



a publication of kirk irwin and sarah kennedy irwin in ministry with Cru and partnering with Friday Arts Project

DEC 2023

## A year in review of an arts ministry

I (Kirk) recently was invited to a local Anglican church to do the sermon. The rector of the church said they wish to become more connected to what we do in ministering to the arts community in Rock Hill.



One of our staffers in a recent conversation with an artist who we have known for as long as we have lived here (10 years) told her that she was looking for a church. She is not a believer.

A neighbor artist told Sarah a few months ago that Friday Arts Project "does so much for the community". He has started to support Friday Arts Project for a monthly amount.

Another artist friend, who has been in the community for decades and heads a newly established arts organization connected to a local Catholic Church told me on two occasions that Friday Arts Project is well respected by the arts community—and that there is nothing bad to say about Sarah and I.

At our recent Christmas Party at our home, The Perch, we had 30-40 people attend, half a dozen of whom never attended before—several of them were not believers.

This past year two artist friends have grown in their appreciation for Friday Arts Project and joined our Gallery Committee to help us decide what artists to show in a given year. They are not believers.

I could go on. Like the entire family who has become involved because Sarah met their then 7-year-old daughter at an artist's event at the local county museum—the young girl's mother recently helped us by sitting at our art festival info table for hours. Or the multiple college students who have grown towards maturity because of their connection with our campus staff—the general culture would probably overlook some of them as leaders but our staff have patiently worked with them. Or the former Winthrop student Sarah worked with years ago—who tried to undermine our work—recently trusted Christ. Or the rise in attendance numbers, volunteer participation, and generous patrons who helped us make Art Party (that art festival mentioned above) even more successful.

I have shared this before, one of our prayers before events and throughout the year is, "God, help us to be a part of someone's next step toward you". The above scenarios show this. Some haven't visibly changed. Some have positively changed toward God, and are more open. And a few have actually trusted Christ. I am reminded of the Apostle Paul after his visit to the Areopagus in Athens:

*Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this."... But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them. —Acts 17:32-34*

Though we have not been "mocked", we have had adversity and suspicion toward us, people wanting to "hear more", and some who "joined and believed". Thank you for supporting us through your giving and prayers so that we can continue to stand in "the Areopagus" of the art community here and make our case for Christ.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

The end of this year has shown some loss of giving which is not unusual considering the times. As you consider your end of the year giving and in the coming year please consider a gift toward our ministry as we walk this path with the community in Rock Hill and greater Charlotte. ■

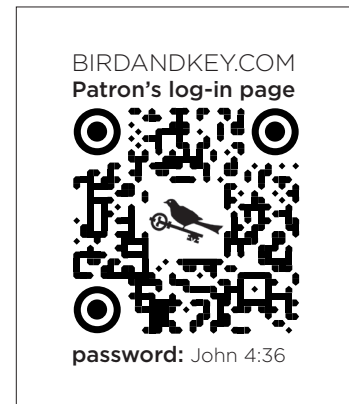
Blessings—

*Sarah and Kirk*

### Please Pray

- » Pray the prayer with us that we try to pray before every event, "Jesus, help us be a part of someone's next step toward you."
- » Pray for the coming year and our full year of events—not only the regular ones but also our forum in April on Beauty, Art & Ecology called "Birdsong like a Canopy". Pray this event gives us opportunity to speak as followers of Jesus.
- » We have a significant financial reduction in our monthly support coming in February. Pray that God provides new individuals and avenues of funding so we can continue to engage with the arts community here in Rock Hill and to the world.
- ★ If you would like to partner with us in ministry, visit our giving page on Cru's website: [www.cru.org/0402593](http://www.cru.org/0402593)

- ★ For more information about us and our ministry, visit our website: [www.birdandkey.com](http://www.birdandkey.com) also check out Friday Arts Project on Facebook or website: [www.fridayartsproject.org](http://www.fridayartsproject.org)
- ★ If you would like to access our Patron's page, go to: [birdandkey.com/patrons](http://birdandkey.com/patrons) or use your smartphone camera with the qr code below:



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