

'YOU HAVE BEEN WEIGHED ON THE SCALES AND FOUND WANTING' so says Daniel in his interpretation of the writing on the wall. (Dan. 5:27) It's not what anyone wants as their epitaph, is it? Well, it's certainly not what I want as mine.

Or to put it in a more positive way, 'when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food...just as you did it to the least of these... you did it to me' (Matt. 25:35-40)

Last week at Synod, we were invited to go for a prayer walk. This essentially meant going for a wander. On my travels I met a man from Cameroon. During our conversation, after hearing me speak a non-English language on the phone, he asked me where I was from. 'Here, I'm English.' He said I didn't seem English; I wasn't like other English people, but he wouldn't be drawn further on what he meant. I took it to mean that I hadn't got up and moved away, that I had talked to him, though I drew the line at accepting his kind offer to exchange phone numbers!

Sometimes we do have to draw a line, and sometimes we have to cross it. I was reading an interview with Pakistani writer, Mohammed Hanif, on the release of his new novel. He spoke about how if you wanted to write about politics in Pakistan, you have to do it abroad (he used to live in London but has moved back to Karachi) for fear of assassination. He quoted a good friend of his, human rights activist Sabeen Mahmud who said, 'fear is a line in your head. You have to cross it.'

We all have things we are afraid of and fear of change is real, but we have to overcome it and move forward, otherwise we will slowly die. It is one thing to be the remnant if the remnant is lively, active and creative, it is quite another to be the remnant cowering in the corner watching its own demise.

In another thing I read this week (UCC Daily Devotional, 23 Oct.) it said, "Since Moses led the people out of slavery, God's people have been speaking and acting at the forefront of social change movements. Our long and prayerful and at times dangerous work is bearing fruit not *in spite of* the gospel, but *because of it.*' The author included a link in her reflection to a joint statement by the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (Germany) and the United Church of Christ (USA) entitled "**Hope...not Fear!**" (extract overleaf) We have the opportunity to make a joint statement with Iron Aid for the benefit of the community in Northwood.

It was too late for king Belshazzar; it doesn't have to be too late for us.



“Together, we affirm our unity in a world torn apart by fear, hatred, disregard for the sanctity of human life and God’s earth...We stand for the rights of all people, regardless of race, gender, creed, or any other source of discrimination or exclusion, and recognize our place as part of the entire human family. Therefore, we resist the political manipulation of public discourses, dominated by self-interests, misusing peoples’ fears.”