

## New mural blesses St. Stephen's, Ocala



The expectation was high on Sunday, Jan. 27, as St. Stephen's, Ocala, celebrated their 2nd annual Name Day. For the second year we transferred St. Stephen's Day (Dec. 26) to late January.

This year, however, was even more keenly anticipated than our first one in 2012. This year a commissioned mural of the stoning of St. Stephen's was to be unveiled! The anticipation was high. Some of the vestry who had chosen the artist and backed the project had the usual jitters when the final outcome is unknown!

The mural was installed on the day of Diocesan Convention so the only person to have seen it was the parishioner who hung it. He had, as instructed, covered it with a sheet for unveiling during the service. After the congregation declared our faith in the Nicene Creed, the priest, the Rev.

Marnie Silk-Wright, the donors, Sr. Warden Marvin and treasurer Valerie Naylor, and the artist, Prof. Tyrus Clutter, stood on either side of the mural ready for unveiling.

The silence was electric. Down came the sheet. There were tears, sighs and oohs, and then came the applause! It was all and more than we could have "asked or imagined." It is a work of art to inspire our own bold witness to our great and faithful God whom we worship and adore. It is a work that will help us to emulate the saint for whom we are named.

It helps us remember that our own witness, no matter how unimportant it may seem to us, may be the very spark that significantly burns in the mind of future saints like Saul (St. Paul) pictured in the foreground. The beautiful mural was then duly

dedicated to the glory of God. It was a day to remember in the life of our parish family known as St. Stephen's.

### About the artist

Tyrus Clutter is assistant professor of art at the College of Central Florida and a member of Grace Episcopal Church, Ocala. He has an MFA in painting from Bowling Green State University. He continues to teach and speak on topics of art, art history, aesthetics and the intersection of art and faith around the country.

From 2003 to 2008 he worked as the Director of the non-profit organization Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA 2003-2008). This included his tenure as studio and art history instructor at Gordon College. His work is on display at various colleges, museums and galleries.



**From left to right are Tyrus Clutter, with Marvin and Valerie Naylor.**