Sermon: **“the boat began to fill with water, so that they were all in great danger** (Lk 8.23)

For many in the social service world hope is the end product after all the help is given, for Church Missions hope is what the start of the process.

What are the signs that help us believe in hope? Or is it just crossed-fingers?

It is easy to have hope when all is going OK and less easy when the storms of life come – TEXT.

Here were disciples, four of whom at least were hardened fishermen. Scared to death. Hope had ebbed.

We too face storms – as mentioned last week, including personal crises: health, finances, bereavement, etc. In these it is easy for hope to ebb away. It is also easy to be glib about hope, or to put hope in the wrong places (**When a wicked man dies, his hope dies with him. Confidence placed in riches comes to nothing.** Prov 11.7). The hope we mean is hope in God, God’s positive activity for humanity.

E.g. Paul & Silas in prison in Philippi sang a defiant hymn of praise. To do so is a sign of hope when our souls are tested.

Lisa (9) was diagnosed with a rare blood disease. After testing her brother Mark's (5) blood was a compatible match. Mark agreed to give his blood. As the Mark’s blood was extracted he began to feel dizzy and asked the doctors if this was the time he would start dying? Mark thought all of his blood was needed and still he had reluctantly agreed to it – this took true courage, which brings hope!

How many of us in a difficult time have found hope in a friend’s hug and/or a listening ear?

A rainbow is a sign of hope when the rain falls. Spring flowers are a sign of hope in the storms of winter.

Resurrection is God’s sign of hope to us that death is not the end, despite appearances.

None of this is proof, all can be dismissed by sceptics, but stars cannot be seen until the sky is dark.

TEXT. Jesus brought calm, which baffled the disciples, but brought them hope, not just for that moment, but for life – no wonder some of them gave their lives for their trust in God.
We, as people of God, are called to bring hope, by what we do, in what we say, by what we point to.