



## With Wonder & REVERENCE

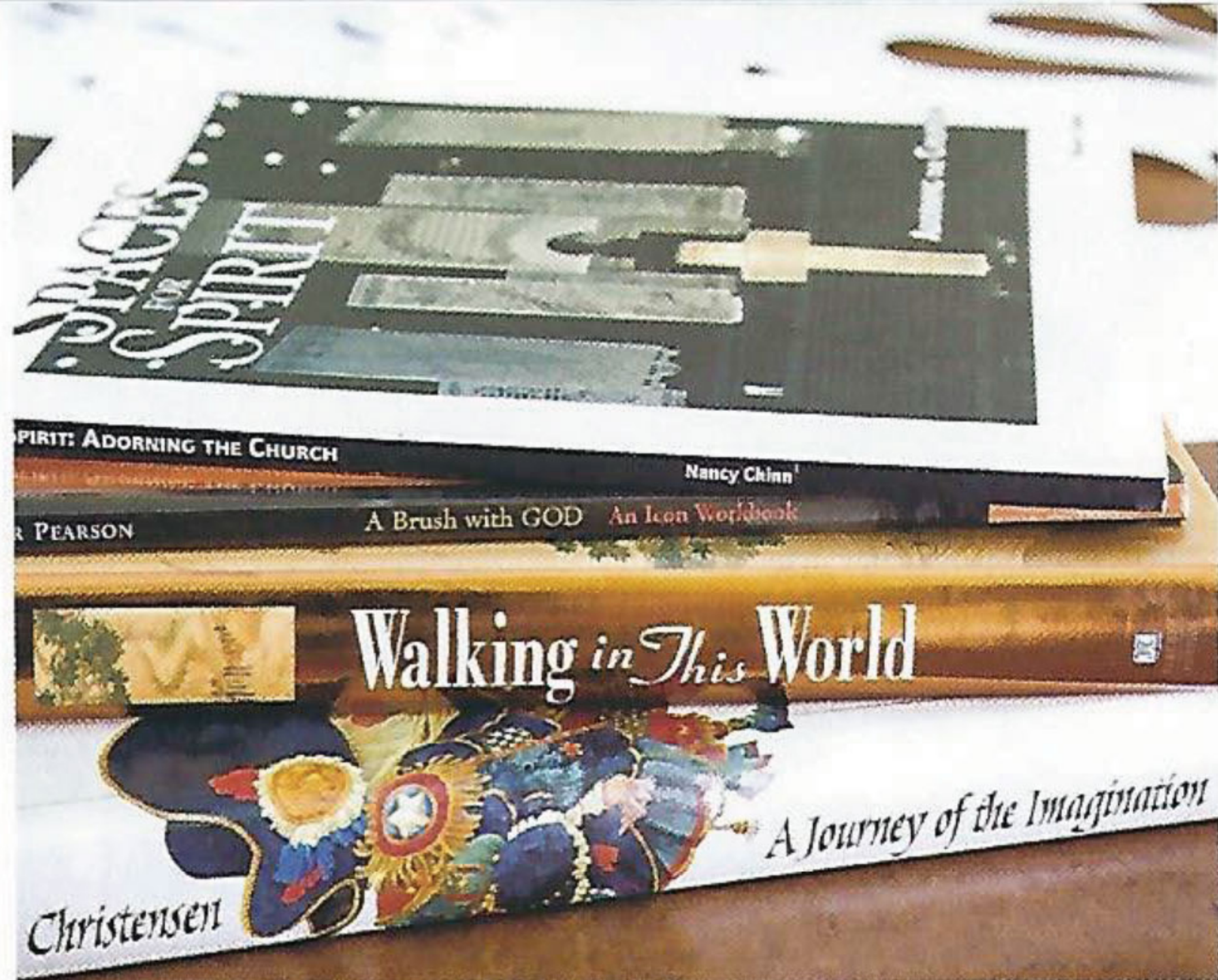
*The contentment that Ellen Phillips feels when painting or sculpting is rooted in personal expression, but her spirit takes wing while developing liturgical art. In each pursuit, the former scientist seeks to illuminate beauty as a means of reflecting hope.*

Atop a peak in Black Mountain, North Carolina, Ellen Phillips observes the rhythms of nature from her woodland studio. Expansive windows frame views of the surrounding area—a peaceful setting that offers a kaleidoscope of artistic inspiration.

Within the atelier, Ellen's portfolio also reflects seasons of growth and change. After majoring in biology and art, she began her post-college career as a research assistant in biochemistry and was surprised to find similarities between the two areas of study. "What they have in common," she says, "is a hungry







*“GOOD ART CAN INTRIGUE  
AND CHALLENGE AND  
AWAKEN OUR MINDS TO NEW  
AND DEEPER IDEAS.”*

—Ellen Phillips

curiosity and the ability to connect seemingly disparate things.” Both disciplines require tenacity, she points out, in order to bring about something new.

Creative expression ultimately shifted from pastime to vocation. She progressed from taking art classes to teaching them and garnered accolades for her skill in painting portraits. Originally, she worked primarily in oils and pastels, but when a friend encouraged her to explore sculpture, Ellen discovered a passion for the medium.

Around this time, she was also introduced to the concept of liturgical art. “Although I had been a professional artist for years and had been a worshipping Christian all of my life,” she says, “I never realized that the two could be combined into a profound calling.” The invitation to make a lace-cut paper banner for her church’s sanctuary allowed the mingling of faith with creativity—an experience that she describes as visual prayer. Since then, congregations across the United States have commissioned her to make banners.

Whether retreating to her studio to paint, shape clay, or design pieces for sacred spaces, Ellen chooses to focus on what is good. “This is the best of humanity: to recognize joy and laughter and love,” she says. “That is what I want to draw attention to.”

*Artist Ellen Phillips, above right, cuts lettering from photography backdrop paper, below. Opposite, clockwise from above right: The banner was custom-made for an Atlanta church. A corner of Ellen’s studio showcases her oil pastel Stargazer Lilies; the space is a haven for design work.*

