

Facebook Posts February 2024



A thought from Rev Anne:

Today is Candlemas, which is the end of 'Old Christmas'. It's when we remember the story of the presentation of the baby Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem from Luke 2. The Singing the Faith website says : " There are several traditions associated with Candlemas (including the eating of crepes in France and the more widespread reference to snowdrops as 'Candlemas Bells').

However, for most Christians it is the idea of Jesus-as-light bringer that is uppermost on this day. Candles may be blessed; a candle-lit procession may take place; and, on Candlemas night, many people place lighted candles in their windows at home – all actions that remind us that Jesus is often described as the “light of the world”.



How do we understand the light that Jesus brings? Is there illumination, a warm glow or a blinding light? Pray for the light of Christ to be in your life and with those you love and pray for today.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Trinity Dereham.



A Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen (posted last week rather late in the day so repeated now!)

I saw this large poster in Sussex last week and it gave me something to think about. There seems to be a campaign to enliven the town of Eastbourne, with many parts being given an upgrade. There is obviously an intention to give the town a sense of renewed purpose and identity.

This large billboard was on the promenade along the sea front. The way these words were displayed set me thinking. It seems to me there are at least four possible questions arising out of four possible combinations of these important words:

1. Does love equal empathy, respect and dignity?
2. When you show empathy does that require love, respect and dignity?
3. Does respect always include love, empathy and dignity?
4. Is dignity the out working of love, empathy and respect?

Perhaps choose one of these questions on which to ponder.



"On behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain, we offer our thoughts and prayers for King Charles and his family after he was diagnosed with cancer. We appreciate his openness and willingness to share news of his health and hope that it will encourage more people to attend routine screening and health checks when invited by their GP surgery.

As we have just marked World Cancer Day, we are also praying for everyone who has just been diagnosed or is suffering from a life-changing illness, their families and everyone working for the NHS who helps and cares for patients."

-The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton, and the Vice President, Deacon Kerry Scarlett



Great, O God is the power of your glory; great are the wonders of your works and great is the wisdom of your justice and mercy, and for all these we bless you and magnify your holy name, now and for ever, Amen.

George Wither (1588-1667)

A thought from Aileen Fox:

Which direction?



I like having something to do whilst watching TV. I used to do counted cross stitch but these days find it difficult to see the holes. I have a canvas cross stitch kit with large holes in my favourite colours of oranges and yellows. This kit is a true cross rather than the often used half cross stitch. You go in one direction with stitches along the line or block, then come back with the stitch in the opposite direction making the cross! The stitch underneath goes in one direction and the one on top in the opposite direction for the entire row, which is fine if doing straight lines or blocks of colour, not as easy for zig zags. A slight turn of the canvas and you can easily confuse the direction you should be going in and it spoils the overall effect (or you end up undoing stitches!).

However, life is a bit different we are not all on identical paths. We might set off with straightforward plans when there is a sudden change of direction, a deviation of the path we expected to take. I am always reminded of the path Jesus trod, encountering stumbling blocks, opposition. And the disciples, especially the fishermen who really did have a deviation from their expected life path. They left their fishing, travelling the country, witnessing healings and being with Jesus who changed their lives. Are we as followers of Jesus prepared to change direction when asked to, or when life dictates otherwise? Will we embrace the new path trusting in Jesus as the disciples did?

Loving Lord, help me to be prepared to change direction when you ask me to. Amen

Please pray for the congregation and community in **Fulmodeston**.



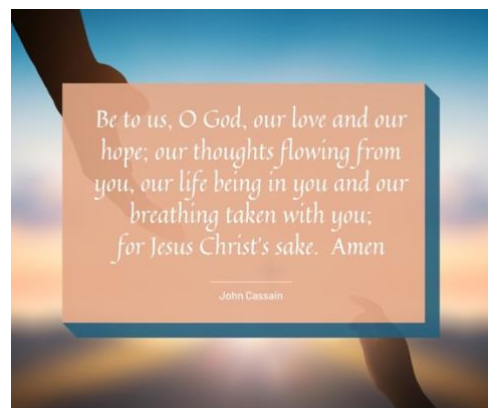
A thought from Sam Parfitt:



Today marks a convergence of two events in the Christian Calendar - Ash Wednesday and St Valentine's Day. It might seem strange to be reminded of our fragile mortality on a day which at the same time is celebrating love - they seem like very disparate things.

Recently in a homily I heard the Priest say 'one cannot have love without pain' and that sentence really stuck with me. I thought about the love that giving birth to Wendy brought me (which definitely came with pain), the love that adoptive parents have for their children (who will have been through the pain of losing one or more parents) and the love that children have for their parents (with the inevitable and eventual pain of grieving).

So, perhaps we can't do anything about the painful bits, maybe they're an entwined non-refundable part of what it is to live the human experience fully. What we can do, however, is learn to recognise love, nurture it, keep it in our hearts all year round and keep it well. So, whether you're going to be ashed or serenaded today, my prayer for you is that love finds you, makes itself known to you and rests within you.



A thought from Rev Anne:

What does Lent mean to you? I've been trying to put it into a few words, using just the letters of the word!

So far, I've come up with:

Luxuries forbidden
Energies focused afresh
Narrowed beautifully to give
Time for God
Love
Endlessly
Never
Turn-away
Lengthening days bringing
Eternal possibilities for
New spiritual experiences.
Take part!



Do you want to have a try? It's not as easy as you may think - but then neither is Lent! I look forward to seeing yours in the comments!

Please pray for the congregation and community in Garvestone.



Today's Thought for the Day is from Deacon Jen:

A couple of years ago I moved some snowdrops to this bank. Then last year, in the Autumn I planted some tete a tete daffodil bulbs and crocus bulbs. I had forgotten that I had done so. Then a couple of days ago, I was delighted to see them all out in quite close proximity. It seemed to me that each had their own beauty and each of them also complemented the others. What a lovely surprise.

If we say a kind or encouraging word to someone, we don't always know what effect that will have. We don't always see an immediate result. But, at some point, we may be surprised by what 'comes up' in the future.

Equally it may be that someone has said something to you in the past that has had a profoundly positive effect in your life. Let us always look for ways to be encouraging, loving and affirming. At the same time, be thankful for how things have been enabled to grow in us.



A thought from Aileen Fox:

The recent weather has seen local roads flooded. Driving to take a service in a village about 5 miles away, I came across two areas where the water was across the road. It was still raining hard. I resolved to be sensible and to take a different way home and avoid the flooded area.



Strangely, the Old Testament reading for the day was about Noah and the ark! I had taken a small Noah's ark with me, carved in wood and this I laid on the table in front of me. What an appropriate topic on a wet day as we looked at the animals and the giraffes, elephants, camels, crocodiles, cats and dogs, certainly not to scale but adding to the quirkiness of the set. We thought about Noah and his trust to carry out such a request from God and how he must have been laughed at. We also thought about the practicalities of such a feat, such as the disposal of waste products, the smell and the possibility of some animals eating others.

It also set me thinking later of the situation so many people find themselves in, living in the open, fleeing conflict, struggling to find food and water, enduring floods and earthquakes. How scared they must be and such a feeling of desperation. I felt scared coming home a different way where the conditions were even worse. If I turned around, I would have to go back through the water I had just come from, should I do that or press onwards?

Well, I am typing this so you know I got home eventually. We don't always make the correct decisions, but God knows this and he will help us come through those unwise times. Are we willing to trust God? Are we open to changing direction and not just to avoid the difficult situations. God is love, let us hold on to that.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Great Ellingham.



The Methodist Church

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Pray with us today.

Eternal God, we seek clarity and reassurance in a bewilderingly complex world.

Grant us the patient trust that will enable us to sense your hand in the emergent, the ambiguous, the random and the fragile. Give us courage to embrace your vulnerability seen in Jesus Christ.

May your Spirit help us to understand it is amid the darkness that your light can be seen most clearly; attune the eyes of faith so that we can detect and follow the glimpses of your kingdom's radiance. In the still, dark night of our days may we behold galaxies of divine light and love and be captivated by the vision of your glory. Amen.

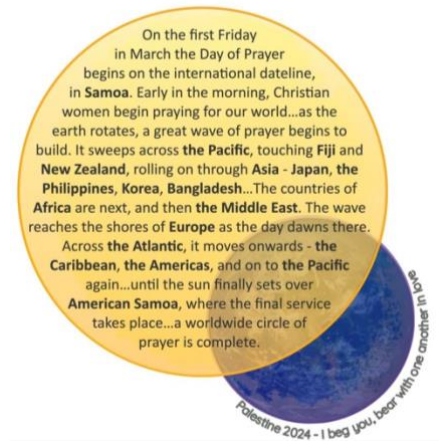
Find more ways to pray at methodist.org.uk/prayer.

A Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:

I have taken the attached graphic from the website of the World Day of Prayer - which is this Friday!

As the text in the yellow ball says, the prayer begins in one part of the world and then rolls round in a great wave of prayer through the day.

The service this year has been prepared by Christian Palestinian women on the theme 'I beg you, bear with one another in love.' If you are not able to get to one of the ecumenical services in various parts of our Circuit on Friday, then at least be part of the global wave of prayer and pray for our world, for the women of Palestine, and for Christians everywhere bearing with each other in love.



A thought from Sam Parfitt:



This reflection is the last one that I'll write as an employee of the Central Norfolk Circuit, as this is the last week of my notice period before moving on to my next adventure! Seven years seems to have gone by extraordinarily quickly, although a lot has happened in that time, both in the Circuit and in my personal life. I am sad to be leaving, but unto everything there is a season, and this is my season to move on. I will take many happy memories with me, and some sad ones too. Life can be tough sometimes, and it doesn't really care whether you've already got enough on your plate.

I remember things seeming particularly difficult whilst working at the Cafe at Blakeney, when I found a piece of paper on the floor in the Chapel. On it was written 'Lord, help me to remember that nothing will

happen today that between us we can't handle' it was exactly what I needed to find and that little phrase has kept with me ever since, propping me up on more than one occasion!

So, thank you Central Norfolk for being awesomely you, it has been a pleasure, but my time has come. I've got my coat and the taxi is waiting outside - for my final words (well, the words of Jerry Springer!) take care of yourself, and each other xx

