

inklings

celebrating the art of written expression ~ composed by
people from the Living Word Community Church family



Fall Edition: October - December 2009

[the Arts of LWCC]

The Arts Ministry of Living Word wants to awaken the artist within you. This ministry is here to encourage everyone: the artistic dabblers to the established artists and especially those who are interested in developing their creative life. It's true, we are all created in God's image – which means we all have the ability to create. Is something holding you back? Let's dive into our God-given creativity in the context of a grace-filled community.

Our Current Arts Communities

Aperture – photography, no fancy cameras required!

Pages – writing group for both men and women

***Inklings** is a result of the writing communities of LW and is published four times a year: January ~ April ~ July ~ October.*

*To submit your written piece(s) for consideration in **Inklings**, email deAnn Roe at droe@lwccyork.com.*

The Gallery @ CGCB

Calling all artists! The gallery exhibits change every six weeks and we need your art to grace the walls of the Common Grounds Coffee Bar. Call deAnn to have your art considered for an upcoming exhibit. We have space for wall-hung art and three-dimensional art.

Ways to plug-in...

- ◆ Artists in general: sketchers, sculptors, photographers, painters, potters, writers, poets, and the like. I'd love to talk with you about the many ways to be involved in the Arts Ministry!

the studio where visual artists gather

is geared for established and emerging visual artists and meets monthly to connect as artists to artists, to God, to the church, and to the community.

To hear more, contact deAnn at 755.0089 x126 or
droe@lwccyork.com

And don't forget to check out **Vertical Creativity**
www.verticalcreativity.blogspot.com

Ridiculous Love

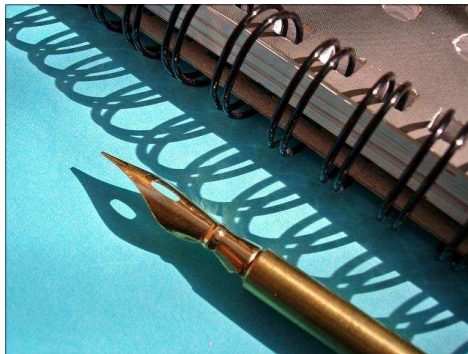
Watching as a young boy curls up in his father's arms I'm suddenly struck by a facet of God that, while understood, is very poorly grasped. In this image of the father and the son there is something else going on below the surface. The son shows an intimate trust of his father and the father shows this uncompromising, unending, ridiculous love. It is fascinating and phenomenal to think that we can care more about a small individual than ourselves. So many times we hear stories of parents who have risked or given their lives for their children. It is simply unfathomable. To be so incredibly in love that you would literally do anything for them. Then we see God and His Love. We, by our very nature, are prone to failure; we can't always be loving or caring. There are times when we do fail at loving others, even our own family, but God doesn't. He is so drunk with love that He sent His son who was also part of Him to die for us. He had such a ridiculous love that He gave His life for us.

It's a simple fact to grasp, God loved us so He died for us, but how incredible is that love. He is the God of everything. He created the Heavens and the Earth. He told the galaxies how to work and He governs the universe. His love caused Him to choose torture and pain even when the very ones He was saving spit upon Him. How hard is it for us to trust someone after we've been hurt. Romantically speaking, it is incredibly difficult. You fall in love and then your heart is broken. You feel depressed and know you can't feel that way again. God has had His heart bro-

ken time and time again but He recklessly goes back for more. He is driven by this all-encompassing ridiculous Love that just won't let go. It's so incredible that no matter how much we think we understand it, we still haven't scratched the surface. That is the kind of Love that I think everyone desires to have and at the same time trembles at the thought of it. A ridiculous, reckless, uncompromising, irrational kind of Love.

By Ryan Johnson

*Every author in some way
portrays himself in his
works, even if it be
against his will.
~ Goethe*



Reincarnation of Jesus

Remember that old, ratty, stinky thing covered with dusty fur? The one that everyone had once? That teddy bear? When we were little kids, we needed someone to tell our hurts and joys to. The arms of that big soft teddy (that now smells like moth balls) comforted us when we cried. And, in many ways, our childhood teddy knew more of what hurt us and what made us extremely happy than our parents did. Fred or Thumper helped us in life, and for some, maybe that softness and the comforting arms were like a life preserver—pulling us out of the fear that brought us down. You see, now that we are older we don't have that teddy anymore. That teddy was just a childhood toy, and we have to get older and grow up. But we all have an adulthood teddy bear don't we? Someone we can go to with all of our worries, one that will listen no matter how long you talk, and one that will comfort you still. But this teddy has a resemblance to someone we all know really well, doesn't it? I think it reminds me of... Jesus.

By Jennifer Leech

Rose Colored Sacrifice

Running in circles, going nowhere fast
My mind spins uncontrolled
Meeting my blackened self,
Stings like hot coals upon my chest
They sink into nothingness

I offer what's left up to the Lord
What do I bring but hate and scars
All I have not much but I have my own
Please don't turn away from my sacrifice

Rain pours down I'm caught in the storm
A battle is waging destruction commences
Scarlet rivers flow over soaked earth and mud
This land is laid to waste and all who's in it
I cry out, "HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?"
When will this scene fade from my mind?
Will I ever hear an answer?
Seasons pass and the rain continues. I ask yet one more time

With no more hope, when all is abandoned
The clouds part way of a beautiful sunrise,
Light glistens upon my battered face
Open the gate and run...run...run...

Con't next page.

Rose Colored Sacrifice

Con't

Run, run for the doors wide open
No one can stop us now
It's perfection we seek and a promise given
The battles already won

Will you come as I walk through death?
Through the desolate lands where I once tread
Don't be afraid no one's left to hurt
Your scars are gone, your body no longer burnt

Written by: Bobby John Rambo 8/21/84-5/23/09

Rain

Rain
so thorough and complete
consistent and straight forward
no pretense
rain like God's sorrow
pouring down
weeping with the ones
who weep
taking their pain
and making it his
grieving and aching
releasing and taking.

By Emily S.

Morning Joy

This is a piece about...nothing, really. It's about the simple joy of a cool morning, a shining sun, the aroma of coffee, a colorful variety of flowers all around—in planters and hanging baskets and beds, a tiny but growingly bountiful garden heavy laden with tomatoes, peppers, chilies, and cucumbers. More often than not, these abundant reasons for celebrating life in its simplest essence go unnoticed. More often than not, even when just out of bed, our brains are obsessed and distracted by our duties and tasks looming large, by over due bills, by unsolved dilemmas, by imperfect relationships, and all the burdens we carry. But on that rare morning, like this one today, when all those things are, for unknown reasons of biology and psychology, deep in the recesses of consciousness, just sitting and smelling and sensing is, however briefly, a joy. On these special occasions our skin registers the cool dampness of the morning air, the palette of nature is noticeably more intense—oranges and blues and reds and yellows and many shades of green—and the often unseen detail is in focus: butterflies, chipmunks, the creak of the porch swing chains, the wasps in the corner, the adoring stare of the dog. The peaceful time window, however, begins to draw short, and from the edges, awareness of the day at hand begins to seep in, bringing with it the familiar anxiety of life. If only I had the power, or self control, to regulate the presence and onset of worries and stresses. I'm sure some do, but not me. That flaw though, that weakness, makes rare times, such as this very morning, more joyful, and reminds me that life is a wonderful gift full of lavish beauty.

By Jeff S.

Hesitant Steps

She walks slowly, hesitant steps, embarrassed glances...furrowed eyebrows, doubt etched into her face.

She stands silently at the foot of the cross. She waits, wondering if the reality could live up to the hype.

She looks at her feet, not ready to raise her eyes. The doubt that has kept her from this place has become her hope. The possibility of this place has kept her from giving up, but now she knows at the moment she looks up, she will know if it's real.

She shivers at the thought of an empty cross. All hope for something beyond what she can see, for something that means something, for something that can make everything OK, would be gone.

But she has to know. So, she looks.

Her heart shatters, the tears roll down her face. No!
It can't be.

No one hangs on the cross.

There is nothing.

Just three rusty nails.

His hand touches her shoulder.

Child, I was on that cross for just a moment.

Just a moment in time to take all of your doubt, your mistakes, your anger, your addictions, your pain.

I only needed to be here for a moment.

I am where you are. I go where you go. I go where you've been.
And I go where you will go.

Hesitant Steps

Con't

So, spend a moment here, absorbing the magnitude and depth of my love for you. But, just a moment.

I have plans for you.

I love you, as you are, and as you will become.

You are my beloved, a child of the King.

Now, stand up, shake off the dust, and follow me.

By Lauren P.

I'm in no Hurry

I feel my legs **running**.

But now I don't *flee*, I'm just *free*.

I hear my voice **shouting**.

But not out of *fear*, just so you can *hear* my new song and see my new dance.

It is the song of a **child**:

laughter, joy, and peace.

It is the dance of a **girl**:

twirling, running, and release.

Somewhere in the ocean

or along the waves of the sea;

This is where you can find my new motion,

Where you can see me finally just be **ME**.

By Brittany O.

Thirsting

If spirits could storm
mine would be tearing
itself apart with lightning.
If hearts could dry up
mine would be
withered and dirty.

I thirst for Living Water -
You hold it out to me.
I pretend I do not see you
and turn to walk away.

I drink the dust instead
and die a little bit more.
But still you're there,
inviting me in.

By Emily S.

ATTENTION WRITERS AND POETS

The **Inklings** publication is released quarterly. The next edition will be in January. If you love to express yourself and/or give glory to God through words, paragraphs, or stanzas, please submit your written pieces for consideration to deAnn Roe by December 15, 2009 via email: droe@lwccyork.com.

Don't hesitate to contact regarding questions you may have.

Trust

As I have processed all that I experienced in Guatemala, there are many things I walk away with. One in particular is a different level of trust I had in the Lord while I was there. This is something I journaled as I was pondering about this trust....

“Since I had very little control over anything while I was there, I had two choices: I could worry or surrender any time I was afraid. So, I made a decision early on, moving quite quickly to trusting God at a level that I had never done before. After all, I couldn’t speak the language, I wasn’t in control of driving the vehicle we were in, anywhere outside the home I had to depend on our new dear friends to help communicate for me, and even though I didn’t have to eat the food that was placed before me, I needed to trust God that even if I got sick He would take care of me. Interestingly enough, by the time we were at the end of the trip I had moved to a level of pure peace, knowing that if God were to take me home I had full trust in Him because it was my time. This will impact me the rest of my life because I will be able to reflect on that trust in a time that it would be easy to worry and be fearful. I will be able to ask myself, ‘Can I trust God in this situation just like I did while I was in Guatemala?’”

Recently, I read this quote from Ruth Hailey Barton and it reminded me of what I wrote just a few weeks ago on this same issue of trust:

“She lost her opportunity to trust God and see Him come through at His best.”

Further reflection on this quote, in conjunction with the question I asked myself above, resulted in a different level of relationship with the Lord. Not only do I want to be able to say yes, that I can trust God like I did while I was in Guatemala, but I want to be able to come to a level of trusting so much that I watch Him come through at His best. My problem is that here in the states it would be easy for me to take control of a situation and lose the opportunity to watch Him come through at His best.

What level of trust do you have in the Lord? Is it only when you have control and things are going well? Or maybe you have been somewhere on this journey of life where you didn't have control and you saw God come through at His best? If you did, what can you do to remind yourself of that place? How could you fill in the blank: *Can I trust God in this situation even if _____?*

I pray that you will experience the opportunity to trust God and see Him come through at His best.

By Celesa H.

Finding Joy

One of the fruits, one of the “you'll know them by...” marks of a Spirit-filled life, we're taught, is **joy**.

But for many of us, even after coming to faith in Christ, a prevailing joy is *not* our default setting. Like other “Spiritual disciplines” - regular time in the Word, consistent times of prayer and meditation, loving those we don't like, selfless generosity to those in need of resources we have—these things take intent and effort on our part to *become our nature*. We don't, at least not most of us, enter into relationship with Christ as our Lord on one day and wake up the next filled with Christlike love, compassion, gentleness, and joy. The transformation, the manifestation of the new creation we have become, develops over time, a lifetime, as God incrementally convicts and steers and enlightens and reveals, then refines and polishes the jagged edges of our human nature. Sometimes these transformative steps are only a matter of changing perspective—seeing the same reality a new way, from a different angle. Such it is with joy.

Consider Route 322, the route many take to State College. The stretch of highway from roughly Newport to Thompsontown is, perhaps, one of the most spectacularly scenic drives in all of PA. The road runs adjacent to the Juniata River, and from the Northbound lane, high above the river, you can see the brown ribbon of river winding into the distance, and the forested, rolling mountains stretching toward the far off horizon to the west. I've made that drive at least a hundred times, probably more.

Most times I see only guardrails, tractor trailers, the white broken stripe between the lanes, and the green interstate-style signs. Most of the time I just want the drive to be over with. Most times if I could teleport past the whole thing and just *arrive* I would do so. But every once in a while, on those unfortunately rare times when my mind is focused on the here and now instead of the *next* place, the view out the driver's side window is stunningly majestic and beautiful.

Joy, I believe, can become a more frequent reality when we bring our mind back from some imagined destination, look out the driver's side window, and allow the “getting there” to be, at least, half the fun. We aim our awareness, too often, on some as yet unrealized future place and time where we might find joy—when that promotion occurs, when we're finished school, when I can finally afford a new Softail, when we retire. Or we “live” in some idealized past time, our “glory days,”—when we were the star running back, when we had no bills other than gas in the Camaro, when there were far more years ahead of us than behind us and our life was mostly a blank sheet of paper. We travel through the present, the only earthly reality truly available to us, seeing only the guardrails, the stripes on the road, and the exit signs, missing the spectacular scenery, the fountains of joy all around us.

At almost any moment, regardless of the ambient stresses and worries that may underlie our present circumstance, we can

pause, take in our surroundings, and allow ourselves to be thrilled by them. We are, round the clock, all our lives, immersed in generous beauty and wonder that we need only notice to begin having joy as our default setting. Look around. There are comfortable homes, the company of family, indulgent food, too many clothes, sunshine, storm clouds, a wet-nosed dog, majestic trees, Famous Hot Wieners, a star-filled night sky, the smell of baking, beaches, a motorcycle ride, toys, the magic of modern communication, mowed lawns, friends, cool sheets, an endless variety of music, medicine, people who need us, people on whom we depend, uncountable books, the collective knowledge of all mankind for all history at our fingertips, and the means-a-plan—whereby we can live forever with the Creator of the Universe.

Surely all of us, at any given time, can cite reasons why joy, for us, is a distant concept. And all those things, the trials and torments of life, are very real. But I believe, with practice and intent, and the help of our transformative Savior, we can develop the ability to notice and experience and savor and find joy in the abundant, infinite, spectacular world we, for now anyway, must live in.

By Jeff S.

Weapons of Mass Distraction

I'm a sucker for HGTV or the Food Network or NBC news or... often I wish we had no TV in our house. But even if we didn't have one, other time-stealing distractions would find their way into my spiritual and creative life. Oh, need I mention this little flat technical device that rests so nicely on my lap - connecting me to the entire world with one easy click...yes, even my computer and Internet become a distraction. Sadly, I could be like Chuck Noland, stranded on a deserted island with no people, blackberry, errands, work, traffic, Facebook updates, and I'd **STILL** be distracted. Most distractions, however, are not external...but *internal*.

We will never be 100% free from distractions this side of eternity. But they sure can rob us of the things that are most important. On Tuesday, I was having lunch with a close friend and she shared how distractions annoy her terribly. *I could relate*. She said that when she's inspired creatively - that is when the distractions hit the hardest. "Oh, an idea for a writing project! But, I need to reply to that email first. It will only take a second." *Right. Only a second*. An hour later and the inspiration has passed. No engaging creativity that day. Same story the next day and the next.

I believe there is something uniquely special about engaging in creative endeavors, and in those endeavors we encounter God in intimate ways. So, of course, distractions will creep in and keep

us from doing such things. BUT, distractions are not the only things that rob us of time with God...slothfulness is a biggie too. More on that another time.

How do you keep distractions from distracting you from your creative endeavors and quiet times with God? First is **awareness**. Knowing that it's happening - when you are pulled away and excuses are made - is half the battle. If you are like my friend and like me, the feeling of sorrow then follows, "Why do I let it happen!?" Paul illustrates this beautifully in the seventh chapter of Romans - verse 15, "I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate." Second is **intentionality**. Because I know I'm prone to distractions, I seek God's grace and ask for His help to avoid things that distract me. I want to be intentional with meeting with Him through my creativity. He wants that too. So, asking for His help is never bad! But I must put forth effort as well.

Creativity is placed in us by God. His desire is that we explore this gift as an offering to Him - to create beauty and express what He's put on our hearts. It's a high form of worship.

May you be free from annoying distractions that steal you away from the lap of God - and may you create freely in His presence as you experience a oneness with your Lord.

Grace & peace on the creative journey ~ deAnn Roe

The Writers' Corner ~

Oh Say, Can You Spell?

Admit it. You either write efficiently and effortlessly, not even pausing when you have to write words like “embarrass” or “vacuum” or “separate” OR you hide your shopping list because you’re afraid your kids will see that you spell “eggs” with one “g.” Why, my own sainted mother refused to write me letters when I was in college because she feared I’d circle her mistakes in red ink and mail the letters back to her. Now, would I do something like that? (No comment.)

It’s part of the age-old nature vs. nurture debate: Are good spellers born or made? Do some people just miss out on the spelling gene or can they learn how to spell? Personally, I believe if you are a visual learner and can picture words that you’ve seen in print you tend to be a better speller, whereas other learning types might do well to keep a dictionary close at hand or consult one of my favorite on-line resources: www.merriam-webster.com.

Part of what makes spelling so much fun in our modern society is the technology that purports to make our lives easier, but instead contributes to the demise of good spelling. Take texting as an example (should “texting” even be a word?). I recently sent my first text message in a pathetic attempt to keep in touch with my teens. After taking about 10 minutes

to figure out how to compose and send a very short message, I will now concede that abbreviations should be allowed in texting (but nowhere else). Yes, the message: "Where R U?" is grammatically horrendous, but it does save a lot of time and is extremely useful for tracking wayward children.

While we're on the subject of abbreviations, "nite" is not a word; neither is "thru," "lite," or "till" (it should be "until" or "'til"—unless you're tilling a field), although you will often see these words on very public billboards and signs. I understand that you may be pressed for space, but spelling the word "nite" correctly only requires 5 letters total (versus 4 letters). Please think of the impressionable children.

I'm a firm believer in hand-written thank-you notes and well-composed e-mails (please take the time to read over what you've typed before you hit the "send" button). If you haven't learned by now, the spell check on your computer is not to be trusted. Those who have blindly followed the recommendations of their spell checker without having human eyes proof their written work have ended up publishing such gems as:

Please add my name to the class roster.

There are two many samples to choose from.

There are some closely guarded proofreading secrets that will help improve your spelling. First, read what you've written out loud, slowly and carefully, and glaring errors are bound to jump out at you. Second, if you have the time (and virtually no one does), read what you've written backwards—start with the last sentence and work your way back to the first sentence. This technique is especially effective in finding duplicate words and letters that our eyes tend to glide over when reading in the normal fashion. Third, have a trusted colleague read over what you've written. The more sets of eyes you have looking over your work the better.

Last, but not least, think back to your elementary school days. The rules of spelling you learned way back then still apply today (most of the time):

i before e, except after c, or when sounding like A, as in neighbor and weigh.

Form the plural of nouns ending in s, x, z, ch, or sh by adding es.

If you're not a natural-born speller, take heart! Your readers will appreciate the efforts you make to consistently spell correctly and the world will be a better place as we all communicate more effectively.

By Lisa Long—our resident editor and writing guru.

Each written piece is owned by the writer and cannot be used without their permission. Thank you!

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