

The Knitting Pilgrim Synopsis – 418 words

As at June 5, 2019

A one-act interdisciplinary play, using performance, image projection and a set made of 90 pounds of yarn, **THE KNITTING PILGRIM** explores Kirk Dunn's artistic and spiritual journey knitting **Stitched Glass**, 3 large tapestries designed in the style of stained-glass windows that search for the common thread between the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Kirk was motivated to become part of the interfaith conversation after 9/11, asking why is it we focus more on our differences than our similarities. And can art be a catalyst for the conversation about what knits us together, rather than what pulls us apart?

Kirk received a grant to knit the tapestries and set upon what rapidly became a daunting, overly ambitious project: something he thought would take 10 months to finish instead took 15 years.

A PK – or Preacher's Kid – the product of three generations of Presbyterian ministers – the project took him on a journey of rediscovering his own faith of Christianity and researching two faiths he knew much less about: Judaism and Islam. He read books, he met with Ministers, Rabbis and Imams, attended services at churches, synagogues and mosques, and more often than not got himself into embarrassing, sometimes comedic and often humbling situations.

But as he continued on his path of designing and knitting the tapestries, and juggling kids, a marriage and multiple jobs, Kirk lost confidence that anyone would be interested in the installation and wondered if it would have any relevance. He dealt with artistic doubt and the fear of offending others. After all, what right did he have to be talking about faiths not his own?

But then came the election of Donald Trump, and the rise anti-refugee sentiment in Europe, the Alt right, xenophobia, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Kirk knew that he needed to finish the work and do what he could to foster interfaith empathy and constructive conversation. He decided to tour the tapestries with a one-man show that would tell the story of his journey – and in fact become part of it, as each show is followed by a talkback and a chance for the audience to see the tapestries up close. It's all part of an ongoing search for understanding that will move you to laughter, and maybe tears, and leave you inspired by the power and impact of art.

#BYOK (Bring Your Own Knitting), so you can knit while you watch – or use Kirk's yarn to knit and contribute to his next giant knitting project that he hopes will knit people together.