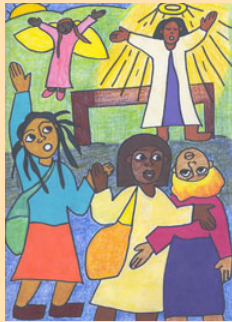


## New Visible Kingdom Web Site

Visible Kingdom Studios now has a Web site! Check it out at



### The Women at the Empty Tomb

[www.visiblekingdom.com](http://www.visiblekingdom.com). There are several galleries, including Scriptures for Today paintings and Women's Illustrated Bible images, as well as a Community Forum and many other informational pages.

Visible Kingdom images are for Christian believers of all races, colors, cultures, and ages. We share a faith in Jesus and a belief that understanding of the story of Christ and practice of his teachings can and will change the world for the better.

The name "Visible Kingdom" focuses on our task of making visible and actual God's kingdom in our world, seeking to do God's will as Jesus taught us "on earth as it is in heaven." Visible Kingdom Studios wants to make a difference in the world, for peace and for the poor. Its inspirational and educational art focuses on the Bible as

God's word, encouraging and supporting the building of God's kingdom in today's world.

As a company, Visible Kingdom tries to further God's kingdom through artistic and educational images that illustrate the kingdom and its implications for our modern world. The company also seeks to embody kingdom principles through partnerships with urban youth, elders, and the homeless. Its motto is, "Let's really follow God's word, practice what Jesus preached, and make visible the kingdom of God in every corner of our world."

## Women's Illustrated Bible Project

The Women's Illustrated Bible is an in-process, ongoing project of Visible Kingdom Studios. Visit the new Visible Kingdom Studios Web site ([www.visiblekingdom.com](http://www.visiblekingdom.com)) to see many sample drawings from the Women's Illustrated Bible. Quite a few illustrations from each of the four gospels are on view.

The aim of this Bible is to encourage people of faith in their quest for gender equality. The project seeks to provide a fully illustrated contemporary Bible, with close to 400 pictures focusing on women's important roles throughout the scriptures.

This project fits so well with one of the Visible Kingdom promises — to provide scriptural images for today's world: Biblical art and illustration that reflect racial and cultural diversity, gender equality, youth and elder empowerment, urban environments, and a social-action orientation.

You can participate in this historic project and help make it happen sooner by sponsoring illustrations. Choose a favorite story or verse. Sponsors also receive the original hand-colored pencil drawing for the passage they sponsor. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact [vks@visiblekingdom.com](mailto:vks@visiblekingdom.com).

### Be sure to check out:

- **New Visible Kingdom Web site**
- **Women's Illustrated Bible Project**
- **Advent articles**
- **Ideas for using Kingdom art in worship services**
- **What is holiness?**
- **Visible Kingdom Community Forum**
- **Scripture reflections**



### Inside this issue:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| Advent Is Coming!                         | <b>2</b> |
| Using Kingdom Art in Processions          | <b>2</b> |
| Scriptural Reflections for Advent         | <b>2</b> |
| Using Kingdom Art in Illustrated Readings | <b>3</b> |
| An Epiphany Procession                    | <b>3</b> |
| Everyday Life: What Is Holiness?          | <b>3</b> |
| Join Visible Kingdom Community Forum      | <b>4</b> |

## Advent Is Coming!

**When we walk in a procession, we are standing up for Jesus, saying "Here I am, Lord," "Send me, God."**



**The Annunciation**

Advent means "coming" and it is the liturgical season that starts the church year. It

begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. This year the first Sunday of Advent is December 3. If December 24 is a Sunday (as this year), it is the fourth Sunday of Advent, and Christmas Eve officially starts at sundown.

Colors for Advent are traditionally purple or various shades of blue. Sometimes pink, symbolizing joy, is used for the fourth-Sunday candle on the Advent wreath, or in fourth-Sunday fabrics or flowers.

During Advent we focus on the immanent coming of the Savior we and the world

pray for, long for, and wait for.

To use Kingdom art in this season, late in Advent or on Christmas Eve, you could try a **Nativity Procession**. It could be a parade through your church or neighborhood celebrating the birth of Jesus, including characters, banners, and scenes from the Nativity story. It might also include Christmas carols and a crowd of people and angels (with masks, costumes, puppets ) wanting to see and celebrate the baby Jesus. (See the article "Using Kingdom Art in Processions" for more ideas.)



**The Visitation**

## Using Kingdom Art in Processions

Processions of the people take place in churches on Sundays and during special services, but are different from traditional liturgical processions. They involve movement, usually to music – walking, marching, dancing, processing – through the sanctuary. They can include clergy and worship leaders, but typically are composed of lay people who have created art work on the

theme of the procession for celebrating with the faith community.

The Kingdom art can be anything a person makes relating to the scriptural theme, especially masks, costumes, puppets, banners, paintings on cardboard or wood, and musical instruments. Some processions are "seasonal"; others can be performed at any time in the liturgical year.

Processions of every kind are walks with God, which we make publicly and in community, though at the same time, of course, we are also walking with God individually, one on one. When we walk in a procession, we are standing up for Jesus, saying "Here I am, Lord," "Send me, God." We are marching in a Jesus parade, saying "Christ, I proclaim you!"

## Scriptural Reflections for Advent

"Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of

cloth and lying in a manger." (Luke 2: 9-12)

### Scriptural Reflections

- How can I best prepare myself for what God is going to do in my life?
- What does God expect of me?
- What would be "good news" for our world?

- What do I hope for from the incarnate God who comes to live among us?
- How do I think of the Word "made flesh" in our world? The Word or Christ coming again? The Word or Christ living with us day to day?

## Using Kingdom Art in Illustrated Readings

Illustrated readings are one way to enliven the reading of scriptures and make them more accessible to non-native speakers of English, hard-of-hearing persons, visually-oriented people, and children. Of course, everyone becomes more involved with a scripture and remembers it better when a variety of learning styles or modalities are employed.

When you create an illustrated reading, both the reading itself and the illustrations are extremely important. Choose a scripture passage that contains concrete images; abstract concepts can be difficult to represent

pictorially. You will want to look at different versions of a passage in different Bibles. You may want to choose portions of the passage or edit it somewhat, for a particular emphasis (if that is acceptable at the church where the reading will be done).

Consider creating a reading for multiple voices, including various "parts," or a dramatic reading with characters and costumes. Make sure your illustrations, whatever media you use, are large and easy for all to see, even those who are short or sitting in the last row of the balcony. All your pictures

should be eye-catching, brightly colored, and attractive, unless the theme for the reading is somber.

Illustrations should be clearly related to specific scenes or portions of the reading. Their presentation, whether in a scroll or one by one, should be timed to coincide exactly with "their portion" of the reading being read. You must show each illustration long enough for everyone to see it adequately; this may require some tricky "orchestration" with the reading. Once you have illustrations you like, save them. They can always be put to new uses.



Presentation in the Temple

## An Epiphany Procession

In church one Three Kings Day we processed to "We Three Kings of Orient Are." It was a 10-minute procession and pageant celebrating the incarnation of Jesus and recognition of him as the Messiah. A larger than life-size papier-mache baby Jesus was mounted on a pole and led the procession. Very

large figures painted on wood panels included one of the three Kings, as well as Anna and Simeon, the wise elders who recognized the infant Jesus as the promised Savior.

The procession focused on the gifts we give to Jesus. Second and third grade Sun-

day School students made gifts out of cardboard, painted them, and presented them on the altar. Adults from the Alternatives class wrote a description of their gifts on paper and pinned the pieces of paper to a gold star made out of wood and strung with Christmas tree lights.

## THANKSGIVING: Psalm 30:11-12

"You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever."

## Everyday Life: What Is Holiness?

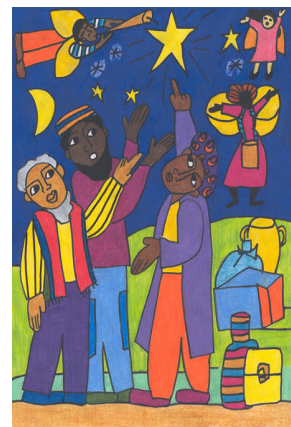
Have you ever wondered what people mean by holiness? One good answer is found in John Wesley's thought. He believed that becoming a Christian is an ongoing process. It doesn't end with our being saved, with what God does *for* us. It continues with the process of sanctification (becoming holy), with what God does *in* us.

For Wesley, becoming holy is being renewed in heart and conformed to the image of God and the mind of Christ.

But it also involves performing works of mercy and piety. Works of mercy, for Wesley, include feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, hosting the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or contributing in any way we can to the saving of souls. Works of piety include public prayer, family prayer, and praying alone; receiving communion; reading the scriptures; and fasting if our health allows.

According to Wesley, holiness doesn't always come

right away when people pray for it, want it, or say they are ready. Although God could grant sanctification in that way and sometimes does, more often it is a process that takes place over many years, with God doing much work in the person, transforming his or her life. It is God working in us that changes us. But we can, through our faith as well as our prayers, actions, habits, attitudes etc. open ourselves to the Lord and to being worked on and in.



The Magi

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## Making visible God's word and God's kingdom in today's world.



Let the Children  
Come

### Imagine a world in which people

- Treat others as they themselves would like to be treated
- Love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength
- Love their neighbors as themselves
- Make peace, banish war
- Show mercy to others
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness
- Treat others they meet, especially "the least of these" as they would treat God

This kind of blessed community is the vision Christ's teachings show us. And this vision

can become reality – more visible in the world – through our work and our prayers, as we try to build God's kingdom on earth using the vision of Jesus as our guide.

### Visible Kingdom Studios

Using visual and communication arts to renew and enliven worship services; give expression to reconciliation, Christian unity, and interfaith understanding; strengthen and improve church communication; enhance Christian education and Bible study for all ages; partner with community and outreach ministries; support evangelism and social justice work; promote church growth; and celebrate God's blessed community.

## Join Visible Kingdom's Community Forum



### Touching His Clothes

The Visible Kingdom Community includes people everywhere – from every city, town, state, and nation – who want to see God's word and God's kingdom made more visible in today's world. This means (among others) peacemakers, activists, those who meditate, seekers of justice and righteousness, the poor in spirit, the poor, the meek, the merciful, mourners, the grieving, the pure in heart, those who are persecuted or oppressed, those who pray, and all friends and followers of Jesus. It includes me (Anne Brink, artist) and I hope you too.

This Forum is a place where, as individuals and as a community, we can communicate our activities, our ideas, our prayers, and our dreams about making God's word and God's kingdom more visible. In this way, we can encourage and celebrate each other, expand what we imagine and work on, and so dream bigger dreams.

### Visible Kingdom Characters

One of my contributions to the Forum is Visible Kingdom characters, whom I draw and imagine helping to make God's word and God's kingdom more visible in their daily lives. Sometimes I will add new characters or retire some, and sometimes I'll write about what I imagine (and hope) they or someone is up to.

### Visible Kingdom Activities, Ideas, Prayers, Dreams

What about you? Please send us news of your activities and your ideas, dreams, and prayers. Include pictures of yourself and your activities if you wish, or drawings of your imaginings. I WILL answer your emails, and will post many of your communications on the Visible Kingdom Web site with your email address, so others can write to you too. Send us email at vks@visiblekingdom.com.