

MARK

The Gospel in Greenville



Triune Mercy Center

Lent 2026

Introduction to Lent 2026

Lent is the 40-day period leading up to Easter, excluding Sundays. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter.

The 40 days of Lent involve fasting, prayer, and almsgiving as a way to connect deeper with God. Many people use the 40 days of Lent as a time of personal reflection to prepare their hearts and minds for Easter.

In the 1957, Clarence Jordan published “The Cotton-Patch Gospels,” in which he set the stories of Christ in 1950s rural Georgia. Jordan also created Koinonia Farm in Americus, GA – a pioneering interracial farming community in the heart of the deep South. Triune’s member, [Nikki Day](#), was a part of that community.

In the spirit of “The Cotton-Patch Gospels,” we asked members of Triune to reimagine the Gospel of Mark in present day Greenville, South Carolina.

We have not attempted to maintain a continuity of place in these writings. We focused on giving Triune the opportunity to tell the Christ story in their own words. One story may take place at Falls Park and the next in Simpsonville. So don’t let our jumping from place to place throw you off.

Cover by Valerie Wetzel
“Mountain at Peace”
mixed media

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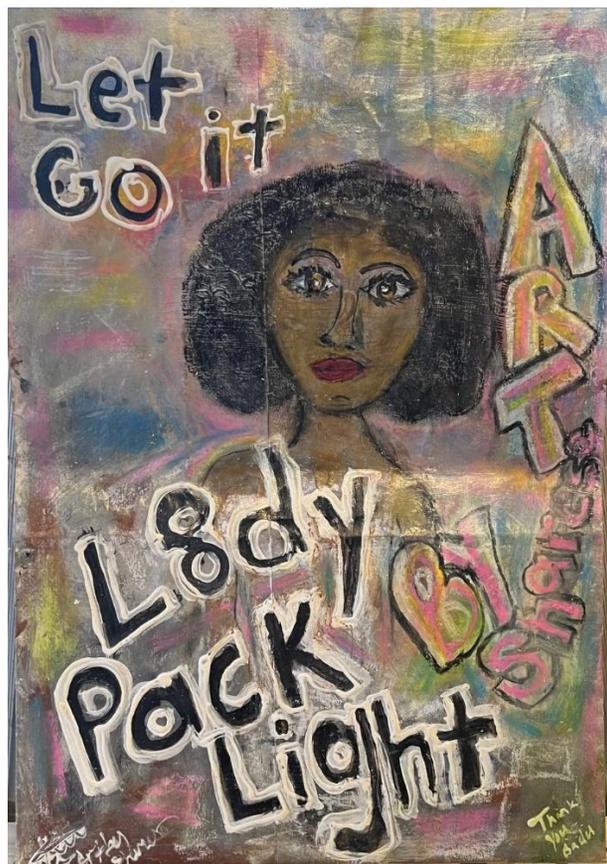
[April 4](#)

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Breath by Moody Black

We enter quietly,
Dust on our foreheads,
Truth in our breath
remembering we are made from just that...
A breath of beginning
And one day we will return...
With a breath
So, let this be the season of emptying,
Of loosening our grip
On noise, on pride, on excess,
So we can be one...
With the breath
In the still places again
To feel the graces again
To get reacquainted with our greatness again
So, we fast not to be seen...
But to be freed...
To breathe
We pray not to be heard,
but to be changed
We repent not from shame,
But from love that calls us home.
In this wilderness of forty days,
strip us of what is false
For that is real freedom!
Breathe silence so that it can lead to mercy,
Sacrifice...
So, that it leads to another breath...
Call it resurrection.
Call it reflection

When connecting with the breath
And what's left...is...
Ash to ash,
heart to heart,
Breath to breath
As we walk toward the cross
trusting that what is buried
will rise renewed.
So, breathe!



Dalphine Sharese McFadden-Woodward
Pastel on Brown Bag

February 18, 2026 (Ash Wednesday)

Mark 1:1-8

**Bible Study Group: Susan, Les, Glenn, and
Craig**

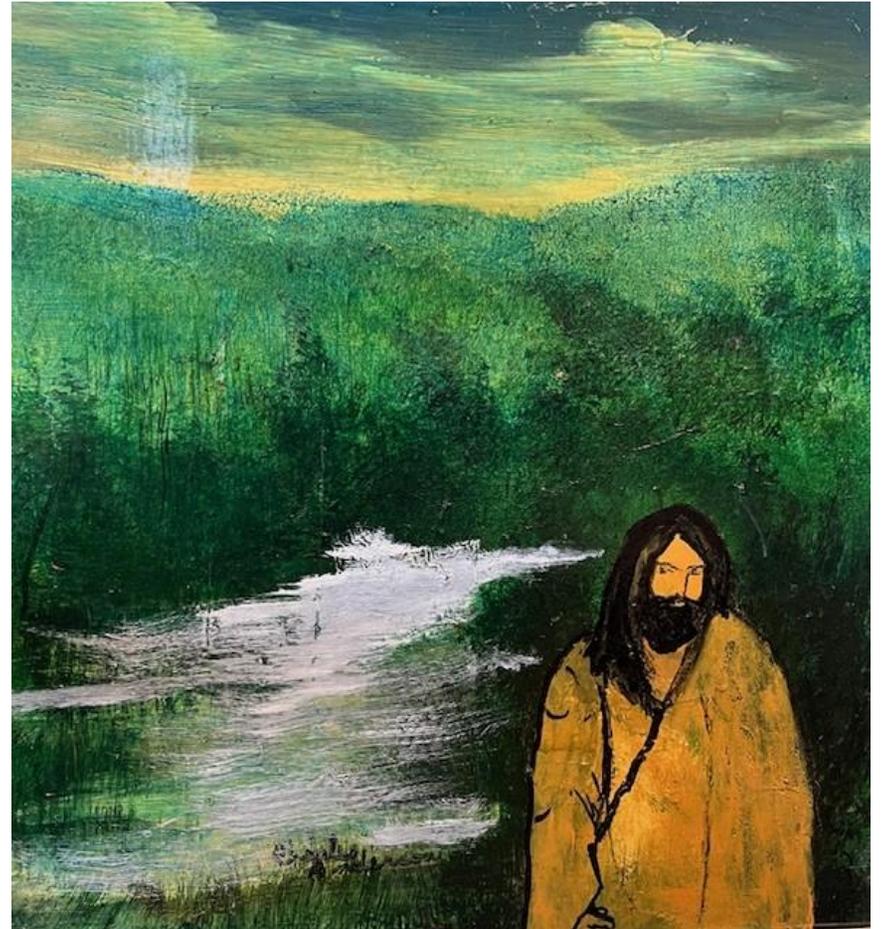
It all started down on Main Street.

This street preacher said, “I told you before that a messenger was coming to Greenville, SC. A voice was calling out from the Old Mill Village, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord!’”

Later, John appeared at Connestee Nature Reserve telling folks about forgiveness pert near every day.

“Come to be dunked in that dirty water and come out clean.”

John wore dirty patched clothes that he got from Goodwill and was drinking Kefir. He said, “After me comes someone as big as a Goliath and I can’t even shine his shoes.”



Charles Anderson

Mixed Media

February 19, 2026

Mark 1:9-11

Bible Study Group: Katie Turek

I came across Jesus at Unity Park. He was sitting on a rock, drinking a Methodical Coffee as the sun came up. He was waiting for a friend. When his friend finally arrived, they wandered over to the Reedy River. They waded into the water and his friend gave Jesus a good dunking. When Jesus rose out of the water, all the birds burst into song. And I heard a voice from above me, singing, "Love, love, always love, my child."



Les Gardner

photograph



Dan Weathers

photograph

February 20, 2026

Mark 1:12-13

Bible Study Group: Amy, Ann, Sheryll, Dan

The Spirit made Jesus go to the empty lot on Rutherford and Stone. He was homeless for 40 days and Satan tempted him. He faced the cold, the heat, rain, and hunger. But the good people of Triune Mercy Center ministered to him.



Unknown artist

mixed media

February 21, 2026

Mark 1:14-20

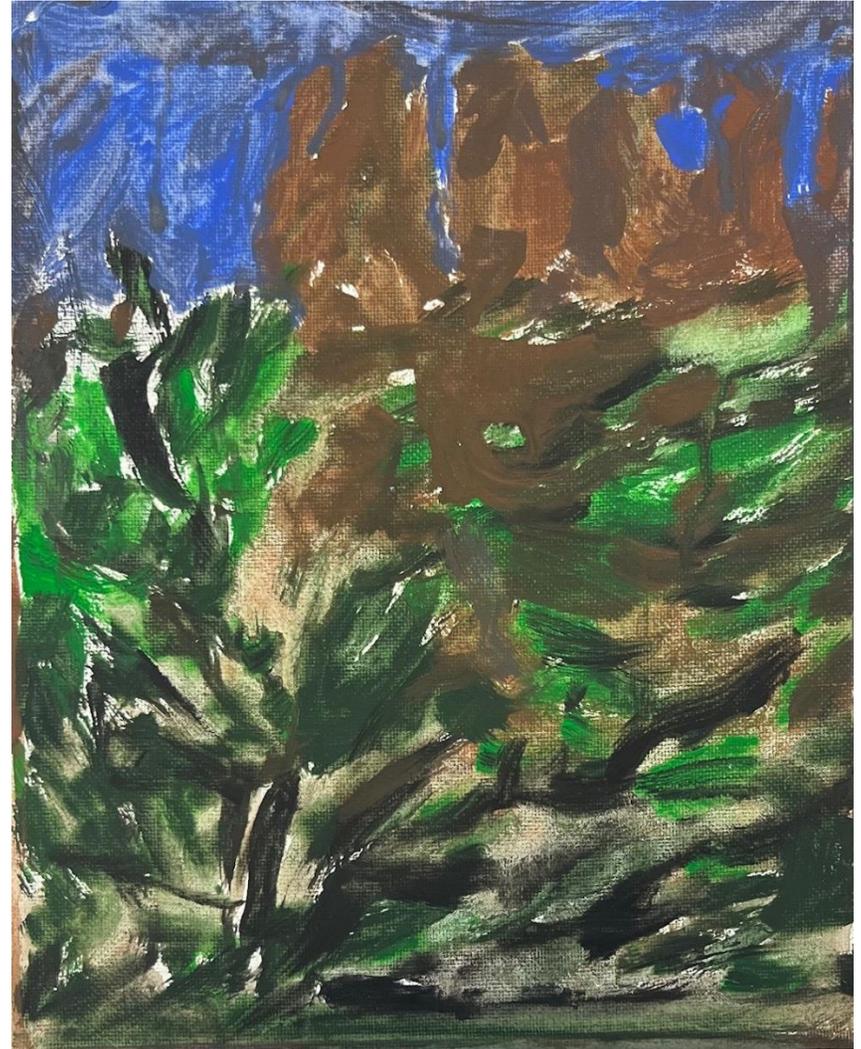
Bible Study Group: Sandy, Russ, and Craig

After John got busted, Jesus went through Greenville, preaching along the shores of Lake Cunningham.

“You saw what happened to John, so now’s the time you better decide whose side you’re on.”

He saw Russ throwing a line, hoping to catch his dinner. Jesus said, “Come hang out with me and your luck is going to change.” Russ said, “I’ve got nothing to lose.” He dropped his pole and followed him.

Jesus saw Sandy and Craig working in the hot sun. He said to them, “Come follow me.” They dropped everything and followed him – much to their dad’s chagrin.



Landscape
Pervaz Allaudin

acrylic

February 23, 2026

Mark 1:29-34

Linda, Jessie, Jonathan, David (Bible Study Group)

After a Sunday morning service Simon, Jesus, and some of their friends left Triune in a Honda (because they were all in one Accord). 😊 They drove up Poinsette to Simon's house near Cherrydale. Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed. Jesus went in to see her. When He held her by her hand, she felt better immediately. Now it just so happened that she was one of the older servers at Flatrock Grill, accustomed to serving big crowds of hungry folks. So she set about feeding all who were gathered there.

Simon's wife posted what was happening on Facebook and Instagram, and all of a sudden lots of folks started pouring in. Some of the folks were skeptical about how Simon's mother-in-law got to feeling well just like that. They began to question and criticize Jesus. Jesus had no patience for their crazy criticisms, so He told them to just keep their mouths shut – except to enjoy the free food.



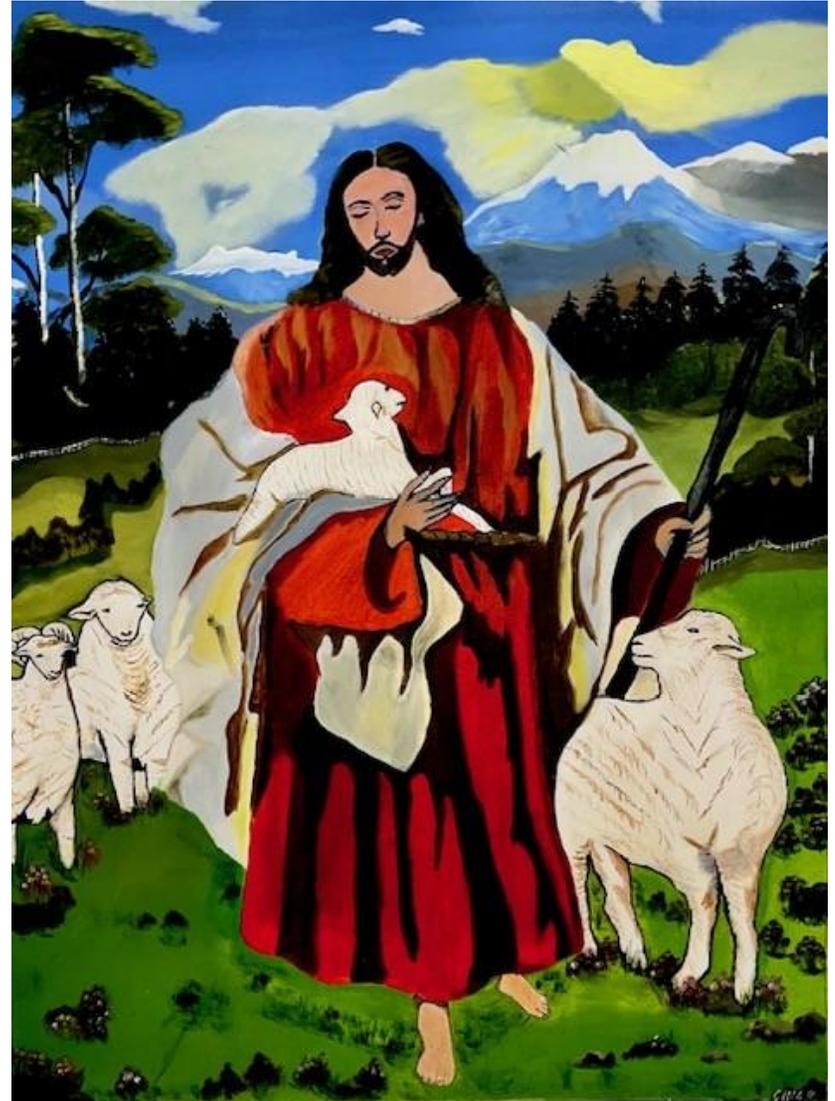
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February 24, 2026

Mark 1: 35-39

David R Taylor

Jesus got up way before the crack of dawn and went out across the railroad tracks to a part of Greenville that had not been gentrified, near a couple of abandoned industrial buildings, to pray. He didn't post on social media his location or what he was doing. Jesus didn't follow a "10-steps to a better prayer life" program or download an app for a successful prayer life. He merely stepped away from the noise, turned off his phone, centered himself, and prayed. His followers found him only after much frantic searching. They scolded him because everyone was searching for him. Jesus said, "Hey, let's go to Pumpkintown and Marietta and Greer and Fountain Inn so that I may share with them the message of freedom and liberation, because that is my purpose." And that's exactly what he did. Jesus shared about the good news of radical love, and he cast out the demons of fear, anxiety, and enslavement to things that do not satisfy.



Chilo

acrylic

February 25, 2026

Mark 2: 1-12

Elaine Nocks

Jesus, a well-known Jewish psychologist, known for his fresh interpretations of the Bible as applied to the human psyche, returned to speak in Greenville. So many came to hear him that the hosting auditorium was packed, and lines were waiting outside the entrance doors. (Tickets were free!)

I was waiting in line too, still hoping to get in, when I noticed that some guys were pushing a man in a wheelchair up the ramp. His head was down, and he appeared to be in great emotional distress. I gathered that he was a veteran from his tattered cap and jacket. His friends were quite determined to get him in to hear the great speaker but alas, they couldn't even get him up to the door.

Then it seemed that the crowd noticed the man and his friends and somehow parted to let them by. And so, by some miracle it seemed, they got the sick man in, landing him squarely in front of the speaker. Jesus, the speaker, immediately recognized the PTSD-type paralysis of the man and had compassion for him.

Oddly, Jesus then said this to the man: "Son, your sins are forgiven."

The other psychologists who had gathered to listen to the revered man were puzzled by this kind of language from a psychologist. They whispered among themselves, "Who does he think he is, talking like he is God?"

But Jesus, knowing that the man needed to be released from his trauma through the power of forgiveness, replied to the questioners, "Which is easier for this man to understand, forgiveness or psychotherapy? For this man, it is the former.

And with some strange kind of sacred commissioning that the people didn't understand, Jesus said to the man, "Get up and get on with your life." And the forgiven man did.

Thanks be to God.



Dan Weathers

photograph

February 26, 2026

Mark 2:13-17

Nikki Day

Jesus went down into Falls Park. He was teaching and a crowd was there, listening. As he walked along, he came to a city council member who was sitting at a table trying to get passers-by to sign a petition to prohibit sleeping in public places. Jesus said, “Come join us.” The man got up and followed Jesus.

Later Jesus sat at Levi’s house, eating dinner with people who had joined him in the park. It was a rag-tag group of homeless guys and unemployed drifters.

The city councilor saw Jesus with these ne’er-do-wells and asked a few of the people hanging around, “Why does he eat with these loafers?”

Jesus heard this and said, “Those who have housing have no need of help but these ‘street bums’ need shelter. I’ve come to call people to offer the shelter they need.”

Fun Note: Nikki actually spent time at Koinonia Farms back in the day. Koinonia was founded by Clarence Jordan who wrote the Cotton Patch Gospel.



“Light in the Darkness”

Rebecca Constantine, acrylic

February 27, 2026

Mark 4:1-20

Ike Cannon

The crowd grew so large that Jesus retreated to a boat on the water, and began telling the parable of a man, a Sower, who cast his seeds indiscriminately upon each of four different types of soil.

Some soils were hardpacked trails where people walked. Other seeds landed on rocky soil, other seeds landed in thorny areas, while other seeds landed on good rich soil. The results were as follows. The hard ground seeds were eaten by the birds. The rocky soil seeds sprouted some seeds which failed, due to dry heat and inability to form deep roots. The thorny ground seeds areas also sprouted but were overgrown by weeds and failed to live. The good rich soil seeds were not only able to sprout but also produced the fruit of the seed and multiplied thirty to a hundredfold. Jesus spoke this parable so that the people would be able to relate to real life.

The meaning of the parable is that the soil is the human heart and the seed is to word of God. People can relate to farmers that had sown fields and seen the different results of the crops.

Those that wanted to hear, did in fact try to learn more. Others refused to learn. Some accept it, some reject it. Those with closed minds reject it are overtaken by the devil.

The stoney ground seeds land and fail to germinate. The people that hear the gospel get enthused and decide to give Jesus a try. These types get caught up in the passion of the moment, by exuberant preachers and think that by repeating a prayer or

“walking up to the front a church” means they are saved, when nothing ever truly grew. It’s not long before they “backslide.” They may or may not be truly saved, but only they will know this in their heart and soul.

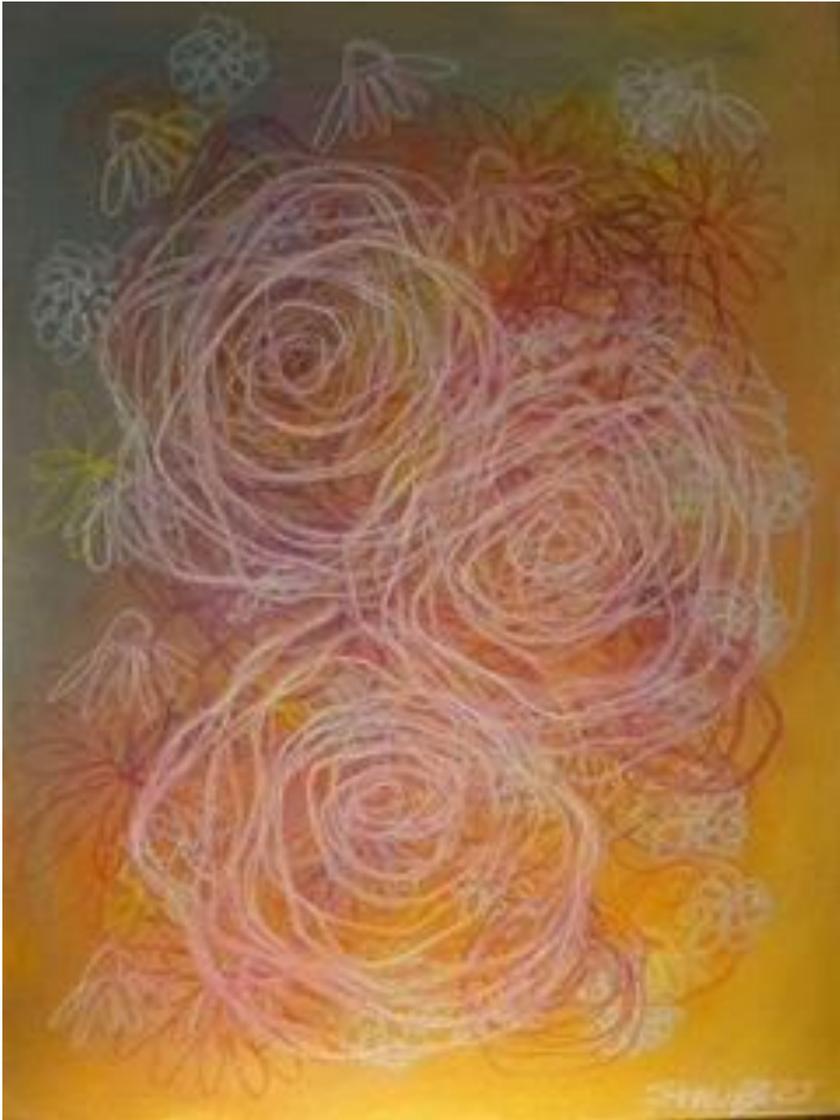
The thorny soil seeds sprout and grow and look very successful to the human eye, but the roots of weeds under the soil will choke out the life of these sprouts. Their thinking gets cluttered up. While trying to live a Christian life, but gets wrapped up in earthly goods and sinful ways. They mean well, but slide back into sinful ways.

The people that hear and dedicate themselves to the word of God not only take root but also become the fruit of the seed. As in life, the fruit varies. The end product can be 30, 60, or 100 times greater.

We Christians are obligated to spread the word of God to all that we have an opportunity to speak to. Here in Greenville there is a large population of those that are searching for something and do not know what it may be. We never know whether we will be the one that reaches their heart or not, but we still must join with the Sower, sowing our seeds indiscriminately.

If our neighbors are hurting, we can offer help, hope and encouragement, but we cannot control others’ growth, thoughts, or actions. We can pray and offer what we can to help them get into a better state of mind, and hopefully the seed will sprout and produce more fruit.

And so on and so on and so on.



Stacy Battle
Garden Dances

Oil on Canvas

February 28, 2026

Mark 4:21-25

Anna Romano

Jesus looked out at Saluda Lake before turning back to the crowd gathered before him. He took note of all those watching. Among them, a man stood in ragged jeans and a t-shirt. He looked as though he had spent the night hiding between bushes in Falls Park. A woman sat on a bench, clothed in her finest dress with a lavish hat upon her head. Children sat at their parents' feet with fidget toys and coloring books – they seemed to be the only ones to truly understand, keeping their hands busy and minds open with a willingness to learn.

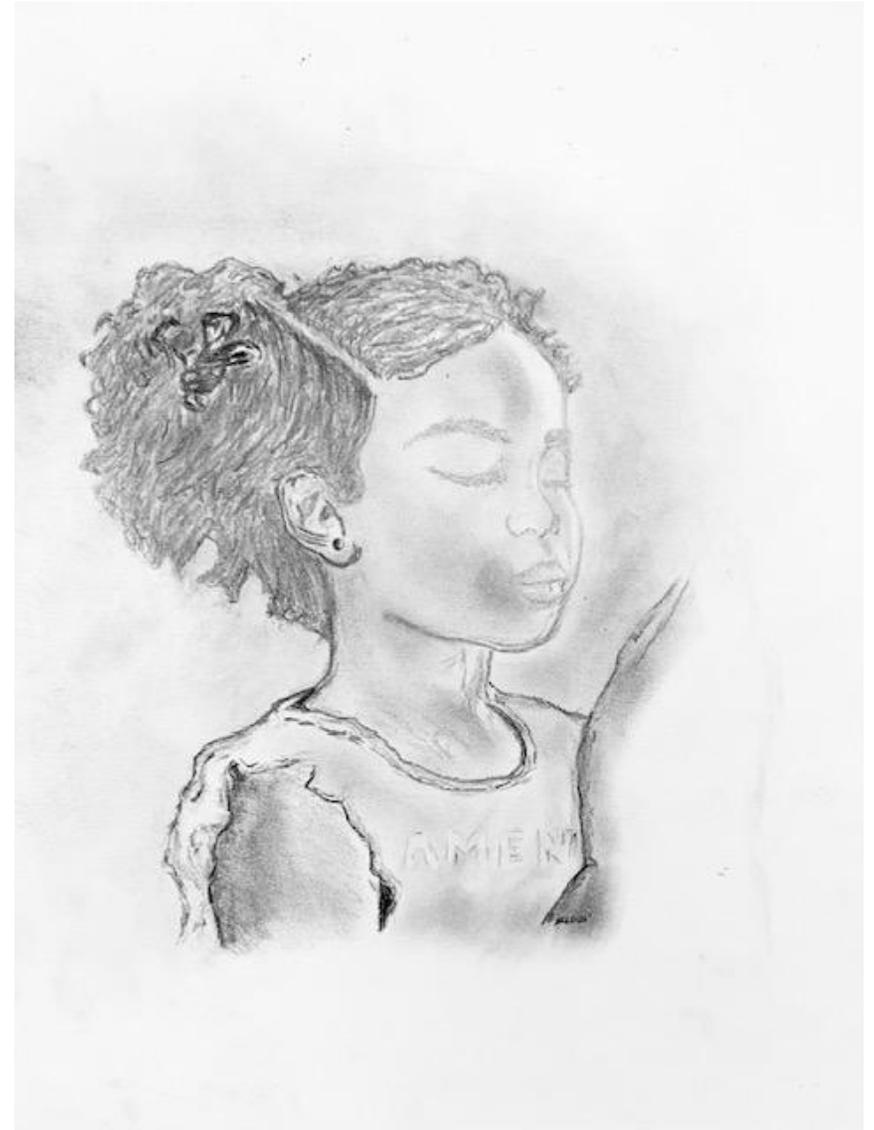
He said to them all, “Do you turn on a lamp, only to place it under a bowl or beneath your bed? No. You place the lamp in the open to light up the room. Don't hide in the dark. Stand in the open.”

“Are you listening? Do you hear what I say?”

“Consider my words carefully. Pay attention to all you say and do.”

“If you open yourselves to the light and share it, what you have will multiply. But if you hide the light and try to keep it for yourself, everything will be taken away.”

Jesus paused and watched before speaking again. Some in the crowd shifted their weight from one foot to the other, staring at the ground. Others clapped, not really understanding. The children looked up, eyes huge in wonder. The lake remained still, waiting for the Lord's next words.



Shante Goodjoin

Graphite

March 2, 2026

Mark 4:30-34

The Art Room

How can I describe the kingdom of God?

Maybe in a story.

Big ideas often have small beginnings.

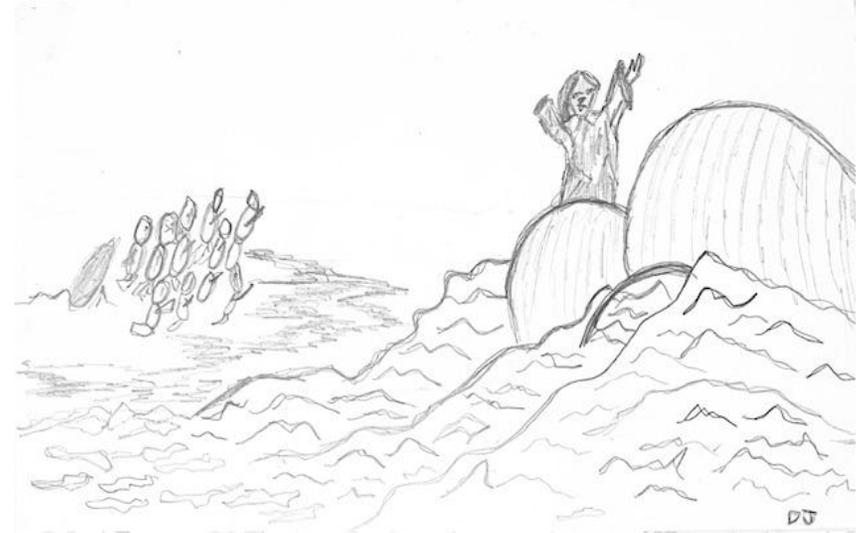
An artist took a clean canvass and started her painting. It began with a single stroke. Stroke followed stroke and the composition took shape.

Detail followed detail.

She paid attention to both positive and negative spaces.

The shape of light illuminated the darker hues.

You had to use your imagination at first. But a slow unveiling took place and before you knew it, she had created a masterpiece. The most beautiful painting anyone had ever seen.



DJ

Graphite

March 3, 2026

Mark 4:35-41

Ben Williamson

Sometime that day, as evening was approaching; my dude, JC, told His people that He wanted them all to go over to the other side of the lake where He was schooling the people who needed His info.

They were going to take the boat.

Of course, other boats were going to follow. You know everyone was trying to keep up with JC. Well, He got down in the boat and took a nap. While He was asleep, a storm popped up. His people freaked out and woke Him up.

They said, “JC! Really?!? It seems like you don’t care if we drown or not!”

All of them were scared and complaining.

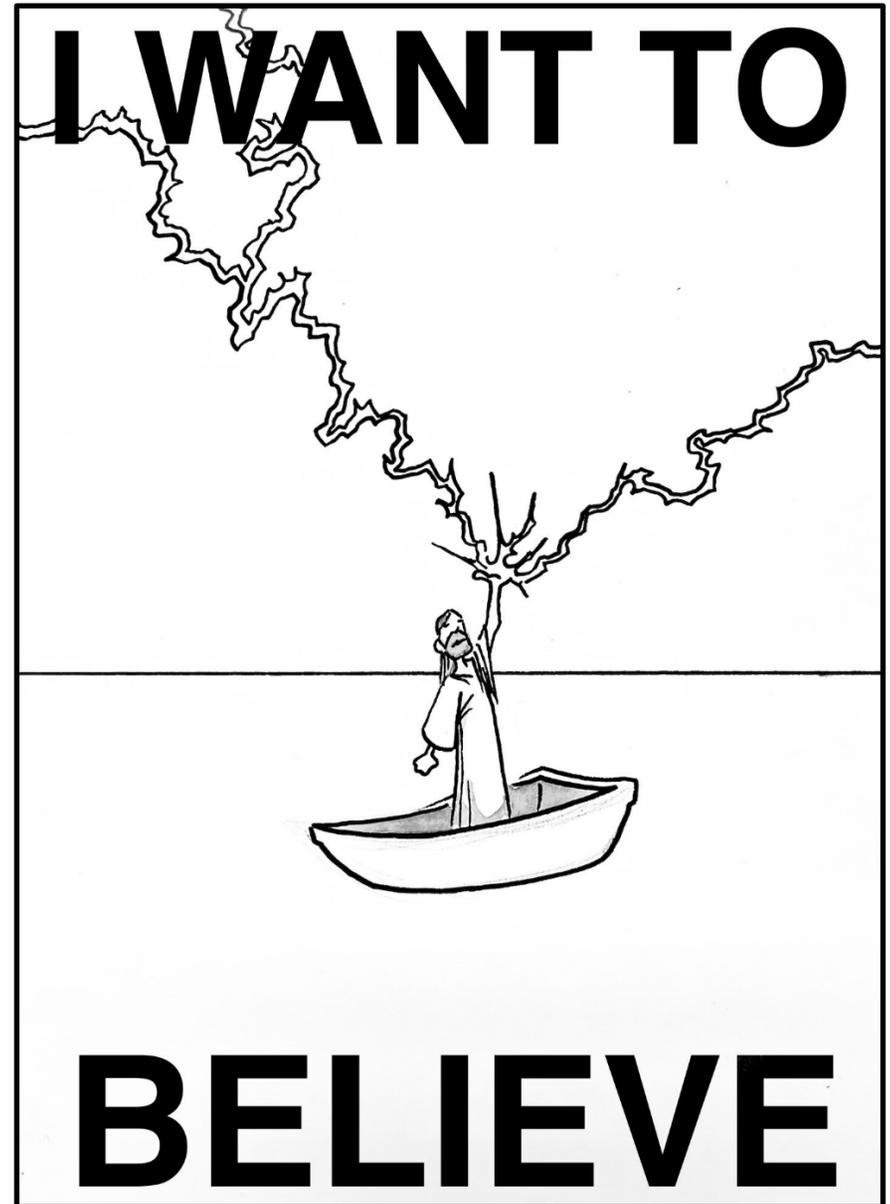
JC says, “Bruh, slow you roll. Ya’ll straight.”

Then JC says to the storm, “Quiet. Be still.”

The wind died down and the lake was completely calm.

Then JC popped off at His people, asking, “Bruh, why ya’ll scared? Wow! Do you still have no faith?”

They were freaked out, scared to death. They were like, “Who is this dude?! The wind and the waves did what He said.”



Owen Robertson

Pen & Ink

March 4, 2026

Mark 5:1-20

Grayson Hiatt

During those times, there was a man animated by things contrary to God and living off the Swamp Rabbit Trail in the woods. Though he was often restrained with shock-collars and handcuffs, neither could hold him as he would rip them apart. He was often seen in the woods and under overpasses howling and bruising himself with needles.

Eventually, Jesus arrived at the other side of the Reedy River, known as the West End, and when the man saw him leave the trolley, he ran over and bowed before him. Immediately, Jesus commanded the evil forces to come out of the man, but the man yelled, “What have you to do with us, Jesus, Son of the Most-High God? I beg, do not torment us!”

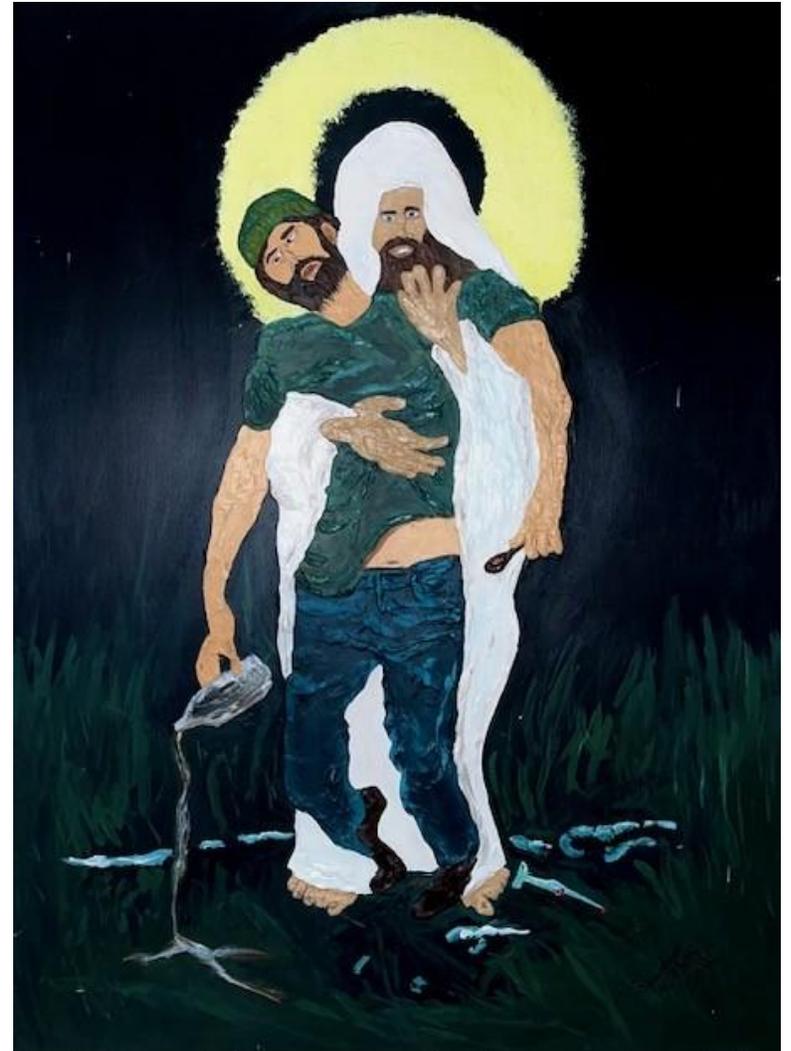
Gently, Jesus asked, “What is your name?”

The man replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many! Please do not send us away from downtown!” Just then, a pack of rats were seen scurrying from a nearby alleyway, and the man said, “Send us into the rats; let us enter them.”

Jesus gave them permission, and the evil spirits entered the pack of 2000 rats. Immediately the rats stampeded down the steep bank of the Reedy River and were drowned in its falls.

Seeing this, tourists ran off and told the police what had happened to the rats. When the people came to see what had happened, they saw Jesus and the man who had been possessed by the evil forces sitting together. The man was clothed and in his right mind. This frightened the people, and

they begged for Jesus to leave Greenville. As Jesus was entering the trolley, the freed man asked if he could follow him, but Jesus refused saying, “Go home to your own people, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and what mercy he has shown you.” At this, the man immediately went and proclaimed all across the upstate how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone was amazed.



Hillbilly

acrylic

March 5, 2026

Mark 5:21-34

Deb Richardson-Moore

Our gospels show us a picture of Jesus ministering in an environment beset by interruptions. As he attempted to deal with one task, another often intruded. In this story of Jairus's daughter and the hemorrhaging woman, Mark masterfully highlights the interruption by sandwiching one story inside the other, allowing one to comment on the other.

The passage begins with a summons for Jesus to heal the 12-year-old daughter of synagogue leader Jairus. But then a woman, hemorrhaging for 12 years and terribly unclean according to Jewish law, tugs at his cloak. He halts to recognize the faith that has healed her. Then he continues on to Jairus's house, but since the girl has died in the interim, he raises her from the dead. In short, Jesus allows himself to be pulled from the world of stalwart Judaism to deal with the lowest, most marginalized sector of ancient society.

Early in my ministry at Triune, interruptions at our side door nearly drove me insane. People wanted food, clothes, shelter, a phone, a razor, money, furnishings. I couldn't get sermons or newsletters written. I couldn't finish meetings. I couldn't complete a counseling session. Our recovery case manager, the late David Gay, spoke into my frustration. "God," he told me, "is in the interruptions."

One typical Saturday, a man with two children interrupted our meal service. His wife and children had been evicted from their Myrtle Beach home while he was in prison. Now they were stranded in Simpsonville.

David and I set them up with clothes, linens, dishes and food, and the father went off to look for work. He interrupted me again a week later – to tell me he'd found a job in maintenance at a nearby golf course.

I never got to the point that I was as gracious as Jesus – or even as David – about interruptions. But Triune's staff of recovery managers and social workers was set up precisely to deal with them.

I first preached this Scripture passage at our partner church, Buncombe Street UMC, in 2006. Triune had dissolved as a United Methodist Church, and at the request of the district superintendent, Buncombe Street had taken it on as a mission church.

Triune was a hot mess of needs and wants and questions and problems. To make matters worse, I was an ordained Baptist plopped down in the middle of all those Methodists.

Triune was one gigantic interruption.

But Buncombe Street reacted with the compassion that Jesus showed the hemorrhaging woman. They welcomed me and Triune, and they gave money and served meals and hosted art shows. Ten years later, they prevailed upon the conference to hand over the Rutherford Street property and buildings, free and clear.

The interruption, they said, was of God.



Unseen Greenville

Fred Wood

watercolor

March 6, 2026

Mark 6:1-6

Amy Bowling

Mark 6:1-6 Greenville Version

After Jesus did many miracles, he and his disciples got into a boat and went to the other side of Lake Hartwell. Once they docked it, the group traveled about sixty-five miles east to Jesus' hometown of Greenville.

As it was late in the day when they arrived, the weary travelers found a quiet corner to rest in Unity Park. They had just started to lay out bedrolls when they were told to "Move ON!" by the authorities, since there was now a "no-camping" ordinance in the city. Jesus told the group to quickly pack up and get moving and said that things had changed since he was last home.

The morning sun was just coming up over Cedar Lane Bridge that Sunday, and there was a delicious smell coming from a little cafe with a large bicycle on the roof. When Jesus saw that there was room for everyone to sit at tables, they ordered breakfast and thought about where to head to church.

Jesus said, "I grew up here, so let's go back to the church my family used to worship in when I was younger. It is not far."

So the folks with Jesus finished eating and followed him a few blocks to an old church with a huge white steeple. A few people were milling around on the steps, and their jaws dropped as the crowd of strangers marched up and entered the building. There were stares and elbows poked into ribs as heads pivoted to gawk at Jesus. He walked calmly up to the front and navigated the three steps to the pulpit.

He began to share wisdom, hope, and peace from the Bible passage that was opened in front of him. In the middle of the teaching, the congregation began to mumble, "Hey, isn't that Jesus?" "I think this is Joseph and Mary's boy. When did he get so clever?"

"Who does he think he is, coming in here and preaching like he is ordained?" "Look there, his sisters and brothers are sitting over on the right, you know, they are so embarrassed!"

Hearing the jealous criticism, Jesus gave a nod to Peter and the disciples. He signaled for the team to head toward the exit and then remarked to the church members, "I had hoped that it would be different coming home. You have known me since I was little, but you really do not know my heart. I am an honored prophet, teacher, and healer in Upstate, but not in my hometown. I am not surprised by your lack of faith, just sad. This just means my work here is limited."

Without missing a beat, he walked out of the church, heads and fingers wagging after him. Once outside, there were a few people who were not dressed up enough to be allowed into the church and had to stay on the curb. Jesus looked at them with kindness, touched them, and healed them. That was about all he could do in his hometown because of the unbelief.

"Let's travel out to the county and some of the other cities so we can teach, heal, and carry God's love," Jesus sighed. The travelers bundled up their belongings and began the trek into the Upstate.



www.triunemercy.org

March 7, 2026

Mark 6:30-44

Dan Weathers

Mark 6:30–44, Greenville Edition

It was one of those cold snaps Greenville gets that sneaks up on you. The kind where the temperature drops just enough that Miracle Hill Ministries Opens the Cold Weather Shelter, and suddenly the numbers double overnight.

I was already in the kitchen at Greenville Rescue Mission, chef coat on, coffee gone cold, moving by muscle memory more than thought. We normally fed about 140 men a day. That morning, we were staring down another hundred easy. Every pot was going, every burner full. The walk-in looked thinner than it should have, and the clock was not our friend.

My boss, Dan Coe, was in his office, door half open, furiously busy trying to make it all work — calling around to schedule extra guys to come help, seeing who could cover shifts, and working his contacts to get food donated — while I stayed planted at the stove, doing what I do.

I finally said it out loud, keeping my voice low. “Dan, we’re gonna run short. I don’t see how we stretch this.”

Dan. He didn’t need to. The math was the math.

I went back to counting in my head: trays, portions, ladles. Even cutting things lean, the numbers didn’t work. You can’t serve faith on a plate and call it dinner.

That’s when Jesus walked in.

No fanfare. No announcement. Just a man in work boots and a jacket that had seen some miles. He stood there for a moment, taking it all in — the steam, the noise, the tension hanging in the air. He smiled like he already knew how the day was going to turn out.

“Y’all look tired,” he said.

Dan Coe let out a short laugh. “That’s one way to put it.”

I explained the situation — cold weather shelter, extra men, not enough food. I half-expected advice about portion control or logistics. Instead, Jesus asked a simple question.

“What do you have?”

I told him. Soup. Bread. A few pans of protein that were supposed to last exactly as long as the numbers said they would — which wasn’t long enough.

He nodded. “That’ll do.”

He asked us to bring everything together. No scrambling, no panic. Just gather what was there. Then, right there in the kitchen — stainless steel counters, chipped tile, fluorescent lights humming overhead — he gave thanks.

Not loudly. Not showy. Just honest gratitude, like the food already knew where it was going.

Then he looked at me. “Go on. Start serving.”

I dipped the ladle into the soup. Filled a bowl. Then another. And another. The pot should’ve been dropping fast, but it wasn’t. I checked it again. Still full.

The line kept coming. Regular guys. Cold weather overflow. Men with frost in their beards. Men who hadn’t eaten right in

days. Bowls went out. Bread baskets emptied — and somehow were full again when I turned back around.

I caught Dan Coe’s eye. He was watching the pans like they might explain themselves.

“Are you seeing this?” he whispered.

I nodded. I didn’t trust my voice.

We served everyone. Every last man. No one was rushed. No one was turned away. And when the line finally stopped and the room settled into that quiet hum of people eating — the good kind — we went back to the kitchen.

The food was still there.

Not scraps. Not just enough. Plenty. Enough to fill containers. Enough to plan for the next meal. Enough that the math finally made sense — if you stopped pretending numbers were the whole story.

Jesus wiped his hands and headed for the door.

“Thanks for cooking,” he said.

After he left, Dan Coe leaned against the counter and exhaled. “Well,” he said, “I guess we learned something today.”

I looked out at the dining room — full bellies, tired smiles, warmth spreading where it was needed most.

Yeah. We did.

Sometimes the miracle isn’t that food multiplies. Sometimes it’s that gratitude shows up before fear gets the last word.



Greenville Rescue Mission Kitchen
Dan Weathers

photograph

March 9, 2026

Mark 7:1-23

Michael Graham

What is going on?

Jesus has been doing completely amazing, impossible things in villages here and there and everybody is talking about the unbelievable day recently when he walked ON WATER out to his apostles in a boat.

Word gets around.

Somebody, we do not know who, maybe a village person looking for favors in the big city, went to town and talked to some rabbis. I would guess this person was a weasel or a gossip but maybe that is too harsh.

The holy high church leaders were not happy with what they heard. Talk about a young man doing impossible stunts? Not good. Too much power on the loose. The overly religious people in downtown Greenville decided to go see for themselves.

So they sent some Pharisees and a few Scribes – a whole posse of faith police with instructions to find something to use against Jesus, (a broken taillight sort of violation, anything that went against the holy codes they had written and continued to add on to and clarify as they saw fit). The authorities in Greenville were hoping that Jesus would be caught violating ordinances and when called on it by the posse, he would back down and be all yes sir no sir.

Pharisees – I think of them as a combination politician theologian priest member of congress: a lot in one package.

Scribes – I think of them as very special guys who needed to have keen eyesight. They copied scrolls that contained the scriptures. They were the only ones allowed. But that also recorded things that top theologians and professors had said and interpreted, like our building codes today. Scribes developed a lot of power this way because they were always reading and copying scrolls, so they were super educated.

This group of critics and sour pussers found Jesus and his disciples with no trouble. He was in top form and big crowds were following him. People would go up to him, touch his robe, and feel totally better. Villagers who had sick friends were going all over the place, bringing people to him. It was heavy traffic on the freeway. Easy to find. And no sooner did the delegation from Greenville get close but don't you know they saw laws being violated: Some of the disciples were EATING INCORRECTLY.

You see the Pharisees had invented the only right way to eat and they made sure everybody learned the method. You had to wash your hands in a special way, first getting clean water and sprinkling it from your wrist to your fingers, then you beat your hand with a fist, then you sprinkled water from your fingers to your wrist. That was the basic idea and there were probably other gestures and sounds that went with it. The disciples were doing none of this.

How can you possibly be so gross and break our laws, the Jerusalem gang asked. Jesus was probably ready for their arguments. He had undoubtedly been watching these actors closely.

Nothing you put in your body is gross, he said. You will digest it and eliminate it. But what comes out of you, that can be gross and you guys are a good example, spouting this stuff about table manners while we are here telling folks about salvation. You can't stick to what's important, can you?

And then, to back up his point, he quoted Isaiah to the distinguished members of the posse.

By now you can imagine the commotion. This was all happening outside, with a big crowd watching. Imagine the noise, movement of people back and forth. You had to yell to make yourself heard. Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go indoors." They entered a house, where he talked to them about what had just happened.

He said, "These men from downtown are talking about what goes into your stomach. I am talking about putting things in your heart. Things which can make you strong where it counts, so you can learn to avoid the REALLY bad acts." He went on to remind them of what is truly evil. He recited a quick list of major bad behavior, things that we all try to avoid: murder, rape, avarice, lust...all the usual subjects that tend to gather around vulnerable humans.

He did not preach how to wash your hands or your pots and pans. "If your ears are open, then hear me," he said.



Michael Graham

graphite



Ron and Sylvester

It's Not What Goes In, But What Comes Out of a Man That Matters

March 10, 2026

Mark 7:24-30

Jerri Gray

Jesus, is leaving with His disciples, and headed northwest to the regions of Tigerville and Blue Ridge. Not long after being there, Jesus was invited to someone's home, and He was hoping to get a little peace and quiet, but people discovered that He was there. A crowd began to arrive wanting to meet and talk to Him.

There was one particular woman who came to Him, she knelt down at His feet, and asked for His help. She began to tell Him about her daughter being possessed by a demon. She begged Him to cast out the demons who were tormenting her daughter. The woman was “not from around these parts,” an outsider. So He took this opportunity to demonstrate to His disciples, their prejudice for anyone they didn’t know by name.

Jesus made the statement to the woman that, "It isn't right to take the children's food from the table and feed it to the family dogs." He said, “God's healing power is reserved for His children.”

Then the woman responded and said, "That's true, Lord, but even dogs are given leftovers after children have eaten.”

As the disciples listened, Jesus responded once more to her and said, "Because of your faith, go in peace; your daughter is healed.”

So, the woman left, and when she got home, she found her daughter completely free from the control of demons.



Za' Ziah Goodjoine

acrylic

March 11, 2026

Mark 7:31-37

Joel Armistead

Now, Jesus had been hanging out near TR. But he left there and came down through Sans Souci, down to Lake Connestee and into The Golden Strip.

While hanging out at Heritage Park some people brought a guy who was deaf and could hardly talk, and begged Jesus to try to help him.

Jesus took him off by himself, away from everybody. Jesus stuck his fingers in the guy's ears. Then he spit and touched the guy's tongue.

He looked up to heaven and let out a deep sigh and said, "Be opened." And, lo and behold, this guy started talking normally, and he could hear again too!

Now Jesus told everybody to keep it under their hat and not to go blabbing to everybody about what they saw. But everybody was so amazed that they couldn't keep quiet. They told everyone how Jesus could make the deaf hear, and cause people to talk right again.



"Triune, Jesus Loves You"

Kevin Calvert

acrylic

March 12, 2026

Mark 8:1-13

Lee Mason

Those with little ... receive much.

With God, all things are possible....

There is nothing God cannot do....

God's provision is abundant!

His compassion is far reaching!

Word spread! "Jesus is here!" People in the region of Pickens County gathered. Soon a large crowd had assembled. A crowd of people. Some gentiles, some Jews, some onlookers, some rich, some poor, young and old, some Jesus-committed folks.... They came together to see and listen to Jesus.

After three days, those in the crowd were in need of sustenance. They were hungry. Jesus expressed concern for the hungry people and wanted to feed them. (After all, many had traveled a long distance – some even from Walhalla.)

"Not possible," says Jesus' disciples. Jesus insists and asks, "What food do we have?" They reported, "Seven loaves and a few fish." Jesus gave thanks for the bread and blessed the fish. All were fed ... four thousand were satisfied with many baskets of food left over.

Incredible! Skeptical onlookers began to question what they observed. They confront Jesus and ask for "a sign from heaven." Jesus refuses and tells them that a sign will not be given. And he turns around and leaves them standing there.



Feeding 4000

Lee Mason

Mixed Media

March 13, 2026

Mark 8:27-30

Kathy Sharp

Chuchi was walking down Poinsett Highway with his companions headed to Travelers Rest and Marietta so he could teach a Bible Study at a camp they had heard about. Chuchi wasn't his real name but what his family had always called him. Where his parents were from, Chuchi is a nickname for Jesus. He preferred it now because people in Greenville never pronounced his real name correctly and it always caused a stir – jokes, teasing, indignation.

Growing up in Berea, Chuchi was always trying to help people. He had a knack for making people feel better when they were sick or feeling down. And he loved going to church and helping out with the food pantry at San Sebastian Church. When he grew up, Chuchi left home to hang out with friends living out in the woods in Poe Mill. Sometimes when it was cold, he would follow his companions to the cold shelter.

Chuchi went home to his family in Berea from time to time but he felt more at home with his friends who didn't have a place to stay. Besides, his family did not approve of his friends or how he seemed to be stirring up trouble in the community.

On their way to TR, Chuchi asked his friends, “Just who in the world do people think that I am?”

His companions answered, “That councilwoman said you are a trouble-maker for defending people with no place to sleep.”

The folks under the bridge said, “a healer because you comfort people and make them feel better.”

“I heard one guy call you a saint as you always seem full of the Holy Spirit.”

Chuchi asked them, “What about you? Who do you say I am?”

His buddy Stoney replied, “You are our savior!”

Chuchi told them, “Don't say that to anybody else!”



“Self-Portrait”

Jon Osborne, acrylic

March 14, 2026

Mark 9:2-10

Owen Robertson

It was one of those moments you never forget.

Of course, with Jesus there were a lot of those.

But this one takes the cake.

He asked James and John and I to come with him up the tallest mountain in the area. I figured he needed to clear his head or get a good lay of the land.

We hiked all day until we got to the top. It was beautiful, serene. Just the four of us. That's when it happened.

How do I describe this? Jesus started glowing.

It wasn't like a spotlight shining on him. It was more like light was coming out of him. No, that's not it. He was the light. He didn't look human. Even his clothes were beaming like nothing I'd ever seen.

Then, out of nowhere, two men were standing with Jesus, and they were talking very excitedly.

One of them was Moses – Israel's greatest leader – the Lawgiver.

The other was Elijah – Israel's greatest prophet.

I'm not proud of all the things I do sometimes. I can be very impulsive. Say things before I think. I blurted out, interrupting Moses and Elijah and Jesus, "Jesus, teacher! Thank you so much for including us in this ... this ... whatever this is. We're

very honored. We would like to honor the three of you by building a shelter for each of you right up here on the mountain. Would you like that? Can we do that for you?"

That's when the cloud rolled in. Or came down. I'm not sure. But it covered us. I could still see Jesus glowing from somewhere inside the cloud. The cloud itself was glowing. And it spoke. Or something in the cloud spoke. It said, "This is my Son. I love him more than you can know. Listen to him."

Then the cloud was gone. It didn't roll away. It didn't ascend. It was just gone. In the blink of an eye.

And there was Jesus. He wasn't glowing anymore.

Moses was gone.

Elijah was gone.

I was a little disappointed. I had questions for the Lawgiver. I had questions for our greatest prophet. But the voice had said that the one we should listen to ... was standing right before us.

We started down the mountain.

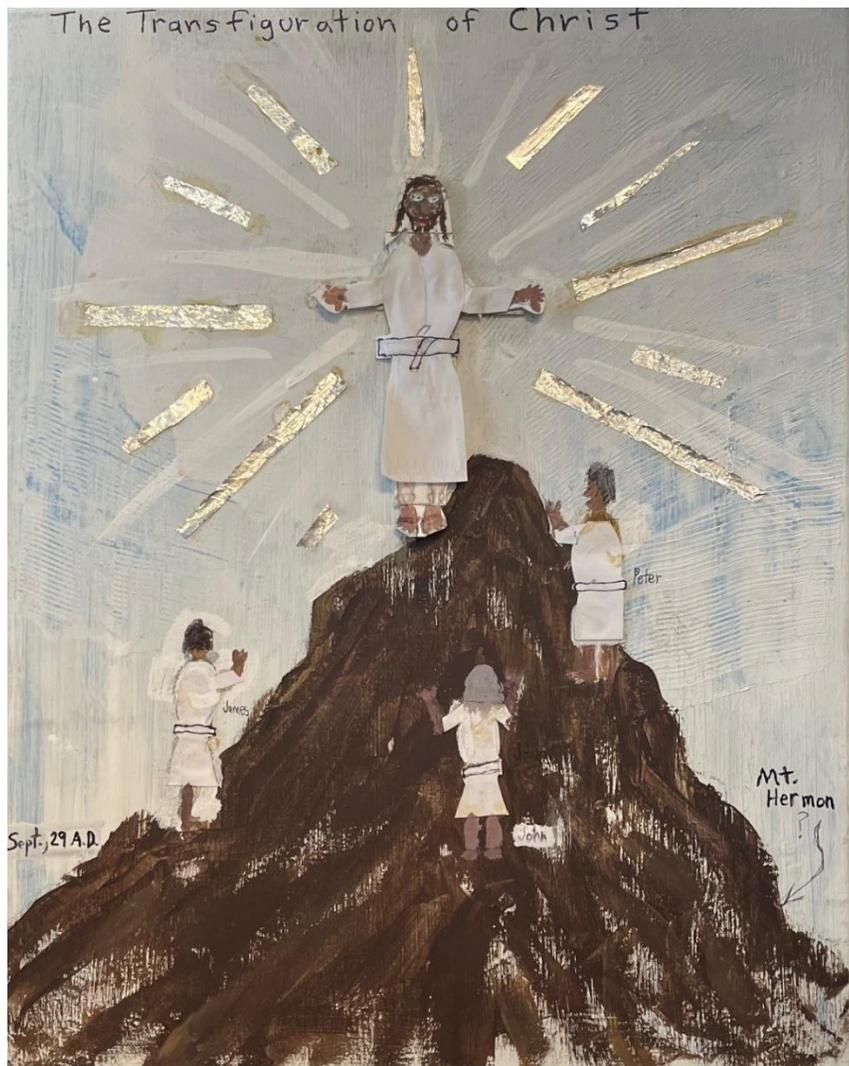
Jesus told us not to mention Moses or Elijah or the cloud or the voice or the glowing to anyone. Not until he was dead and buried and come back to life.

It was the biggest secret I ever kept.

I haven't told anyone until just now.

James and John and I had a big discussion on what "dead, buried, and come back to life" meant.

We had no idea what was coming.



David Mercier

mixed media

March 16, 2026

Mark 9:33-37

Melinda Dukes

Epigraph: They argued about greatness; he answered by taking a child into his arms.

The trip home from Columbia took forever. Maybe it was the traffic, the weight of the last few days, or simply how tired he was. Whatever the reason, he needed to concentrate as he navigated to the Stone Ave exit. He kept his eyes on the road but couldn't miss the whispering and the occasional loud "No way!" coming from the back of the van. Asking would have to wait until they got back home. He was just too tired.

He settled in the living room after lunch, turned off the TV, and asked, "So, I heard y'all talking about something as we were pulling into Triune's parking lot. What was so secret that you were trying to keep me from hearing you?"

None of the disciples answered him. Some of them dropped their eyes to the floor while others turned their backs, wiping the already clean countertops. What in the world had they been thinking? Why had they thought it was so important to argue about who was the greatest while in the van? Really, couldn't they have waited until they dropped him off and had gone to the store for groceries?

He called all Twelve to the living room, and they went practically dragging their feet as they suspected that they had disappointed him. The women and children stayed in the kitchen, putting away the dishes.

"You each want to be the greatest? Think about that. You couldn't help the child who needed you most. If you want to be the greatest, step back—and serve. Serve all!"

The disciples were confused but didn't want to admit it; however, Jesus could see that they didn't understand. Miriam, holding her grandchild, had joined the discussion. He took the sleepy child into his arms and said, "When you hold a child like this, you are holding me. And when you hold me, you are holding the God who sent me."

They fell silent, watching him hold what they had been arguing about.



Photograph by Les Gardner

March 17, 2026

Mark 10:1-12

Owen Robertson

Wherever Jesus went, crowds followed. Hundreds of people. And he would teach them about GOD's wonderful kingdom. And he'd offer them citizenship.

Some people, however, were quite satisfied with the prisons they called kingdoms which they had built for themselves.

This holier-than-thou bunch infiltrated the crowds time and again trying to test Jesus, to trip him up, the badger and beguile him. It never worked.

This time they tried to impress the crowd with their deep knowledge of GOD's word.

“Teacher, what does GOD think about divorce? Does the law allow for a man to divorce his wife?”

Jesus rolled his eyes. “Here we go again. You guys are ‘masters of the law.’ Everyone knows that. What law did Moses write about divorce?”

The holier-than-thous said, “Moses allowed it. He said all you have to do is write ‘I Divorce You’ on a note and hand it to her and send her packing.”

Jesus looked at their expectant faces. “You know there's a reason behind every law, right? They're not arbitrary. Moses wrote you this law because your hearts were hard as stone. But GOD didn't make you to be hard-hearted. Look back further than Moses. Look to what GOD said in the very beginning when GOD first created man and woman. GOD made them for each

other. Two made to be one. Who are you to tear apart what GOD created?! Who do you think you are?! Are the words you've written on a piece of paper more powerful than the words GOD spoke at the very beginning of all things?!”

Everyone looked from Jesus to the holier-than-thou religious experts on all things God related and then back to Jesus.

Everyone's mouths were hanging open.

Later, when Jesus was once again alone with his students, they began to ask Jesus questions of their own. The difference was that they weren't interested in tricks.

Jesus told them, “When a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, it's adultery. Same goes for a divorced woman. Then again, who do you know that's married to a sinless person? No one. Divorce doesn't mean they're horrible people. And it doesn't mean that GOD blows up in frustration, wiping His hands of them. The religious leaders are very good at twisting the word of GOD to serve their own purposes, looking for a loophole. They always have been. GOD will never hand you a piece of paper that says, ‘I Divorce You.’ GOD would never tear your heart out like that. So why would you tear out the heart of someone who is just as much a child of GOD as you are? You are citizens of GOD's kingdom. It's time to start acting like it. Quite treating each other so flippantly. Love is hard. Love takes work. Love is something you make – not something you fall into. Listen to me. Love is worth dying for.”

“But, teacher, what about this situation ... and what about ...?!”

Jesus said, “There are always ‘what-abouts, aren't there?”

Their hearts were getting softer, but they weren't there yet.



Owen Robertson

Mixed Media

March 18, 2026

Mark 10:13-16

Family Sunday School Class

Good News Gazette

"Spreading the News to All."

March 17, 2026

Edition I

Fish Belt Business to be Sold

After completing his sermon series at the Peace Center on Sunday, world renowned evangelist Pastor Jose met George Thurston IV outside of Whole Foods on Woodruff Road. Thurston, a young millionaire whose family made their fortune through cryptocurrency investments and their local embroidered fish belt empire, is a deacon at Fifth Presbyterian Church known for his outstanding character and kindness to all.

A bystander, Susan Wells, heard Thurston engaging Pastor Jose, asking how he can get into heaven. Susan said, "I heard George ask him straight up if he has done enough good things to get into heaven."

She further reported, "Pastor Jose looked at him kindly and told him he needed to sell all he owned, give his money to Triune Mercy Center, and follow him!"

Susan added that George's countenance fell as he walked away with tears in his eyes.

A statement released by Palmetto Belt Company announced the company's three plants and \$4 billion in property and assets are up for auction at Sotheby's Auction House in Charleston on March 30th at 9:00am. Thurston could not be reached for comment.



Charles Anderson

acrylic

March 19, 2026

Mark 10:17-27

Family Sunday School Class

Good News Gazette

“Spreading the News to All.”

March 18, 2026

Edition II

Pastor Jose` Thinks Kids Have Important Things to Add

A group of middle school students were spending time in Greenville’s Historic Downtown yesterday when their plans for shopping and Frappuccino’s took a dramatic turn. As they approached Lululemon, one 12 year-old girl, Eva Smythe, looked across the street into Falls Park and saw world-renowned evangelist Pastor Jose enjoying his cup of coffee from Spill the Beans.

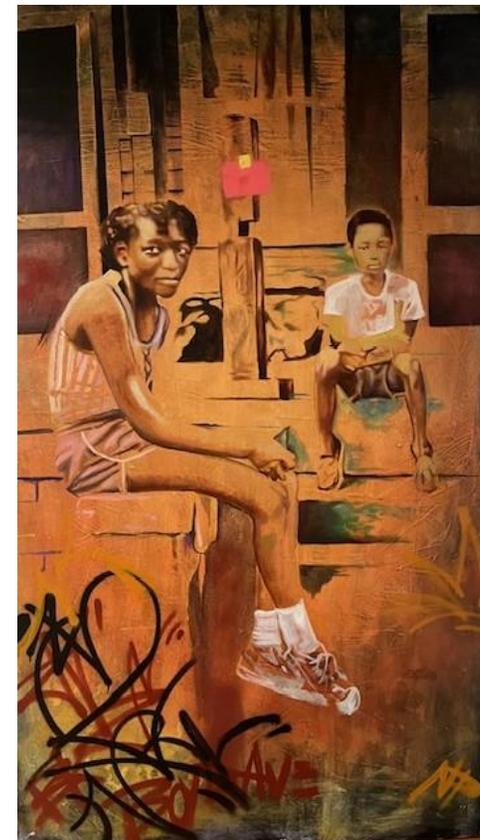
Pastor Jose had just finished his lecture series at the Peace Center concerning the collective responsibility to conserve the Earth. Eva Smythe, having just finished her science project about ocean pollution, was eager to meet Pastor Jose. According to eyewitnesses, she encouraged six or seven of her friends to go over and see if they could ask his opinion on Eva’s research project.

As Eva and her friends approached Pastor Jose, eyewitnesses report that a group of old men came out of the nearby Starbucks, saw the unsupervised girls and began yelling at

them, “Get out of here! Go and find your parents. This is grownup stuff!”

Pastor Jose heard the uproar and quickly approached the girls directly to intervene. Eyewitnesses report he told the men to leave the girls alone. He was then heard saying, “Why don’t we get an ice cream at Spill the Beans and talk about your science project? I think climate change is important for us to consider as stewards of the Earth.”

There was nothing heard from the old men after Pastor Jose` left the area. Many others were heard muttering, “What does this mean?”



Ninja Picasso

acrylic

March 20, 2026

Mark 10:35-45

Carol Highsmith and Anna Romano

Friends of Jesus were walking down Stone Avenue on their way to Moe's Original Barbeque. Two of his closest companions, James and John, pulled on Jesus' sleeve and took him aside. With an adamant attitude, they confronted their beloved teacher. "Jesus, we want you to do whatever we ask you to do!" With this inquiry from his beloved friends, Jesus smiled and shook his head. He replied, "What do you want me to do for you, now?"

James and John were contemplating the possibility of setting up a new barbeque restaurant that would compete and overtake Moe's, overtake the Upstate, overtake the world. They dreamed of a pulled-pork kingdom where they could feel the people's bellies and their souls.

With this in mind, they asked Jesus the following, "We think you would be an excellent executive chef in our new business. And which one of us should be your right-hand man and who should be your host?" With that Jesus sternly looked at them and with a heavy heart replied, "Boys, you have no idea what you are asking!" Jesus continued and asked, "How long have we been together? Haven't you learned anything that I have been teaching?"

With this rebuke, the two brothers answered, "Of course!" And Jesus answered back, "You are asking the wrong question. These prestigious positions are not mine to give."

The rest of the group were listening and wondering why James and John would be making such off the wall comments. What on earth were those boys thinking?!! Anger and disgust began to fester. Seeing these emotions were surfacing, Jesus tried to settle down and calm their passions with reassuring words of wisdom. And the teacher said, "You know that city council has strict rules and regulations for new restaurant entrepreneurs. And because of these restrictions, it will difficult to win them over. However, with y'all, things are different! For instance, city council members hold to high esteem the glamorous prestige of the restaurant's front of the house and the top-down leadership style; whereas y'all will be in the back of the house scrubbing dishes and mopping floors."

With speechless astonishment, the friends just stared. The great teacher concluded by saying, "For even I did not come to stand ceremoniously in the front of the house but rather, I came to sacrificially serve all who are hungry and need clean dishes."



Photograph by Les Gardner

March 21, 2026

Mark 10:46-52

Tim Turner

Over the weekend, Jesus and his buddies held a couple of tent revivals in Greenville. As they were leaving the city, they stopped at QT for gas and snacks. There was a blind guy sitting on the sidewalk by the door. He was wearing the remnants of a name tag from Sunday Service, which said, “Bart.”

When he heard the guys address Jesus, Bart’s ears perked up and he shouted out, “Hey Jesus, come here! Please! Have mercy. I knew you were in town this weekend. I just need a touch from you, Please!”

When folks around heard and saw Bart, they told him to shut up and let Jesus and his buddies be.

But Bart just kept calling for Jesus to help him out. He got louder and louder until Jesus told the guys to have him stand up and take a few steps forward, right to where Jesus was waiting. After doing just that, Jesus asked what it was that Bart actually wanted him to do for him. He answered, “I want to be able to see.” Those few words of faith were all it took and Jesus said, “Cool. You can see. Now leave the QT and find a more suitable place to stay.”



Shuntae Goodjoine

graphite

March 23, 2026

Mark 11:15-18

Suzie Smith

Owen, I worked on this for hours last night when you reminded me it was due. Since getting home, I have been reading and rereading. 10 hours on 4 verses – pouring over everything that could be found, including going back to the oldest translations. It all left me more at a loss. I kept writing and rewriting and nothing seemed right.

This passage of Scripture was such a turning point in the life of Jesus. The point between where none of the powers-that-be not liking what they heard him saying and their determination to get rid of him.

How can I possibly write words to describe or paraphrase or restate, in better language, what happened that day in the cleansing of the temple than any of the numerous paraphrases and translations have already done? When Clarence Jordan wrote the Cotton Patch Gospels, the church was almost exclusively using the 1619 King James Version. Today I don't know whether to stage the Christ story in Greenville or Washington or Minneapolis.

I'm so distracted and worried about the events happening all around us. I don't know anything except my February 3rd deadline to create a plan for doing whatever we can to keep our Haitian friends (whose temporary protected status has been taken away) with at least food and a place to stay or go to hide. The government has declared it is now safe for them to go back to Haiti – of all places to Haiti! Those who self-deported are warning the others not to come back because there is no work, no food, and nothing but gang violence all over Haiti.

600 Haitians were deported from Minneapolis last week. I don't know what we do when they start coming for the ones here in Greenville. How do we advise them? How do we help feed them? What would it accomplish if we had lawyers accompany them to their immigration hearings – only to be detained when they show up. How do we help them plan for what happens to their children, who, for the moment, are US citizens because they were born here? Do they take them with them to the hearing to reduce the trauma of separation? Are there safe people and places to leave them in Greenville, knowing they may never see their children again?

And coming up fast is the deadline for Somalians and Afghanis – the first week in March. From that point forward the government can start deporting any “legal refugee” for any reason if the refugee has not gone through the court process again (this time with a lawyer appearing with them) to re-adjudicate their right to be here. It costs \$750 a person just to fill out the 2-foot-high volume of paperwork – not to mention going to Atlanta or Charlotte or Charleston for the hearing (\$350,000 for just the folks we know in the Greenville).

If you see my face with one million more wrinkles this week, it's because of all these new laws that are trying to make us a country that talks the same, thinks the same, comes from the same place, and believes all the same stuff. We're edging out the outsiders.

That's why Jesus comes into our temples to clean house. He doesn't have to go far – just inside the doorway. Because we don't let “the others” come in very far. And we certainly don't make it hospitable. Or affordable. Their foreign currency isn't any good here. It has to be exchanged. At an exorbitant rate. Their foreign animals can't be sacrificed here. Only American stock is good enough for GOD. Their foreign tongues aren't acceptable. They have to pay someone to offer GOD-ordained English prayers if they expect GOD to listen. So the court of

“the outsider” is where we set up shop for the business of merchandizing and branding. And business is booming.

Jesus knows what he’s walking into. He’s seen it before. It’s progressively getting worse year after year. Still, he walks in. And he takes action. The holier-than-thous are cleaning house by forcing “the outsiders” out. Jesus is cleaning house to make room for everyone.

I wonder if he could eat the night before, knowing what was about to happen? Did he sleep at all? Or did he toss and turn from the nightmares of what was to come? Did he wake up screaming “HELP!” like I did last night?

Owen, maybe you could just draw a cartoon for this passage as a stark commentary on this turning point in Jesus’ life. The religious elite has decided he has to go. And there won’t be any coming back.

He knows this as he walks into the box we created for GOD. He knows it as he turns the tables, scatters the dollars to the wind, frees the animals, and creates a holy hush here at the beginning of Passover.

Is he thinking, “There is so much more that needs to be done?”

That’s what’s on my mind as I write to you. There is so much more I need to do before I try to go to sleep tonight, like eating something – not that I have any appetite at all. Except for justice. I’m hungry for that. And a little peace. But there are agendas to be developed for our new Task Force meeting on humanitarian concerns.

Maybe one day we will learn to treat each other as human.

Maybe we can learn how to do that from Jesus.

That is my prayer.



Owen Robertson
Mixed Media

March 24, 2026

Mark 11:27-33

Marydell Gordon

One Tuesday, while in Greenville, Jesus and His closest friends were at the one and only Hallelujah Praise Church when He was approached by a group of men. Now, this was not any ordinary group of men but a group of Greenville's religious elites. They were pastors, priests, preachers, religious leaders, and church teachers. This important group of religious men were not pleased with all the things Jesus had been doing. Jesus' actions and behaviors made them straight-up angry. Jesus had been telling everyone about God, His Father, and the wonderful news about the Kingdom of God. Jesus was healing people of their illnesses, teaching about God, and, by His actions, showing people a different way to live their lives on earth. All those things bothered the religious group of men because it did not put them in the spotlight and they were not in control.

Everything Jesus did was very different from the way the religious leaders ran things in Greenville. Jesus had done something the previous day that made them angry enough to start plotting to get rid of Him for good! You see, Jesus and His group of friends had stopped by the Hallelujah Praise Church. He saw that this special place of God was being treated as if it was a flea market! People were buying and selling items, money exchanging going on, and simply using the Hallelujah Praise Church as a money-making spot not as a place of worship. Talk about furious; Jesus was livid! He put an end to it all that mess taking place in the church right then and there! Jesus forcefully demanded that the people leave, flipping over

the merchandise tables where all the selling was taking place, and He refused to let anyone walk through the church, the holy place, with anything in their hands. The religious leaders were very familiar with the Scriptures, and they were reminded of God's word when Jesus quoted the Prophet Jeremiah. He said, "God's house is a house of prayer for all people from everywhere on earth. But you "religious people" have made it a hangout for thieves." Oh my, the group of religious elites were exasperated. How dare Jesus call them out like that!?

So, the pastors, priests, preachers, leaders, and teachers decided to come up with a plan to destroy Jesus, because they feared He was taking control over the people who were very interested in what He was doing. As they all came together to discuss the plan to ruin Jesus, they decided to question His authority. If they brought about doubt and questions where Jesus got His authority to do what He does and say what He says, then the people would stop listening to Him. They rolled-up on Jesus with a question, "By what authority are You doing the things you're running around doing? And, who gave You the power to do them?" Jesus, saw right through the game the religious men were playing. He said, "Cool, I'll answer your question about my authority once you answer my one question. Let's talk about John the Baptist's baptism – was it from God or by men?"

Well, Greenville's finest religious group had a problem with how to answer the question. They knew if they said John's baptism was from God that Jesus would point out that they didn't believe John. If they answered, the baptism was from men, then the people would turn against them, because the people held John the Baptist in high regard as a prophet. Therefore, the pastors, priests, preachers, religious leaders,

and church teachers in Greenville decided to answer safely by saying, “We don’t know.”

Then Jesus said, “Alright then, I will not tell you where my authority comes from to do the things that I do.” PERIOD.



Angry Stab at Cubism
Michael Graham

graphite

March 25, 2026

Mark 12:1-12

Craig Vial

Clearly frustrated, he told them this story about a stranger, from a distant place, wanted to build a stone house on a wooded hilltop outside of Hickory Tavern.

“You can’t build a house, you’re not a builder.”

The people watched, in curiosity and some trepidation as, day after day, they saw the stranger trudge up the hill, carrying stones. Some laughed.... others felt threatened. “Wasn’t this the new school teacher?”

“Our children are having way too much fun, they can’t be learning!”

The stranger received angry calls. Others said, “He’s creating turmoil in our church! He doesn’t wear a tie..... He married a divorced woman!”

“Something needs to be done! He can’t be a church officer! He can’t teach our children!”

The established community leaders admonished him. They rejected his lack of normalcy and his refusal to adhere to established rules and practices. He was forbidden to teach in the church. Religious leaders condemned his unorthodox behavior. He was forced out of the church. They feared his new ideas. His life was contrary to theirs. Their discomfort grew.

“Get him out of our school!”

They drug tested him. They called local officials. They harassed him. They threatened him, all to no avail. They were afraid to continue their crusade.

Their children were different, enthralled. They loved school! Life was changing. Was this the Lord’s doing?

“Have you not read the scriptures? ‘Lest the Lord builds the house, he who labors, labors in vain.’”

So, they left him alone.... and the love seed grew.



Tansie Phillips

Oil on Canvass

March 26, 2026

Mark 12:18-27

Trevor Scott Barton

In his gospel, Mark tells a story about some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection.

Imagine if there wasn't.

Hate would be stronger than love. Injury would be stronger than pardon. Fear would be stronger than faith. Despair would be stronger than hope. Shadows would be stronger than light. Sadness would be stronger than joy. All because death would be stronger than life.

In this story by Mark, Jesus reminds us all, "God is God, not of the dead, but of the living."

God is the God of life.

And this life comes to us in small, simple, surprising ways.

Here is a story I wrote, *una povera piccola storia francescana*, a poor little Franciscan story, in which life comes to Greenville in that small, simple, surprising way.

May life come to you that way, too.

I discovered I had the gift of healing by accident.

"I was walking up the sidewalk between Stone Avenue and the Mercy Center and I saw Alan, all hunched over like a human question mark on the brick wall.

I sat down beside him.

A teardrop rolled down his cheek and into his grizzled beard.

Enough tears'd gathered in his beard to drop, pit pat, pit pat, onto the concrete as if they were rain drops from a Bethlehem cloud falling softly onto the manger of the poor baby Jesus himself.

"Alan, it's me, Juniper," I said. "Can I help you in any way?"

But he was as silent as the deepest part of a night.

I reached out my hand and placed it gently on his shoulder and started to whisper a prayer and a blessing into the morning breeze.

He hasn't been able to use his arm and hand on his right side for a long time. He hurt it on the street, and the street is an unforgiving adversary. It hurts you and leaves you wounded so you'll always remember who's stronger. The street's always stronger.

At least I thought it was.

When I touched his shoulder, my own arm dropped to my side, battered and broken like his, with a pain so sharp I could feel it in my whole body, my whole heart.

I balled up and became a human question mark myself.

Alan looked up at me.

He reached out to me with his own busted arm and hand, now healed and whole, and placed his hand on my shoulder.

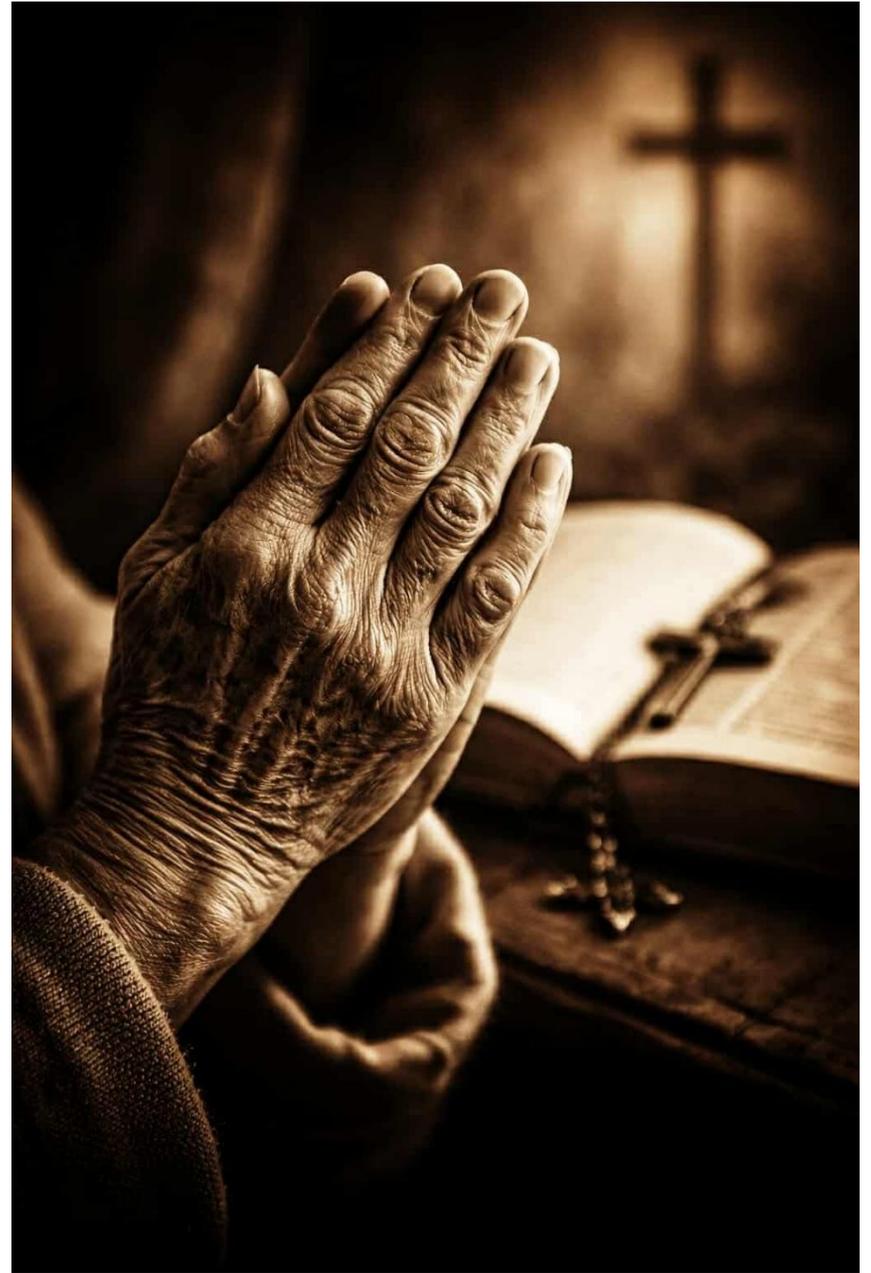
"Dear God," he whispered.

And I was healed and whole again.

We looked at each other without words.

Mystery can only be faced with a reverent silence, right?

Cars began to hum on the street and people around us began to move into their own day, unaware that a miracle had happened, that I, small, forgotten me, had received the gift of healing and had been healed myself by a small, forgotten, drunken homeless man.



Dan Weathers

photograph

March 27, 2026

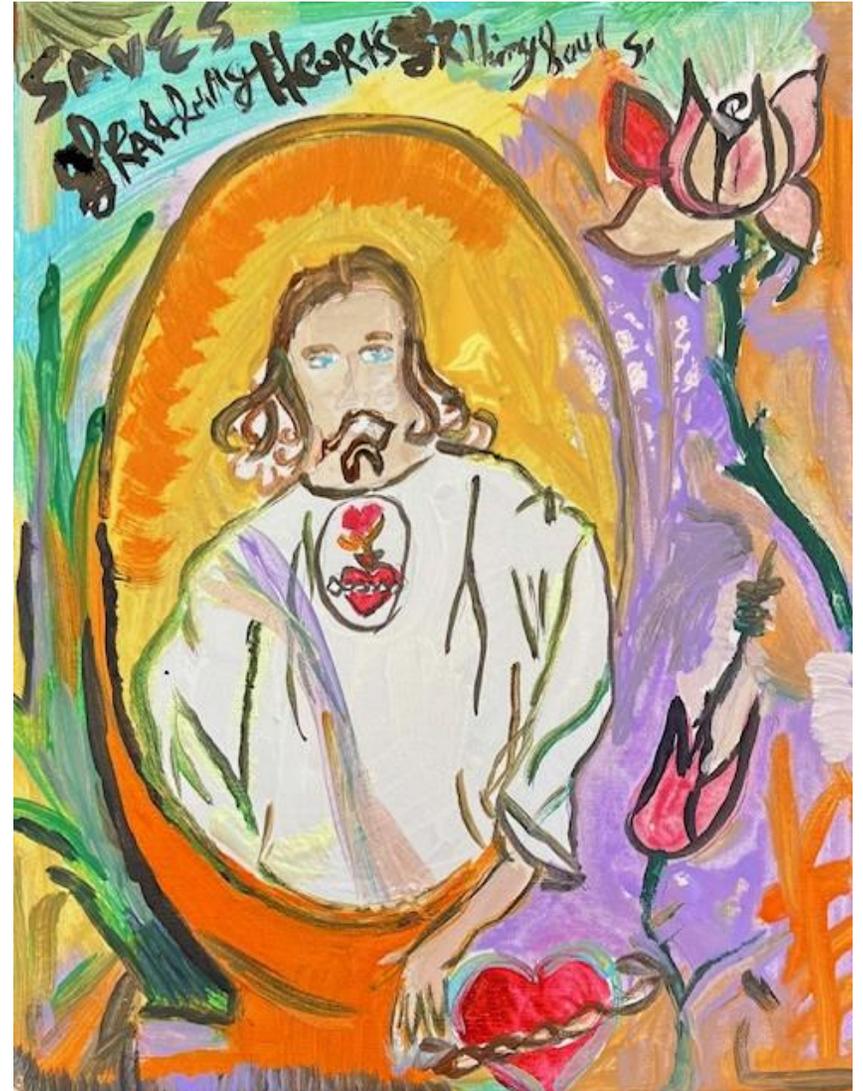
Mark 12:28-34

Phinnie A. Mohammad

A long time ago, a man studied every single rule in the Bible. There were so many rules, it was hard to understand what to do. So he asked Jesus, "What should I do first?"

Jesus did not give him a long list. He told him, "The most important thing is to love God with all your heart, all your feelings, and even all your muscles." Then he told the man, "There is a second part to this. Love your neighbor just as you love yourself."

The man understood that showing love is more important than just following old rules. Jesus then said to him, "You are very close to God's kingdom."



Christy Peeks

acrylic

March 28, 2026

Mark 41-44

Dalphine Sharese McFadden-Woodward

Today I have an errand to run. I may have to walk a little bit, but as I walk, I have a conversation with myself.

Most days, I stay home because I don't have much. When I do leave home and go to the market, I have to count change. People in the line stare at me. Some of them whisper, and some just say, "Could you move out of the way and let people who have money pay for their items?" I feel so ashamed.

But today's errand is different. I have no food to eat. I'm not very hungry...actually, I'm excited. I haven't been excited in a long time.

I'm excited because not anyone or anything can get in my way of my liberation.

I have a divine appointment.

I must get there by any means that I have. I don't care how it looks; I don't care what people say. I don't care if people whisper.

I have a divine appointment.

I don't care how long I have to walk. I don't care how scared I am that tomorrow I may not be able to eat.

I don't care if I've cried all the tears I have in my heart because I'm so sad and lonely.

I have a divine appointment.

I have a brand-new outlook on life because there is someone new. There is someone new that brings me hope. They've called him, Emmanuel

I have a divine appointment.

I'm here. I put my two copper coins in. I don't care what anyone else has; this is for the one. The one who gives me hope, the one who will shelter me, the one who will give me food I can not eat, the one who will give me health in my soul, and the one who will never leave me lonely.

He has a divine appointment with me, even if I never see him or speak with him.

Still, I share, and I share with all my heart.

HE and I will be together within the Glory of God.

I have, a divine appointment.



Dalphine Sharese McFadden-Woodward
Divine Appointment

Pastel on Brown Bag

March 30, 2026

Mark 14:12-16

Ann Hinson

21st Century Last Supper

Jesus and his disciples drove their bus into Greenville as part of their journey to spread the word of the love of God and His acceptance of all people. They were accompanied by certain followers that joined them after seeing and hearing Jesus speak of love and everlasting joy that waited for them. Jesus knew why they were in Greenville and the events that were about to happen. Along the way, they observed people lying in the grassy areas and on the sidewalk. Jesus and the disciples saw an emptiness in their eyes when they approached them. Jesus held their gaze, saying without words, "I see you." It wasn't very often that people would make direct eye contact with them or speak to them.

These new friends joined Jesus and his disciples as they walked the streets of Greenville. Jesus spoke to them of salvation, their importance in life, and the joy of knowing they are loved by God. As they walked, other people joined them: people walking with crutches, people with sores that would not heal, and those who were just curious about who Jesus was.

A disciple and one of the women from the bus reminded Jesus of the Passover meal they needed to prepare for that evening. Neither of them knew where they could prepare the meal. A couple, who had been listening from outside the group as they walked through the streets of Greenville, offered their house for the Passover meal and place for sharing hospitality. They wanted to hear more stories from Christ. A few of their new

friends asked to come along as well. The couple and a few new friends drove home, ahead of the others, to start the Passover preparation. Jesus and the disciples would drive their bus to the house after they spoke one last time with their new friends.

When they finally arrive, they were greeted by delicious aromas from the food that had been prepared by new friends. Jesús sat down so that he was in the middle of the table and could see everyone gathered around him. Jesus reached for the bread and gave thanks. He then broke the bread and gave it to the disciples and everyone around the table. He said, "Take it; this is my body." Jesus reached for the wine and thanked God for it. He passed a cup of wine around the table and each person drank from it. Jesus told them, "This is my blood, a new covenant, which is poured out for many." Everyone knew and could feel that Jesus was sacrificing his life so that they would be saved from their sin. They joined in singing and prayers for this new day. Jesus wanted them to focus on the new covenant, love for one another, and remembrance of His sacrifice. Jesus' message for the Last Supper-sacrifice was all about unity and love. These central tenants would transcend time and cultural context.

The 21st Century Last Supper would emphasize the ongoing, active relationship between Jesus and his followers.



Shuntae Goodjoine

Mixed Media

March 31, 2026

Mark 14:32-42

Jill Taylor

“The Waterfall in the Woods” – Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane in the voice of Jill Taylor

One of my favorite places since locating to Greenville is a little waterfall that I found for my children and I. It is located about 30 minutes from our little haven of an apartment that we call home and is known as Wildcat Branch Falls. With its off the beaten path location, it is extremely ideal for me as a single mom of 4 kids. Add in the multiple different layers of c-ptsd, a lot of late and/or mis-diagnosis’ over the last decade, and the unfortunate fact of no present father to my children, and that little waterfall had become a cocoon to my fried nervous system since stepping into “sole, healthy parent role” to my children in 2023.

Each time we would visit, the to-do’s would be long for me to manage as the sole caregiver. But each time, without fail, that trip would be better than I remembered the last to be. I often look at their 4 little faces and wonder if this is how Jesus felt with his little baby disciples following Him as he journeyed His Divine Path in the 3 years we are so blessed to have recorded in the Bible. Having to deal with frustrations that can sometimes arise with so much excitement that their little minds and bodies can’t contain it anymore. The constant guiding and directing, and redirecting, and redirecting and.... Well, you get the idea. Don’t forget, always and forever, as well- SO. MANY. QUESTIONS. I love my children dearly, but the reality is, raising

4 beautiful humans ranging from ages 8-11 comes with more questions (most of them repeated) than I can shake a stick at. They are dependent on me. I am their shepherd, and they are my little lambs. The beautiful gift of motherhood became my calling in life at the young age of 19. No matter how hard the days, I do my best to answer the questions and repeat myself calmly (and still fail, I might add), calm their tantrums (and my own, let’s be real), soothe their aches and pains, and love them just as my loving Jesus has consistently loved me, and in turn, I would imagine, his disciples, which happened to be some of his closest friends.

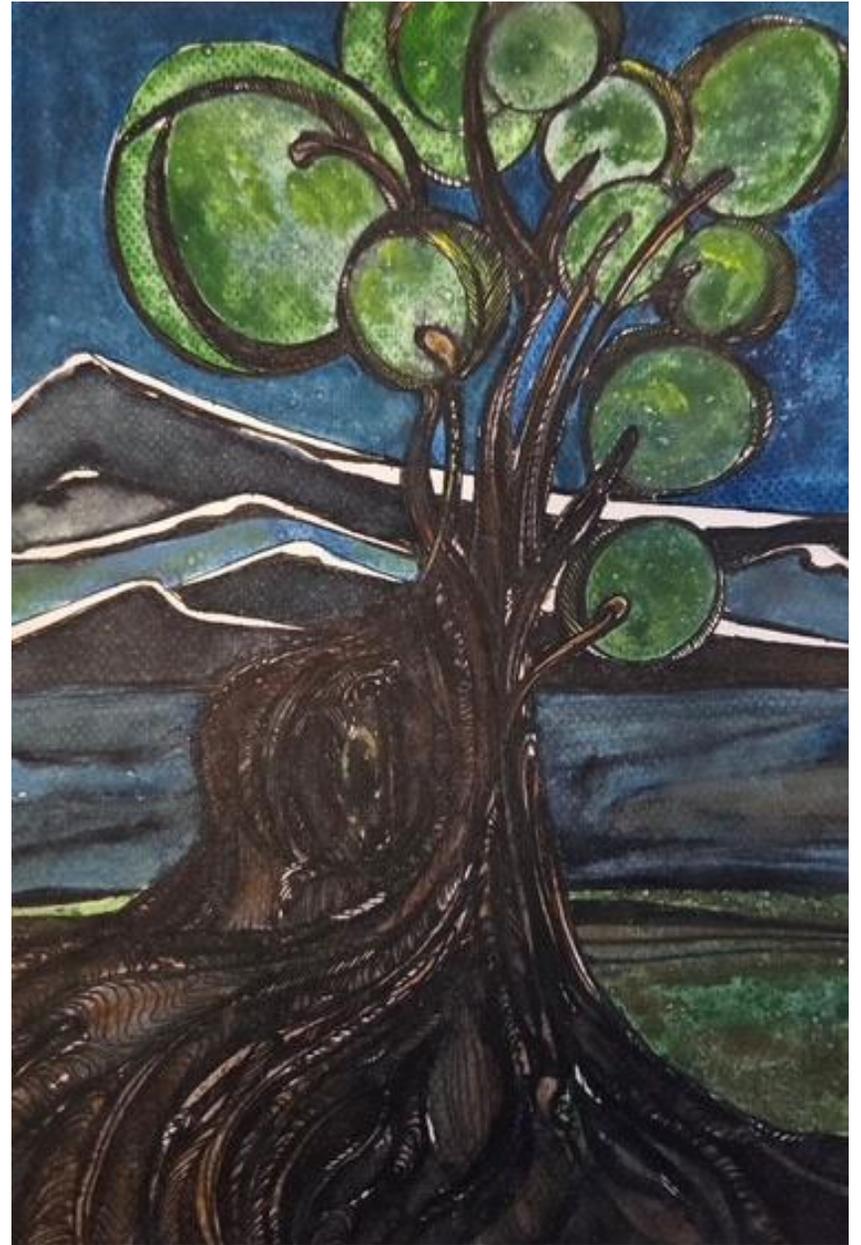
Over the course of events that crossed my path from 2024-2025, my nervous system, and in turn my body, started taking blows left and right. By June of 2025, at the age of 30, my body was proving to me just how weak it truly had become. 30 years of consistent trauma and survival had finally caught up. I had to fight hard to get the few answers I have received since then, as the traditional western medicine has told me it was my mental health, my weight, something in the air, or they just simply gave a diagnosis and had no solutions. When the answers came, they were, to put it bluntly, devastating, life-altering and chronic. I was bound to walking with a cane 90% of the time, and could not go far, at that. My heart was making it so clear that she could take no more, and it was taking moments from my days faster than I could keep track. The days of taking my children to that waterfall came crashing to a halt over the course of a single winter.

As I type this now, we sit in January of 2026, and my story looks much, much different. Still so very hard, but slowly my body gets stronger and begins to feel safe once again. The months that followed June of last year were agonizing. Over and over and over again, my body proved to be weak and it failed time

and time again, but my spirit reigned stronger. The love of a mother, at least in my experience, must be the kind of love Jesus had for those disciples that followed him like little ducklings learning to waddle and live. That Spirit of love was, and oftentimes still is, the only reason I press on. Countless nights I screamed and cried and prayed in pain, begging for the end, but also knowing that this hard, hard road was necessary not only for my healing, but the healing of so many others around me. I prayed for the thorn to be removed, but thankfully, God knew the strength I had just on the other side of each new unknown.

The cup has still not passed, and many, many unknowns still lie ahead, but I press on. Raising a hallelujah and living in the wholeness that comes with trusting the Unseen Hand. And loving my babies just like I believe Jesus does.

“Not my will, but Thy will be done.”



Penny Sue

Mixed Media

April 1, 2026

Mark 14:53-65

Brian Gearin

You could cut the tension with a knife. The mood in Greenville was so intense. The Fall for Greenville Festival was coming and there were all sorts of conflicting issues happening all at the same time.

First, the weather was predicted to be unseasonably cold and rainy and the event organizers feared that the anticipated tourist revenues for the three-day event would be a disaster. There were even some “knuckleheads” loudly complaining about “homeless people” and their “roaming in the streets, begging for spare change. disrupting the “mood” at the Festival.

And since the City Council had just been publicly chastised for not enforcing the recent “anti-camping ordinance” strongly enough to arrest people, the Council had requested the Governor to deploy a contingent of the South Carolina National Guard to be called up to “maintain order.” “Just in case!”

Also, yesterday, at the “No Kings” rally, Jesus Christ just appeared in the middle of the crowd at Unity Park and told us that he was destined to die for our sins and be raised to new life. However, there were some in the crowd who twisted what he said to mean that he would knock down the Unity Tower and put up a new one in three days.

A whole group of angry leaders then met at the Grand Bohemian Lodge and each started shouting out ways they thought could fix the whole crisis for good. A bartender at the

lodge (Sierra, a friend of mine from Church) overheard one person say that somebody should get rid of the people causing trouble, especially that crazy guy who wants to destroy the Unity Tower.

Sierra then said she immediately saw a Captain of the National Guard whispering commands to kill the crazy guy and help him get his death wish. Maybe that would impress the General and get the Captain a sweet promotion.

Sierra then told me that Jesus was brought into the bar, looking all battered and beat-up. When the leader of the mob asked Jesus if he really was the Son of God, Jesus replied yes and the whole room erupted in chaos. They blindfolded Jesus and then hit him repeatedly saying: “Some prophet you are! You can’t even say who hit you!”



Owen Robertson

Mixed Media

April 2, 2026

Mark 15:1-15

Gisele Gaithings

Imagine My Surprise

It was a long workday today. The traffic on I-85 didn't make it any easier. As customary, I pulled up to my driveway...hit the garage opener...jumped out and checked the mailbox and backed into the garage.

I grabbed the mail, my work briefcase, my coat and keys, then proceeded into the side door. "Hi Home!!!" I shouted out. Some might think it strange, but I greet my home everyday upon my return. I believe it makes us both happy!!!

After settling in and grabbing a bite to eat, I sorted through my mail. Imagine my surprise as I opened a letter from Greenville County summoning me for jury duty. "Uuuuggghh", I groaned. "This is the last thing I needed or wanted in my life." In defiant compliance, I filled out the jury duty forms wondering what type of case this may be....I would soon find out!!

I arrived at the courthouse 45 minutes early. Imagine my surprise arriving 45 minutes early to NO parking!!! "Uuuuggghh", I groaned...well at least I have a bit of time to park. I found a parking space with precisely 25 minutes to spare!!!! After a maddening sprint, I reached the courthouse entrance. "All keys, bags and electronic items in the bin please..." requested the security guard. Once I made it through security, I was led to a holding room for all those serving on the jury for today's case. I released a big sigh of relief as I learned my requested arrival time was 45 minutes prior to the actual

trial time. I took the additional time to gather myself, my thoughts, and my Spirit as I whispered "Lord...pilot me."

As we were led to the jury box, I gasped!!! Imagine my surprise as my eyes beheld a court room with standing room only!!! "What is going on!!!??" I thought to myself. "This case seems to be a tremendous, big deal!!!" I watched the Defendant enter...shackled yet calm, stately...yet humble. Imagine my surprise... when it was announced that he had waived his rights to representation. A kind of inaudible hush whispered through the court room. As I turned my head in wonder, the defendant turned and stared right at me – calm, content, and resolute. The Prosecutor and his client whisked in...cocky and cold...as if this case was already decided. The Prosecutor looked at the defendant and smirked.

"All rise," the Bailiff proclaimed, "the Honorable Judge Constance Pilot presiding." "You may be seated..." the Judge announced. The Judge then proceeded to the particulars of the case. "The Defendant has been accused of being an Insurrectionist by participating in the protests against the actions and presence of ICE officials in Greenville County. "How do you plea?"

"Not Guilty Your Honor," said the Defendant.

"I understand you have waived your rights to representation."

"Yes, your Honor. I have done nothing wrong. I have only proclaimed the truth...advocated for those with no voice...and challenged the misuse of power."

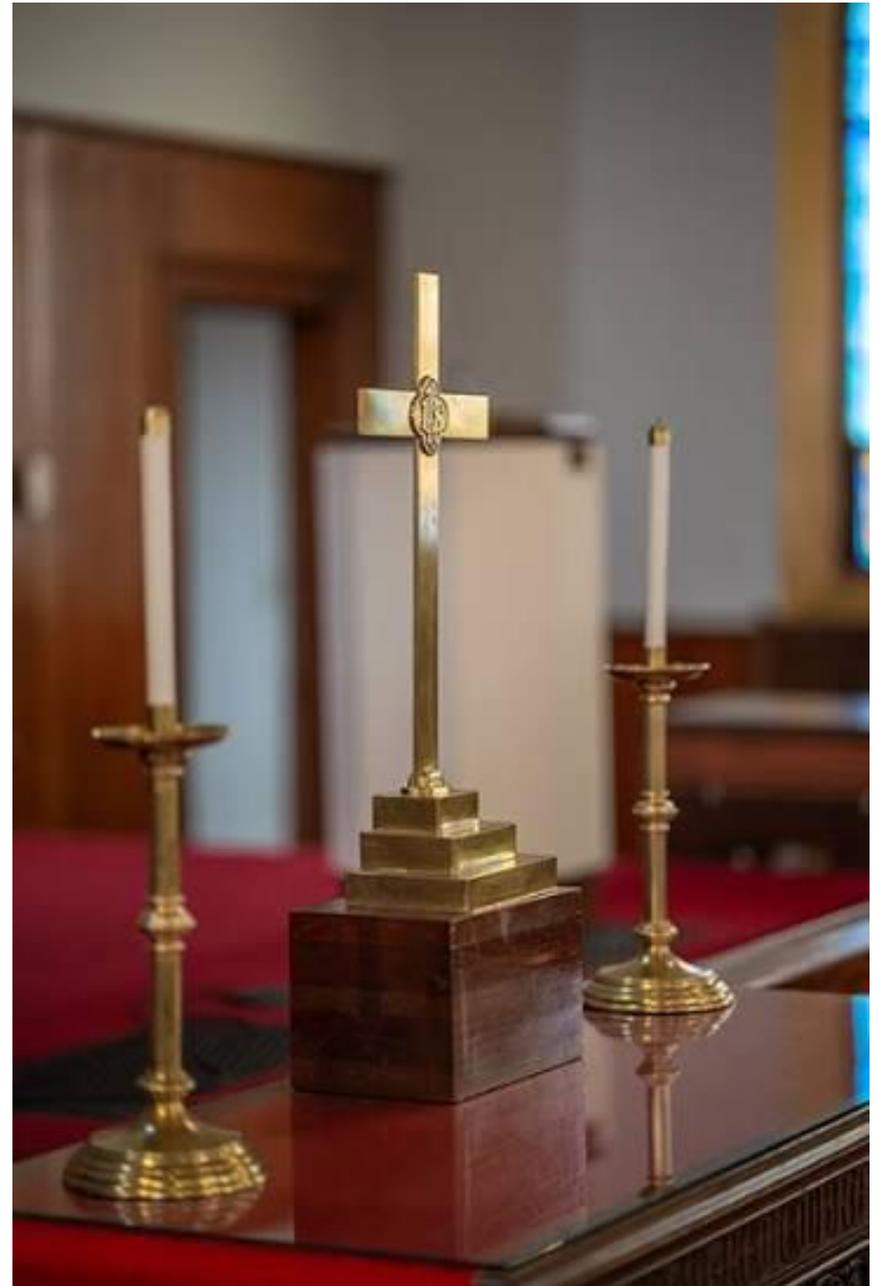
"Prosecution...are you ready to present your case?" the Judge asked.

“Yes, your Honor. We are prosecuting the defendant under the Insurrectionist Act.” There was an audible gasp... “He has rallied protestors against ICE agents...taken food to suspected immigrants so they don’t have to leave their homes and advised those that have proof of citizenship to stand for their rights...” The court erupted with cheering!!! “Order in the Court” the Judge demanded!!! Imagine my surprise when the Judge ordered all jurists to be dismissed!!!!

“What is going on!!!” I thought. I sat in the jurist holding room trying to grasp what just happened. Before I knew it, an hour had passed, I was sitting alone, and a court employee told me I had to leave.

I exited the Courthouse walking to my car in bewilderment. I looked up and saw the Defendant. He looked up and saw me. He must have seen the distress on my face. He shook his head at me ...and smiled. Somehow...this calmed and soothed my Spirit. There He stood in shackles and chains awaiting to be escorted to who knows where and He was soothing me.

Imagine my surprise as I saw ICE and FBI vehicles drive up to take him away. He looked at me and got in. Imagine my Surprise.



April 3, 2026

Mark 15:21-41

The Faith & Fun Women's Group

They crucified him.

It was a grim reminder to everyone the dangers of standing against the State.

The Crucifixion Parade started on the overpass intersecting I-85 and 385. Everyone passing through on their way to North to Charlotte or South to Atlanta could see it.

Cars lined the roads and bridges as the Parade traveled along 385 past Roper Mountain Rd, Haywood Rd, and Pleasantburg on into downtown Greenville.

News helicopters followed the spectacle.

The crowds turned left onto Main Street, the cross with Christ leading the way down to Falls Park. The parade stopped briefly outside the old court building at M. Judson. People were everywhere, standing on car tops, lining the steps, in trees, hanging out of windows. The parade picked back up.

The Liberty Bridge was shoulder to shoulder people. Police put up barricades to keep more people from pressing in, afraid of the bridge's weight capacity. People above the falls. People on the rocks. People in the water, having slipped. Falls Park was mobbed. Players created a quick mock improvisation of the morning's events on the stage. And musicians sang funeral dirges.

And the parade continued.

It all ended in Unity Park. Apropos, but unknown to most, because that's where everything began three years ago.

People at The Commons were laughing and eating and watching the Crucifixion Parade turn the cross in unending Maypole circles.

Everything was recorded by local news. It live-streamed on every service. Flooded social media. Filled the Internet. The whole world saw the State enforce unity.

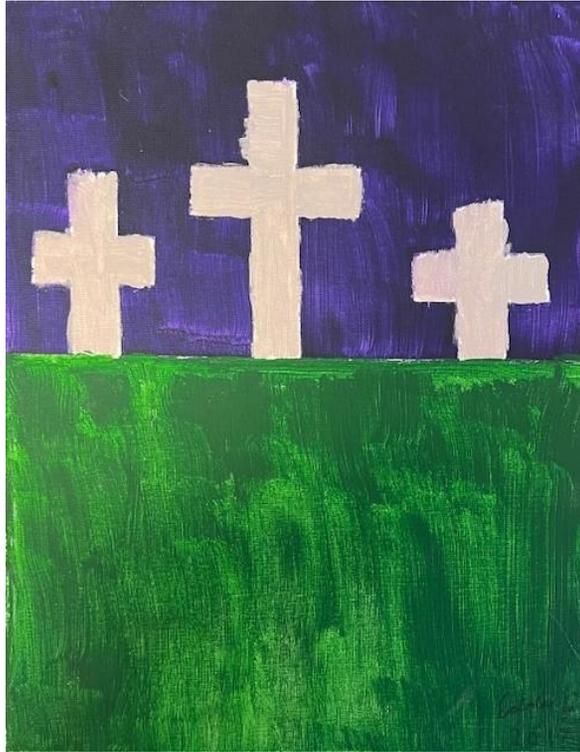
Jesus finally opened his mouth and said, "That's enough."

And he stopped breathing.



J.R.

acrylic



Coleman

acrylic

Michael Phillips: a poem

“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”
Oh awesome words from our Savior’s lips
 Upon the cross, salvation’s promise.
The Crowd looks on at the cross and sneer
 Words of mocking and not of fear.
And soldiers jeer and offer sour wine –
 “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”
Raised between two thieves,
 One who blasphemes and deceives,
The other who confesses and receives

One who looks upon Jesus with disdain,
The other who sees the Lamb being slain.

And so it continues down through the years,
Even today, some mocking, some in tears.

Some resisting, some saying, “It’s a sham!”
Others bowing their hearts before the LAMB,

 God’s only Son, given that we might LIVE.
He bears our sins upon that cruel cross,

 And in the throws of His agonizing pain,
His heart of love expresses the glorious refrain,

 “Assuredly, I say to you,
Today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

 Oh awesome words from our Savior’s lips.
He sheds His precious blood,

 Forgiveness in His eyes.
Heaven’s gate now opened wide

 From this truth we cannot hide.
The choice is there to make

 Salvation for all who will partake.
For all who will believe,

 For all who will receive,
The promise of eternal life we now realize

 “Assuredly, I say to you,
today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

April 4, 2026

Mark 15:42-47

Les Gardner



Les Gardner

photograph

Standing on the edge of the crowds was Joseph of Marietta. He was the son of immigrants who had escaped the holocaust in Austria prior to World War II. They had come to pursue the “American dream,” and built a highly successful business. Joseph was sent overseas to Hebrew University for his education. When he returned, he inherited the family business and became a highly successful developer of high-end housing in the foothills of northern Greenville County.

Joseph tried to remain incognito because he was a highly respected member of the Sanhedrin. He was considered by the Sanhedrin and his neighbors to be a good and righteous man. But Joseph also sought the kingdom of God that Jesus was pronouncing. He had expressed his opposition to the Sanhedrin decision to condemn Jesus and was regularly seeking low-key ways to serve Jesus and the twelve. Known only to Jesus, Joseph was the one who made arrangements for the dinner on that special night, though he had no idea what would transpire.

Joseph had secretly arranged for the crew to meet in the wood-paneled ornate wine room known as the Legacy Room in the City Club. Joseph had a membership in the private dining club...downtown...on the 17th floor overlooking the city with a view as far to the north as the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains... and across from the historic Springwood Cemetery where many of the community’s leaders were entombed. In fact, Joseph had already purchased a large tomb there for his own use.

So on that Friday afternoon Joseph went to Pilate to ask for Jesus’ body. As often happens with ruthless rulers, Pilate was clueless and didn’t know Jesus was dead. He sent a minion to investigate and report back. In the meantime, Joseph was

interrogated. Rumors were already swirling that Joseph had actually offered to pick up the City Club's Legacy Room tab for Jesus and the Twelve on Thursday night. Joseph's answer was a simple but clear, "Yes." He added, "I knew they would be hungry after their serious and meaningful work in our community. They deserved a good meal in a room away from the demanding crowds." Pilate continued, "Do you realize they are trouble-making rebels who are disrupting the work of the Empire? If you are found out to be closely connected with this rebel, there will be serious personal consequences."

Before Joseph could answer the minion returned and confirmed Jesus' death. Pilate turned to Joseph and said, "Again, I wash my hands of this reprobate. You can have his body. My only question is why would you want to place his body in your magnificent hewn-stone tomb? He doesn't belong in Springwood."

Joseph's answer was strong, quick and clear. "He's my king and savior. It's the least I can do for him considering what he has done for me."



Les Gardner

photograph

April 5, 2026

Easter Sunday

The sun hasn't risen.

But the Son has.

Come to the tomb and see for yourself, but don't expect to find Jesus there.

There's no body to embalm. No corpse to cry over. Nothing to stare at in morbid disbelief.

Nothing but an empty hole in the earth.

Don't worry about the stone covering the grave. It's gone. Nothing can keep him in. And now there's nothing to keep you from stealing a peek.

Don't be afraid.

Easier said than done.

You're going to have to tell everyone the Good News. It may take a skinny minute to get over the shock. But when you do, the words are going to flow out from between your grinning teeth. No containing them.

This is more glorious than you ever dared imagine.

Death didn't win. The grave is all bluster and noise. Life is greater than death. Love wins.

Nothing is impossible with GOD.



Christy Peeks

acrylic