

Facebook Posts January 2024

A Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:

A Happy New Year to all our followers from the Central Norfolk Circuit!

A year ago we were beginning 'Pray 2-3' - the District Prayer project for 2023. In our Circuit, we resolved to have a different prayer initiative for each month, however big or small. We managed it with the exception of June.

To see what we did each month, go to our website www.centralnorfolkmethodistcircuit.org.uk and click on Resources and then Prayer. A thought for the 2nd day of 2024: how can each of us keep our prayer life fresh, up to date, and creative? Maybe trying something different each month of this year for ourselves?



Pray with us today.

God the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. Strengthen and deepen our commitment to revealing your kingdom through our lives and by our prayers. Grant us, we pray, wisdom to discern signs of your kingdom in the world around us, wherever grace, mercy and truth are present. Enable us to discover, even in unexpected places, the beauty of holiness revealed in personal acts of compassion and sacrifice. Empower all people of goodwill to work towards establishing social structures and relationships that embody justice and peace. Through the faithful endeavour of us and all your people, may your kingdom come your will be done. Amen.



Rev Anne writes:

Going on country walks with Merlin, my poodle, has taught me that he really doesn't like pigs. In fact, I think it would be true to say he's quite frightened of them!

Every time we come across a field where pigs are free range, he simply refuses to walk past them. He sits down, digs his heels in and I either have a choice of dragging him through, or picking him up and carrying him. There would be no point in me, trying to explain to him how there is a wire that keeps the pigs away from us. There'd be no point trying to show him that pigs and dogs are not mutually exclusive. There's something about the smell, the sound, the way they move, that he really doesn't like. I'm not really keen on dragging my dog anywhere so I pick him up and carry him past the pigs!! Once through, he jumps down very happily - his tail comes up and off he goes.



It strikes me that we can be very similar to Merlin when faced with various things that we are afraid of! It doesn't have to make sense. It can be almost something subconscious. But of course the big difference is that we can understand, for our minds can speak into our emotions. When we trust in the Almighty God who cares for us, we know that even when we are afraid, the 'everlasting arms' surround us. Indeed, as the footprints poem reminds us, it's at the lowest saddest, most frightening times of our lives that we find ourselves being carried. Pray that as we face all that will come in the year ahead that we will continue to put our trust in God who loves us and carries us.

Pray with us today



O God our Creator, like the collier digging underground and the quarryman chiselling the face of the slate, you are at work to discover treasure in unexpected places. May we produce something beautiful for you, even from the darkness and the coldness, that we may bring glory to your name and for the sake of the coming of your kingdom. Amen.

A thought from Deacon Jen:

At the end of January Jacqui and I led the Big Sunday Zoom service from our sitting room at home. I made sure the Christmas decorations on the mantelpiece were in just the right position on the screen. Of course, I also put on a smart blouse and jacket, making sure my diaconal cross could be seen clearly. So, the physical appearance was as good as I could make it. Then I realised I could just put on a pair of jeans – as no-one could see them. This I did, but then I immediately had a sense of discomfort, that something just wasn't quite right. It was as though there was a disconnect between the two halves of my body. I changed into smart trousers and then felt more connected and authentic to lead worship.



On reflection later a few questions came to my mind.

Do we always bring our whole selves to worship or is it sometimes just part of us?

When we leave a church service, do we then 're-connect' with the rest of ourselves and continue on with our everyday life?

Does worship change all of us (if at all) or just part of us?

There are no easy answers but I think it is worth challenging ourselves by asking the questions.



A thought from Rev Rosemary:

When we came back from Africa, I was so blessed to get a job in a village school. They've all gone now. I had the 4-7s. They were a mix of true country children and others who had moved into the country.

Paul was the son of a remote marsh farmer. He was a shy, thoughtful child. We had just finished playtime, the bell had gone, but Paul (aged 6) remained motionless at the fence looking into the field of cows. I went over to him and reminded him that the bell had gone. He remained motionless and pointed to a nearby cow and said she was in labour. The children gathered round and I said we were all to remain still and silent. She dropped a black and white calf and turned to lick it as it struggled to its feet. I whispered that we could now go in, but Paul remained. He said she was still in labour, and the calf was small, he was sure she was having twins. Of course, he was right! After a short time another little black and white calf appeared. The children were thrilled I wonder if there are still children with that sort of knowledge and sensitivity - I do hope so.



A Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen:



One afternoon recently I was driving a little way to visit some people. I had the car radio on Classic FM, and was enjoying the variety of pieces being played. They were all pieces I knew well and each composition created a different atmosphere and mood within myself. I was thinking about this and how we react to music in different ways according to what memory it triggers.

Then the presenter announced that they were just about to play a movement from Bach's Double Violin Concerto. In my mind I was immediately taken back over twenty years ago to when I was teaching the violin in Chichester. I taught at the Cathedral school and one of my violin pupils was particularly gifted. Just before he left the school, he and I performed the same piece of music to which I was now listening, accompanied by the Cathedral organist. Driving along I could still feel the same sense of pleasure and accomplishment that I had felt on that day.

Music, of all styles and tastes, is a very strong trigger for our memory. Let us thank God for music and for all the memories we hold dear. Which pieces of music trigger memories for you?

A thought from Sam Parfitt:

This is, undoubtedly one of the most unstable periods of my life that I've experienced for a long time - I have moved house, am in the process of divorce, my Stepfather is dying and I need to look for another job as my contract comes to an end in the next couple of months (I may stay on reduced hours for a bit, but I'll still need to find a supplementary job!) Most, if not all of the most stressful things that can happen in life - all happening at the same time! One of the most impactful of those changes has been leaving my home of 18 years and moving into a little cottage in Walsingham. Our homes give us (at best) a stable base to explore the world from and encounter life's other hardships. When that base wobbles, life can feel wobblier for it.



Over Christmas, one of my favourite programmes, Ghosts, which airs on BBC one gave me food for thought. In it, the ghosts were entering a poetry competition and the subject was home. What Lady Button (one of the ghosts) wrote about home was especially poignant;

The flowers die, the trees fall.
The house can change brick by brick until nothing of the original remains.
Everything changes.
So, home is not the walls or the gardens.
Home is the souls within those walls.
Home is the memories made on this spot.
Home is not a place.
Home is a feeling.

It has made me reflect on home as more than bricks and mortar, more than place, and indeed, if home is a feeling, then I feel loved, cared for and held in a myriad of ways by friends and family, they are my stable base from which I navigate life's ups and downs. And for that, I am ever thankful.

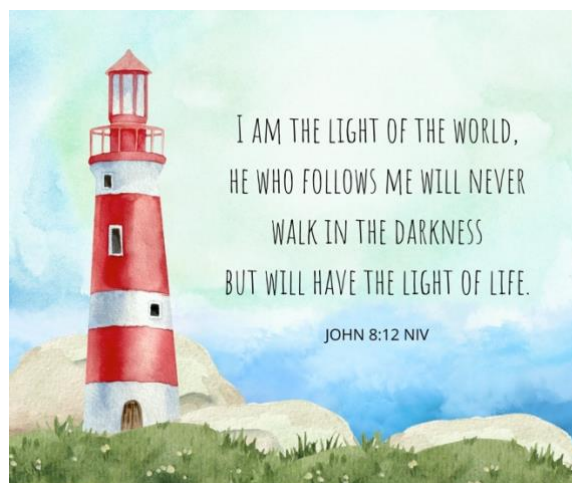
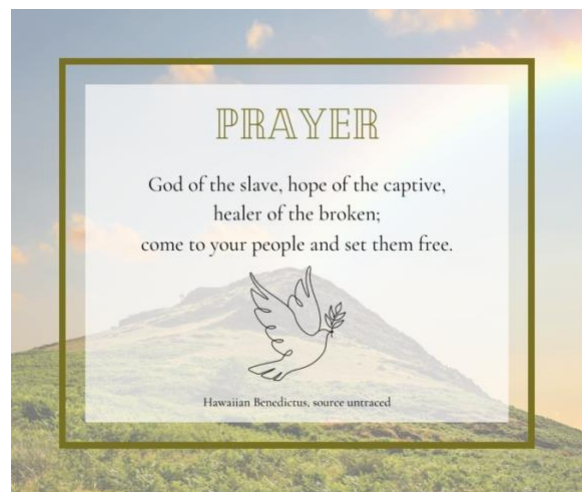
Rev Anne notices - Just a metre apart on the path, in the same soil and environment, one gorse is full of flower even in January, the other has hardly anything on it at all! What makes the difference? I know there are probably many factors that gardeners and biologists can explain, but the obvious difference to me as I walked past, is the sun. One is growing where it catches all the morning sunshine, the other grows hidden behind a tree.



We all need sunlight to cheer our days and I expect, like me, you're looking forward to longer days and more hours of sunlight to enjoy outside.
Spiritually, we all need the Son-Light too.

Do we make time to allow that light to fill our hearts, minds and souls?

We just need to place ourselves so we can catch the full light to help us grow and flourish.



Thought for the day from Rev Jacqui:

Around 25 people met for prayer and conversation at the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Swaffham last Thursday. Anglicans, Catholics and Methodists enjoyed being together as they did again yesterday morning, and will do on Thursday evening. We recently brought the formal structure of a churches together organisation to an end and decided to go for a more relational network.

When Christians of different denominations meet up with each other they usually discover a wider world than their own church, they make new friends, and they experience the power of shared prayer!



Creator God, you separated light and darkness giving us the precious gifts of day and night. You used the stars of the sky to illustrate your covenant promises. You sent messengers to the shepherds as they kept watch by night. Speak to us through the darkness.

Christ Jesus, you often prayed under the cover of darkness, searching for guidance about the next steps in your journey. In Gethsemane we sense you wrestling with questions yet affirming your commitment to God's will. From the hidden darkness of the tomb came resurrection and new life. Intercede with us in the darkness.

Holy Spirit, you brooded over the waters of the deep, calling forth rich treasures where we saw only a void. Elizabeth was filled with your presence as her baby leapt for joy in the darkness of the womb. In the secret depths of sleep, you spoke to your servants through dreams and visions. Show us what is hidden in the darkness. Amen.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Beetley.



A thought from Aileen Fox:

Angels

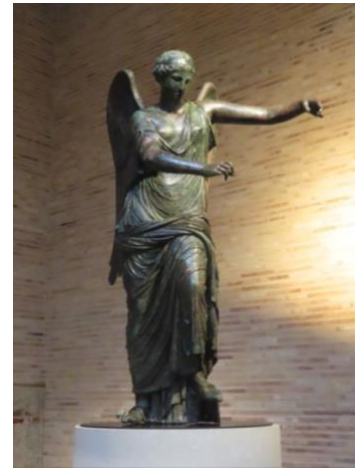
We all have our own ideas about Angels and the imagery from the Bible. But I think there are human angels, people who go the extra mile and make a difference and appear at the exact time you are in need.

I recently went to a funeral near Norwich, but the way I would normally go involved roads that were closed due to flooding. I set the car Sat nav and set off; it took me across country, through narrow lanes and all the time I was conscious that the time for the funeral was drawing near. I arrived at the nearby car park to see the Hearse pulled up and waiting. I had 8 minutes to get to the chapel.

In my haste in looking for a space, I drove the wrong way round the car park and was promptly cursed by another driver for doing so, and the car park was full! I saw the attendant checking tickets; he remarked on the other driver's language. I asked him if there was any more parking explaining I was trying to get to a funeral. This lovely man immediately told me to turn my car round and he would move his car in the corner and I could have his space. I ran to the machine to pay, and he accompanied me. Another person was trying to work out the cost, so I tactfully said I'm trying to get to a funeral to which her reply was 'Is it ... because so am I' I then discovered I hadn't enough coins and got out my card to pay, 3 minutes to start time! Then the lady handed me a £1 coin to use. The patient attendant put the money in for her and for me and we ran to our cars to put the tickets on.

Rushing to the chapel we encountered the family waiting to go in so tactfully asked if we should slip in before them. Another person arrived behind us and we were allowed past and upstairs to find that seats were available. Angels indeed in people prepared to assist and help us get to the funeral in time. My lack of preparation and timing was poor but Angels came to my rescue and I was really in panic mode by then.

I hope I will be ready to help someone, instead of getting impatient when they are trying to use a car park machine.



Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen:

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.

A thought from Sam Parfitt:

At the weekend Wendy and I went to walk around the snowdrops at Walsingham Abbey, it's something that neither of us had done before and we felt that living in Snowdrop Cottage, we should probably give it a go! Despite it being a couple of weeks still until the snowdrops are really out en masse, there was a beautiful carpet of delicate white flowers across the woodland floor.

What I like about snowdrops is that they've pushed their way through the soil into a climate that is still too harsh for lots of other plants. They may be small and delicate, but they are resilient and a symbol of hope that there are always better times to come and that beauty can blossom through hardship.

