

February 2024

Dear Friends, I write this on the last day of January and we're told there's another storm coming. Not a few people in our parish and Cupar area have been upset and badly affected by the amount of unrelenting rain.

The Lectionary we're following on Sundays takes us to St Luke's account of Jesus calming the storm on the lake. This Sunday we'll be taking advantage of the technological wizardry we enjoy in Springfield Community Church to view the late Simon Weller's gorgeous depictions of that proverb. I say proverb because a good few theologians believe most of the gospel accounts are proverbial - pithy, to the point narratives containing a message, piece of advice or teaching.

The people in our parish and area who've had storm damage to their homes and precious possessions know too keenly the effects of a storm in our lives. A storm is unstoppable, uncontrollable, unrelenting and hits at the heart of the thing which is our safe and our stay - our home. My English teacher mother in law, Evelyn Barron used to say after a particularly challenging day at Linksfield Academy in Aberdeen, "Well I know when I come home I can shut the door and recover, be safe." Our homes are absolutely visceral to the security and comfort of our human condition - something which two million people in Gaza know all about.

How many times have human beings - whether people of faith or none cried to the heavens saying 'Where was God when this disaster struck in my life?' "No surprises there: We need to be able to vent and rant when we're terrified and devastated. Jesus' friends did a similar thing in Luke's proverb. "Jesus! For heavens sake where are you when we're terrified and threatened?"

We don't need a meteorological disaster to know what terror and want feel like. These come in other ways; the death of a dear one, devastating illness, unemployment, financial ruin, mental ill health, betrayal, disappointment and more. The effects of these are like a tsunami crashing onto a town leaving buildings in matchsticks and lives lost and shredded. I am not surprised when some people report losing their faith. Psychological trauma is devastating.

A Church family, I believe has the opportunity to offer resilience in the face of any of the above. Some people across Scotland are feeling devastated given the ripple effects of church closures and reviews following the 2021 General Assembly's Radical Plan ratification. Put that together with whatever may be going on in our personal lives (watching the global news can add to it) and yes, "Christ! Where are you? Are you sleeping at the wheel? Don't you care?"

The proverbial stories from the Bible, surely contain every blessing and malice under the sun, with reactions and teachings alongside. The Canon of scripture was never meant to be a pious document with nothing to say to real people. Quite the reverse. There is nothing happening anywhere in the world, or in the secret places of our hearts that isn't there in human stories told over millennia.

I hope this means that as a *Church family* we say we can't be so shocked, we can't be so dismayed or disgusted that we believe anyone or anything is beyond hope and health. There is such a lot of condemnation, and a culture of blame in society is rife which have their time and place. But a church family understands (not easily, because we work hard to understand) that the power we call God, the force which created everything exists in a far bigger picture frame: There is no storm on earth or in heaven that puts us beyond the love and reach of such loving creativity, forgiveness, healing and hope.

Your Minister, **Jane**
Rev Jane Barron