

Church of All Nations (worshipping with Mark the Evangelist)

September 21, 2025 Season of Creation Week 3 - Storm Sunday

Luke 8:22-25

Season of Creation is bookmarked by Sept 1 in Australia wattle day - Oct 4 Francis and animals flora and fauna.

Season of Creation - our third week. I said in the first week we are not worshipping creation but we summon and join with the whole creation in the praise of the Creator. There are strong biblical precedents for this - the Psalmist calls the mountains, the animals to be unified in worshipping the Creator. We will listen to a song at the end of the sermon that is a classic of this genre.

And last week the opening thought was that in S of C we we are talking about we nowadays call the “environment” but in the church we also use the term the “creation” which introduces the idea that the natural world exists not unto itself so to speak but in relationship with/to the Creator. It is the handiwork of God, it bears God’s fingerprints, it is an expression of the pulsating love that is at the heart of the universe. Third week in our Season of Creation series. Storm Sunday this week. Spirit/wind moving over the water at Creation must be the first storm.

Ironic that on Ocean Sunday a couple of weeks ago I spoke of the calming, restorative effects of being by water, taking long walks along the beach. Well like most things in life there is another side to the story. Storms. They don’t necessarily have to lashing the coast but often do.

We have an ambivalent relationship with storms. Can be exciting, invigorating if not out in it in a little boat getting pummelled by it. Sitting safely on a balcony overlooking the ocean and watching a storm, with lighting flashes, claps of thunder, howling wind and driving rain. Exhilarating. A bit disappointed no cyclone in Fiji the year I lived there.

But the main way we experience storms is the major damage they do to buildings and transport infrastructure, farmlands and fences,

AT 3°C OF GLOBAL WARMING, AUSTRALIA CAN EXPECT...



4x the amount of time spent in heatwaves compared with today



Up to 5x the amount of deaths due to extreme heat



\$135+ billion drag on productivity



1.5 million more Aussies at risk of coastal flooding



And by 2050, property values could take a half-trillion dollar hit

According to the National Climate Risk Assessment, 2025

 CLIMATECOUNCIL.ORG.AU | crowd-funded science information

coastal terrain, including beaches. And humans. I do a monthly service at a local retirement village and asked them if they have been through a storm and was it scary or exciting or both at the same time. A couple of people answered and then one of the residents said I went through the Boxing Day Tsunami. Wow!

Hurricanes are growing more powerful as global temperatures rise because these storm systems draw their energy from warm ocean water.

As regions grow hotter and drier, bushfires are growing in size, ferocity, and speed.

Warmer air increases evaporation, which means that our atmosphere contains an increasing amount of water vapor for storms to sweep up and turn into rain or snow.

Just as drier areas are likely to get drier with rising global temperatures, those areas of the world that have historically trended toward heavy precipitation will only get wetter.

Even as climate change raises average global temperatures, that doesn't spell the end of winters. Overall, winters are getting milder and shorter; but recent winters have brought intense snowstorms and record-breaking frost.

As a result, average global sea level has increased eight inches in the last 150 years.

While it may seem contradictory, climate change may be contributing to more extreme winter weather. As the warming atmosphere traps water vapor later and later into the year, that precipitation leads to heavier snowfall when the temperatures do drop..

Weather that is chaotic and threatening to humans and our environment.

The psalmist calls the Heavens and the Earth to hear God's voice in storms. It would be so easy for the ancients and probably us as well to imagine the voice of God we are hearing in the storm is an angry voice. A voice that threatens us, is beyond our control

This is a common motif in the Psalms, appealing as it does to that archetypal sense of troubles that overwhelm us even as the waves of the sea overwhelm a drowning person, Ancient Israelites not known as a great sea faring nation. After you have been a preacher for 35 years you are open to the previously unthought of and quirky questions... could Jesus swim?

The gospel story draws upon deeper, older images. At creation, God brings order from the primordial waters by separating light from darkness, sky from earth, dry land from oceans and waters. Later God saves Noah and the other creatures from the flood. Then God provides a passageway through waters as the people flee their Egyptian slave lords. When Jesus wakes up and calms the storm for his disciples it carries with it all those earlier stories and memories. Jesus' word frees from bondage, carries us through the flood, and inaugurates a new creation.

Jesus is treading on cosmic chaotic, treading underfoot powers of destruction. Jesus comes to them as the one who has power over the chaos (in a different setting of calming a storm he even walks on the waters) and the language evokes scenes of the many exorcisms in the gospels.then calms them.

Finally at the height of the crisis there is the call to Jesus '*Master, Master, we are perishing!*'. It is the cry/prayer both of individuals at times and seemingly the constant plea of the church at present. *Almost literally every church meeting I attend has this theme embedded somewhere "Master, don't you care, save us we are perishing"*. It is a prayer of ours that each person who finds themselves overwhelmed with the fears and cares of life, will have a Master sleeping in their vessel.

The calm that Jesus brings is truly, the "*peace that passes understanding*", isn't it?

It is a peace that comes from the same source that enabled him to sleep through the crossing. No matter how frightening the crossing, It only our fear that makes us think that bad things cannot be transformed and redeemed. "*O we of little faith*"

Ends with disciples worshipping Jesus - first account of this in Matthew.

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While storms in nature may inspire us by their beauty and majesty, let us remember that they can be destructive, like those that rage around and within us. The nature of the God revealed in Jesus, the power of Jesus' presence in the world, is to calm the storms of injustice and desperation and death. Jesus speaks a word of life and of peace, calming Anxiety, reversing Injustice, bringing the healing of God, who brought order to the chaos, hovering over the waters at creation, and who comes to us and to all amid the storm.

There are things we can control – our habits, our use of the Earth's resources, our CO2 footprint. And there are things we can't control. And storms can be a symbol for those things – the things we find overwhelming. In today's Gospel, a squall comes, the boat is swamped, the disciples are overwhelmed, and Jesus is awakened because his followers are afraid.

Does creation have a voice?

And Earth has a voice in this. Today we've remembered hearing Earth's voice in storms; remembered our feelings of bewilderment, isolation and helplessness, or maybe wild exultation. May our memories of hearing Earth's voice remind us to keep listening carefully; listen and respond to God's call; obediently, humbly, gratefully and with courage. Amen