



A NEW CREATION

BY HANNAH GARRITY

INSPIRED BY 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

A couple of years ago, we did a water ritual at a summer Sunday service. I was needed to hold one of the bowls and perform the ritual. The liturgist instructed us to dip our thumbs into the water, slide the molecules into a cross on each person's forehead, and then look into their eyes and say, "You are a new creation; the old life is gone, a new life has begun." This sounded doable. I memorized the words. I knew the actions. I was ready.

When the time came, people began to line up at my station. "You are a new creation." After around thirty people, a child appeared. I knelt to meet her as I have for years in the elementary classroom. "The old life is gone, a new life has begun." My voice faltered. An adult was next, "You are a new creation." A new face emerged. "A new life has begun." And another. "You are a new creation." Now the faces, the group, the line, the humans, and the souls before me were suddenly whole. Tears began to stream down my face. I was able to humanize everyone. Though I didn't know them personally, the space between us was bridged and their eye contact, this ritual, these words, made each of them a whole life before my eyes. The words began to flow through me as my tears continued.

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