



A Gift to Remember

A highly anticipated Christmas Art Walk comes to Barrington

Story by **Lynn Tangorra** | Photography by **Susan McConnell**

A memorable Christmas awaits the town of Barrington. As the holiday season approaches, local churches and merchants hope that residents will take a moment to remember the meaning of Christmas by participating in an art walk. Titled “12 artists, 12 stores, a Gift to Remember,” the walk will mimic the Passion Art Walk that was held during Easter of this year. The holiday art walk will focus on the true spirit of Christmas. Coming together to discover the story of Christmas, local artists, churches, stores, will collaboratively launch a celebration of Christ’s birth starting on December 12 and culminating on Christmas Eve.

Similar to the Passion Art Walk, residents in Barrington will have the opportunity to experience the story of Jesus through artwork. The walk runs for twelve days, with twelve stores containing twelve pieces of art to be

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This painting, by Steve Puttrich, appears on the Christmas Art Walk’s website homepage.

seen. As store patrons travel to each stop on the map to view commissioned pieces of art, the true meaning of Christmas will be revealed.

After the success of the Passion Art Walk, the churches approached the Barrington Area Ministerial Association (BAMA) and began to inquire if something could be done around Christmas time. The merchants also asked Christine Danforth, facilitator of the Passion Art Walk, if she could put something together in the coming months. Danforth was hesitant at first to orchestrate a Christmas art walk. “Initially I was very hesitant to put together a Christmas Art Walk, because I had no clarity of an inspired vision for it. There was no surprise for me in what we had to do,” she said. Through the combined efforts of local churches, artists, congregation choirs, and merchants all coming together around common values and traditions, the concept of the Christmas art walk was born.



The art walk would not have been possible without the enthusiasm from the merchants, churches, and artists. Zina Jacque, left, and Christine Danforth have formed a strong friendship through collaborating on the art walks. "It's the power of the community that is allowing us to get this done," said Danforth. "It is all about partnerships," said Jacque.

The Gift of Community

When coming up with a theme for the art walk, Danforth started with the fact that she had twelve stores that participated in the last walk. "We wanted to connect with the slogan that we had for the Passion Art Walk, '12 stores, 12 artists, a Walk to Remember,'" said Danforth. She considered the Christmas story as a narrative and wondered if "the 12 stores could tell the story of Christmas in art from faith-filled artists." As families and friends walk to remember the gift of Christmas, Danforth hopes the pictures will communicate deeply and joyously about the reason for the season. Everything was falling into place.

Barrington Flower Shop owner Glen Egeland, along with wife Mary Cay, will be hosting the first piece of artwork on the walk. Their shop will be incorporating the first part of the story of remembering the gift of Christ at Christmas, which features the announcement to Mary being told she would be the mother of baby Jesus. Glen feels that the art walks are way to get locals involved in the community. "Some people came through our store on the last art walk and told me that they have lived here for ten years and have never been into the shop," said Glen. "These walks seem to be popular in Barrington, and they get everyone involved."

M.J. Miller owner, Mike Miller, echoes the same sentiments. Miller's store will be the twelfth and final stop on the art walk. Miller, who also participated in the Passion Art Walk, was delighted when asked to participate in the Christmas Art Walk. "I think it helps bring the community together," said Miller.

Finding Tradition

The merchants and pastors are excited about bringing back traditions that seem to have faded over the past years. Danforth wanted to bring an old-time tradition feel this holiday season through the art walk. "Our generation is missing handing down our faith stories and traditions every year, and teaching each other their importance," she said. Zina Jacque, pastor of The Community Church of Barrington, has been working with the Catlow Theater to come up with a series of Christmas films that will play during the art walk. Jacque will be teaching on these films at her church. Jacque noted that not only

The Barrington Flower Shop will be the first stop on the Christmas Art Walk. There, customers will view a piece of art, which will depict Mary, and the announcement by the angel Gabriel.

The next step on the walk will be *Bravura- Home & Gift Shop*. The storeowners will open their doors to patrons who will gaze at art portraying the story of Joseph, the father of Jesus.

Across the street, customers will find a piece of artwork at *Egg Harbor Café* where Mary and Elizabeth greet and share their glad news.

Around the corner, *TT Patton* will host a commissioned piece of art of layered paper depicting the point in the Christmas story where a decree of a census went out for all to be registered by Caesar Augustus.

Acacia Organics will host the fifth piece depicting Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem.

Customers can visit *Phillips Men's Wear* to see the sixth piece of art depicting that there was no room in the Inn as the story unfolds.

Down the street, patrons can stop for a warm drink at *Cook Street Coffee* and view the seventh artistic interpretation. This art piece depicts the gift we celebrate, the birth of Jesus, the gift of Christmas.

Mia Sorella will host the eighth piece of art on the art walk. This artwork focuses on the Wise men following the star lighting the way to find the baby Jesus.

At *Bread Basket Restaurant*, patrons can view the ninth piece of art. The shepherds in the field are depicted in this scene hearing "good tidings of great joy" as the angels in this part of the Christmas story announce the message of the Gift of Jesus' birth.

Susan McConnell Photography will display the tenth piece of art. Here Susan McConnell captures the magnificence of the first gift of the wise men, the gift of gold pointing to the kingship of the Baby Jesus.

At the *Catlow Theater*, an artist's rendition of the second gift of the wise men, the gift of frankincense. Frankincense is the incense burned in religious ceremonies. It is an offering to honor Jesus as God.

M.J. Miller will host the final piece of art. The final gift of the wise men is myrrh, the oil that is used to anoint a dead body before burial. It is pointing to the way Jesus would die, as the Passion is foreshadowed.

Continued on next page

Churches:

Church of the Atonement
Immanuel Lutheran Church and School
Living Grace Community Church
The Orchard Evangelical Free Church
Salem United Methodist Church
St. Anne Catholic Community
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
St. Michael's Episcopal Church
St. Paul United Church of Christ
The Chapel Barrington Campus
The Community Church of Barrington
Thrive Vineyard Church
Trinity Oaks Christian Academy
Village Church of Barrington
Willow Creek Community Church

Artists:

Al Buschauer
Marsha English
Donna Jung
Bridget Mantasoot
Susan McConnell
Bobbie Puttrich
Steve Puttrich
Patrick Raymond
Marg Rehberg
Cindy Sloan
Ted Stanaszek
Val Stanaszek

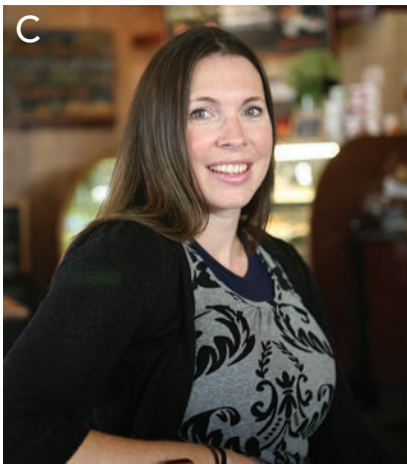
For more information, visit www.christmasartwalk.com.

is this a time for the community of Barrington to come together, it is also a time for families to reconnect and share this gift that has been given to us. "We are all trying to figure out the picture that God has already created," said Jacque. "There is a light that gets shared with family through art that words cannot communicate. This notion of light is significant because the solstice is the darkest time of the year." Danforth wanted to make known that the art walks haven't united the pastors in the community, they were already united. "That is the beauty of all of this," said Danforth. "The work has already been done, and this is just a celebration of being together and being together on the same page with the same message."

In keeping with an old-time feel, Danforth thought including some of the church choirs would be another way to get the community involved. She felt lead to ask Barrington churches to pick a day and have their choirs organize carols. "The more ways we can incorporate partnerships with the village to



From left to right: Reverend Zina Jacque, Christine Danforth, and owner of Barrington Flower Shop Glen Egeland, all played instrumental roles in helping the Christmas Art Walk become a reality. **Inset:** Zina Jacque has been collaborating with the Catlow Theater to play Christmas films during the duration of the art walk.



A: Tim Brubacher, back row center, and his choir from the Village Church of Barrington will be entertaining participants of the art walk by singing carols outside of shops. **B:** Mike Miller's shop, M.J. Miller, will play host to the twelfth and final stop of the art walk. **C:** Bridget Mantasoot has been working on a piece for the seventh stop on the art walk, Cook Street Coffee. Mantasoot also commissioned a piece for the Passion Art Walk.

why we are celebrating.” Local church choirs will be on various street corners singing carols for art walk participants to enjoy as they travel from shop to shop. Tim Brubacher, pastor of worship ministries at the Village Church of Barrington, feels that music helps people get into the spirit of the season. “So much music surrounds Christmas,” said Brubacher. “We will be singing the true meaning of the season.” Brubacher and his choir are 30 people at full force, and are no strangers to performing around town. The choir also puts on Christmas in the Village every year, which Brubacher says “provides a high quality Christmas program for free for the community.” He is also excited for the art walk because it will be a new experience and a great opportunity to showcase local artists tied into the message of the season. “Art helps people focus,” said Brubacher. “The message gets across and becomes clearer when you have that time to think and participate.”


The Meaning of the Season

This time around, Danforth had a few more months to prepare for the art walk. She wanted to engage the community even more broadly and went to the churches to ask them to submit names of local Christian artists that could create artwork to be displayed. Local artists have been hard at work for weeks coming up with unique pieces that will help tell the story

of Christmas to the community. Artist Bridget Mantasoot is working on a commissioned painting of the manger scene in her unique style influenced by cubism. “I am excited to bring a fresh view to the part of the story that we all celebrate, the gift of Christ, on Christmas morning,” said Mantasoot. “[It’s] such a beautiful and sacred time, expressing the divine and human, the big and small of those first moments.”

Mantasoot also participated in the Passion Art Walk. She painted the surrender hands that were displayed at Mia Sorella. Danforth is looking forward to having the artists voices heard through each of their individual pieces. “I’m excited that the artists, as Christian artists, can find a venue to speak their messages through their medium, which is so often disregarded, and yet can be so powerful for us to remember,” said Danforth.

In a time of year when most people’s minds are on buying gifts, cooking food, and preparing for family, Danforth hopes that the community will pause and reflect on the true meaning of the season. “I am excited that the community is embracing the gospel message; the message of truth,” said Danforth. “I’m excited that the churches can be unified around the gift of Christmas, Jesus, and that we can celebrate together this tremendous holiday, the traditions, and the meaning of hope and bringing light into the world. In a time of a lot of despair worldwide, to have a community still be able to celebrate around truth and light and hope and faith is a tremendous inspiration to all.”

Bring your families to remember and enjoy the heart of the season as Barrington focuses on rediscovering the meaning of Christmas. 

For more information about the participating artists, merchants, and churches, visit www.christmasartwalk.com.