmaninoff dedicated the piece to his best man and talented cellist Anatoliy Brandukov, who premiered it with him in Moscow in December 1901. As it turns out, this sonata was the last chamber music piece Rachmaninoff composed.

The slow introduction immediately creates a mysterious atmosphere, full of rising half step motives in the cello to which the piano responds, like a series of questions and quasi-echos. The texture thickens and the register expands before plunging into the Allegro moderato, now firmly in G minor. In general, there is an underlying storminess in the piano writing underneath lyrical cello lines. Like many themes in the work, the piano introduces the stunning second theme before the cello repeats it over lush harmonies. The development is unrelenting and turbulent, then comes to a halt before struggling towards a hard-won climax that simultaneously ushers in the recapitulation and a breathless, cascading, determined ending.

The Allegro scherzando in C minor offers a different flavor of agitation. Incisive and full of quiet intensity, it gallops and explodes unpredictably before melting into expansive tapestries of melodies over rhapsodic waves in the piano. The agitation returns and then disappears in a hushed, electric flash.

The gorgeous third movement is a treasure of this sonata with its darkly romantic piano solos echoed by the cello, its supercharged, sumptuous harmonic language, and not one but two unbelievably moving climaxes. The movement is an exquisite arena for displaying Rachmaninoff's quintessential rubato-laden style and remarkable melodies.

Triumphant, uninhibited joy ushers us through the opening of the final movement. The writing is full of exuberant triplets, and pure G major soundscapes. Heartfelt Moderato sections bring warmth and lead into sparkling piano figurations underneath soaring cello lines. The arresting effect leads into rich chords and a grand arrival in D major that suddenly morphs into D minor. The journey heightens in drama, filled with thick chords and octaves in the piano before reaching the return of the opening theme. A short, quiet, slow section, over an ever-present tonic pedal, seems to dispel the energy which further intensifies the excitement of the sudden Vivace coda that puts the final exclamation point on this outstanding piece. ■



Natalie Sherer (Schamp) and
Anne Richardson at the
University of Michigan
December 2021






POTTERY BY RACHEL WILSON

PHOTOS BY RACHEL LEIGH PHOTOGRAPHY





Responding to a voice
veiled beneath the horizon
leaves begin to emerge
from the darkness
whispering news
of the radiance
arising

POEM AND PHOTO BY MIKE HOUGHTON

P S A L M

74

¹²*Yet God my King
is from of old,
working salvation
in the midst of
the earth.*

Waiting Well: *A Meditation on Psalm 74*

By Justin Vos

Waiting is difficult for something good. Children wait for presents under the tree. Adults wait for the Amazon package at the door. But waiting can be excruciating: waiting outside the principal's office or waiting for the doctor's diagnosis. We live in a world of waiting. Waiting for the good, the bad, and the mundane.

Epiphany is rooted in waiting—it is the appearance of the king for which Israel had waited. God's people had waited a long time for God to fulfill his promises. Psalm 74 attests to how Israel's waiting was not easy. The psalm is a plea for God's remembrance in a time of doubt. "Remember Your congregation which you purchased long ago... Remember Mount Zion where You dwell." The Psalmist Asaph struggles with not knowing. He wonders when the waiting will end, exclaiming, "There are no signs for us to see...And none of us knows how long this will last."

Waiting is rooted in uncertainty. In times of waiting, my anxiety can build. My worry grows and manifests in frustration. I feel like Asaph. How long will this last?

In the struggle of waiting for God to show up, Asaph took comfort in God's past action. "God my King is from ancient times, performing saving acts on the earth. You divided the sea with Your strength; You smashed the heads of the sea monsters in the waters."

Just as Asaph could take comfort in God's past faithfulness, so can we. Epiphany reminds us that the awaited Savior of Israel came. Asaph's waiting was not in vain. Although Asaph did not personally witness it, Simeon could depart in peace, for he saw the light revealed to the nations. Looking back at God's faithfulness brings peace in the waiting and hope for the future. In the midst of chaos and mess, we can wait with patience and confidently say, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." ■



SAM HAUTAMAKI



PHOTO BY DANIEL HAUTAMAKI

Jesus Christ Will Hear Your Prayer

Music and Lyrics by Daniel Hautamaki
Performed by Apocalyptic Potluck
(Daniel Hautamaki, Cody Sherman,
Claire Houghton, Mike Houghton)





Brown Butter Chocolate Chunk Cookies

By Catherine Deining

I came up with this recipe through trial and error, and often made these cookies in the bleak winter months of my final year of grad school. They were truly light breaking through Chattanooga's wintry darkness. If you are debating between extra school or opening a small bakery, just know that I have used this recipe more than the degree I earned. Shoutout to Geneva College Golden Tornadoes!

If this is your first time in brown butter land...

1. Place butter in a saucepan over medium heat. See! That was easy.
2. Let it melt. This thing is going to take some time, but be patient. **Remember: DO NOT MULTITASK. We need all eyes on deck here.**
3. Once the butter is melted it's going to crackle and pop. That's great—it's the sound of water cooking out of the butter. Once the water cooks out, the milk solids will begin to brown, which is really the main reason why we're here.
4. Okay so now the butter is settling down and getting quiet. Do not take your eyes off the butter. If you're curious, you may now lightly swirl your saucepan. Check the color. If it's still yellow, let it sit a little longer. If it's golden, take it off. If it's dark brown, start over (sorry)!
5. Transfer to a small bowl and place in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes just to take the edge off. It will look like the color of a golden beer with a nice foamy head.

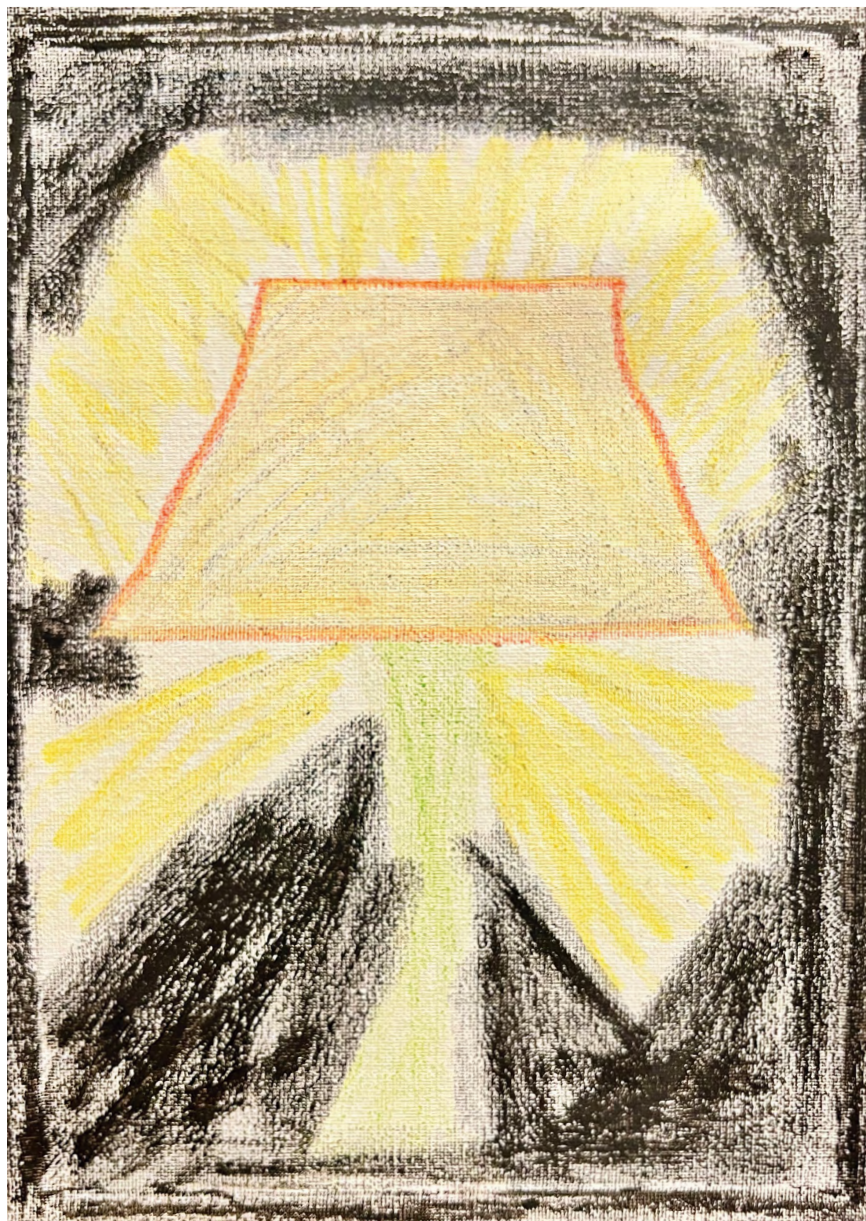
Ingredients:

3/4 cups browned butter
3/4 cups brown sugar
3/4 cups white sugar
1 egg
1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon molasses

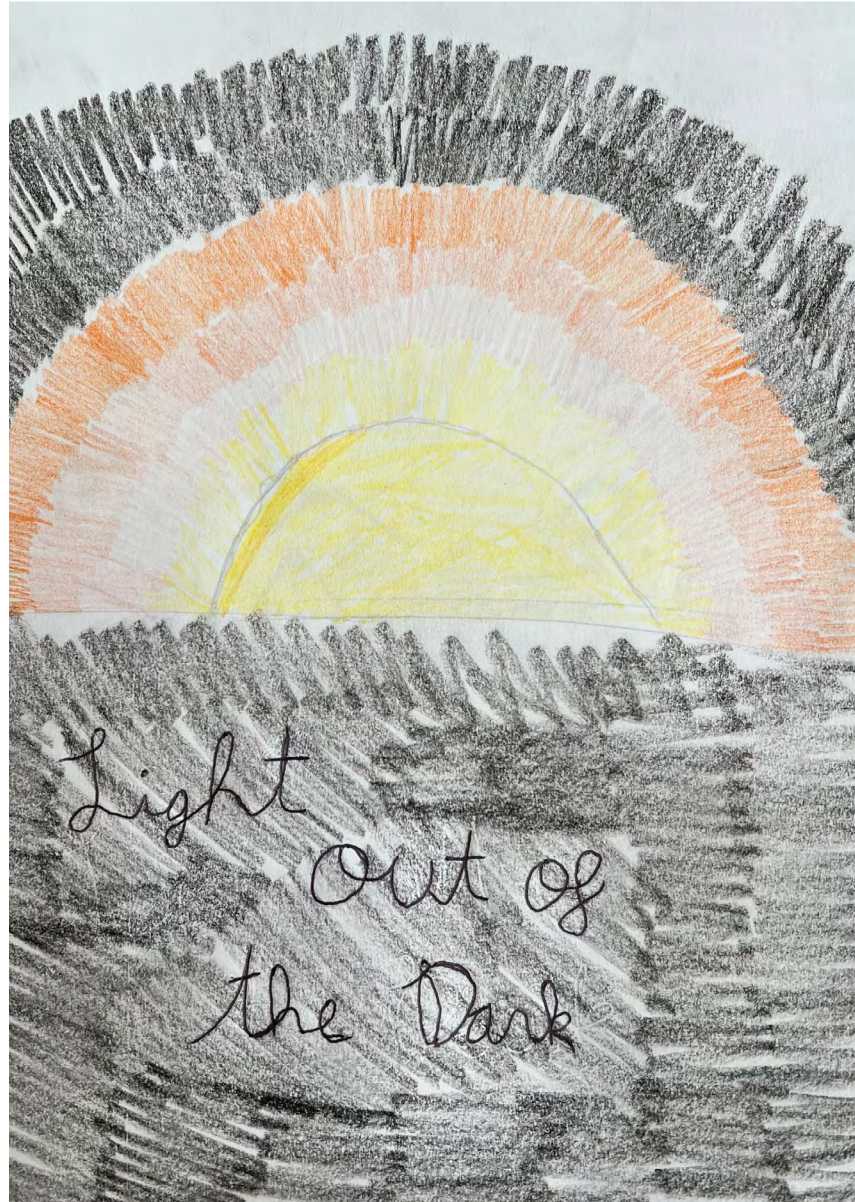
1 tablespoon vanilla
2 cups bread flour (240 g)
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups chocolate chunks
Sea salt for garnish

Step by Step:

1. In a medium bowl, sift bread flour, salt, and baking soda together. **TIP:** *If you don't want to use bread flour, feel free to use all-purpose flour; just be sure to double the baking soda.*
2. In a large bowl, combine sugars. Give it a good mix; you will want them to be evenly combined before you add the butter.
3. Add the cooled browned butter to the mixer and mix until evenly combined. You may need to stop a few times to scrape the extras from the side. This mixture is going to resemble wet, grainy sand.
4. One at a time, add the egg yolk and then the egg, mixing between each incorporation.
5. Add one tablespoon of molasses and one tablespoon vanilla. Mix again!
6. Add flour, salt, and baking soda mixture.
7. Add two cups of dark chocolate chunks. Chips are fine but I just think the chunks have a nicer aesthetic with the end result.
8. Okay. We're done! You could take a few bites right now because this dough is so good.
9. Had enough? Did you accidentally eat the whole thing? Go ahead and put it in the fridge to cool and then set the oven to 350 degrees. You'll be ready to roll when the oven is warm.
10. Line your trays with parchment. Or don't. Do your thang!
11. Now that the oven is warm and the dough is cool, start scooping. I use a two tablespoon scoop because it creates an even bake every time. I bought mine at a commercial kitchen supply store. If you don't have a scoop, just roll to your preference.
12. Last thing! Sprinkle each cookie dough ball with sea salt. I prefer the Celtic Sea Salt brand but I also think flakes would work too. Table salt is not going to give the same effect. If you don't like salt as much as I do then just skip this step. But before you completely disregard my note, just know that everyone loves this extra crunch. I think it brings out the chocolate.
13. Okay. So we did it. Pop your trays into the oven for 12-14 minutes. Badda bing, badda boom. Pull those suckers out when they are a lovely golden brown. Let them rest on the tray for about five minutes before you transfer to a cooling rack or your mouth. **TIP:** *I like to scoop then freeze for cookies whenever I feel like one or two.*



"SHINING LIGHT"
ANNIE HAUTAMAKI



"LIGHT OUT OF THE DARK"
CAITLYN MIDDLEBROOK



A Place For Plants

By Heather Sherman

A year ago Cody and I built this plant shelf and installed it in our living room. Every plant on it started off really small—cuttings from friends, gifts from family, a baby snake plant that I grew from a single leaf, and a croton from my grandmother's funeral. Sixteen months later, it's my own cultivated jungle. I've added framed animal prints from an Alaskan artist and a carved wooden bird received as an anniversary present. I love the light shining through the leaves in the afternoon and the glow of Christmas lights at night. I like how the salmon swims among the leaves. It's my favorite place in our house. Family and friends, light and growth, sometimes death, all wrapped up in one spot.





PHOTOS BY HEATHER SHERMAN





Glory for you in Him

By Caroline Jackson

One Friday night in October, I went to Costco with my two young kids. My husband drove separately to get new tires on his car. It was dinner time. The wait for the \$10 pizzas was crazy long, but we ordered one anyway. I did my shopping. Johnny, 11 months old at the time, smashed his finger in the cart and got sympathetic stares from strangers as I comforted him. Two-year-old Nora sang an unrecognizable song with her arms spread wide to an audience of fellow shoppers. An hour later, my husband's car had new discount tires and we had our pizza. It was just an errand-running kind of Friday at the end of a normal week. I walked out with my two children in the massive shopping cart filled with ridiculously large packages of food, husband not far behind, to see something glorious. It stopped me in my tracks: an extraordinary surprise.

There it was—an awe-inspiring gift perfectly painted in the October Florida sky. The swirls of pink clouds reached up, stretching to the heavens. They hovered on display, the pink overlaying a pale yellow burst of last light under a blue-gray expanse. Others stopped to stare with us. Of course we got out our phones and tried to capture the beauty of it. But you never really can, can you? After a few minutes the masterpiece gave way to darkness; the sunset was gone.

This life, even in special seasons, can begin to feel basic and lose its luster. As mothers and wives, followers of Jesus, we want to be vessels of transcendence, lifting our family's gaze to something more glorious. All the while, we are still waiting and wondering, just plodding along to the next thing, and often we get bogged down.

Even on the highest holidays, the ordinary responsibilities remain. Nap times still need to happen. Cups still need to be refilled. Little hearts still need to be directed and counseled. On top of that ordinary, we will layer some crazy, as well—delayed meal times, extra indulgences or rebukes from well-meaning relatives, all the relationship dynamics, responsibilities to host or prepare or be there, the extra eyes to measure your gratitude or mothering skills. And beneath all the activity, we may also be grieving, lonely, or on the edge of despair.

But, when I walked out of Costco on that Friday night, God cut through my mundane. He lifted my eyes to the heavens. Have you experienced this? With the beauty of his sunset, with his glory written in the sky, he reminded me from where my help comes (Psalm 121). He reminded me that even though he is wondrously great, he is mindful of little ol' me (Psalm 8). As he daily continues to build his larger-than-life kingdom that this world cannot contain, he also daily gathers us to himself like chicks to a mother hen, and at the end of this world, we will finally reach the home we've longed for all this time (Hebrews 11). A new, gleaming city will descend with God as its builder and the Son as the only light (Revelation 21). Mother Jerusalem will welcome her sons and daughters with a feast way better than any mama could make for Christmas: the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19).

He reminded me that the Son will descend again. This time, he will not come quiet and lowly. He will not restrain himself in meekness, God in a tiny baby's body, willfully submissive to the authorities of earth and frailties of mankind. The curtains of the sky will open on the Last Day, revealing his transcendent splendor. He will come with the sound of clashing thunder and rushing rivers, a multitude singing, "Hallelujah! He reigns!" forevermore. His glory will shine as bright as the sun. Trumpets will peal and angels will shout (1 Thessalonians 4)! He will come to deliver you, his beloved, once and for all. You will be freed from every fear, every anxiety, every need, every false hope, every insecurity. It will

be the end of racism, misunderstandings, malice, mental illness, children dying, terrorism, poverty, and every kind of darkness. He will free you. He will put an end to all evil.

***“For every look
at yourself,
take ten looks
at Christ.”***

ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE

So let me urge you today, even with all that you are feeling and all you feel responsible for, open your eyes to the significance of what we celebrate. Lift your eyes. Look for the hints of his glory to come. For really, what is Christ's birth but beauty breaking into the mundane on a cosmic level, an intersection of a holy God and sinful humanity that literally changes the course of history and your own story forever? At the last, at glory, that very same God will break into the mundane for one last time, but this time our gaze will not fall from the beauty ever again. Finally, our faith will be sight; our prayers will be turned to praise. Oh, what a gift that will be! ■

***Even though he
is wondrously
great, he is
mindful of little
ol' me.***



Visual Hymnal exists to celebrate the creative work of the people of Center Point Church and beyond. We are interested in exploring the intersection of Christian faith and creativity; we also just love seeing what our friends are making. Writing, visual art, music, pottery, sewing, crafting, cooking, gardening—we want to showcase it all.

While we always welcome submissions on any theme or topic, our upcoming issues will reflect the liturgical themes of Eastertide (resurrection, victory) and Ordinary Time (building, planting, growing).

Submit to:
visualhymnal@gmail.com

Eastertide issue deadline: Feb 1
Ordinary Time issue deadline: April 1

Visual Hymnal is run and funded by a small staff of dedicated volunteers. Want to get involved or support this project? Email visualhymnal@gmail.com or talk to Leah, Sara, or Katie!