Dear Ones in Christ,

I greet you in the name of the One who is Love. Let us quieten our hearts to hear God’s word for us today.

Today’s Lectionary psalm is Psalm Psalm 66:8-20

8 Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard, 9 who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip. 10 For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. 11 You brought us  into the net; you laid burdens on our backs; 12 you let people ride over our heads; we went through fire  and through water;     yet you have brought us out to a spacious place. 13 I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows, 14 those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. 15 I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatlings, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;     I will make an offering of bulls and goats. 16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me. 17 I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue. 18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. 19 But truly God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.

This has been a most difficult week for me. After struggling with writing about last week’s psalm, which spoke of enemies, I had a church board, who has deemed that I am an enemy to them, threatened me again. I had to return to last week’s psalm many times and what I wrote to get through the week without lashing out at them. Yet, that is what the psalm are for. They keep us focused on God so the LORD deals with those who oppose us and we stay with the LORD.

Last week’s psalm asked the LORD to take us out of the net. This week’s says God has brought us into the net. Awful things happened and the psalmist says God has tried us as silver is tried. At the end of the litany of difficult stuff the psalmist says, “yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.”

Praise arises for God’s safe keeping in the midst of terrible things happening. The psalmist calls others to come listen how wonderful God is for listening and hearing prayers.

When difficult times come and terrible things happen God is still here. The psalm calls us to cry out to God and to stay close for God will bring us to a spacious place and not let our feet slip in the meantime.

I cried to God a lot this week for the horrible unChristian behavior of others. I felt like I’ve been drug through water and fire. And yet, AND YET, God has brought my soul to  a spacious place, and for that I am most grateful.

How does this psalm speak to you? What are your trials and troubles? What does it feel like? How has God brought you to a spacious place this week?

Please join me in prayer:

O gracious Love of heaven and earth, when it feels as though you are testing our faith bring us to spacious places of rest. Let praise rise from our lips for seeing how you stay with us answering prayers and giving us peace. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Rev. Janice Stamper