

A LETTER FROM REV RONA

Stories That Shape Us

I wonder – are there any stories which stay with you? Maybe you were told a story as a child which you still treasure (mine is the Magic Faraway Tree!) or a film, or news story which hasn't left you?



Recently, I had the pleasure of hearing Elif Shafak speak at St Martin-in-the-Fields. She reminded us that hearing/reading stories offers a space for wisdom and personal growth. Stories shape how we see the world, how we understand one another, and even how we understand ourselves.

I've experienced this personally over the last few weeks. At our Remembrance Sunday service, I told a story about my father during the war. Since then, I've been inundated with people sharing stories from their own families – stories of courage, love, loss, and resilience. It's been a beautiful reminder of how much we crave connection through stories, and how powerful it is to give them a voice.

Of course, the stories of the Bible are central to faith. From the creation of the world to the parables of Jesus, these stories carry deep truth and meaning. Yet, as we tell them in schools on 'Open the Book' visits, I'm increasingly aware that many people today do not know them. There's such richness in these narratives and sharing them helps us to make sense of our world.

In December we're reminded of the greatest story of all: the story of God himself coming to us as a baby in Bethlehem. This story has inspired countless generations and continues to inspire us today. It's a story of hope, of love breaking into our world, and of God

drawing near to us in the most ordinary — yet extraordinary — way.

Let me encourage you this season to come to a Carol Service and hear this great story, and at the same time to tell your own stories: of challenge, joy, and of hope. In sharing them, we're reminded that stories shape us, guide us, and help us live more thoughtfully, compassionately and gently in the world.

With every blessing,

Rev Rona