

During Lent, we are inviting our congregation to spend time in God's word. Once a week, we will guide this time with a devotional reading from Scripture and a reflection from someone within our church family. Begin by centering yourself in prayer; ask God to reveal something new and speak to you today. Next, spend time reading the Scripture passage for the day, noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through the text for *you*. Then, move to reading the reflection shared below. Below, you will see that we have also included a piece of visual art for you to consider as you reflect on the passage. I (Pastor Ashley) encourage you to actually get out your Bible and engage with the text on your own first, before reading the reflections shared below. Also, we would love to hear what God was saying to you through this passage! Comment on our [Facebook post](#) for today with what stood out to you from the Scripture passage.

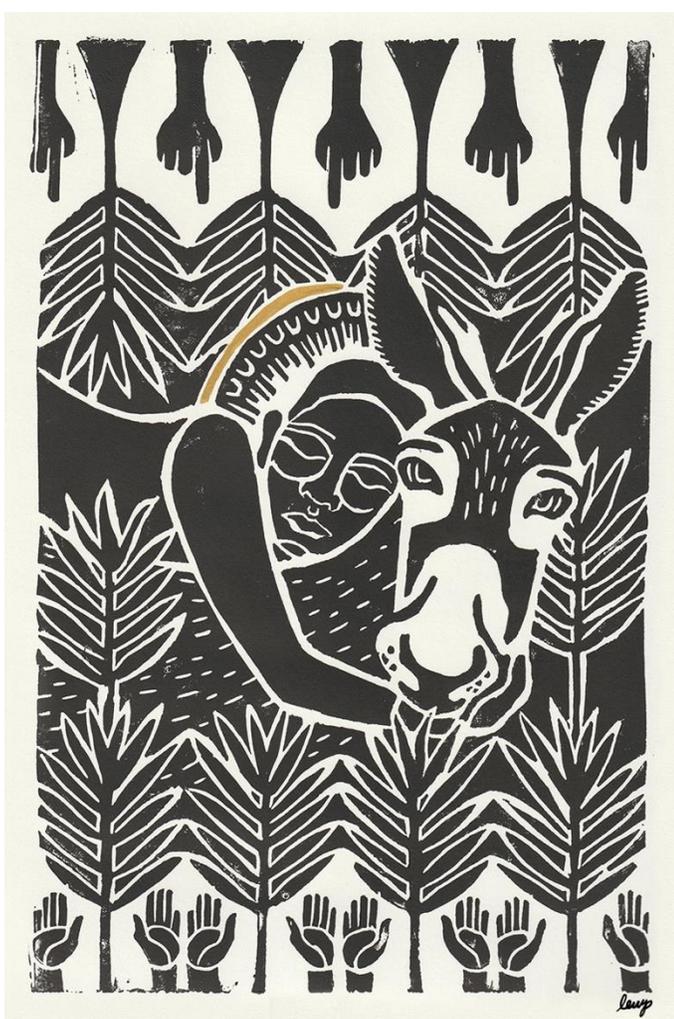
### **Lenten Devotional: Week Six**

**Step One:** *Prior to reading the Scripture passage, spend a moment centering yourself in prayer.*

**Step Two:** Our Scripture reading today is **John 11:45-57**. Read through the text (maybe even twice), noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through this text for *you* today.

**Step Three:** Now, enjoy this reflection from our wonderful Lay Leader, Brian Heineman:

### **Jesus Has His Way**



How many times have you had an emergency arise and your first inclination is to solve the problem?" If you are a guy like me, probably several times in your lifetime. After all, part of our internal wiring is to be "Mr. Fixit." We all have some desire to control things and get outcomes that work for us. For most of the time, you can probably handle it. But what about all those emergencies that you do not have control? Like a natural disaster? Pandemic? Illness? Where do you go, to whom do you turn? For believers, we need to hold onto to our faith and trust in God. We may not have power to answer but He always does.

Our text today immediately follows the raising of Lazarus by Jesus in Bethany. Jesus had attracted the attention of the Sanhedrin. This 'rebel' was not only curing the sick, preaching hope for the forgotten in Jewish society and criticizing Jewish leaders but now he had raised a man to life after he had been dead and buried 4 days. The news was frightening to the Chief Priest Caiaphas. Recalling the Maccabees from just over 100 years prior to this time, the Jewish leader was certain that the Romans would hear of Jesus' preaching and miracles and react with vengeance on his people and the Temple. He advocates the killing of the self-proclaimed Son of God to the point of prophesizing His death. Better to lose one man than to have all the Jews scattered and the temple destroyed.

"Through the Palms" by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman  
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God has always used others unwittingly to further His plan for His chosen. Whether it be Pharaoh to send them

on their way to the Promised Land out of Egyptian slavery or Xerxes to repatriate the exiles spirited away by

enemies, God always executes His plan His way. And we learn that God, time and time again, will turn sad or bad events into something good for all involved. A couple of things of note for me here. Caiaphas is looking for Jesus's death as a selfish way to protect not only his people but also his position in society. God's motivation is love for all the world by sacrificing His son and opening a way for all to come to Him. The way of Jesus is to reflect the love of His father. Despite the Jewish leaders' efforts to save themselves, in just a short time the Romans destroyed the temple and killed some of the people.

There is a good thing for all of us to realize. In whatever crisis we find ourselves in, God is always there, is always working and always loving us. In this most holy time of Lent, during confounding and confused times, let us not forget this truth. Let us follow the way of Jesus: love our God with all our mind, body and soul and love our neighbors as ourselves. Let God handle what we cannot and trust that His plan will always be the better one. Our individual power to do things is infinitely less than the power that God holds.

- *Brian Heineman*

**Step Four:** Close in prayer, thanking God for what has been revealed to you today and asking the Lord to help you carry it into this day and the days ahead. Here is a prayer written by Brian that you may use to close your devotional time today:

*Heavenly Father, we are grateful for your love, mercy, and grace you give us even when we cannot see it, sense it, or feel it. Help us to be confident in your faithfulness and consistent care during our darkest hours as well as our greatest times. Lord, give us peace for all that we cannot control or repair on our own. Amen*

**Step Five:** Join us as we continue reading God's Word this week. Here are daily suggestions for further reading:

- **Thursday, Mar 25** – Matthew 22:36-40
- **Friday, Mar 26** – John 16:16-28
- **Saturday, Mar 27** – John 16:29-33
- **Sunday, Mar 28** – John 17:1-26
- **Monday, Mar 29** – Psalm 20
- **Tuesday, Mar 30** – Ephesians 1:3-14