

**Sermons at All Saints Anglican Church, Luxembourg**

**Preached by Rev Geoff Read on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Bible text: Isaiah 43:16-21**

I remember sitting in a prayer meeting back in early 2017

It was in Colchester in England

We had moved there in 2013 after fifteen years in Switzerland and Germany

We had prayed and it seemed right to go there for me to do a new job there for the church. It was an especially hard move for Marie-Louise

Following the Brexit vote it got harder, and we had a growing sense of alienation living there

We began to pray about whether God was stirring us to move on

We had no ideas of go where or to do what

We just prayed: show us if its right to Stay or Go

And the thing we discerned was: Go

We had no sense of go where or to what

And we had Go but no idea to Go where and do what for months



And it was into the midst of this situation of uncertainty and impossibility that a young man in our church plucked up the courage in that prayer meeting and said simply: I think God may be saying to you ...

*Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea*

*I am about to do a new thing*

*I will make a way in the wilderness*

He spoke words from our reading today which He sensed the Holy Spirit was offering to us  
And as he spoke them, they landed in me with a sense of possibility in the middle of the impossibility  
It was months before there was any job in the Church Times in the Diocese in Europe  
And even then, they were looking for a French speaker ... in Luxembourg ... and I speak German!

The reason I mention this is not because of the eventual outcome – there was a new thing, a way through what had seemed impossible, like the Red Sea or the wilderness for the OT people of God  
I mention it because these words sustained us in the waiting, the anxiety, the sense of being trapped  
It sustained us because we felt ...

**God hears and sees, understands and is with us** – He is faithful: do you remember the Exodus story: at the Red Sea there was only water ahead and the army of pharaoh behind.

Again hundreds of years later as the people are in Exile facing an impossible journey home these words of Isaiah – God hears, and sees and is with them and promises that things will change despite appearances

It sustained us because we felt ...

**God is infinitely creative and powerful** to do what seems impossible and about which I have absolutely no idea how things could change – who'd have thought water could part, a way appears in the desert ...

We felt understood by God in the situation and that somehow He was at work despite appearances...

That wasn't a one off – we wobbled, and we needed to come back to this again and again

But it was there

Over the years I have been drawn back to this passage in walking with people in seemingly impossible situations, in some cases much more serious and impossible than ours

Its like the Holy Spirit prompts me to draw upon them or even share them

As I have prayed for a family applying for refugee status here in Luxembourg, unsure about payment of their extra legal fees, seeking a home outside the cramped refugee hostel



Most recently, following the Oval Office ambush of President Zelenski, I sensed the Holy Spirit was prompting me to offer these words to a Ukrainian family in our church about the new things God is committed to doing for Ukraine even in the midst of the sense of betrayal and uncertainty

And I wonder now whether the Holy Spirit is prompting us as All Saints with them again as we look at the uncertainty, pain and turmoil of our world

And especially today as we think and pray together about the Amos Trust and about Gaza and the West Bank, the whole Holy land and region: are they words that could be to encourage us to pray and act, entering into the suffering of others as God does, and also holding on to the faithfulness of God, the God of new things and the what seems to us impossible

And note this – this all happens in community. We need each other to hold on in this way

I am so grateful for that young man and the risk he took: “I think God may be saying ...”