

Facebook Posts – April 2021

1st April – Rev Cliff Shanganya

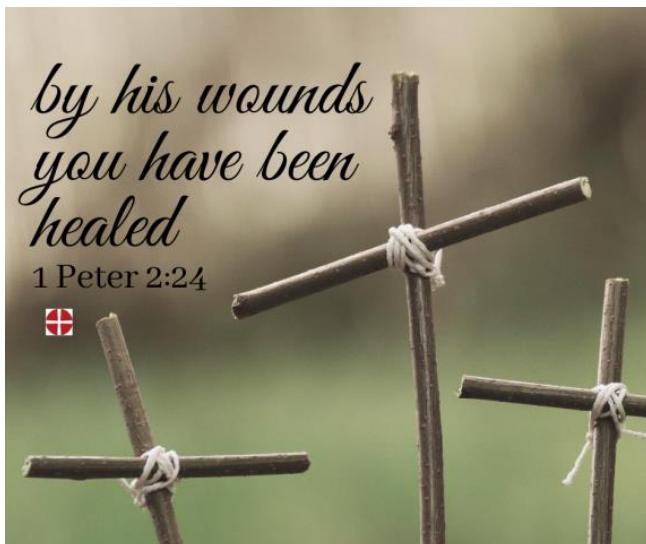
We can't really know the strength of our character until we see how we react under pressure. We may find that being kind to others is easier when everything is going well, but will we still be kind when others treat us unfairly? God wants to develop us into complete human beings, not simply insulate us from all pain. Enduring through trials generates a whole person—seasoned, experienced, well developed, and fully trained. It gives us the life skills to see our blind spots and anticipate mistakes before we make them. Instead of complaining about our struggles, we should see them as opportunities for growth. Ask God for wisdom to help you solve your problems or to give you the strength to endure them. Then be patient. God will not leave you alone with your problems; he will stay close and help you grow. Thank him for walking beside you in rough times. Have blessed Holy Week.



James 1:2-4 NLT

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. [3] For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. [4] So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

5th April



6th April

A quote for today from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, provided by Rev Rosemary Wakelin;

Goodness is stronger than evil,
Love is stronger than hate,
Light is stronger than darkness,
Life is stronger than death,
Victory is ours through him
who loves us.



7th April – Sam Parfitt

I took this photograph on Mothering Sunday whilst walking along the Norfolk Coast Path, I particularly like being able to see the rain coming down in the distance, it was a comforting sight to me for two reasons; firstly, it reminds me of my childhood in the Fens, where the sky was bigger than the landscape and secondly, it was a timely reminder to me that it won't rain all the time and that there will always be clearer skies on the horizon.



8th April – Rev Anne Richardson



Things tend to happen in 3s. Have you heard that?

I was filling in a form yesterday, and my pen ran out! So I selected another.... and it faded awaythen a 3rd – and it was dried up!! After the death of Jesus, his opponents hoped it would all fade away, his followers would run off and the teaching would be forgotten. But God raised Jesus to life and everything started to change. It changed for the disciples. It changed for us.

There is an old hymn: Yesterday, today, forever by Albert B Simpson, published in 1890. The refrain says:

Yesterday, today, forever,

Jesus is the same,
All may change, but Jesus never!
Glory to His name,
Glory to His name,
Glory to His name;
All may change, but Jesus never!
Glory to His name.

9th April



10th April – Judith Semmons

Like many people my husband, Ian, has had more time, due to lockdown, to do some sorting out. I think we all have that drawer or box with keepsakes and memorabilia that we treasure; we're not sure what to do with it but we can't bear to throw it away. The other day he stumbled across this: it's my writing and artistic style (if it can be called that!); something I must have done with our son many years ago. (Sadly it's not dated).

We have recently celebrated Mothering Sunday. In recent years there seems to have been a greater emphasis on the fact that people may or may not have or had a good relationship with their mother or father. Or that they might actually be cared for by someone else. In fact, Cliff Shanganya suggested that the Sunday should possibly be called Parenting Sunday. So if we think of people who have been 'like a father or mother' to us, do the words on my poster relate to them? Would you wish to add others?

It's interesting how many of the characteristics on this paper can be related to our Father God. Looking at the poster, do you think that's true? Or do you find that difficult?

We are reminded of our Father God's love for us in many bible passages. Here is just one:

1 John 3 v 1: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. How much do we know our Father God today?



12th April



13th April – Rev Jacqui Horton

The 1st in 3 programmes 'A Year to Change the World', the programme broadcast yesterday evening showcasing Greta Thunberg (and, along the way, the climate crisis) was very powerful - as I expected when I sat down to watch. It has changed, and softened, my view of this extraordinary young lady. She feels absolutely called to what she is doing and it has reminded me of Martin Luther's statement "Here I stand, I can do no other". One can only admire, respect her courage, and give thanks to God for her. As I was going to bed, I read the extract for April 12th in my bedside John Wesley anthology and the words - in a totally different context - really resonated with how I was feeling about our world. Wesley is giving directions to servants: "Equally dishonest it is to hurt or waste anything, or to let it be lost through your carelessness or negligence. Whatever is committed to your trust, whether within doors or without, so carefully preserve that it be not lost, spoiled or impaired under your hands." If you did not see the programme, I thoroughly recommend seeing on catch-up (BBC1) and/or seeing the next one next Monday (9 pm).

Photo from Wikimedia Commons

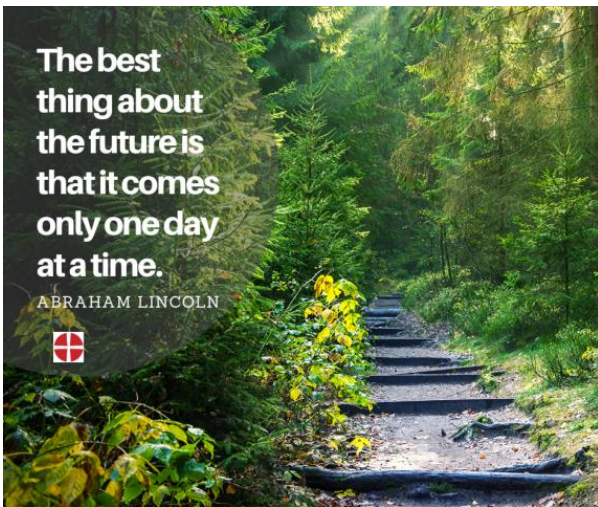


14th April – Sam Parfitt



It occurs to me that creation has probably been enjoying a rest from our interference over the past year and I hope that humankind thinks carefully about where and how it treads as it steps further out as lockdowns ease. There is a great Native American Cree proverb that says "only when the last tree has died, the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realise we cannot eat money" which I think is still exceptionally relevant today. The sad irony of course is that the Cree were considered 'savages' by early colonists when in reality they lived a life of synchronicity with creation and understood well the fragility of that relationship. I wonder who we might learn from today as we try and tread gently in step with creation?

16th April



17th April – Dee Moden

One of the things I love to do is bake/cook. I rarely follow recipes to the letter, and many times make it up as I go along using my experience and judgement by taste and by texture. This leads to a variety of combinations all which seem to work with no real disasters. In fact, it has led to interesting discoveries and new tastes of different things working well together, even small changes or additions can make a big difference bringing an enhanced flavour to our food.

In our churches we have had the 'recipe' for our usual worship put on hold, we are having to find new ways to reach people, and as we open our doors again we cannot worship in the same way, but we can, and have, found new ways! The ingenious communion cups we used on Easter Sunday are one example.



What must we take from all this? Whilst we are longing to get back to 'normal,' there are many lessons to be learned from this Pandemic situation, good changes that we have had to make that can enhance ours and others experiences reaching out to many more people.

The basic recipe is to follow Jesus' teaching but not to be afraid if he leads us along a different route a different path taking us to new places, new ventures, and to trust in his judgement. Psalm 119 verse 105 says "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

19th April – Judith Semmons

My Aunt Kath died just before Palm Sunday 2021. She would have been 94 this July. 'AK' (as we affectionately called her) was a spinster. She had lived in the same home for most of her life; the three bedroomed property had belonged to her parents and was left to 'AK' and her late older sister when the parents died. AK was one of 7 children so when she went into a care home just over three years ago, due to dementia, we knew that clearing her house would be a significant challenge as it had never properly been sorted out. I used to talk to work colleagues about going to Leicestershire to help sort out Aladdin's cave!

There was lots of memorabilia including school reports for herself and her siblings. We also discovered this small New Testament; hardback and about 5cm wide. It was a gift from AK's father to his future wife; dated February 1916 so during the first world war and at one stage he was a prisoner of war. The message to his future wife captures a true indication of discipleship. He wrote: 'As a guide to true friendship. It is a guide to happiness. A guide to joy and love. A guide to peace and plentifulness. And a guide to Heaven above.'

What a witness through a simple message. Most of AK's siblings, including AK became very active Christians. AK was an infant teacher and well known by generations of families who she had welcomed into her class. It therefore seemed appropriate to announce her death on Facebook. We have had endless messages of condolence: the frequent comment has been of a lady who was generous; with her time; always baking; caring and doing errands for others; always with a smile.

Matthew 28 v 18 -20: Then Jesus came to the disciples and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."



21st April – Sam Parfitt



Today is Queen Elizabeth II birthday (Happy Birthday ma'am) and for some reason I found myself on the internet looking at famous people who share the Queen's birthday, there was quite a list and some faces and names which were familiar to me - Iggy Pop and Charlotte Bronte and far more which weren't - most of them being You Tube and Tik Tok stars, which in today's culture seems to be a growing source of fame. My

screen was full of all of these faces and it suddenly occurred to me how diverse this group of people were and in turn reminded me of how diverse we are as the Body of Christ, something to celebrate and rejoice!

22nd April – Rev Anne Richardson

Today is 'Earth Day'! The first one was in 1970, something which was born from the concern for the environment after the massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California, in 1969.

Out of this grew a global movement with a mission to diversify, educate and activate the environmental movement worldwide.

Now there are over 75,000 partners in over 192 countries, driving positive action for the planet.

There has been so much education, through TV programmes, discussions, books, and lobbying of governments, to bring about personal and national changes. Yet we still face a great climate emergency today. Why is there still so much apathy??!! Why do we still bury our heads in the sand?

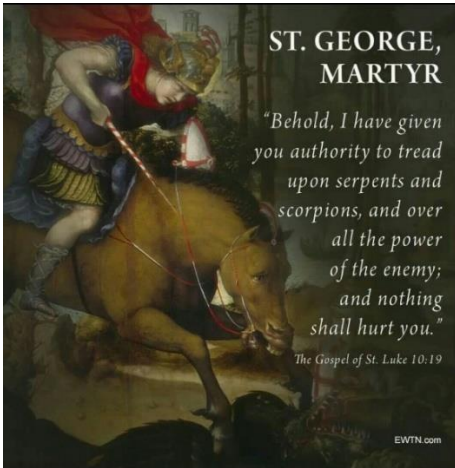
As Christians, we have long been aware of our role as stewards of God's creation. What else should we be doing?

What else should we be praying?

O Lord, have mercy!



23rd April



24th April – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

I have decided I am an unrepentant Luddite. Our behaviour as a human race has brought our beautiful home to the point that unless we take drastic action this planet may not be able to support our great grand children. We have the expertise, the science and the funding to do something about it, instead the people with all the facilities are congratulating themselves on reaching Mars, not to mention further expeditions to the Moon. Not content with wrecking this planet we are taking our destructive habits into the universe as space vehicles plough their way through the tons of rubbish already in orbit from previous expeditions. Maybe the original problem is that we see the earth as ours - when it isn't. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. As it's stewards we have been entrusted to work with our Creator to creatively enjoy it and prosper from its limitless possibilities. Instead, in our arrogance, we have preferred to exploit and destroy and put ourselves in the place of God. In doing so we have also endangered the lives of the unnumbered creatures who share our home. Maybe, as God's family, the Church, we should be more strident in our warnings and get behind Greta and David Attenborough (neither Christians that I know of) and join them in working to protect our Father's property before it really is too late. I have noticed that when His children fail to act God has no qualms about using those who are listening, even when they do not realise who it is who is speaking to them.



26th April

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Based on the acrostic
of Psalm 111.

Janet Sutherland. Holt Methodist Church.

27th April – Deacon Jen Woodfin



Do you read instructions or would you rather work it out yourself? Recently I made up some shelving for the greenhouse as I need more space to protect plants from the frost. I thought I would read the instructions but they were just in pictures not words so looked quickly. I understood most of it and then started to assemble it thinking I would figure it out as I went along. Being a little short of time I got to a point that looked quite good so I put it aside for that day. When I picked it up the following day imagine my disappointment when it all fell to bits! I then studied the instructions more carefully, watched a YouTube of how to do it, undid the whole thing, started again properly and managed to complete it.

Perhaps we are a little like that in life? We think we can do something in our own ability. We give it scant attention and don't give it enough time. Then we are surprised when things go wrong. We, perhaps, need to give a little more time to ask God for instructions, to follow His guidance. As we give time to hear God's word, we, and those connected to us, will be enriched in ways that we may never have foreseen ourselves.

28th April – Sam Parfitt

On this day in 1789 (only five years before Walsingham Chapel was built!) the crew of the Royal navy's armed vessel *Bounty*, led by Fletcher Christian, mutinied - casting adrift their Captain William Bligh and 18 men who were loyal to him. The Mutiny on the *Bounty* went on to inspire books and films, many of which portray Bligh as a sadistic tyrant, keen to inflict the lash as punishment for even the most minor of offences. However, there are many historians who counter this portrayal, arguing that the evidence suggests that Bligh was, in fact, a compassionate Commander who frequently spared the lash. Whether you see Bligh as a tyrant who pushed his men to mutiny, or the 'victim' of a rogue crew probably depends on the lens you view the story from. The same, I think, is true of scripture, there are passages that have been used to justify great harm done to others in the name of God - many 'just wars' have been fought. As Christians, we are called, I think, to look at the world through the lens of Jesus - seeing firstly the context, then applying the great commandment to love one another. How very different might the world look then?

Photo from 1935 film 'Mutiny on the *Bounty*'



29th April – Rev Cliff Shanganya



Psalms 42:5-6 NLT

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again- my Savior and [6] my God! Now I am deeply discouraged, but I will remember you- even from distant Mount Hermon, the source of the Jordan, from the land of Mount Mizar.

Depression affects many people, requiring some to seek extensive counselling and medical help. God has given us counsellors, doctors, and medicines to aid in healing, and meditating on the record of God's goodness to his people can also help us. Recalling how God has worked in our lives might help take our minds off the present situation and can give us hope that it will improve. It will focus our thoughts on God's ability to help us rather than on our inability to help ourselves. When you feel down or discouraged, take advantage of this psalm's advice. Read the Bible's accounts of God's goodness, and meditate on them. Have a blessed day!

30th April – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

Jesus is King! Alleluia! We sing a lot about that - but what are we actually saying? We still have a monarchy. It's not about power as it used to be, it has become more about service, but it is about wealth, privilege, superiority, separateness - and yet we insist in giving Jesus the ascriptions of royalty. Does he really want them? There is plenty in the Bible about the greatness and majesty of God and Jesus, but then I read the Gospels, where Jesus tells us that if we have seen him we have seen the Father, and he's not referring to Joseph. And what we see has absolutely nothing to do with wealth, superiority or privilege. From the start Jesus's life is totally grounded in the ordinary life of ordinary people. The carpentry business of Joseph and Sons was possibly reasonably prosperous, there is no evidence to suggest that he grew up in grinding poverty. His ministry mainly involved mixing with ordinary people, with special attention to children, the outcast, the despised, the sinful etc. When the Resistance tried to make him their leader (after he had fed them) he rejected the offer. When he made his entry into the Capital City it was on a donkey, even the Romans weren't alarmed, but we rightly call him King. Perhaps we need to redefine Kingship, because I think that is what he did. Kingship through history has been about status and power requiring barriers to protect it. Jesus spent three strenuous years breaking down barriers, which cost him his life. We have spent 2000 years putting up makeshift barriers of race, colour, denomination, gender to separate ourselves - yet he doesn't give up on us! Perhaps if we stop trying to make him a king in our image and recognise his definition as the real image of kingship - -? Maybe he doesn't want servility but sisters and brothers to share the work of bringing in the Kingdom of Love. When we at last come face to face, will it be with a dimly seen mighty figure pronouncing judgement or did Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy get it right when he wrote:-

Then will he come, with meekness for his glory, God in a workman's jacket as before,
Living again the eternal Gospel story, Sweeping the shavings from the workshop floor.



Image: Jesus Washing Peter's Feet, Ford Maddox Brown 1821-1893