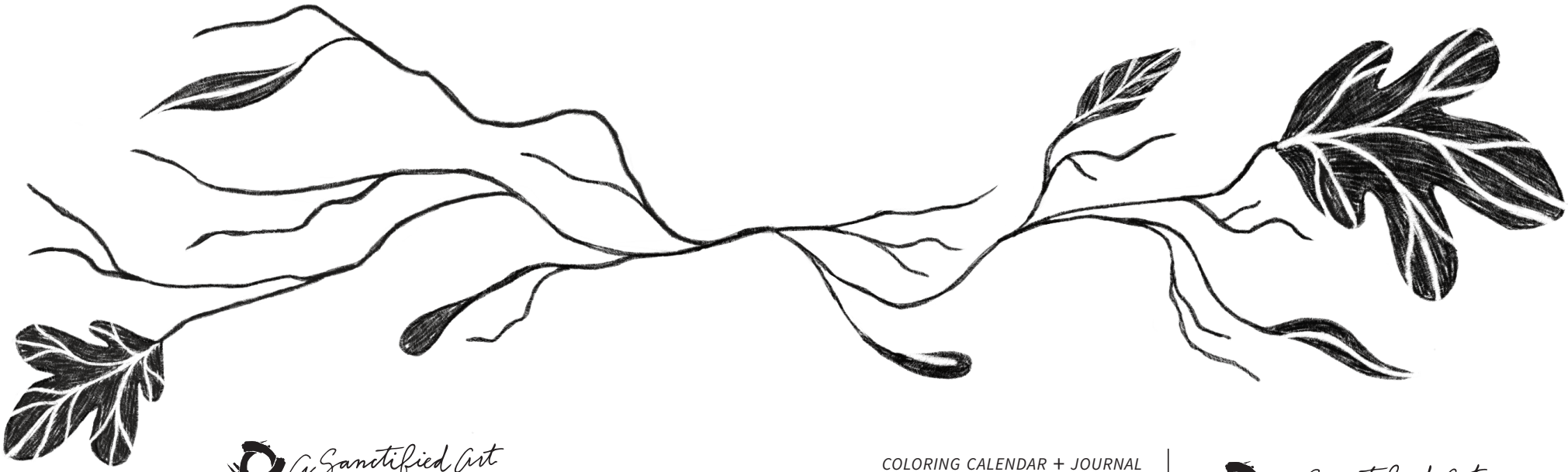
2021 Lenten Devotional

CULTIVATING & LETTING GO



A Sanctified Art

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COLORING CALENDAR + JOURNAL TO PRACTICE CULTIVATING & LETTING GO THROUGHOUT LENT

A Sanctified Art

sanctifiedart.org

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Take a few moments to look at your completed coloring calendar. Over the course of six weeks, you have practiced cultivating and letting go. You have invited God into your journey of planting and pruning. You have used scripture, color, poetry, and self-reflection to create—and possible become—something new. This artwork is a visible token of your process.

Today, we give thanks that God makes all things new. We are a new creation in Christ.

In the space below, name all the spaces—in the world, in your spiritual journey, in your work, in your relationships—where God is creating something new. Close your time of journaling with a spoken or silent prayer.

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YEAR C LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

CULTIVATING & LETTING GO

NAME _____

CHURCH _____

PHONE # _____

EMAIL _____

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God.

Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.

A NEW CREATION | EASTER

Of course it happened in a garden—
Dark earth and sunrise,
Fresh air and bird songs,
Trees that had not yet been cut down for crosses,
And flowers that had not yet been pressed for oil.
Of course Mary found Jesus there—
Alive and well among the fig trees and flowers.

For in a garden
There is growth after the harvest,
Beauty after the rain,
And that constant refrain—
"It was good. It was good.
God saw it,
And it was good."
So of course he'd end up in a garden—
New life invites new life.
He and those budding flowers were one and the same.

However, he also must have known he'd find us in that garden,
For new life fills in the holes of our pain in ways that nothing else can.
It's holding a baby at a funeral,
Bringing flowers to the hospital,
And searching for the sunrise after the night.
It's singing lullabies at our nightmares,
Holding hands in the dark,
And writing letters in the face of isolation.

So this Easter season I plan to place my heart under big trees and blue skies,
Because the broken parts of me need a type of garden-like healing.
And like a gardener, I will surround my
Loneliness and heartache,
My suffering and grief,
With wildflowers
Until the roots of those flowers are tangled up with the worst parts of me
And I can finally see what God sees;
Until the roots of those flowers are tangled up in me
And I can look at myself and say,
"It is good."

For I am in need of a garden-like type of new life—
Growth after the harvest,
Beauty after the rain,
And that constant refrain—
"It was good. It was good."
Thank goodness I found him in a garden.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

EASTER SUNDAY

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: HANNAH GARRITY

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:19-26

ARTIST REFLECTION

"But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. The first fruits of those who have died" (1 Cor. 15:20).

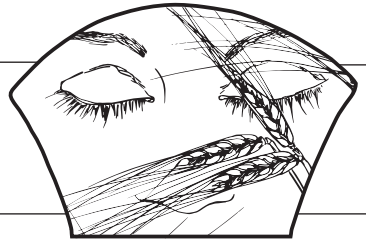
Barley is a grain that readies itself for harvest in time for Passover. In historic Jewish tradition, it was one of the grains that was approved for use as a First Fruits offering at the Temple in Jerusalem[1]. In this image, barley represents Christ, the first fruit. Christ's compassion lives through us.

Cultivate compassion. At Stanford in 2010, the Dalai Lama spoke of compassion and respect as the way to a more peaceful 21st century[2]. He noted that talking and listening are the way to solve problems which will inevitably arise. In this drawing the expression is one of compassion. Similar expressions are seen in religious artworks throughout the centuries.

Cultivate compassion.

COLOR THIS SHAPE IN THE CALENDAR

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK



1 Jewish Concepts: First Fruits. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/first-fruits Encyclopaedia Judaica. © 2008 The Gale Group. All Rights Reserved.

2 Dalai Lama Advocates a Secular Approach to Compassion, by Cynthia Haven. https://news.stanford.edu/news/2010/october/dalai-lama-speaks-101410.html.

Lent is a season of spiritual gardening, of inviting God to unearth in us what lies fallow, what needs to be tended, and what needs to die for new life to emerge. This Lent, we're embracing the literal and spiritual practices of cultivating and letting go.

We have designed this devotional to accompany our Lenten coloring calendar. We invite you to walk through this booklet a week at a time, completing the content and prompts at your own pace. You may wish to begin with the scripture for each week, reading your preferred translation, then identifying and coloring in the coordinating shape on the calendar. We hope the imagery, written reflections, poetry, and journaling prompts will help you dig deeper into this text throughout the week. We hope this weekly rhythm helps you invite God into your journey of planting and pruning, of cultivating and letting go.

Let go of your fear.
Let go of perfection.
Let go of busyness as a sign of your self worth,
And the notion that creativity is a luxury.

Be wild and free.
Plant roots like a redwood,
And a spine like a sunflower;
For the days are short, and you are beautiful.

Don't be afraid to let go.
The only thing you cannot lose is God's evergreen love.

Artfully yours,

The Sanctified Art Creative Team

Lisle Gwynn Garrity
Sarah Are
Hannah Garrity
Lauren Wright Pittman

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LETTING GO

Reflect on your Lenten journey as a whole. Fill in the blank with anything that feels honest and true. Then, in the space below, reflect on what you gained from letting go. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS LENT, I HAVE LET GO OF _____

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ASH WEDNESDAY

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: HANNAH GARRITY

READ ISAIAH 58:1-12

ARTIST REFLECTION

In Isaiah 58, God explicitly differentiates between personal fast and social fast. Both are required; however, we cannot simply fast alone and expect the appreciation of God. Here, God is demanding the fast of Her choice. A fast from injustice, a fast from oppression, a fast from hunger, a fast from homelessness—the list goes on. She reminds us that we are interconnected.

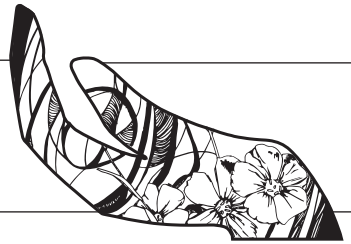
"The themes that underlie the human soul are deeper than the patterns that distinguish us… the lines that distinguish us can also be the interlacing that unites us." —John Philip Newell, *Praying with the Earth.*

Much like strands weave to create fabric, society is interdependent. My drawing for this text explores this idea through the lens of weaving. Encyclopedia Britannica[1] explains that flax is a plant whose stalk yields the fibers used to weave linen. In this image, a collection of flax flowers bloom on their stalks. Beside the flowers, water rolls down, inviting us to imagine the cleansing of our tendency to self focus. If we can wash ourselves clean of selfishness, so can we give selflessly.

Cultivate selflessness.

COLOR THIS SHAPE IN THE CALENDAR

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK



1 Linen, Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/technology/linen

CULTIVATED

Reflect on your Lenten journey as a whole. Fill in the blank with anything that feels honest and true. Then, in the space below, reflect on how you cultivated this and the fruit that came from it. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS LENT, I HAVE CULTIVATED _____

ASH WEDNESDAY

Thumb to forehead, that's how this begins—
A thin dust reminder that life, in time, ends.

So how do I want to spend my days?
How do I live a life that weighs
Heavy with love and heavy with truth,
Heavy with memories of laughter and you?

And is that what matters, at the end of the day?
Or is it justice and peace and the sound of your
name?

Thumb to forehead. Remind me again.
That this precious life begins and ends.
And like the trees in autumn, may I learn to let go,
Making room in my heart for a new kind of growth.

A change in seasons, a change in me.
Thumb to forehead. Let it be.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

CULTIVATING

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will cultivate this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO CULTIVATE _____

LETTING GO | GOOD FRIDAY

How do you let go of a dream
That has woven itself into the fiber of your being,
Except for stitch by stitch?
Anyone who has loved and lost
Knows how painfully slow that unraveling goes.

It's the air knocked out of your lungs.
It's grief as big as the sky.
It's a garden that once was full of life, now of
nothing but wilderness.

And it aches.

So is it cowardly for me to say that I'm glad I wasn't there?
That I'm glad I wasn't at the foot of the cross?
For those gathered there had to let go of a dream—
That needle to thread, unraveling.
And those gathered there might have let go of hope,
Or faith or peace or whatever else goes
When the sky goes dark.
And that's the worst kind of letting go—
The kind that only a broken heart knows.

So it's tempting to say that under the soil there
were seeds,
And that behind that night, a sky full of stars.
But in that moment—
In this moment—
We're unraveling.
In that moment—
In this moment—
The garden is nothing but wilderness,
The soil is proof that it existed,
And that is enough.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

GOOD FRIDAY

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: LISLE GWYNN GARRITY

READ PSALM 22

ARTIST REFLECTION

Often, psalms such as this shock us with their honesty and brutality. We may hear these lamentful words read aloud in worship and think, “That doesn’t sound very sacred.”

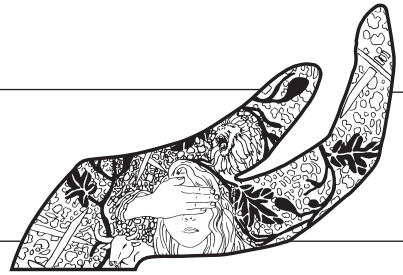
But during Holy Week we remember that these words became a breathless prayer in Jesus’ final hours. We remember that God chose to surrender to death in order to rise above it. We remember that brutal honesty can be the most sacred expression of faith.

In this image, I aimed to capture the rawness of the poetry in Psalm 22. To embody the sense of complete surrender of the psalmist, I made this a self portrait of sorts. A lion roars, swords swipe, a bull charges, worms invade, enemies encroach, pot shards invade the air—this scene is graphic and horrifying. And yet, the figure stands firm, resilient in the face of death.

Perhaps this is the posture of Holy Week—we stand firm in the face of death, knowing that, like the fig tree, fruit will come.

COLOR THIS SHAPE IN THE CALENDAR

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK



LETTING GO

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will let go of this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO LET GO OF _____

LETTING GO

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will let go of this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO LET GO OF _____

1ST WEEK OF LENT

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

READ DEUTERONOMY 26:1-11

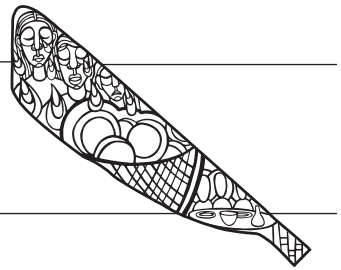
ARTIST REFLECTION

What a beautiful image. A full table, overflowing with the gifts of God re-given and re-distributed among the Levites and the aliens who reside among them. The native and the alien share a meal together in remembrance that their ancestors were once strangers in a land flowing with milk and honey. My ancestors, your ancestors, our ancestors, were once strangers. This text is clear; the alien resides among us and we are to celebrate all that God has given us by sharing in the bounty that God has given to our houses.

This passage reminds me of my own privilege as a white, middle-class, cisgender woman and challenges me to think of new ways I can share in my bounty. I often find myself living in a scarcity mindset, like I need to continue to Scrooge McDuck my way through this life clinging tightly to each penny that enters my bank account. I also grasp tightly to the ease with which I interact with the systems of this country; my privilege has become a comforting friend, a safety blanket. I need to live with open hands, emptying the first fruits of the ground, the fruits of my labor, the tainted fruits of my privilege and offer them back to God. In doing so, I honor my ancestors, and share in abundance with my community— the full extent of my community. We need to see, value, respect, listen to, and learn from the alien among us. We need to face their affliction, toil, and oppression, and let it break our hearts and do something about it. The aliens among us are cause for celebration.

COLOR THIS SHAPE IN THE CALENDAR

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK



CULTIVATING

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will cultivate this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO CULTIVATE _____

LETTING GO | FIRST WEEK OF LENT

A letter to someone I love

Dear loved one—

I hope you let go.
I hope you let go of holding yourself to impossible standards.
Lower the bar. Give yourself grace.
God delights in who you are.

And while you're at it, I hope you let go of ignoring your beauty.
The mirror is tired of your harsh words, for you are made of star stuff and music.
You are the only you there is, and you. are. simply. stunning.

And I hope you'll consider letting go of certainty.
For the sun will always rise and set, and you will always be loved.
What more do we really need to know than that?

So let go of your fear.
Let go of perfection.
Let go of busyness as a sign of your self worth,
And the notion that creativity is a luxury.

Be wild and free.

Plant roots like a redwood,
And a spine like a sunflower;
For the days are short, and you are beautiful.
I love nothing more than to see you happy.
So don't be afraid to let go.
The only thing you cannot lose is God's evergreen love.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

CULTIVATING

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will cultivate this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO CULTIVATE _____

CULTIVATE | HOLY WEEK

Tell me again.
Tell me again to cultivate new life—
a life where I believe in myself,
a life where, dare I say, I love myself.

Tell me again to cultivate new life—
a life of dancing in the kitchen
and slow cups of coffee;
a life where Sabbath is viewed as a gift
as opposed to a luxury;
a life where I trust my own voice
and speak words dripping in hope,
heavy in love.

Tell me again.
Tell me again because I will forget.
Tell me again because change has never come easy.
Tell me again, because on Monday I'll wave palms
And by Friday I'll be at the foot of a cross.
So if you can, tell me again
Of the love that changed the world,

And my invitation to do the same.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

HOLY WEEK

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

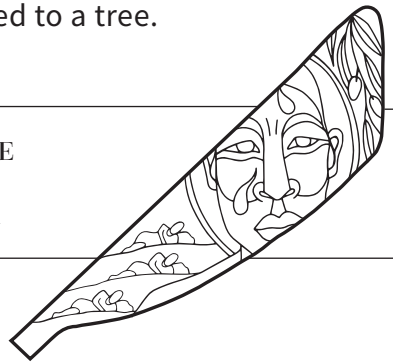
READ LUKE 22:39-46

ARTIST REFLECTION

Why are you sleeping? It's a simple question. In this case, it's a heartbreaking question. In anguish, Jesus prays for God to take this cup from him, though he still insists that God's will be done—an image of undeniable faithfulness.

I imagine Jesus daydreamed of ways he could get out of his imminent torture and death while blood and sweat poured from his body. I imagine his dreams of circumventing this path came crashing down when he found his disciples fast asleep. Why are you sleeping? In my reading of this text, I can feel the profound disappointment and exasperated anger of Jesus as he is almost comically abandoned by his community. In the midst of his most desperate cry for help his support system is taking a nap. This is just one of the millions of ways we as humanity have spectacularly failed in following Christ. I imagine in the moment Jesus awoke the disciples the chilling reality of his coming pain ran up his spine. He would be rejected, abandoned, betrayed, denied, and nailed to a tree.

COLOR THIS SHAPE
IN THE CALENDAR
THROUGHOUT THE WEEK



LETTING GO

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will let go of this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO LET GO OF _____

LETTING GO

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will let go of this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO LET GO OF _____

2ND WEEK OF LENT

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: LISLE GWYNN GARRITY

READ PSALM 27

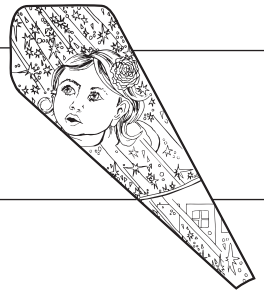
ARTIST REFLECTION

My natural instinct when reading the Psalms is to personalize them, to welcome the ancient poet's words as my own. When I first read through Psalm 27, I found myself transposing the psalmist's literal threats—armies surrounding, enemies encroaching, safety retreating—into metaphorical ones that might resonate with my own experience. Suffocating stress, seasons of instability and uncertainty, relational conflict, disintegrating health—all of these threaten my own personal sense of security and well-being. However, I lead a life cushioned by support and physical safety. I have never had to pray to God to spare my life in the midst of war.

Sometimes, to remember that scripture is not for me but for all, I imagine the words spoken by someone with a vastly different life experience than my own. In my second reading of Psalm 27, I placed the words in the lips of a Guatemalan girl fleeing violence in her home to seek asylum in the States. I encourage you to read the psalm once again, imagining how the words come to life from this vantage point.

The most stunning moment in this prayer exists in verse 4. The poet turns from survival mode to seek God's beauty and presence. Perhaps living at the edge of life teaches you that beauty, like light, is necessary for survival.

COLOR THIS SHAPE
IN THE CALENDAR
THROUGHOUT THE WEEK



CULTIVATING

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will cultivate this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO CULTIVATE _____

CULTIVATE | SECOND WEEK OF LENT

I wish I could cultivate my days
Like my mother's favorite recipe,
Blending together the sweetest things—
Hope and love, you and me,
Justice and peace,
Music and dreams—
Like spices pulled from the shelf on the wall.

I'd add one cup of family,
And one cup of grace.
A dash of starry nights,
A pinch of snow.
One tablespoon of hope, and like oats, they would grow.
A tablespoon of music and the hymns that I know.
A cup for friends that feel more like family,
A teaspoon of vanilla, for life's sheer beauty.
Three teaspoons of summer, and one tablespoon of dreams.
Plus half a cup for the church that raised me,
And half a cup for the moon that serenades me.

The instructions would read:
Melt your love and whisk with justice until it expands beyond the pan.
Gently stir in all that you hope for. Cover, and let rise.
Drizzle with a sweet glaze of mercy.

Please be sure to leave heartache and grief tucked on the shelf
Beside comparison, doubt, fear, and depression.
Busyness will make this dish sour,
As will grudges and gossip, which is not to mention
Trauma and loss, or my fragile bones.

So use only the best ingredients
When you cultivate your life.

For like your mother's favorite recipe,
These days are sacred.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

CULTIVATING

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will cultivate this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO CULTIVATE _____

LETTING GO | FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

People throw around the phrase, “Let it go” like a
child throws out laughter—
Easy and light.
I wish that’s how I knew it.
I wish it felt that simple.

Instead I have to talk myself into a better frame of mind.
I have to drag one foot in front of the other until
I’m closer to love.
I have to sing my mother’s words in my head until I
can’t hear anything else.

And I pray for letting go that feels like taking off
shoes—a sort of coming home.
I pray for letting go that won’t always involve a
battle between heart and mind.
I pray for letting go that moves like muscle
memory, but it never does.

Letting go has never been as easy as holding tight.
Why is that?

So now and again I stand in the rain and let the
clouds teach me a thing or two about release.
And when that doesn’t work,
I think about the way my mother’s body broke so
that she could let me go—
Yet another body broken for me.
And when that doesn’t work,
I find myself on my knees—a sort of coming home,
And I pray,
Teach me a thing or two about grace.
Teach me a thing or two about letting go.

And I inhale.
And I exhale.
Air drawn in.
Air let go.
And I recognize God in my lungs, and I can’t help
but laugh,
Easy and light.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

5TH WEEK OF LENT

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: LISLE GWYNN GARRITY

READ ISAIAH 43:16-21

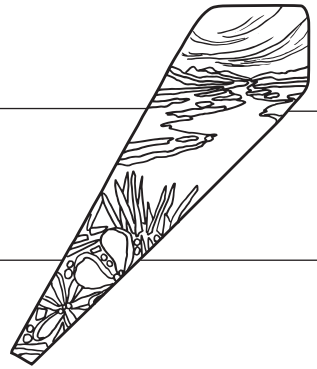
ARTIST REFLECTION

This Lent, I have spent a lot of time thinking about the changes we can't always see. Seasons shift with the waning and waxing of light. Cells expand and divide. Hearts grow more full of compassion or more brittle with resentment. Wounds heal from the inside out. Often it's not until a crisis or an abrupt disruption that we notice what has already changed.

In this text, the prophet appeals to a people once enslaved but set free. Time has fogged their memories; new challenges have short-sighted their hope. The prophet reminds them that God is always in the process of making all things new.

In this image, a widening river cracks open the dry desert. In the foreground, a grassy ledge springs forth with wild grasses and blooms. As a viewer, where do you stand in this landscape? Parched and hopeless in the desert valley? Kneeling for healing at the water's edge? Or swaying with the wildflowers, looking out at it all? No matter where you place yourself, you are not bound to stay there. You are in the process of becoming. Can you perceive it?

COLOR THIS SHAPE
IN THE CALENDAR
THROUGHOUT THE WEEK



LETTING GO

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will let go of this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO LET GO OF _____

LETTING GO

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will let go of this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO LET GO OF _____

3RD WEEK OF LENT

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

READ ISAIAH 55:1-9

ARTIST REFLECTION

Who among us does not thirst? Who among us does not feel hunger? We all thirst, and we all hunger, but some of us are so caught up in our busyness that we do not realize it. We may look long down our noses at those who are begging for a morsel to eat—a necessity of life—while we question the sincerity of their pleas and ignore the glaring spiritual thirst and hunger in our own lives. The words of Isaiah image a different world where all who are thirsty have water, and all who are hungry have all they need. This is a great leveling of the status. This is the haves and have nots coming eye to eye and recognizing what makes us the same. We need water, we need food, and we need the loving embrace of God.

These words of Isaiah come to a people exiled from their home land. In a lot of ways they thirst and hunger because they feel they have been altogether abandoned by God. They have been ripped from their places of worship, God's dwelling place, and exist in a place where they do not belong. The prophet calls on the exiled to seek God, because God is near. That in and of itself must have been a miraculous shift in perspective, because they must have felt God was far away back in their homeland.

If these words can penetrate an exiled nation, allow these words to break through your distracted, overwhelmed day-to-day grind. Incline your ear, return to God, and join in the work of bringing hope to the hopeless—the work of preparing a great feast for all.

COLOR THIS SHAPE
IN THE CALENDAR
THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

CULTIVATING

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will cultivate this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO CULTIVATE _____

LETTING GO | THIRD WEEK OF LENT

If the trees can do it, then so can I,
At least that's what I tell myself.
For if year after year the trees can let go
Of their brightest leaves and that warm autumn glow,
Then maybe in time, like trees with their leaves,
I can release
That which keeps me from you.
Maybe in time, I can let go
Of my need for certainty
And my need to look good,
My need for busyness,
And my need to numb pain;
The trivial ways I measure my self-worth,
Or the hurtful ways I measure yours.
For if year after year the trees let go,
Then maybe, in time, I can too.
Maybe,
In time,
My heart will know spring.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

CULTIVATING

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will cultivate this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO CULTIVATE _____

CULTIVATE | FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

I have come to believe
That it's harder to cry under an open sky.
So when life falls apart, throw open the windows.
Invite the sun into your shadows.
Lie in the grass and let the sun mistake you for flowers.
Maybe this is step one in cultivating—
For flowers do not grow by mistake.
They need the sun, just like we need love,
And time,
And the grace to try again.
So put your body where the light is.
You'll find God there.
She is warmth.
You will know it.
And you will feel strong.
So put your body where the light is.
Maybe this is step one.

PRAYER BY SARAH ARE

4TH WEEK OF LENT

REFLECTION & IMAGE BY: HANNAH GARRITY

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

ARTIST REFLECTION

A couple of years ago we did a water ritual at a summer Sunday service. When the time came, people began to line up at my station. “You are a new creation.” After around thirty people, a child appeared. I knelt to meet her as I have for years in the elementary classroom. “The old life is gone, a new life has begun.” My voice faltered. An adult was next, “You are a new creation.” Tears began to stream down my face. I was able to humanize everyone. Though I didn’t know them personally, the space between us was bridged and their eye contact, this ritual, these words, made each of them a whole life before my eyes.

In that moment I began cultivating my ability to connect with the person right in front of me. In this image I have represented that feeling of the words flowing through me as new life emerges. Lines in the background imagine the pouring of the water, the permeating fall of the spirit. My smile is one of truth, honesty, and connection. It is the smile I find within me when I look people in the eye and greet them wholeheartedly. Growing around and above me are irises and fig leaves, two majestic species, here representing the grandeur of God in the fragility of a moment.

Cultivate connection.

COLOR THIS SHAPE
IN THE CALENDAR
THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

LETTING GO

Fill in the blank. Then, in the space below, reflect on why and how you will let go of this. Conclude your journaling with a spoken or silent prayer to God.

THIS WEEK I WISH TO LET GO OF _____