

Launching the Ministry...InsideOut

Rev. Nora Jacob, UrbanMission Community Partners

Pomona, CA

September 2016



Creativity and protest, celebration and publicity—all of these, rolled into what we're calling the *InsideOut Art Show*, will be unveiled October 7-8, 2016, in our fresh expression of ministry and mission in South Pomona, California.

The 2016 *InsideOut Art Show*—co-sponsored by the new UrbanMission Community Partners nonprofit organization, co-hosted by/at UrbanMission the church, and co-sponsored by Forward Progress—will create a

two-evening showcase for the original paintings, drawings, and reproduced prints and notecards by nine currently and formerly incarcerated artists in/out of California prisons.

With it, we celebrate the creativity of human beings who envision freedom—our theme—even as we honor the month of October as the Month of Resistance to Mass Incarceration.

InsideOut is not just an art show—it's the “coming out party” for UrbanMission Community Partners (UMCP), the new NBA Incubate Initiative affiliate ministry launched by our team six months ago. Called to be with people on/beyond the margins of today's society, Rev. Al Lopez connected with Rev. Stephen Patten and myself when we were still in seminary three years ago to create first the church, and then the nonprofit, to bring our social justice vision to life.

UMCP is a community-focused nonprofit organization that seeks community wholeness, resilience, and sustainability in the Pomona area by working with families and individuals at risk from poverty, hunger, homelessness, incarceration, and/or inadequate education and healthcare. As part of its outreach, Stephen and I both serve as Insight Prison Project co-facilitators with accountability and healing groups of men serving life-term sentences inside two of California's 34 state prisons.

Back in March, we were blessed to have UMCP accepted as an affiliate ministry of the National Benevolent Association. By July, we had our Board of Directors in action. And now, in October, it is time to unveil one small piece of how we want to bring UrbanMission Community Partners to life—through creative collaboration, with community, in a spirit of justice and God's shalom.

Forward Progress, our co-sponsoring partner, is headed by Phillip Angel Senteno, our curator and a participating artist. After his release from prison, Phillip made a commitment to be an advocate of positive change and founded Forward Progress, which provides reentry services for those recently released from incarceration.

He reached out to a network of “outside” artists, and to the family members of artists “inside,” to bring together the works we will be showing and offering for sale on October 7-8.



[L to R: “DePrived: Bars, edition 1,” (watermarked) by Ezequiel, \$300 show price; “Harbor Mist” (watermarked) by Phillip Angel Senteno, \$665 show price; and “Quiet Serenity” (watermarked) by S. Hunter, \$500 show price.]

The event is a fundraiser, too. Underwritten with generous support from the United Church of Christ as well as the NBA Incubate Initiative, we will set aside what we earn to make another art show possible next year, and on from there. In addition, a portion of all artwork sales from *InsideOut* will purchase art supplies for artists in the California Institution for Men, one of three prisons within 20 miles of UrbanMission.

To follow our progress online, please check the *InsideOut Art Show* webpage regularly during September and October, as we share photos and artists’ bios, an essay about the uneven financial economy of art inside and outside prison walls, and more: www.insideoutart.org.

And if you’re in our area, please join us to watch transformation and hope being born!

The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at nbacares.org/incubate or by contacting Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at awatkins@nbacares.org.