

Artist Statements *for Lent-Easter*

While we hope viewers develop their own interpretations of the art we create, we offer these artist statements as theological reflections on process of creating these works. You are welcome to share these artist statements in worship bulletins, church newsletters, or online, and you may also incorporate them into sermons or worship liturgy (with credit). Additionally, you can print, mount, or frame each artist statement alongside prints of the images to create an art gallery in your space.





THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart: "Jesus sought me"



River of Grace

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 5:1-11

Acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing

"Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"
(Luke 5:8)

As we begin Lent, this desperate confession introduces us to Peter, the disciple whose story—and wandering heart—we will follow for the next 7 weeks. If you've ever acted in a play or film production, you may have been tasked with writing your character's backstory, imagining the threads of your character's life that form the tapestry of their personality and motivations. If we do this exercise with Peter, many threads of imagination and historical details weave together. Peter was a commercial fisherman; his business partners were Andrew (his brother) as well as Zebedee and his two sons. Based in Galilee, he was most likely bilingual, speaking Aramaic and Greek. Culturally, he was immersed in Judaism and Hellenism. His business would have been under oppressive control of the Roman government, which arbitrarily imposed harsh rental and harbor fees, fishing licenses, and taxes on domestic fishermen. He was likely a blue-collar worker daily constrained by tides and taxes.

With this backstory in mind, we may hear Peter's response to the abundant catch of fish with fresh ears. There are so many messages within his protest: "I'm not prepared. I'm not capable. I'm not deserving. I'm not faithful enough. I'm not smart enough. I'm not the type you're looking for." Have you ever found yourself saying these things in response to a new calling, or to an abundant gift of grace?

In this image, the bursting nets transform into a river of grace meandering through the composition of Peter's life. The river pours into Peter's hands, but he can't quite grasp the fullness of this gift and calling quite yet, and so most of it rushes right by. As you will see in my other pieces for this series, this river of grace will wander alongside Peter throughout his life. The river represents how his journey with Christ begins and ends: with an abundant catch of fish. He is forever tethered to the overflowing love of God. The river is a symbol of Peter's gifts, as God uses what Peter knows how to do well (being a fisher of fish) and invites him to apply his skills to a new calling (being a fisher of people). It's a visible reminder of the ways God's grace bends and turns and rushes to find each of our wandering hearts.

Despite Peter's resistance, grace seeks him out. His right thumb gets caught in the net. He can't escape the fact that God's goodness and mercy will pursue him all the days of his life (Psalm 23:6). The river rushes in. The question for Peter—and for each of us—is will he follow where it leads? —Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity



THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart: "Rescue me from danger"



Lift Off

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by Matthew 14:22-23

Acrylic, ink, paper collage, and mixed media on canvas

There are no street lights in the ocean. I think about that often. Rarely do we think about how dark and mysterious the night is, even for a veteran fisherman. Nor do we take into consideration the movement of the wind and its roar rumbling off of the waves.

Inside the wind tunnel in this piece, we see the West African symbol, *Adinkrahene*,¹ symbolizing leadership and charisma. Peter embodies all of that when he follows Jesus onto the water. But the bottom of his foot holds the *Mako*.² *Mako* reminds us that not all peppers grow the same. As charismatic and eager to impress Jesus as Peter is, he does not necessarily embody the same level of development as Jesus. The hand of Jesus reaches through the image of *Asase Ye Duru*,³ reminding us that the earth has weight. Jesus, the divine, is greater than the limitations of the flesh, the fears we carry like the uncertainty of the water. What we also see around the hand of Christ is *Nyame Dua*,⁴ the sacred stump symbolizing God's presence and protection. The ever-present God protected Peter from drowning. All of this storytelling is set inside the symbol of *Mmusuyidee*,⁵ signifying prosperity and sanctity. We are invited to maintain a hopeful outlook and persevere.

I titled this piece *Lift Off* as a nod to the 2011 Jay Z and Kanye West (ft. Beyonce) song by the same title. There is something about the opening lines, "We gon' take it to the moon, take it to the stars, how many people you know can take it this far?" that lingers in my head. The emphasis on the night sky and the deep wonder of the stars definitely influences the correlation. However, I think it also pertains to how Peter must have felt walking on water toward Jesus. No one had ever done that before. Not only was he the first, but he must have felt like he was having a deeper experience with Jesus. Who else was flying this high right then? Who else had dropped everything to live vagrantly with Christ? Before stumbling in his ways, there was something otherworldly happening, which brings me back to the stars.

Living in a metropolitan area, I don't get the luxury of stars but I like to imagine a world where the skies told their own stories. In *Lift Off*, the elements are like main characters, inspiring whimsical fantasy. Cut-out layered clouds build into the horizon of the sea. The forceful wind tunnel blows over the sinking foot of a probably panicking Peter. This is a moving piece that is meant to tell a story in any direction it is turned. Like the theme of this series, the viewer should feel like they are on a journey with Peter. *Lift Off* is intentionally dark with beautiful highlights of color and sparkle. It is because of the darkness that the colors shine bright. These two things are complimentary, not contrasting. The fear that entered Peter with the wind was most likely heightened because it was dark out. Without knowing exactly what was around him, Peter became vulnerable, thus causing him to reach out. The wonder of darkness exposes us and invites us to seek connection. We see that in the reaching hand gently entering the dark sky. —Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

1 Adinkra symbols originated from the Gyaman people of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Learn more about their meanings and significance here: adinkrasymbols.org. View the *Adinkrahene* symbol here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/adinkrahene/

2 This proverb warns the greater ones (the peppers that ripen quickly) to help the less fortunate. Learn more here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/mako/

3 *Asase Ye Duru* is a reminder of the earth's significance; humans should respect the earth and not harm it. adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/asase-ye-duru/

4 *Nyame Dua* means "tree or altar of God." adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/nyame-dua/

5 *Mmusuyidee* means "that which removes bad luck or evil." adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/krapa-musuyidee/



THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart: "Praise the mount"



Who Do You Say That I Am?

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Matthew 16:13-20

Digital painting

I don't know if this was a moment of clarity for Peter, if he was regurgitating the answer he thought Jesus wanted to hear, or if he was trying to convince himself that dropping everything and following this man was worth it, but I imagine this was a breakthrough for Peter.

I wanted to capture this as a moment of seeing and being seen. Jesus sees him as more than Simon, a fisherman and son of Jonah, and renames him Peter, the blessed foundation through which his ministry would take root and continue to grow. Jesus sees Peter through the eyes of God.

Peter sees Jesus as more than a teacher and companion. He sees through the veil of confusion concerning Jesus' identity. He doesn't see him as the reincarnation of a former prophet, or another contemporary baptizer pointing the way. He names Jesus as the "anointed one," the one his people have so desperately longed for. Peter proclaims Jesus as Messiah and Son of the living God.

In this image, I wanted to create a kaleidoscope of perception, imaging the ways Jesus is perceived in the context of this passage, like light broken down into a myriad of shapes and colors. In the gold rays of light Jesus' form is obscured by the metallic shine of God's glory. In the gray and earth-tone rays he is seen in monochrome. Each of the earth-tone rays holds a pattern on Jesus' clothing which represents a misunderstanding of who Jesus is. Starting on the left, honey, locusts, and baptismal waters misidentify him as John the Baptist. Within the next ray to the right, ravens, an empty chair, rain, and fires from the heavens misidentify him as Elijah. On the right, scales of justice and plants being uprooted and planted misidentify him as Jeremiah.

Through the middle of the image, there is a ray of light where the image comes into full color that holds this moment of clarity where Jesus and Peter truly see one another. In this ray, Peter's clothing holds symbols of his new identity: a rock upon which the church will be built and keys to the kingdom. Jesus' clothing holds imagery—an oil jar and the light of the sun—representing the way Peter sees him as the Messiah and Son of the living God.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman



THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart: "I'm fixed upon it"



Beseeking

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Matthew 16:21-23

Ink on paper

"God forbid it!" says Peter to Jesus (Matthew 16:22). In this image, Peter beseeches Jesus to avoid the cross, to not let the prophecies become reality.

After ten years in ministry, I work in a church for the first time. In this text, I feel Jesus speaking directly to me: "You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things" (Matthew 16:23). This is exactly where frustration surfaces for me in my amazing church job. It is when I have set my eye on human things. I worry about the budget. I worry about the email. I worry about the building. So why am I so focused on human things? And the negative ones, at that?

Because I'm human. Because these things matter. But not if I miss the grandeur of this incredible organization sharing the expansive love of God!

With every brush stroke in this ink painting, the humanity of Peter's face deepens, his expression clarifies. He cannot let his beloved friend be murdered. He worries about human

things. How weighty and legitimate those things feel. Jesus seems free of those human worries. He focuses with confidence on the path ahead, though Peter's concern causes him to falter.

Perhaps we can each be free of human concerns as well... However, that feels like a pipe dream, and Jesus knows it: "Get behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:23). He does not blame Peter. Instead, he calls out Satan from within his friend. In doing so, he offers us a much needed reminder to refocus. Thanks be to God. —**Hannah Garrity**



THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart: "Teach me"



Seventy-seven Times

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Matthew 18:15-22

Digital painting

When I'm creating a mandala inspired by a text, I'm able to zoom out and see the bigger picture, and the image itself ends up looking like a bird's eye view, which I think is a helpful perspective sometimes. In this mandala, I wanted to follow a person through the process of reproval, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration as Jesus describes in Matthew 18. In the center, a person is standing alone, isolated, with their arms crossed in a closed-off posture. If you're sinned against, Jesus says to go and "point out the fault when the two

of you are alone" (Matthew 18:15). When you move to the second ring of the mandala, there are pairs of people shaking hands, finding common ground, or at least attempting to. If this doesn't work, then you are to bring more people (one or two more) together to provide counsel and witness. In the third ring of the mandala, two people are engaging with the closed-off person, sharing a way forward. In the next ring hyacinth flowers—which represent sorrow, regret, and forgiveness—stretch, bloom, and grow, bringing beauty into the now open arms of the people in the last ring of the mandala, who are embraced and woven into the community. The person from the center goes from being alone and closed-off to embraced and open.

When I was drawing the figures from the center out, it began to look like a dance. Is this the picture that grace paints? Forgiveness cannot happen in isolation and certainly neither can reconciliation nor restoration. The movement toward wholeness is the movement toward one another.

Perhaps craving more tangibility and practicality, Peter asks how many times he should forgive someone who has wronged him, and Jesus says, "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22). This piece contains seventy-seven people and flowers to represent the abundance of grace that Jesus calls us into. The gold represents the divine presence of empathy, compassion, grace, and love throughout this dance from isolation toward community, from brokenness toward wholeness, and from guilt and shame toward freedom.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman



PALM / PASSION SUNDAY

Wandering Heart: "Songs of loudest praise"



Then They Remembered

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by John 12:12-16

Acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing

In the Matthew, Mark, and Luke versions of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, two unnamed disciples follow Jesus' orders to retrieve a colt. In these accounts, the disciples actively participate in the parade, laying down their cloaks and singing praise. In contrast, John's version of this story provides minimal details and the disciples are hardly mentioned at all. However, the text does a unique thing: it breaks the fourth wall to tell us something important:

"His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered" (John 12:16).

Is Peter at the parade? Does he lay down his cloak and follow the others? Does he sing songs of loudest praise? Or is he lost in the cacophony of the crowds, confused by and afraid of what is taking place? Maybe he is thinking about the blur of events in the days just before: Lazarus raised from the dead, Jesus anointed in Bethany, the crowds knocking down their doors, the plot to kill Jesus and Lazarus swelling like a darkened, fast-approaching sky.

They didn't understand at first, but then they remembered.

This image attempts to visualize these two locations in time and space. On the left, Peter looks out from the palm procession—his eyes glazed over as he watches Jesus riding into the city where he will surely meet his death. As the crowds sing "hosanna!" for a new, soon-to-be-killed-king, the dissonance of the scene causes Peter to tremble—like a guitar string snapped suddenly mid-tune.

In the top right is Peter's mirror image. In this mirage, we glimpse the future. Peter stands aghast at the empty tomb, waves of hope and relief rushing through him like a river of grace, the remembering happening all at once—like a childhood song plucked from memory, like the refrain of a chorus that won't let you go: *it's true, it's true, thank God it's true.*

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity



MAUNDY THURSDAY

Wandering Heart: "Streams of mercy"



Golden Hour

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by John 13:1-20

Acrylic, ink, paper collage, yarn, metallic tape, and mixed media on canvas

The story of Peter brings us to the last supper. The disciples are tucked away in the upper room. Within the overall composition of this piece, we see the West African symbol,⁶ *Aban*, which means fortress and demonstrates power and authority. *Aban*⁷ is the central image of *Golden Hour* and it is duplicated around the perimeter of the piece like a mighty fortress. The gold-plated vessel at the top represents the water Jesus uses to wash the disciples' feet. Around it are miniature *Mpuannum*,⁸ the five tufts of hair. In Ghanaian culture, it is said that a priestess wore this hairstyle

giving the symbol a meaning of deep loyalty and priestly office. The water drips directly down onto swollen feet, feet that bear no name. The section to the left of the vessel holds a tearful Peter. He refuses Jesus' hospitality and then backtracks when he learns the value of merciful water. Around him contains *Dwannini Mmen*,⁹ the horns of rams, and *Nyansapo*,¹⁰ the wisdom knot. Both sit subtly in the background. If only Peter remembered that pride is a vice and through curiosity we are exposed to the interconnectedness of wisdom and knowledge. Across from the image of Peter we see the Eucharist. When orienting this piece in a diamond formation, the cup looks overflowing. But when the canvas is sitting as a square, the wine is tipping out of the chalice, dripping in unison with the vessel onto the *Aban*. The Eucharist is also one of the ways we receive Christ's mercy. Body and blood broken for us. Water is very versatile. The vessel of water is providing mercy. The swollen feet are receiving mercy. Peter is asking for mercy. The chalice has shed mercy.

There is a particular time of day we refer to as the "golden hour." This is when photographers love to take photos as the sun sits at a particular point, either after sunrise or before sunset, when daylight is redder and softer than when the sun is higher in the sky. A serious photographer does anything to capture that moment. When I reflect on the entire Passion story, this might just be the golden hour for the disciples. Jesus and his crew are tucked away, having their Passover meal. They are cleansing themselves and carrying on not realizing this will be the last moment of peace they will have. Sharing a meal with the people you love is one of the most glorious moments anyone could have—before what will end as a night of torture and betrayal. While Peter is tearful in this image, the overall vibe of *Golden Hour* is soft, rich. It feels like it is captured in marble as if nothing can destroy it.

—Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

⁶ Adinkra symbols originated from the Gyaman people of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Learn more about their meanings and significance here: adinkrasymbols.org

⁷ View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/aban/

⁸ View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/mpuannum/

⁹ View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/dwennimmen/

¹⁰ View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/nyansapo/



GOOD FRIDAY

Wandering Heart: "Prone to leave the God I love"



Really?

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by John 13:31-38

Ink on paper

In this pulpit parament, drawn with ink on paper, Jesus looks up at the congregation asking, "Really?"

In my unique first glance at this story, looking through the eyes of Peter, I was floored by Jesus' judgment of Peter in this text (John 13:38). Jesus's response to Peter sounds harsh coming from a loving God. I think that that is why I was so surprised as I studied the scripture. So I looked deeper to see what Jesus is actually going through, to see where his perspective may be coming from. Trauma. With this lens, my fragile frustration with Jesus is *really* me centering myself. Jesus is constantly putting himself in harm's way and now he's heading toward the cross. Yet, I am still demanding him to be polite to me, not to call my bluff.

Recent research on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)¹¹ has caught the attention of many educators and doctors. An amazing TED talk by Nadine Burke Harris¹² breaks it down simply: a person's health predictors change when they are traumatized as a child. A doctor or an educator can better serve their patient

or student with an awareness of their ACE score.

My frustration with Jesus unveils my impatience with being treated in a way I consider rude by a person with a high ACE score. My reaction is to push back, to not have sympathy and deference for the real difficulty he is going through.

I wonder in my daily life whose trauma I am still approaching ineffectively. How can I learn from Jesus' valid impatience with Peter's empty, well-meaning promises? —**Hannah Garrity**

¹¹ ACEs are traumatic childhood events that can lead to mental, physical, and behavioral health issues. You can learn more here: my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/24875-adverse-childhood-experiences-ace

¹² "How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime," by Nadine Burke Harris. TEDMED. September, 2014. ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime?language=en



GOOD FRIDAY

Wandering Heart: "Prone to leave the God I love"



Disarming Peter

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by John 18:1-11

Digital painting

"In disarming Peter, Christ disarms all Christians." —Tertullian (160-220 CE)

Pressed in by soldiers and religious leaders, surrounded by lanterns, torches, and weapons, Peter does what many of us would do. He responds to the threat of violence with violence. With sword in hand, he tries to take the unfolding narrative into his own hands and cuts off Malchus' ear. Jesus tells Peter to "put the sword back into its sheath" (John 18:11). This is the moment I wanted to capture in this image. I imagine a rush of emotions surge through Peter's body like a bolt of lightning. I imagine he feels the sting of shame after being admonished by

his teacher for his violent actions. I imagine he feels the searing grief that comes with the realization that his teacher and friend will in fact die, and he is helpless to do anything about it—perhaps the most painful of all.

Peter had a choice. He could continue down the path of violence, fight the soldiers and religious leaders and protect Jesus from the inevitable, or he could yield, dropping his sword and surrendering to the cup that God has placed before his friend.

In the image, this choice is suspended in time. Is Peter releasing the sword and choosing the way of peace? Or is Peter about to take up the sword and choose the way of violence? On the left in the image, leaves from the garden's olive grove reach out to shade and comfort him. This is the way of peace. On the right, the soldiers are looming with the flames closing in around him. This is the way of violence.

Peter releases the sword as if it was on fire, as hot tears of shame, grief, and helplessness pour down his face.

Which way will we choose? —Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman



GOOD FRIDAY

Wandering Heart: "Prone to leave the God I love"

The Descent

by T. Denise Anderson

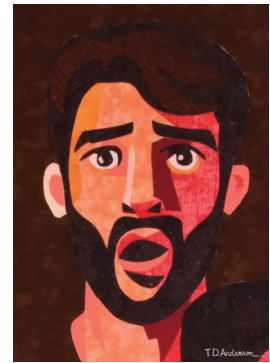
Inspired by John 18:12-18; 19-27

Cotton, appliqué



I love portraiture and textiles, but until now, I've never married those two things. At the time of this piece's creation, I'd been doing a lot of sewing, particularly of stoles and vestments. When it came to choosing a medium for this collaboration, fabric would not let me go! It makes sense that, as we consider the interweaving of Peter's own story with that of the crucifixion, the medium for this piece would itself be woven. What must Peter have felt in those fateful moments of betrayal?

Here, I try to capture Peter's initial paralysis when he's first asked if he's one of Jesus' disciples. When Jesus was arrested, Peter had only begun to see the full extent of the empire's cruelty. "Would they do to me what they've done to him?" he must have asked himself. Maybe he could be so zealous for Jesus in the past because it was all an



abstraction. Now, things have gotten frighteningly real.

From there, Peter descends into more fear—the kind that does not help us to be our best selves. I depict him going from stunned to defensive and then to belligerent, navigating the full spectrum of the fight, flight, or freeze responses to a perceived threat. By the time the cock crows as Jesus predicted (see if you can make out the bird's faint silhouette in the lower right-hand corner), Peter probably no longer recognizes himself. He must feel deflated and ashamed. At the end of his descent he is different, so I depict him differently from his three prior denials. He has much less fire in his countenance and can't even open his eyes to face what he's done.

The flames recall the fire where Peter warmed himself, but they also represent purification and illumination. Peter is forced to see himself as he truly is—as Jesus had already shown him. Who will he choose to be after this? When we are confronted with who we truly are, who will we choose to be after that confrontation? As we look at Peter's journey, it's my prayer that we will consider and meditate on our own. —Rev. T. Denise Anderson



GOOD FRIDAY

Wandering Heart: "Prone to leave the God I love"



Were You There?

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by John 19:1-30

Acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

This refrain from a well-known Gospel song dances in circles in my mind as I wonder where Peter is when Jesus is crucified. We know that Peter follows Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest. We know he warms himself by the fire when, again and again, he denies being one of Jesus' disciples. Then Jesus is dragged away—to be tried, sentenced to death, and finally, killed. But where is Peter?

Since we have to fill in the gaps of the story with our imaginations, this image functions like visual

Midrash¹³ of Peter's experience when Jesus dies. I imagine Peter is frozen—with guilt, rage, and regret—still standing by the fire. I imagine he remains there for hours, unable to move, paralyzed by fear. I imagine he mourns privately, pleading for a miracle, praying the worst will not come, crying out again, "God forbid it!" (Matthew 16:22) In the background, the shadow of a cross flickers like flames rising from the charcoal fire.

Whenever I try to make sense of Peter's actions, I have often thought of attachment theory. Attachment theory, pioneered by British psychologist John Bowlby, explores how a child's relationship with their caregivers early in life determines how they navigate secure (or insecure) emotional bonds into adulthood. There are four primary attachment styles:¹⁴ anxious (driven by the fear of rejection and abandonment), avoidant (driven by the fear of vulnerability and intimacy), disorganized (exhibiting inconsistent and unpredictable behavior led by distrust), and secure (signified by good self-esteem and seeking support from others). I wonder if Peter shows us the full spectrum of attachment styles throughout his journey. Again and again, Jesus invites him into secure attachment—through catching him when he sinks, offering him food and forgiveness, washing his feet. And yet, Peter often responds with behaviors that might define anxious, avoidant, or disorganized attachment styles: he resists, he pulls away, he draws his sword, he denies knowing Jesus.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

For Peter, the answer is "no." He has left the God he loves. However, the good news about attachment theory is that even if you have an anxious, avoidant, or disorganized attachment style, you can gradually—through healthy relationships, vulnerability, and interdependence—find secure attachment.

In this image, God's river of grace flows out from the cross and spills out before a bereaved Peter. Even in this moment of deep despair, God's abundance rushes to greet him. Peter's nets may feel as empty as the day Jesus crawled into his boat (Luke 5:5a), but we know that an abundant feast—around another charcoal fire—shall soon come (John 21:9-14). —**Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity**

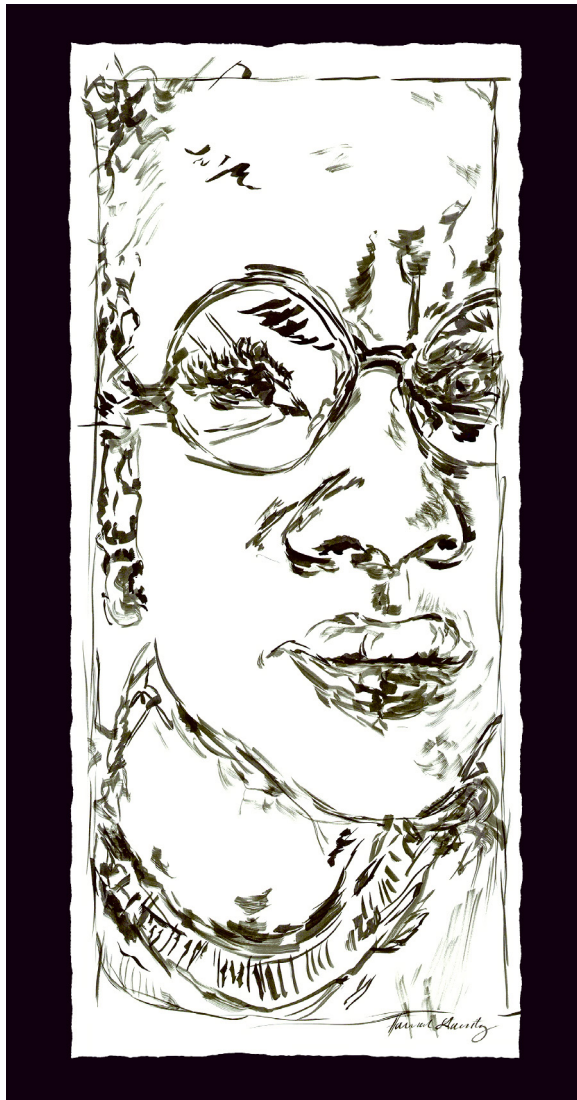
¹³ Midrash, as a method of interpretation, focuses on what is said and unsaid in a text, using imagination to derive additional narratives to stand alongside the scripture as it is recorded.

¹⁴ To learn more about attachment styles, read this article published by The Cleveland Clinic: my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/25170-attachment-styles



EASTER SUNDAY

Wandering Heart: "And I hope"



Where?

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Luke 24:1-12

Ink on paper

"But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened" (Luke 24:12).

Painted in ink on paper, Peter's expression here is inquisitive with a touch of concern. He's tired, but hopeful. He has just gotten amazing news. Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James relayed the message and Peter dared to believe it. The prophecy is coming true.

So many of the things that Jesus foretold have happened over the last few days. The most heavy on Peter's heart are his repeated denials. Fear took over.

In contrast, now hope and joy begin to bubble up inside. He will see Jesus again! Jesus has overcome death! The prophecies have been fulfilled! Truly, God is in this place.

As I was imagining my pieces for this series, I immediately saw the emotions of the human experience reflected in Peter's story. In order to share the energy and perspective of each

emotion, I chose to brush ink on paper. On this Easter Sunday, Peter's face peers through the sketched frame holding both a full expression and tension. Intentionally loose, the brush strokes suggest a face in motion—a glance, the beginnings of joy written in the depths of the eye, the twitch of a smile.

Jesus is risen! Peter is here for it! —**Hannah Garrity**



Feed My Sheep

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by John 21:1-19

Yarn and paper collage on canvas

Feed My Sheep holds a special place in my heart as it is inspired by the text a dear friend of mine used for their ordination. This piece reminds me of their long and complicated journey that led them to the priesthood, much like Peter. As a mixed media artist, I wanted to try something I've never done before—perhaps the silliest decision someone with a deadline could make.

This entire piece¹⁵ (with the exception of the three hearts) is made of yarn. For some reason, the feeling of a sheep's wool kept sticking out to me everytime I read this text. We refer to Jesus as both *el Cordero de Dios*¹⁶ and the shepherd. So why not lean into sheep imagery? I thought the piece would be more vibrant for Easter in contrast to the pieces I created for Lent. This would really take viewers on a spiritual journey while studying Peter.

This post-resurrection story concludes the wandering for Peter so the subject of this piece sits in front of the Adinkra symbol, *Nkyinkyim*,¹⁷ for life's twisted journey. We have seen the ins and outs of his ministry as he accompanies Jesus, which brings us to this dialogue between the two. Peter is asked three times if he loves Jesus, which to all he replies in the affirmative. In this piece, the two of them are portrayed as sheep, Peter being at the right hand of Jesus. The sheep are branded with *Agjinduwura*¹⁸ at the center of their chests. They carry with them a

symbol of loyalty and faithfulness. They are loyal to Jesus, faithful to the promise of salvation, and accepting of their duty to carry the Good News with them to the people of Christ. The face of each sheep is the symbol *Kokuromotie*¹⁹ to represent cooperation and harmony. Jesus asking Peter to feed his sheep demonstrates the faith that Jesus has in Peter to do this work. This value of cooperation is also present in the *Mpatapo*-shaped²⁰ flowers in the field. They are symbols of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Remember, Peter denied his relationship with Jesus several times before Jesus was executed. Above the sheep sits *Kojo Baiden*,²¹ God has traditionally been represented as the sun in various cultures, which brings us to this omnipresent symbol operating as such in this piece. And to the left we see *Akoma*,²² or hearts. While we interpret the heart as love, it is also a symbol for endurance and patience. Peter gets to this point by maintaining goodwill and faith in the message of Jesus. He stumbled through the journey and at times caused more harm than good, but Christ was also patient with him.

Here's my heart. Here are the things I care about so deeply. And you—someone who makes mistakes, doesn't follow directions, and sometimes even betrays me—you are so loved and trusted enough to keep this good work going even after I'm gone.

This is a message to all of us. It doesn't matter how poorly you may think of yourself or how others may view you. To Christ, you are beautifully and fearfully made. And Christ believes in you in spite of it all.

—Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

15 The original is a 24" x 48" canvas.

16 Spanish for "Lamb of God."

17 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/nkyinkyim/

18 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/agjindawuru/

19 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/kokuromotie/

20 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/mpatapo/

21 Also known as Abode Santann. Learn more here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/abode-santann/

22 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/akoma/

About the Artists



Rev. T. Denise Anderson

Denise (*she/her*) is a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the acting Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries. A graduate of Howard University School of Divinity, she is the former Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (USA). A nationally-recognized writer and blogger, Denise's work has appeared in *The Christian Century*, *The Huffington Post*, *These Days*, and on her own blog, *SOULa Scriptura*:

To Be Young, Gifted, and Reformed. Denise writes, preaches, and engages on issues of social justice, diversity, and reconciliation. As a gifted visual artist, she creates art that explores themes of spirituality, history, religion, and race. @tdandersonart



Rev. Nicolette (Faison) Peñaranda

Rev. Nicolette "Nic" (*she/her*) is a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serving as the Program Director for African Descent Ministries. Nic is the creator of MONadvocacy, a racial justice resource grounded in play, as well as the "Talks at the Desk" series which celebrates the voices of leaders in the ELCA African descent community: livinglutheran.org/2022/02/a-love-letter-to-african-descent-communities.



Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Lisle Gwynn Garrity (*she/her*) is a Pastorist (pastor + artist), retreat leader, and creative entrepreneur seeking to fill the church with more color, paint, mystery, and creativity. She founded A Sanctified Art with the conviction that, in order to thrive, the church needs more creative expression and art-filled freedom.



Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Lauren (*she/her*) is an artist, graphic designer, and theologian. She uses paint, metallic inks, and Apple pencil to image the layered complexity she experiences in scripture texts. She also helps faith communities share their vibrant stories through branding & design services.



Hannah Garrity

Hannah (*she/her*) is an artist and an athlete, a daughter and a mother, a facilitator and a producer, a leader and a teammate. She is a Sunday school visual choir facilitator at Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond, VA, an art in worship workshop leader wherever she is called, and a liturgical installation artist at the Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC.