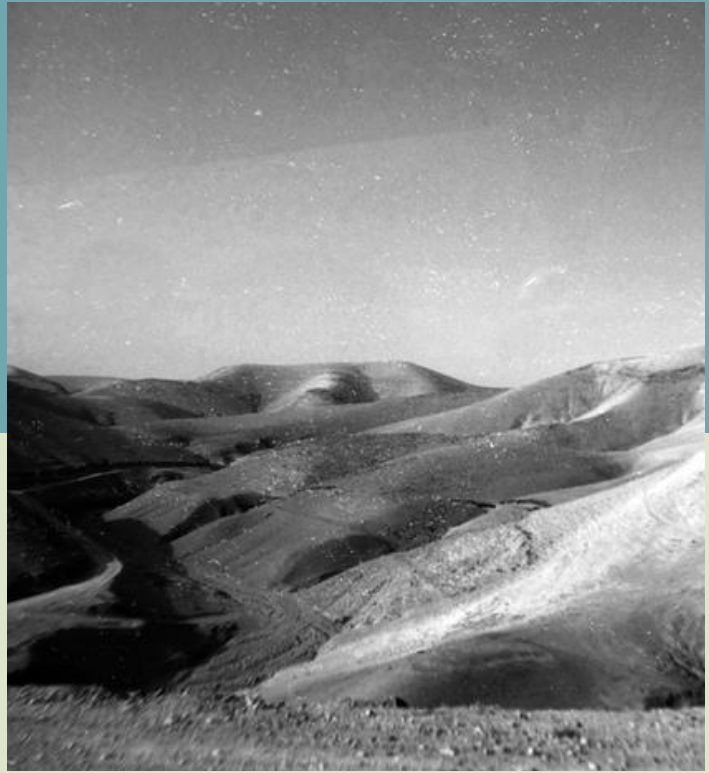


2023 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL
YEAR A

WEEK SIX



WATER IN THE DESERT



water in the desert



40 days of creative contributions from the
Christ Church Cathedral community and beyond

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INTRODU CTION

WHAT IS LENT?



Lent is a holy season of the liturgical year where the body of Christ around the globe intentionally enters into a time of fasting, self-examination, prayer, and works of love. As Christ emerges from the waters of baptism, he is immediately driven out into the wilderness for 40 days to be tested and purified, marking the beginning of his public ministry. And in the Hebrew narratives, the desert is the place where the people of God wander for 40 years after being delivered from slavery in Egypt, waiting for and wandering toward a new life and new land.

The wilderness is treacherous and disorienting. It is a place of liminality and deconstruction - the space in between where we have been and where we are going. All of us have to journey through the unknown at some point, and it's always hard, but it's the only way to get where we're called to go.

WHAT IS THIS PROJECT?

For each of the 40 days of Lent, our team, in partnership with the Liturgical Arts Collective, asked members of our significantly creative and insightful Cathedral community to read, reflect on, and respond imaginatively to their appointed scriptures for that day from the lectionary, holding in mind a general theme of unexpected sustenance in desolate places, or "water in the desert."

We find in the readings during this six-week season stories of angels tending Christ in the wilderness, quail and manna from heaven, plumes of cloud by day and pillars of fire by night to guide our wandering, water flowing out of rock...

In a chaotic, distracted, and fearful world, noticing beauty is like pure drops of water from heaven to the parched soul. Art and beauty can touch the deepest part of the human heart and aid our collective healing and liberation. The goal for this project was not to create a bunch of "really good art," (although the works are stunning,) but to build something meaningful together through our shared devotion, contemplation of scripture, and responding to the Holy Spirit in our midst through our various mediums. So within a few weeks of being prompted, we strummed, typed, smeared, scribbled, sang, scrapped, recorded, prayed, and listened, and this devotional is the result. We hope this is a gift to you, wherever you might be led, on your Lenten journey.



DAY 29
MAR 27

CLICK
HERE FOR
SCRIPTURES
OF THE DAY

Shepherd

BY SYLVIA

*The Lord is my shepherd,
he takes me to green pastures...
Psalm 23*



"This shepherd is holding a trophy because two of her sheep won prizes. The spider is funny and is always trying to play tricks on the sheep, but they're not scared of him."



THE GROAN OF THE CAPTIVE

BY ERIC RICHEY

“Our problems are no longer personal; they’re universal. I think we all feel that right now.”

Sufjan Stevens
quoted in *The Atlantic*
(September 2020)

Since first reading these words 6 months into a global pandemic, they have continued to reverberate in my head regularly when I reflect on my own problems and humanity’s shared vulnerability. I have found them increasingly revelatory as the weeks, months, and years have passed.

These words quickly came to mind again, as I read (and re-read) today’s Lectionary Readings. They are illuminating, pushing us to resist safe and familiar readings of Scripture that protect our buffered selves, and freeing us to read with fresh eyes in order to hear God’s voice anew.

In reading Psalm 102: 15-22, who are ...

- The [praying] “homeless” that the LORD looks upon with favor?
- The “future generation” ... “a people yet unborn” that will praise the LORD?
- The [groaning] “captive” and “those condemned to die” that the LORD hears & sets free?

Locating not just “those other people”, but our very selves in this universal sacred text, fills us with curiosity & kindness for both self and the other. Beginning with the universal frees us up to be attentive to the particularity of our own story (and the stories of the people, land, and animals we’re attached to) without contemptuously labeling our problems merely “personal”. This is a kind of creaturely attentiveness that imperfectly, but truly, images our Creator and Redeemer who refuses to look away from the pain and ugliness present in the world, nor cynically scoff at moments of joy and celebration.

Many of us are learning to see the manifold ways the Spirit is at work breaking down the walls of our discrete, autonomous selves that have been colonized by the power of sin and joining us together into new life-giving webs of relationship in Christ. The wisdom-soaked work and words of a gifted artist/prophet (even one with a cult following of which I am a card-carrying member) is just the starting point.

Who has been or is currently embodying & enacting God’s:

- Gracious Eyes
- Listening Ears
- Hospitable Hands
- Liberating Justice

... in your life?

Reflecting deeply on your sensory experiences attached to these memories, what has that:

- Looked like
- Sounded like
- Tasted like
- Felt like

... in particular moments of encounter and resonance?



BY ISAAC KARNIS

(Originally written by Samuel Lockridge)

CLICK
HERE FOR
SCRIPTURES
OF THE DAY

WHEN THE WALLS COME CRASHING DOWN

As the wind does whisper once again
into our willing ears,
a voice speaks soft, “the hour is near
when the walls come crashing down.”

When the earth is red, and sea is black,
and sky has all but vanished,
a single seed will choke our greed
when the walls come crashing down.

If trees should bear their fruit no more
and bears cease to find honey,
you cannot eat or drink your money
When the walls come crashing down.

When man does shed his brother’s blood,
when woman serves but one purpose,
the day has come for everyone
to watch the walls come crashing down.

When kings and paper gods are slain,
laid to rest in salted ground,
O, how we’ll dance to that thund’rous sound
when the walls come crashing down.

Though many are the nights we’ve cried,
the sun comes in the morning.
So have no fear of the wild, my dear,
when the walls come crashing down.

This cover is an anthem for all those choosing to stand for righteousness and in the same spirit as Daniel refusing to bow to the false, unjust powers of the world; even at the expense of walking through fire.

play
music



When Abraham was nearing the end of his life, he spent his days tending to his flock as he had no children to assign this task to. No children to pass his land and flock and memories to. But one morning, just a regular morning, that all changed.

He was standing alone on a hillside, on a cool but sunny morning. He had positioned himself with his back to the sun so he could watch the flock without squinting into it. As he felt the sun's heat soak into his back, he closed his eyes and breathed in the moment. The smell of the sheep and the grass, the wind blowing across his face, birds chattering in the trees. He felt at peace. When he opened his eyes he had to squint them shut again. How was the sun at his back and in front of him? He looked again through his partially closed lids. Not the sun, a being. He felt a wave of calm wash over him and a voice spoke to his heart.

"I am God. I want to promise to walk with you and grow my kingdom through you, right here." As he listened, Abram saw generations unfolding before him, racing forward and expanding outward. He fell to the ground. How could it be? But he had seen it, felt it, was certain of it. A smile pulled at his cheeks as tears ran down them. He rolled onto his back, light coming at him from all sides. As he exhaled, he heard, "Abraham, I will be *your* God."

UNFOLDING

BY RYAN MOONEY-BULLOCK



I MUST SHOUT

CLICK
HERE FOR
SCRIPTURES
OF THE DAY

BY ROBERT DIMARTINO

two haikus and a limerick

**I MUST SPEAK THE NAME.
THOUGH MOCKED, SILENCE IS A FLAME
BURNING IN MY BONES.**

(Old Testament)

**MY STRENGTH, HEARS MY VOICE!
TORRENTS OF OBLIVION
FAIL AGAINST MY SHIELD.**

(The Psalm)

**"FOR WHICH OF THESE WORKS WILL YOU STONE ME?"
"OUR ROCKS ARE FOR BLASPHEMY ONLY!"
"I SAY 'I'M GOD'S SON.'
BELIEVE THE WORKS THAT I'VE DONE.
IF YOU'VE KNOWN THE FATHER, YOU'VE KNOWN ME."**

(The Gospel)

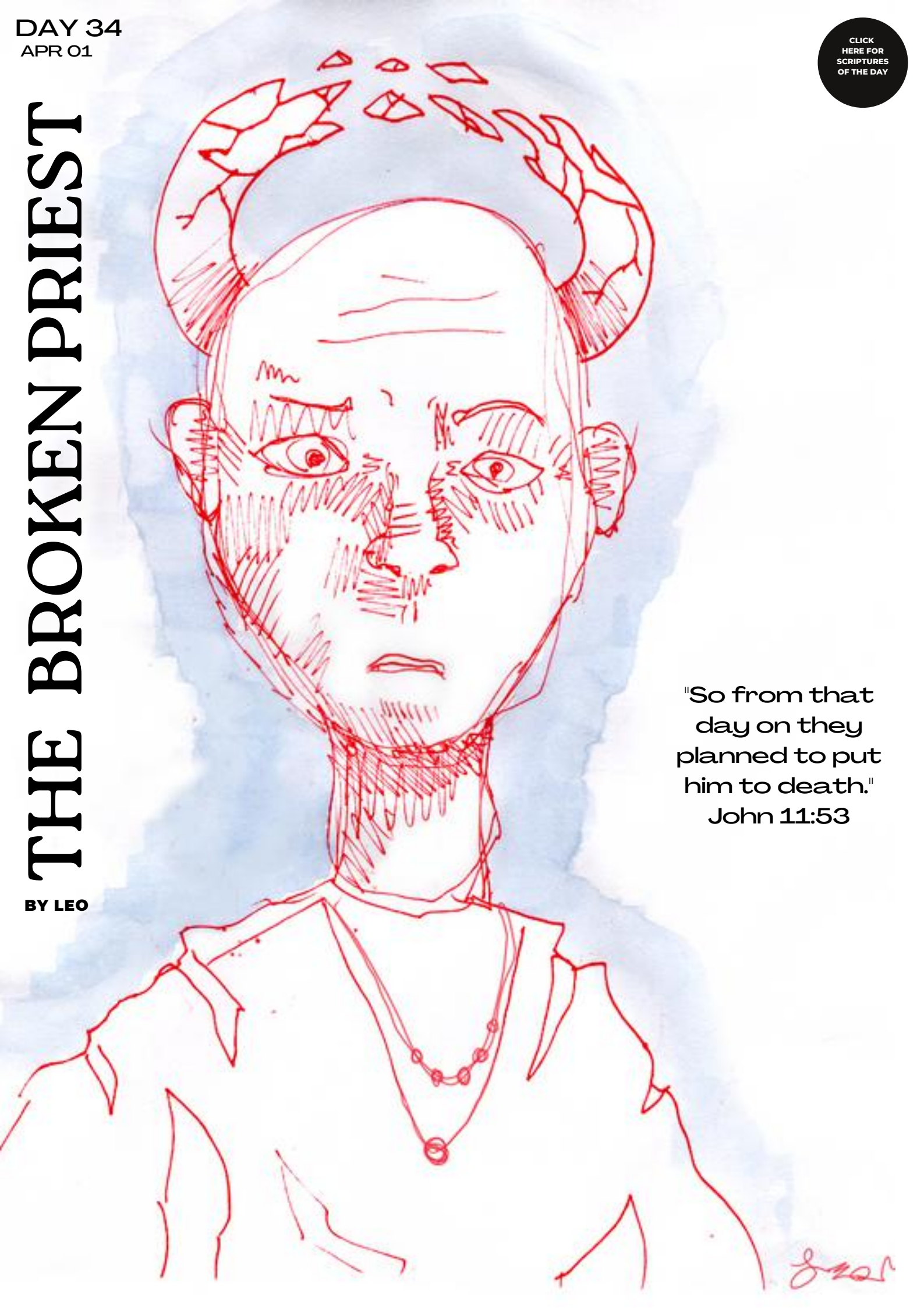
As a New Year's resolution for 2023, I wanted to spend time engaging with the readings from the Daily Office. While doing the offices each day was a little too much for me right now, I've enjoyed trying to respond to each day's passages with a haiku or a limerick. For my contribution to this project, I decided to do both! writing haikus for the Old Testament and the Psalm and a limerick for the Gospel.

DAY 34
APR 01

CLICK
HERE FOR
SCRIPTURES
OF THE DAY

THE BROKEN PRIEST

BY LEO



"So from that day on they planned to put him to death."
John 11:53

Leo

CONTRIBUTORS



ERIC RICHEY

Educator, Campus Minister

Eric Richey has encountered Christ by working alongside young people for nearly two decades as a teacher, coach, and campus minister. He spends much of his time partnering with his wife, Alicia, in caring for their 6 kids as they actively seek to resist the personal, cultural, and spiritual forces that would keep them isolated and unable to share life with their neighbors.



ISAAC KARNS

Musician, Producer

Isaac Karns is a music-maker that works from his studio called The Marble Garden in Cincinnati, Ohio. Isaac is a genre-agnostic, creative instigator and loves to bring play and intuition into his process. He lives in College Hill with wife Emily, son Moses (4) and daughter Salem (1.5)



ROBERT DIMARTINO

Educator, Dad-Joke Collector

Robert is a collector of interesting facts and dad jokes. He finds mathematics to be a spiritual experience, and he loves teaching almost as much as he loves learning. He can be found on Sundays in the 10am service making holy smoke as the thurifer or in Noon Service where he has been a regular participant for almost 5 years.



RYAN MOONEY-BULLOCK

Executive Director of Green Umbrella, Homesteader

Ryan's creativity is usually channeled into meeting design, persuasive communications, the culinary arts and edible landscaping in her roles as the Executive Director of Green Umbrella, urban homesteader and mom. She is inspired by contemplative practices to look with new eyes at old narratives.

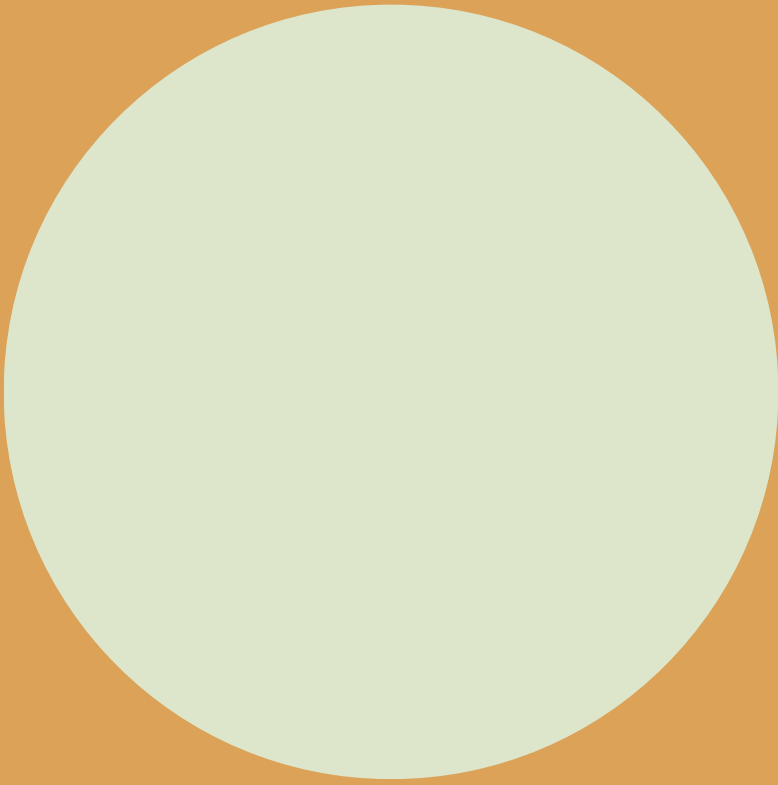
SYLVIA

Sylvia is a prolific artist whose inspiration often springs from the creatures around her. She is a lover of almost all animals and is practicing her shepherding on ducks and goats.

LEO

Leo studies visual art at the School for Creative and Performing Arts. His projects range from quick gesture sketches to intricately detailed drawings based on video games or his own imaginings.





2023
**LENTEN
DEVOTIONAL**

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