

# Phoenix Rising

This grief newsletter is sent to members and friends of Paradise Valley United Methodist Church following the loss of a loved one. PVUMC pastors are available to you if you need one-on-one support. Contact the church office for more information at 602-840-8360. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, contact the church office or e-mail [ddoran@pvumc.org](mailto:ddoran@pvumc.org).

Debbie Doran, Editor

## In The Storm

A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

Mark 4:37 (NIV)

I sat alone at the kitchen table with an empty box of tissues. I'd been a Christian for years, but in that moment my heart doubted what my head knew. If God loves me, why had this happened?

As I pondered my tempest, I remembered another storm — a ferocious one, two thousand years ago on the Sea of Galilee. I realized that this story isn't just about a storm but also a journey of trust. The disciples followed Jesus, but the storm still came. They shouted at Jesus, asking him the same question I often do: "Lord, don't you care?"

Storms may cause us to question God's care for us. We pray for healing, protection, and restoration — for the storm to pass. It's not wrong to pray for that. But we must learn to value God's presence in our trials more than we value respite from them.

Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Sometimes he doesn't calm our storms, but he guides us through them. When doubts arise, we can remember that Jesus is with us in the storm.

## Let Us Pray

Dear Jesus, help us to trust you, especially during trials. Help us to remember you are always with us, no matter what we face. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

Paula Rugen's friend, Paul, lost his wife of 25 years, two years ago on March 5. Here are his thoughts as that date approached this year.

"Two years ago – I woke up about 2:00 am as I could feel a heavenly presence. A Stillness. I knew angels had visited and knew something was missing. I walked into Irma's room, and I saw. Curled hands and fingers. The color of one who was no longer alive. She'd lost her hair but radiated beauty. Her smile was gone. But I knew what we'd feared and anticipated for months had happened.

The night before, with soft music playing, I prayed to send his angels and take her home. To stop the pain. I knew she was ready to meet Jesus as her daily countenance showed. They came.

Two years from diagnosis. Two years of chemo and radiation. Two years of prayer and preparation.

On March 5, it will be two years since she passed. Adjustments galore in my life.

Single means you do everything, even talk about your day. No one lets the dog out.... or cooks. Cleans. No one to discuss the Bible verses you study. It's just you. I know widows and divorced people do this all the time but when it's you.... It's you.

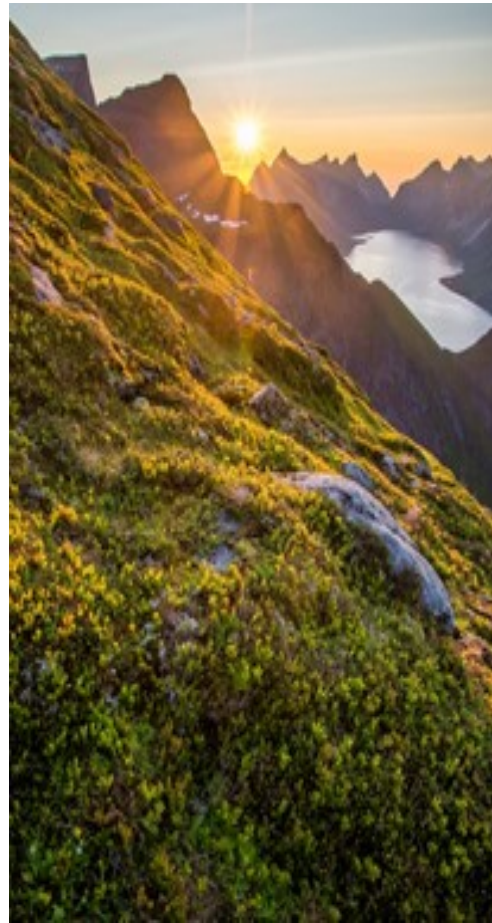
I planted a tree. Placed a plaque. No gravestone. Scattered ashes along the tree roots and other places of note. I still have a few left to scatter in March.

Some days are hard, and some days are easy. Just living on the road God has me placed. I know He walks with me and is patient until I ask, "why I'm still here." I believe there's gold (heavenly) waiting along the path. He's given me the map and key.<sup>2</sup>



## Prayer, Faith, and GOD

Never forget  
nothing is more  
powerful than PRAYER, nothing  
is stronger than FAITH,  
and nothing is greater than  
GOD.  
Amen<sup>3</sup>



## Adapting to Losses in Life

The sorrows will come, and the joys will come too.  
Each has their place in filling life with richness.  
As we live, we lose and let go.  
Loss is a life-long human condition.  
Mourning is the process of adapting to the losses in life.  
Serenity isn't peace from the storm; it's peace in the storm.<sup>4</sup>

## God's Whispers

The empty places, the silences, are where I can hear God's whispers. God reaches out to touch me with his love and acceptance. When I am still, He guides me to my wholeness and leads me through His mysteries to my place of peace.<sup>5</sup>

## Missing Someone

Missing someone isn't about how long it has been since you've seen them or the amount of time since you have talked.

Missing someone is about when you are doing something and wishing they were right there with you.<sup>6</sup>

## Preparation For The Future

Every experience God gives us, every person He puts into our lives, is the perfect preparation for a future only He can see.<sup>7</sup>

Footnote:

1. Glenda Durano (New Mexico); February 6, 2025; Upper Room
2. Paula Rugen
3. Corrie ten Boom
4. Judith Vorst, *NECESSARY LOSSES*
5. Paula Rugen
6. Anonymous
7. Corrie ten Boom