The Story Behind the Artwork for Lessons and Carols

A call went out in September for artists to paint works for our 2007 Advent Lessons and Carols service. Their assignment was to choose one of eight readings from the Old and New Testament, interpret it on a 3'x 5' canvas, and complete it within two months. Each painting would play a major role in our annual special Advent service. Kyle Lindholm, a Jamaica Plain artist, answered that call and painted all eight of them. His impressive collection of paintings was hung in the sanctuary and seen by the public for the first time at our Lessons and Carols service on the First Sunday of Advent, December 2, 2007. The eight colorful interpretations added a visual component to the spoken and sung texts making it a vibrant, extraordinary, and memorable event.

Artist Lindholm faced many challenges during the Lessons and Carols project. As each painting was to portray and interpret a specific lesson, he went to the texts of the Old Testament and the service music for inspiration. He also researched Byzantine art and incorporated the symbols found in the 9th century *O Antiphons* chant into the paintings that describe Christ: *O Sapientia* (Wisdom), *O Adonai* (Ruler of the House of Israel), *O Radix Jesse* (Root of Jesse), *O Clavis David* (Key of David), *O Oriens* (Rising Light), *O Rex Gentium* (King of Nations), *O Emmanuel* (King and Lawgiver). He specifically designed these seven compositions to relate and flow from lesson to lesson, culminating with the Gospel, the eighth and last composition, a stunning interpretation of "The Annunciation."

Kyle Lindholm put finishing touches on his painting "Annunciation."

For the past three years, Lindholm has taught drawing at New England Institute of Art. Before that he was a political cartoonist and says that the experience of teaching realistic drawing continues to have a major influence on his own artwork, for example, the series of landscape drawings he's doing of Afghanistan. He chose Afghanistan as his wife Meghann works there with the Development Alternative International, an organization that helps build roads and parks with provincial reconstruction teams and endeavors to create better communication between organizations in Afghanistan.

"Taking on this project propelled me to stay artistically productive," said Lindholm. "It's been an intense experience but a good one: eight paintings in eight weeks - that's a great thing for an artist. More importantly, while my wife is away, it has been very rewarding to take part in a community-oriented project. And I like the long-standing connection between art and religious buildings. It's great to make something and have it appear in such a respected location."

A special showing of Lindholm's paintings will take place at Taylor House Bed and Breakfast, 50 Burroughs Street, Jamaica Plain sometime in 2008. Go to www.taylorhouse.com for further details and information about their music and art program series.