

It's Back to Nature for Artist Megan Caldwell

By Joe Motheral

Megan Caldwell spreads her immense talent by painting landscapes, portraits and animals. She's had exhibitions of her work in the National Sporting Library and Museum in Middleburg and in the Artists in Middleburg gallery.

Her paintings have been displayed at Long Branch near Millwood, including a show of her landscapes now on display until Sept. 30.

In many ways, her work reflects her actual lifestyle living in Bluemont near the Shenandoah River. "I have five dogs, six cats and four lambs," she said, not to mention being a single mom raising four children. "And I paint from two to nine hours every day."

It takes her about two months to complete a painting in what would be considered contemporary impressionism.

"When you take a photo, it's flat," she said. "I can never touch with a camera what I can touch with a brush. When you paint you can capture the feeling of it...Landscapes are the most meditative for me to paint. I also love painting animals and people but find I can exercise more artistic license painting landscapes."

She decides what to paint when "I see something so beautiful." That includes farmland, river scenes,



A Megan Caldwell landscape.

forests and open land as well as an occasional structure or animal life. One noticeable feature that adds to her work are beautiful cloud formations. She often devotes the bottom half of the painting to land and the upper half to the sky.

Her home is nestled in the woods and she said, "I love being close to nature. I love being able to walk out the back door and wander the forests, taking in all the growth...The changing of the weather, and the position of the sun throughout the year inspires me and feeds my need to paint it!"

And her fascination for animals?



Photos by Joe Motheral
Artist Megan Caldwell and a fluffy friend.

She grew up in Montana on an Indian Reservation where her father was a doctor and "animals have always been a major part of my life. Growing up, we had a house full of cats and dogs, two ponies and a free range box turtle that roamed around the house."

As an adult, "I find myself surrounded by animals and I enjoy their company and candid ways." She also took up bee keeping years back and added, "I even love those little creatures."

Megan Caldwell's paintings can be seen on her website: www.sweetrockstudio.com.

Serving Two Churches Doubles New Pastor's Mission

By Pat Reilly

Rev. TaeWon Kang, who has been appointed the new pastor of the Middleburg and Rectortown United Methodist churches, was welcomed by both communities with a recent breakfast in Rectortown and a bluegrass barbeque in Middleburg.

Leading two churches is nothing new for Pastor Kang, who has experience sharing his time equitably. He served two churches in the Northern Neck before being appointed to Richmond to serve in two different parishes.

How does he do it? "I need to honor each church's culture, mission, and tradition," he said. "I respect their legacy."

The Rectortown UMC is in its 253rd year of worship; the Middleburg church was completed in 1858, and the original bell is still in the steeple.

"I wish to listen and see what I can add," he said. "I will seek how to help them strengthen their own cultures and faith traditions, and also help them find the common ground or connectional points bridging two churches. I'm the pastor of two churches. I'm not here to love one church over the other church."

Pastor Kang also led Korean United Methodist congregations in Georgia and Alabama and also served as chaplain at Emory University Hospital.

"United Methodists are to strengthen faith ties, extend hands to one another, and go beyond the church walls to serve people," he said. "We're called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

He pointed out that Jesus went out of his home area to reach people in need. "Jesus traveled beyond Jewish regions into the non-Jewish regions," he said. "He delivered the good news of the Kingdom of God to all people and all areas. He called all and brought all into a new life by the love of God. He changed people's lives and the world. This mission and ministry of Jesus must be ongoing."

Pastor Kang, 51, and his wife, Rev. MiRhang Baek, 45, came to the U.S. from their native South Korea in 2007. Though his birth family was not Christian, his mother led him to a Methodist Church, where, as a teenager, he recalled experiencing the grace of God and knowing that he was called to the ministry.

He met his wife while attending the Methodist Theological University in Seoul, where she was also studying for the ministry. Pastor Kang was ordained as an Elder of the Korean Methodist Church in 2005. MiRhang also graduated from the same school and wanted to begin the ordination process.

"At that time, I already knew MiRhang has God's call and wanted to be a pastor," he said. "However, the Korean Methodist church was patriarchal and effectively forced MiRhang to live as a pastor's wife rather than becoming a pastor."

After much prayer, TaeWon and MiRhang moved to America to attend the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, where TaeWon and MiRhang each received their Masters of Divinity.

MiRhang was recently ordained as a United Methodist Elder and will serve as pastor for the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church in Dale City. In Northern Virginia, the couple will finally both serve as pastors. They will live at the cooperative parish parsonage in Marshall.

Pastor Kang said his passion is to care for people in need and loving people in Christ's name.

"Churches must be inclusive," he said. "We are not called to judge others by our faith type but love all and serve all by the hands of God. We fully accept the differences among people."



Photo by UMC, Virginia
Pastor TaeWon Kang and his wife, Rev. MiRhang Baek, now at Middleburg UMC and Rectortown UMC.



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