

THE KNITTING PILGRIM - KIRK DUNN (An actor & Presbyterian)

Saturday, April 20, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

Central Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ontario



The Knitting Pilgrim is a multidisciplinary one-man show combining storytelling, image projection, and three huge knitted 'stained glass windows' exploring the connection amongst the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The play -- all about knitting, and not about knitting at all -- recounts Kirk Dunn's twenty-year artistic and spiritual journey hand-knitting the ambitious project, and looks at why people struggle to get along, the meaning of art, the hell of grant-writing and the power of love to overcome major obstacles (and minor mishaps).

"It's a story about my journey -- my journey as an artist," Dunn said. "When I was looking for an art project -- I started out as a knitter -- I was so into knitting, but I was told the things I was knitting -- garments and things -- they weren't going to be able to take me to the level where I would be considered an artist. I needed to find a bigger project, so I built upon this idea of welding that love of knitting I had with something I was very interested in, which was the state of faith and empathy and the problems of the time, which was just after 9/11."

Kirk conducted interviews with leaders from each faith, the first of which was with his father, a retired Presbyterian minister, followed by interviews with an imam and a rabbi. I uncover some of the roots of these three faiths, and we can see that they are actually much more similar than they are different. All basically are coming from the same root and they're saying the same thing. They do it a little differently, and certainly politics has had an influence on them over the last little while, but that's politics -- it's not faith. At the end (of the show), the audience sees these tapestries -- they're pretty large -- ... and I think that is an effective way to present them because they're that much more impactful and impressive," Dunn said.