

MIND the GAP

It can be a little disconcerting to find the picture above your hospital bed is the Sycamore Gap tree – before it met its rogue tree surgeon.

What do we make of it? An omen? But of what? Hopefully of post-operative resurrection. The famous Sycamore near Steel Rigg is certainly showing its own steel and determination not to give up in the face of adversity.

Adversity is a fact of life for so many people.

Circumstances beyond their control may challenge them to the limits of their endurance – be it natural disasters, wars, poverty, abuse, infirmity, loss, homelessness, shame, or the troubles we bring upon ourselves. No-one escapes all troubles, but some seem to have more than their fair share.

Resilience is hard to nurture, and some seem better able to survive than others. Bear Grylls, despite breaking his spine in three places in a parachute accident, went on to climb Everest! Care and concern from others undoubtedly helps us on the journey of recovery, as also the companionship of those who have experienced similar trauma. Church members are not immune from troubles, as our intercessions bring to our attention. Our efforts to address issues, or to bring a timely crumb of comfort, may seem inadequate but they bring hope and encouragement.

Our sycamore tree gave much joy and comfort before it was felled. Surrounded by love and care it will grow again. Our 'patient' left hospital renewed by care. If you are facing challenging times, may others encircle you with love; and if you can, spare some care to encircle others.

Circle us, Lord: keep protection near and danger afar.

Circle us, Lord: keep hope near and despair afar.

Circle us, Lord: keep peace near and turmoil afar.

Those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength
and soar on wings like eagles. *Isaiah 40.31*

