

Exploring Asylum Hill – AHCC Origami Doves

It started when Senior Minister Erica Thompson saw images of the Michael Pendry exhibit of *Les Colombes* at the national Cathedral in Washington DC. It is more than 2000 origami white paper doves suspended from the ceiling of this, the 2nd largest Cathedral in America. She asked Jack Pott, Director of Music & Arts, if something like that could be done at Asylum Hill Congregational Church. The answer was a clear “yes” even if the how was much less clear.



A work of this magnitude requires time, effort and planning, and many hands to help. Start to finish, it was a year in the making, beginning with research to see how it had been done, especially in the other venues before the National Cathedral. Being a smaller church they settled on 625 origami doves in six colors. It wasn't until a few weeks before the completion that as Jack describes it “if it's going to be different solid colored papers, how does that represent what we are? ... six colors, we're going to start them off together in the back, and then figure out a way for them to mix all together, really just representing that we ... come into this space from our own individual places but then we all ... merge together as one body of faith.”

Of course before they got to that point, they had to decide where in the space they would be, and how they would get there. Fortunately there were places they could attach solid hooks and pulleys, but one constraint was the laser smoke detector that runs from the front of the sanctuary to the back. If it is disturbed the Hartford Fire Dept. will show up. So they needed to stay below that but high enough that air currents from the floor wouldn't cause the strings to move enough to get tangled. Candy Lammers was tasked with finding a net that would fulfill the need. Her tenacity was an important component. After going through all the manufacturers of netting on the Internet, she searched EBay and found a used commercial fishing net 100' long. The biblical connection only occurred to them when it arrived with both seaweed and the aroma of the sea. This was one of the “Spirit led moments” as Jack describes them.

Another came when Jack was hanging the doves on string to the netting. It was difficult to reach as far as he wanted to from the Genie lift going down the center isle. When Jorge Fuentes brought in the “picker” used to clean up littler from the property, Jack got the extra 3' of reach on each side that allowed the doves to be placed just right, expanding as they approach the altar.

On Sunday, October 3rd, and again on November 7th, after the Community Meal when the pop-up sale is in the parking lot, the Sanctuary will be open for the public to see this beautiful installation, and of course all are invited every Sunday for the 10:00 am worship. More photos at: <https://bit.ly/AHCCdoves>