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## Hope Conquers All

*"My refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust."* Psalm 91:2

Friends,

I am writing to you the day before this letter is sent out... the day before the inauguration in Washington, D.C., which might already have happened, by the time you read these words.

I am deeply aware that before this significant event, there is considerable anxiety – even fear – at what frustrated, angry and disaffected American citizens might do.

How to speak a word of hope when I cannot guess the outcome? And yet, surely now more than ever, hope is what we people of faith can depend on, no matter the external circumstances.

I know that I have shared on many occasions my favourite scriptural passage concerning hope. Today seems another golden opportunity:

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and *we boast in our hope* of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and *hope does not disappoint us*, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:1-5)

I added the fancy italics – because I can't read this aloud to you, as I would do in church, to stress the parts that mean so much in this context. What I hear – maybe you hear it too? – is that having hope or faith or love of God do not protect us from experiencing pain or suffering. That is just part of being human – heck, it's part of being any living thing, even a snail! Suffering is what our bodies and minds do, sometimes.

Having hope, however, orients us beyond our suffering, to a more important point: God's love. Already given. Already poured out. Already received in our hearts, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We are, essentially, pre-armed for conflict. Armed with hope. And love.

Given that knowledge, what else can truly harm us, in our heart of hearts? Nothing.

Here's another good passage to cling to, when everything around us seems ready to fall apart:

But those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Soar, my sisters, brothers and kin. No matter what has happened or will happen on this day. Soar, for you have hope and life eternal. Thanks be to God!

Grace to you and peace,

**Kate**

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*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.  
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

