

BIRD and KEY NEWS

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

OCTOBER 2026



A young artist named Stephen was flying home from an almost euphoric experience in New York City. He had just finished a summer program there centered on the arts and his Christian heritage. In the midst of processing the whole affair, a fellow college student said to him, "You need to start something at Winthrop".

As Stephen settled back into his Fall semester, he found several other art students rally around him (including our own staffer Brandi Voigt Fox). At the inception Friday mornings and art were central. Hence the name-Friday Arts. And since this was an ongoing "adventure" of sorts, they added the word "Project". Thus was born Friday Arts Project.

When Stephen and his fellow artists started Friday Arts Project in the early Fall of 2006 they were motivated by a love for the arts, a love for their talents as artists, and a desire to see that love grow. By cultivating this love they believed they became better human beings, better neighbors. As their love for the arts grew, their love for the art community in Rock Hill grew, and their love for their fellow artists in the community grew. This was a significant way they served their community.

The students of Friday Arts Project wanted not only to cultivate love through their art, but also to engage with their imaginations. CS Lewis once wrote "Imagination is the organ of meaning". The religious faith of these students invited them into a place of seeing and learning from the unseen truths of this world that existed outside the observable world. It is in this space where the power of art-and anything truly beautiful-can draw a response of awe. The phrase from FriArts vision statement, "...Beauty exists where Truth and Goodness meet Mystery..." is a summary of this idea.

Many of the early participants of FriArts believe in traditional Christian beliefs. They wanted to have a place where there was no tension between their art and their religious pursuits, and wished to invite others to this place as well.

Sarah and I have joined these students-now adults-for the last 13 years. We have presented Jesus in our words and lives, as well as in our pursuit of excellence in our art. We trust that God will give our community 20 more years of even greater impact.

Thank you all for your continued prayer and support.

Blessings-

Sarah and Kirk

**This newsletter is a condensed version of an online blog I (Kirk) wrote in late September. To read the entire essay-and view the associated photo album-go to Friday Arts Project's website: (<https://www.fridayartsproject.org/20-years>).

Please Pray

- » Continue to pray for wisdom for us as we explore finding space to serve and impact artists for Jesus. We are developing content--our "story"--to assist in short or long form presentations related to securing space. Pray God leads us and gives us wisdom as we walk this path and write this content.
- » Pray for a developing new mentoring residency program called "Porchcrop" which we are looking to start this Fall. We have pushed this back to summer 2027.
- » Please pray that God would continue to provide for our financial support. We dearly love this worthwhile ministry. If you know someone who would appreciate what we do, please share our info with them or contact us.

Updates

- » Kirk is still working on his Doctorate, though there have been delays due to summer activities and moving the FriArts Studio out of the Gettys Art Center in September.
- » Sarah's Mom, Sally joined us this past August and will be living with us for about a year.
- » Kirk's Mother has healed tremendously and seems to show no signs of the injury. Even her vertigo has diminished.



Kirk has begun to teach at our church as part of the sermon rotation. You can find the sermon from Sunday, OCT 11, 2026, on the Resurrection Anglican Church YouTube Channel (Kirk begins around 18:24): <https://tinyurl.com/RAC-10-11-2026>

If you would like to partner with us in ministry, visit our giving page on Cru's website: <https://give.cru.org/0402593>

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