

basket
of
prayers + concerns + joys

Please keep those you know who are in need of prayer close to your heart this week.

In the absence of receiving any new prayer requests, I offer the following thoughts.

I'm not sure how many of us have experienced raging storms at sea, on land, or in the air! When I think about storms, I can't help but think of that calming of the storm miracle story in Mark's Gospel. What's usually front and center in that well-known story is that severe mega knock-down-drag-out storm! But could this story not be so much about weather, but about whether Jesus' disciples truly understand *who* is with them in the storm? Jesus eventually calms the storm – peace overtakes chaos – and the disciples are awestruck. How often do we become afraid, anxious or fretful in the midst of a storm? Perhaps it's not a raging storm at sea, but the whirlwinds and storms in life: Maybe it's a battle against the raging tide of an illness; an ebbing or broken relationship; the loss of a loved one; the loss of a job or promotion; the loss of hope. It could be any number of things that causes chaos in our lives. Scripture tells us that we aren't promised an exemption from difficult situations that may bring sorrow and grief. We will have trials and tribulation. But God's word also tells us that in whatever storms in life we encounter, our anchoring confidence is found in Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who promises to be with us always. It is Jesus whose faithful, caring presence will continue to hold us in his love and grace and power. It is Jesus who will guide and encourage us through the calm and stormy waters of our lives – and who calls us to be attentive and available to those in our midst who need help weathering their storms. – SJS [reprint from an Immanuel monthly newsletter]