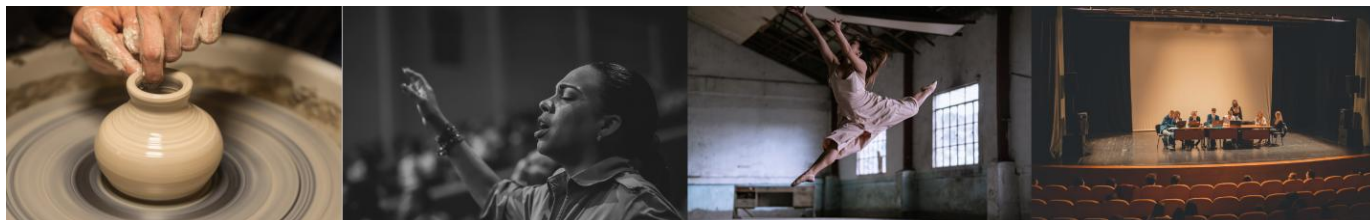


Art & Faith



Why are the arts important to faith

Simply put, the arts are great reminders that there are more ways to describe, feel, and act with our faith. We may understand this intuitively with music, but visual art can also become an act of worship. If we rethink what art is, what it can be, and how God has partnered in creation throughout time, we can allow art to become a spiritual practice that enlivens our faith. God is first and foremost a *creator God*... breathing life and beauty into the world, speaking all things into being (Genesis 1). Throughout scripture, we see that he delights in beauty, in expression, in connection. But more than that, we see that God is active, continually moving towards renewal and restoration (2 Corinthians 5, Revelation 21). From beginning to end, scripture can be seen as an ongoing story of creation and re-creation (in us and around us) that continues today and into the future to come.

Rather than thinking of art as merely a craft, consider it a meaning-making experience. When it becomes an experience for making meaning, it can be used as a time of connection with God and deep faith reflection. When the experience becomes more important than the product, art can be used as a gateway to understand and spiritual transformation, but only when the posture of the heart and the acts of the body are centered on God. Like when Mary anoints the feet of Christ, God sees love where others see wasteful, pointless acts (John 12). Can art not serve like this? Understood this way, it is the act, the experience, that is worship, while the finished piece becomes a reminder ... Now it is a piece for contemplation, something of personal spiritual significance, regardless of its craftsmanship and quality. When we allow art to matter, it can become a new way of seeing, thinking, and being, helping us see God's new creation unfolding within us and around us. By making in connection to faith, we become partners with God in bringing those little glimmers of Heaven on Earth: within us, and around us.

Through seeing and making, we can...

- **know God** in a newer, deeper way
- **point others** towards renewal: God's promise of New Creation
- **express our love** for God through action
- **partner with God** as he also creates and makes things new
- **attune to the Holy Spirit** as it leads us through feelings and intuition

Centering Quotes:

- "What you do in the Lord is not in vain... (You are) accomplishing something that will become in due course part of God's new world." - NT Wright
- "Language is always going to pull you away from the infinite because the infinite is utterly beyond language." - Jeremy Begbie
- "Art at its best draws attention not only to the way things are but also to the way things will be." - N.T. Wright

Theology of Art

Art can help the ordinary become something special.

God created out of love. His creation is a result of that love. We can create as a display of love for God as Creator.

Creating is a different way of knowing and expressing our faith.

All forms of art can transform ideas and people, pointing them to God.

Art shows us how broken material can be given new life.

The arts help us think imaginatively and see God's new creation unfolding in the present.

Because God is The Creator, he can be known more fully through creating.