

Beauty, Truth and Goodness *sharing a bit of ourselves by sharing artful things that pierce our heart*

It takes imagination to live in God's world ~N.T. Wright

{why}

We need art (craft, creativity, things we make and experiences that make us) because we need help tuning into our truest desires, our hopes and our dreams (all things that point us to God). We need help paying attention to our pain, fear and disappointment – we have a tendency to gloss over those truths, always to our detriment. We need all sorts of symbols and metaphors and colors and sensations and sounds and words to help us listen to what God is working into our soul.

We also need help keeping our worship relational, personal, human-to-human. We need to share who we are, where we are alive and where we are struggling to push back all the death and evil. Worship in North America has often been reduced to a consumptive affair where we come (often disengaged), pick up a few morsels of “Christian instruction” and leave, never having our heart touched by the gospel or by another fellow-sojourner. This ought not be. By God’s mercy, All Souls wants to resist such cold reductions.



{what}

You can offer virtually anything that is beautiful, true or good. It can be something either that (1) you have created or that (2) you have encountered. To participate in the heart of what we are moving toward, offer something that has pierced your heart in some way, something that has made you laugh, cry, hope, repent, marvel, gasp or ponder. And, then, we want to know *why* it moved you in this way. Our suspicion is that it will move some of us too – but perhaps even more than that, we will see a little bit more about who *you* are and how God is moving in you.

Some examples (but only examples – there are hundreds of other possibilities) are: cross-stitching, baking, photography, pottery, poetry, a song, short story, painting, a slide presentation of a trip or a place, an essay, an encounter, woodworking, sculpture and on and on and on. The directions you might go are almost endless.

{a word, or two}

When we speak of things that are “beautiful, true, or good,” we do not mean things that are necessarily neat, clean or spiffy. We are not looking (necessarily) for something that quotes a Bible verse or tells us to get our chin up because “God is in control.” God *is* in control, but – again – we are looking for the whole spectrum of things that are true, things that are honest about where we are and the many ways we encounter (or don’t encounter) God. The key words here are honesty and integrity.

Think of the Psalms – we want to embrace the full range of emotions evidence in this ultimate worship book. There are all kinds of beauty – some are sparkly but some are brutal and hard. There are all kinds of truth – some truths fill us with joy but some truths silence us and fill us with sorrow. There are all kinds of goodness – and everything that emerges from an honest place and holds up hope (no matter how feeble) in the mercy of God is deeply, immensely *good*.

If you are struggling to see how what you have to share connects with this, you can ponder the following sorts of questions:



- *What were my emotions as I encountered/created this work?*
- *What does this work mean to me?*
- *How did this work spark my hope or touch my pain?*
- *What questions did this art push to the fore?*
- *What beauty, truth or goodness does this offer me – or might it offer to another?*

Again, we are not (necessarily) looking for the art to have some “message,” rather to know its impact on you – or the impact you hope it will have on others. More often than not, it will seem simple or quiet or small – that’s fine. As with most creativity and art, subtlety will usually be preferred.

{details}

On the week you will share, the following will help us:

- (1) Please **arrive 15 minutes before** All Souls begins so we know everything is in place.
- (2) Please **keep your time to 5 minutes** as an absolute max. You can take less time if you prefer, but please no more. We know this feels for some like a large constraint, but as a community, we seek to be careful of our time and when one section take more time than planned, it makes it difficult for everyone else who follows.
- (3) Please show us (tell us about or perform for us) what you have to share – and **tell us why it pierced your heart** or what it means to you.
- (4) Please make this your **witness to something beautiful, true or good not a sermon**. The point during this moment is not to teach us something or to tell us something we are to do but rather to provide your own story, what you have seen or heard, how you have been moved, what you are doing. When we turn this into instruction, it actually loses its force.

May God open your heart to his beauty – and then may he use you to open our heart up just the same. Amen.