

Roosters and Hens

Luke 13:31-35

In this second week of Lent we find Jesus pushing ahead to Jerusalem. Since he “set his face” toward Jerusalem in chapter 9 of Luke, Jesus has been assailed by many distractions but is still firm in his determination to reach the holy city. While there is no specific theology of atonement found in Luke, Jesus’ death and resurrection occupy a central part of the narrative. Why was Jesus so intent on going to the “city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it”? Luke 13:34 (NRSV) The answer lies in the remainder of that same verse: “How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” In spite of the unfaithfulness of the people, God still desires to draw them close and protect them. It’s sort of like that black sheep child that captures the heart of a mother who will not give up, in spite of rejection. In this case, it’s that vulnerable heart of God that Jesus shows to us, that maternal love that is sometimes difficult for the male half of the population to comprehend. Who, but God, or, a mother could understand such vulnerable strength? We often strive to find inclusive words to refer to God, so as not to exclude any human perspective, and in doing so we sometimes lose the ability to establish that deep, emotional relationship that God invites us to. While neither male nor female, we cannot completely cast God as a lofty, altruistic entity without losing some of the love that we can only understand in our limited human ways. Jesus did not come to lift us out of our human finiteness; Jesus came to complete our human life with God’s unconditional and infinite love. Sometimes God is a rooster and sometimes God is a hen, but God is always our unconditional lover and protector.