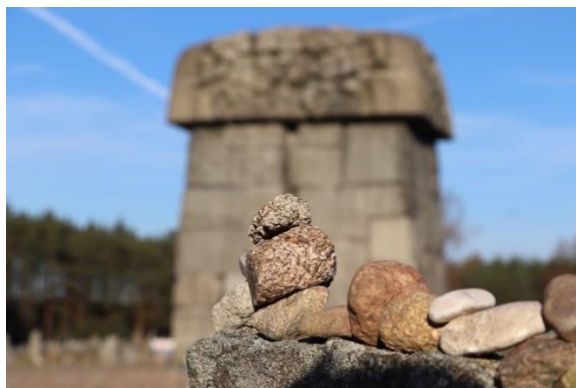


Facebook Posts February 2023

Thought of the Day by Rev Rosemary Wakelin
Holocaust Memorial Day 27th January.

Some years ago when I was still in part time ministry, some of you may remember the charming young Polish man who stayed with me for a year when Poland was going through a bad time economically. Later he kindly invited me to go and stay with him and his new wife in Southern Poland. While there he insisted that we visited Auschwitz, it is still imprinted on my memory. The sun was shining but no birds sang. There were many people visiting, yet it was not noisy. It is in two parts, the original military prison and then the Concentration Camp. In the prison we went to the block that held the notorious cell 11 where 10 prisoners were locked with no food or water until one by one they died. I stood in that cell for some time while the tourists shuffled quietly by, thinking particularly of Maximilian Kolbert, a Roman Catholic priest, who had taken the place of one of the men who had a family. It took them a long time to die, but witnesses said he was one of the last to go, and had been a constant source of comfort and faith to the others. I find it incredibly hard to get my head round that monstrous cruelty and even more that extraordinary grace and courage. I can only look again at the Cross.



Rev Anne writes:

I guess many of us are looking forward to longer and warmer days now we have passed the half-way mark to Spring! But let's not miss the beauty around us even in February. Those first snowdrops and daffodils are always a welcome sight, aren't they?

There are some lovely patches of snowdrops in the manse garden. I wonder which of my predecessors planted them? It also made me wonder about the legacy we leave for those who come after us. Think about your church - what legacy are you leaving for those who come after? Are there things we can and should change and things we must preserve? It's an interesting question to ponder on. And as they say for your old school essays - discuss!



TO A SNOWDROP

O delicate flower,
why hang your head low?
Are you humbly demure?
Or just searching below?

Should you not be proud
and hold your head high?
Or are you afraid,
or just very shy?

When viewed from afar –
a vision of white,
amassed with your friends –
a beautiful sight!

Perhaps it is well
you are not like the rest.
As proclaimer of Spring,
you are simply the best!



© Jacqui A Horton

A thought from Sam Parfitt:



I bought this scarf last week in a charity shop, it was in amongst a big wire basket containing lots of other scarves. This one in particular stood out to me because of all of the different colours in each segment. The lady in the shop was pleased that someone wanted to buy it! The next day, I had been wearing it for a little while when I noticed one of the sections had three crosses on it, followed a little later by noticing the section under it was very reminiscent of an empty tomb. The thought started to cross my mind that perhaps this was an Easter themed scarf!

Studying it further I have found (so far) bread and wine for the Last Supper, two hearts for the New Commandments, a rainbow for God's promise, stars for God's promise to Abraham and lots of other segments that I'm still 'decoding' including a fish, an anchor, a brick wall, clouds and a river! So rather than being an Easter scarf I think that it is a Bible scarf! Being warm and colourful, I've worn it a lot this past week and it has attracted lots of compliments from people I've seen when

I'm out and about. It's been very interesting to talk about scripture in this knitted form, and it has been a good point of reflection for me to be reminded of scripture as something so colourful and vibrant and the importance of sometimes revisiting something familiar from a different perspective.





Thought of the Day by Deacon Jen Woodfin:



A week or two ago I went to see my sisters in Eastbourne for our birthday. It was super to spend the week with them. I stayed until the Sunday morning so that I would have the opportunity to go to church where Denise worships and plays the cello most Sundays. The church is also from where I had candidated for the ministry 20 years ago. It was good to see old friends who, of course, knew my history and where I was now. They asked after me and Jacqui and enquired about my ministry. It was as though we were just picking up from when we had last met.

Then, not long before I left, a lady, who I hadn't met before, came up to Denise and asked her if I was her sister. She then asked me if I played any instrument – like Denise. In that moment it felt like my identity had somehow changed, or at the least, had been given a different emphasis.

We all have a different identity to many different people. We are in different relationships: sister, brother, mother, father, son, daughter, friend... We are in different roles, both official and voluntary or circumstantial such as our neighbours. In all those relationships we are seen in a different light and just parts of us are known to any one person. Have you ever been to funeral of someone close to you and heard something about the deceased that you didn't know?

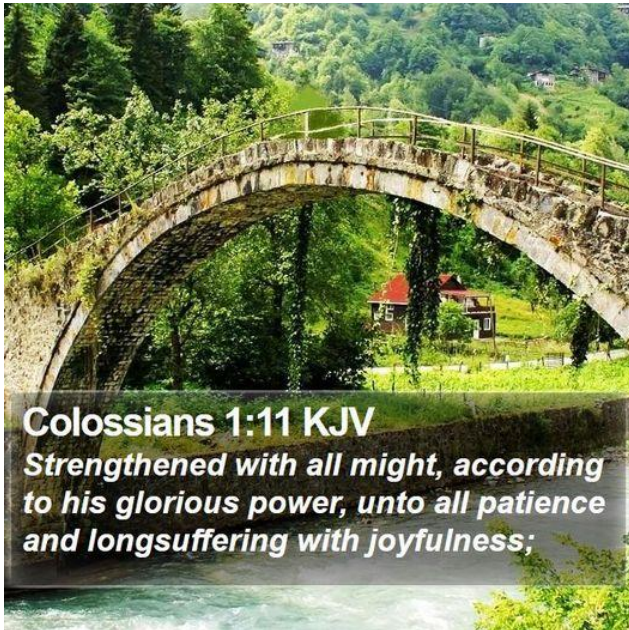
But God knows us. Every bit of us. All the parts we might try to hide from some people. He knows all our history and all our future. Not only that he loves every bit of us. Knowing that makes a huge difference to my own sense of identity. But, when we meet new people, I wonder whether we let people see how our faith is fundamental to our identity – if indeed you think it is. How much do we keep the significance of God in our lives hidden? How much does that stop God working through us? It seems to me these are a few questions on which to ponder.

Thought of the Day by Rev Rosemary Wakelin

The Matthew story of the call of the first disciples gives the impression that Jesus sees the fishermen and calls them to follow him, and without a second thought they do. That would have been an incredibly stupid thing to do if they had no previous knowledge of him. That's when it's useful to refer to other Gospels, and from John we learn that Andrew and Peter had not only met Jesus but spent time with him and that may well have been true of James and John. We can only guess what they had talked about, but Jesus must have shared with them his vision of the Kingdom of God and they had become excited and inspired, so that



when the time was ripe, and Jesus called they were ready and responded. Jesus must have warned them, as he did later, that the going would be rough and possibly dangerous, but that did not deter them. And that has been true down the centuries. People have felt “called” to follow which has often meant leading a more difficult, even dangerous life, which seems foolish and pointless to unbelievers. There are countless stories and of course it still happens. The call of Jesus can override the desire for money and “success “ and security, as it brings a different satisfaction, knowing that you are taking part in a much bigger project, the establishing of the Kingdom of God which is both for now and forever. But it’s not easy and comes with a health warning - as Jesus pointed out.



Rev Anne writes: I had a birthday last week.



The saying goes that age is just a number. Have a look at my candles from the cake the Deaf Church organised for me!! And then see the close up! We had a good laugh about that!

The psalmist knew about ageing. Read Psalm 90:10-12. V12 says: Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

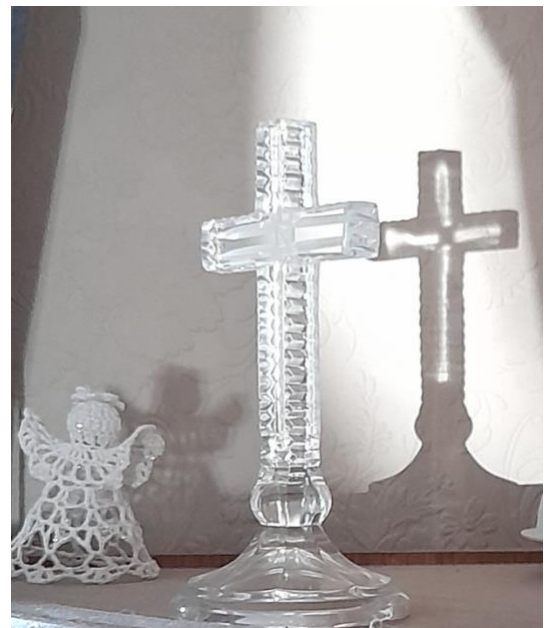
No matter how many years we may have under our belts, may we use our time well and for the glory of God.



Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen:

I took this photo at the beginning of November thinking that I could use it for a Thought for the Day some time, but didn't know when. It is of two items that we have on top of the corner shelves in our sitting room. It was one of those bright autumn afternoons when the sun is low and so shone at a certain angle to light up the shelves in a distinctive way.

As I look at the picture, just as we are about to start Lent, I am struck with the interplay between the cross and the angel and the related shadows. We heard a good deal about angels during Advent and in the nativity story as they play a significant role as being God's messengers. Just a few weeks later, it is as though the angels voices are forgotten, their shadow has become faded. Now we look towards the cross, knowing that as we travel on, the focus becomes ever stronger, the cross's shadow ever more defined.



So this photo, for me, represents the journey we all take from Christmas to Lent, to Good Friday and Easter Day. I only noticed the items because of the way the light played on them. During this Lent, for each of us there will be a different light, a different focus, in the next few weeks. Then as we journey on to the cross and beyond, we will again see the angels take a prominent place as they act as God's messengers on Easter Day.

[#Pray](#) with us today.



Heavenly Father, as we live to be your disciples in this world, and share the good news of your Son Jesus Christ, help us at all times to be faithful witnesses. Grant us your peace and love to be able to keep strong the greatest commandment, which is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." Enable us to be filled with your Spirit as we passionately devote ourselves to the work of teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer

with those around us, to whom we may be seen as a light in this world that you so graciously entrusted us to nurture. We ask this in the name of your son Jesus Christ. Amen.



Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:

Just a quick thought about the theme of the World Day of Prayer Service this year. The material has been prepared by people in Taiwan and the theme is 'I have heard about your faith'. This comes from the Bible - Ephesians 1 v 15 - and the whole verse is sung several times in the service. The WDP service takes place every year on the first Friday in March and, this year, there are a few ecumenical ones taking place around our Circuit - contact a minister if you want to know where. The Thought is: would anyone ever say that about our own church communities? I have heard about your faith?

