

Dear Friends,

The weather is cooler and the days are growing shorter, we are entering that season when our homes are even more precious than our gardens. This Harvest we are reflecting on how our faith inspires us to consider our home on Planet Earth and take good care of it. To help you do that, imagine this.

You lived in your home for some time. You've taken care to decorate it, to maintain it. It's a space in which you live, and from which you live. There is light, there is warmth. You have art and craft from those you love adorning the walls. You have objects of beauty from far and wide. It might not be in any interior design magazine, but it is place of goodness and life. You've shared it with those you love. It's been a place of laughter and a safe place to cry.

You decide you are going on a trip over winter, and everyone seems to be renting their places out on Airbnb. So you do the same. You want someone to be enjoying the space and keep it warm and secure while you are away. So you agree to rent it out over winter, while you enjoy the Sun. Spring comes and you return.

The front door is kicked in. The windows are broken. You walk through in disbelief. The wallpaper is ripped, the kids picture crumpled on the floor, the garden is trashed. Flies fill the kitchen from all the waste strewn around. You can't stand it, you walk back out the way you came. You sit on the path, head in hands. You begin to cry. And you stutter out loud, "they were supposed to be looking after it."

Everything good in our lives we have through the grace of God. All good things come from him.

Yet too often we forget that we are merely renting this world. We are custodians and stewards of His world, which is to be our home for a time, and the home of all his creatures.

Would you walk into someone else's house and trash it?

Why does that feel more outrageous than the ways in which we are trashing the earth?

Maybe because those who notice the destruction and its impact are far away so we can forget about them and our impact on their lives. They are far away in space i.e. they live in another country. Or they are far away in time i.e. the future generations will have to sort it out. We find it hard to deal with the disconnect between our actions and our consequences. That is human nature. We are short termist and value that which we can see. And so, we find it quite easy to trash another's home, because we do not recognise that is what we are doing.

But we are.

And you may not know the farmer who lives on the Bangladeshi flood plain, nor the firefighters risking their lives in British Columbia, nor the baby born last week who will have to get used to heatwaves.

But you do know Jesus. And this his house. Treat it with care and gratitude, and help make it ready for his return.

I wonder what one thing you could commit to doing differently, to honour your Landlord who lets you live here rent free?

Food for thought this Harvest,

Blessings,

*Jo*