

Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Facebook Posts

January 2026



A thought from Rev Neil:

I wonder whether the new year is an opportunity for the new and exciting, or if it's just more of the same old, same old?

As a young person the start of the new year was always exciting with a host of new opportunities: a new school year (in South Africa the academic and calendar year are aligned), a new adventure - off to university, or perhaps a new job, or as a minister, a new station.



There always seemed to be something to look forward to in the new year and I entered the new year with the attitude that this is the year I will... At the very least it was an opportunity to make a new start with the affirmation that "this year, things will be different!". Cue the New Year's resolutions!

As I've gotten older and time seems to be passing by far more quickly than it used to, it is easy to fall into a trap of "not this again". Thank goodness we survived the past year, but do we really have to do it all over again this year?

There's little that's new, 1 January simply heralds another month, and before we know it we'll be into February, then August and December and Christmas and it all begins again. While I don't think New Year's resolutions are necessarily helpful, I wonder if we could preserve some of the joy - and perhaps innocence - of our youth by looking for things to be excited about in the new year?

These do not have to be great adventures, or particularly expensive, but I think making plans that help us foster a sense of excitement about the future preserves not only our own joy in living, but also our youth. If we have nothing to look forward to, it's very easy to lose hope and motivation. So, no big philosophical diatribe, simply some suggestions which I think help us to be more positive about the coming year:

Do something new that gets you moving. Even if it's walking around the block - or to the front gate or moving one's arms if that's what you can manage, but one step more than what you can do now. Maybe the achievement is standing up, maybe it's running a marathon, but commit to an achievement.

Learn something new. Take a course. It doesn't have to be formal, maybe something at the local community centre, or a study at your local church. Maybe take on formal studies that you have long thought about. How about learning that musical instrument you always dreamed of playing? Nobody says you have to be any good as long as you enjoy it. And maybe you will be good!

Grow something new. Plant a garden. Plant something now that you can look forward to blooming later in the year (in the UK begonias, geraniums, lobelia and sweet peas, according to Google), or that will produce fruit that you can look forward to in a few years' time.

Create something new. Plan a creative project. Baking, art, renovating a room in your house. Exercise your creative juices. Remember that the heart of God is creativity, letting things be, and when we create, we are reflecting the image of God.

Go somewhere new. Be intentional about taking a trip away, maybe take a day-long trip to a big city, or a rural area. Maybe if you have the resources plan a longer time away in your own country, or a neighbouring one. Plan the trip you've always wanted to do. Make the move you've been wanting to make but that scares you and you never get around to making. Line up a new job to look forward to.

Read something new. For those who love reading, little compares to the anticipation of cracking open a new book by a favourite author. But why not try somebody different for a change? Read that book you've always wanted to but have found excuses not to. Maybe it's rubbish and you'll put it down after a chapter, but maybe it will change the way you think.

I could say much more about reconnecting with others, restoring relationships and finding new life in old places - and in new ones. Perhaps the best way to sum up is with an encouragement to take more risks. I often wonder whether we get old because we stop taking risks, or whether we stop taking risks because we get old. I suspect it's a bit of both, but by embracing the risk of the new, we are more inclined to keep ourselves young!

May you have a risky 2026!

A thought from Aileen:

January 2nd and 2026 is here. What will it bring us? Will it be a good year, full of joy and laughter, or sadness and worry? I'm not into crystal balls or reading tea leaves but I know that every New Year we all wonder and look at the year ahead and what might happen.

We do around this time remember the visit of the wise men (or Kings) to the Holy family, though they are usually depicted in the Nativity scene. Those who came to see Jesus were not sure; the shepherds were down to earth men used to living rough with the sheep, probably outsiders, but show us that Jesus is for everyone. This is also very true of the wise men, rich, from another culture and country, yet wanting to worship someone of enormous significance even to them. They did not have to come.

January is a cold month and people find it difficult, me included. I don't like the cold but there is beauty all around us. The photos accompanying this are from various walks I've taken over the years in January. It's a reminder that I mustn't hibernate but go out and see what is around me, people and places. This time of the year I see the shapes of the trees without leaves and as anyone who accompanies me on a walk with my camera knows, I take many photos of trees. They are so beautiful yet I could easily miss them.

We don't always look closely at the beauty around us, we don't always stop and observe. Shepherds and wise men came not knowing quite what they would find but they came. They found Jesus and returned telling others about what they had seen, strange as it was. We don't always recognise the inner beauty in others or the beauty around us.

This year perhaps we can show the love of Jesus to those whom we meet. Sometimes offering a greeting, or befriending someone struggling with loneliness can make such a difference. There are always causes in need of a helping hand even for a few hours. And let's pray for those in need and for ourselves that we may hear God saying to us please go and help.

Beauty for brokenness is a wonderful thought-provoking song by Graham Kendrick. (Singing the faith 693) It reminds us that God is for everyone and the refrain goes: God of the poor, friend of the weak, give us compassion we pray: melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain: come, change our love from a spark to a flame.

Might this be a thought to take with us into 2026?

Happy New Year





A thought from Rev Derek:

New Year's resolutions.

Let me start by wishing all our regular readers of our “thought for the day” in the Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit a very happy 2026. I am personally indebted to all of you who are generous enough to “like” our efforts and I particularly love those of you who take time to comment on some of the things we write - thank you very much; it makes me believe that this is an important part of our ministry.



Watching a television quiz show over Christmas (I can't remember which one it was, sorry) a YouGov survey was quoted offering four age ranges and the question was about which age range in the UK were most likely to make New Year's resolutions. I have Googled this and you can check it out for yourselves on

<https://yougov.co.uk/.../53756-what-new-years-resolutions...> (Marianne adds - it was The Wheel)

The age ranges offered were 18-24, 25-49, 60-64 and 65+. Needless to say, I confidently got it wrong! The answer is that of the 19% of people who claim to make resolutions 37% were in the 18-24 age bracket and the percentages got lower the older the people got. Read into that what you may, but I wonder whether it is that the older we get the more likely we are to accept the inevitable and possibly think “why bother” I have to commend my wife who made a New Year's resolution in January 1981 to stop eating sweets and a staggering (in my opinion as I pop a Christmas chocolate in my mouth) 44 years later, she still hasn't eaten a sweet. I'm sure that must be a record, unless you know different.

It is a custom in the Methodist Church during January each year to respond to the Christmas story by renewing our promises to God as we hold a special service called “The Covenant Service” and up and down the country and around the world Methodist people will reflect on the promises made years ago and reaffirm their commitment to life a Christian life as we say a special prayer. The more modern version of the prayer today reads:

I am no longer my own but yours.

Your will, not mine, be done in all things, wherever you may place me, in all that I do and in all that I may endure.

When there is work for me and when there is none; when I am troubled and when I am at peace. Your will be done when I am valued and when I am disregarded; when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking; when I have all things, and when I have nothing.

I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you, as and where you choose.

Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.

May it be so forever.

Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.

Regardless of whether you class yourself as Christian or not, Methodist or not and whether you go to Church or, regardless of age, gender race or anything else, I don't think this is a bad prayer for the beginning of a new year.

With best wishes for 2026

Please pray for the congregation and community in Tittleshall



A thought from Dee:

We have now packed our Christmas decorations away, and we have all probably eaten too many mince pies and chocolates! So now we can get back to some sort of normality, and focus our minds on this season of Epiphany, what it really means to us both collectively and personally. Epiphany means a sudden revelation or realisation.

In the book of Isaiah chapter 60 verse 1 says "***Arise and shine for your light has come.***" We have the call of the disciples told in the gospels, calling them to share this light, which was revealed through the coming of Jesus.

What does this mean for us?

How can we reflect God's light to shine to others?

At the moment we seem to be living in a dark world, what can we do to share this light?

Of course we cannot solve the world's problems ourselves, but we can look around exploring different possibilities, open ourselves up to new things and seeing what is needed. It can start with a kind word or deed, or just a hand held in silence, shedding light on someone's darkness, making a difference.

John 1: v 5 says "***The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it***"

May 2026 be an enlightening and blessed year for us all.



A thought from Rev Neil:

Sometimes one needs to experience something to appreciate it.

Coming from South Africa snow is a novelty!

While our winter minimum temperatures where I grew up on the Highveld - close to Johannesburg - are similar to what we have experienced this week - a few degrees below zero, with an occasional drop to six or seven below - there are a couple of significant differences between the winters in the UK and on the Highveld.



This first is that the Highveld winters are dry. There could very easily be no rain from May to September. So, the climate is not conducive to snow. Indeed, when snow does fall it is often in spring when there is enough moisture in the air combined with a sudden cold snap. On the day of the first snowfall I experienced as a child I had gone to school in short trousers and sleeves.

The other significant difference is that the maximum daytime temperatures are much higher, typically reaching the early teens, even when the minimum is below freezing. A lot of human thawing happens sitting outside absorbing the sun, rather than in a centrally heated building. Daytime temperatures in the minuses are very rare indeed!

The result of this, when we do have snow, is twofold: if we have a smattering of snow as we did in Norfolk this week, first it would only be one day's snow fall, and second it would be melted by lunchtime the next day. I have never experienced more than one day's snowfall at a time (and, to be fair, maybe only experienced snow on the Highveld a handful of times).

Another difference, which I put down to the above mentioned warmer daytime temperatures, is that snow lands and stays on lawns, and in gardens, not on roads. I guess the harder surfaces hold just enough daytime heat to melt any snow that lands on them.

So, my limited experience of snow needs to be completely revised when I see the snow landing, and staying on the roads, but melting more quickly in the garden!

Incidentally, this is also the first time I've seen value in having heated seats and steering wheel as features in my car. Previously I've pooh-poohed these as unnecessary luxuries!

My point, though is that sometimes we are quick to write something off without experiencing or understanding it fully. Experiencing proper snow here has changed the way I think about it, as has many of my experiences in the UK so far. I'm sure you can think of an experience that changed your perspective on something.

I find this a helpful way to think of the incarnation, the enfleshment of God's presence in our world that we celebrate at Christmas. The experience of living with us moves God from a place of judgment to a place of empathy, and invites us also to experience the world from God's presence, to reach out and touch the Kingdom which Jesus proclaims, even now, is at hand.

God's experience of us, and our experience of God, unite us in a deeper understanding of a universe which challenges our own prejudices and misconceptions and invites us to experience life from a broader perspective, which is inclusive and welcoming of new people and new ideas. Even heated car seats!

I encourage you to find new ways of seeing things in the new year.

A thought from Aileen:

What Direction?

As I have stated on numerous occasions, I am not good at direction. When I use Sat Nav in the car it's not too bad. Recently I had to use Google maps for a walking route and it told me to turn north or south and it was no use and I had no idea whether I was going in the correct direction. I had to rely on finding the street names and that in some cases was hard as the name seemed to be missing, plus coping with the Polish names.

I had a recent train journey from Sheffield to Ely and I checked it out with great care, which platform and lunch and coffee purchased, all seemed ok. I kept an eye on the departure board and was feeling very pleased with myself. I noticed too that the departure board indicated that passengers travelling beyond Nottingham needed to be in the first two carriages of the 4-carriage train. The train arrived early and I made my way to the first carriage where there was a luggage space for my suitcase. I settled myself down facing forward the way I was travelling. Coat on the top rack, coffee and Kindle at the ready. On time the train moved and I found myself going backwards! Now there was a dilemma the train was to split at Nottingham so I needed to be in the correct carriage. I assumed someone would come and check my ticket but the only official was the person with the refreshment trolley. He seemed to think it was the two carriages behind me. (It was obvious really the train had come from Norwich stopped at Sheffield as final destination then would make the return trip, common sense was absent from me that morning!)

I packed my rucksack again, reached for coat and suitcase and slowly moved to the other end of the train not easy in the narrow passageway and a jerky train. I kept listening to the announcements of the next station but nothing was said about the train splitting at Nottingham.

I did reach Ely safely and found the warmth of the waiting room welcome as I waited for the train for King's Lynn. 14 minutes before it was due, a platform change was announced and everyone for King's Lynn needed to change direction, walk under the platform via the tunnel to platform 3. All the years I have travelled from Ely the train to King's Lynn has always gone from platform 1.

It got me thinking about direction and how direction is needed in our lives. We often think we are going in the right direction just as I did from Sheffield, though not realising it would obviously go back the way it had come in! But what direction are we setting ourselves on this New Year? Do we know where we are going? Do we need to ask for advice, work with others? Are we so sure of what we should be doing, that we rely on our own strength and expertise only? Do we pray and seek guidance from God?

As part of our Christian journey, we need direction and support to fulfil our earthly tasks. Are we willing to listen to where God is directing us? Sometimes this direction may come from a request or need asked by others. Are we ready to ask God if this is the right direction, especially if it isn't what we had in mind?



A thought from Rev Derek:

Fully Reliant on God

One of the many advantages of being a minister is that we are provided with a house to live in, and over the years I have found the gardens we have inherited to be amazing places. I am no gardener, mowing the lawn when the inclination, time and weather conditions are aligned is about my limit, the rest (in my words) I leave to God and nowadays to a paid gardener. Moving to Dereham in 2024 we inherited a huge Holly bush in our front garden which stands almost as high as the house itself. It stands right alongside the driveway and to be honest has been a bit of a nuisance as its branches ran down the side of my car as I drove in and out until during the summer, trying to get a caravan into the drive, we did a bit of brutal pruning.

As Christmas came closer this time our Holly bush became laden with bright red berries and has taken on a new kind of beauty and it has earned a place in my heart. Earlier this week we had a covering of snow and the Holly bush took on a new kind of beauty with the snow on its leaves and, leaving the warm sanctuary of my study, I ventured out and took this photograph which shows the variant shades of green in the leaves against the bright red of the berries, the white of the snow on the leaves and the blue sky beyond, even the frosty cold roof of our neighbour's bungalow is a thing of beauty.

A few years ago, when I was working in Hethersett near Norwich, we decided to start a separate act of Sunday Worship aimed at children and families, it was innovative and fast moving, creative and informal. We had a good group of leaders who related well to all ages and it was successful. One of the early challenges was finding a name, and somebody came up with FROGs, this didn't have a lot to do with the slimy green creature found in our gardens, although one did feature on the logo; FROGs in our context was an acronym for "Fully Reliant on God" and that sentiment underpinned the ethos of what we were doing.

As I look at the picture of the Holly bush, I have become the steward of for a season, I am reminded that I have contributed nothing at all to this splendid vision, I have never tended it, watered it, fed it or done anything apart from complain that it was a bit of an inconvenience. Yet I have the privilege of looking out of my window and seeing this blaze of glory and I am thankful. There are times when I believe that God needs me in his great mission to the world and no matter what, I will continue to serve him in everything I do. But the Holly bush reminds me that God will continue to do his thing long after I have gone, he is far bigger than I am.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Toftwood



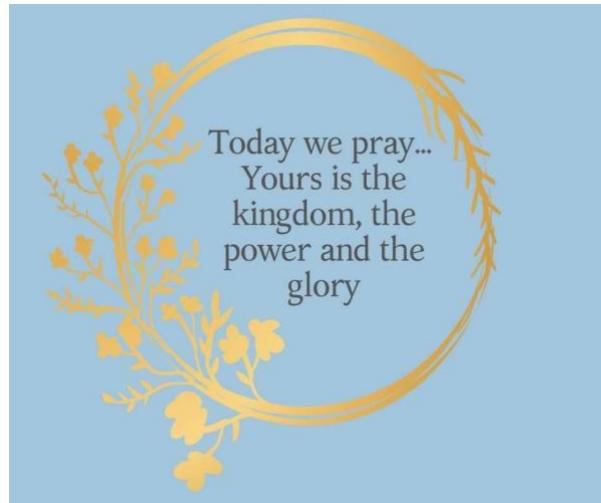
A thought from Seb:

The words we declare at Covenant Service can be difficult to say. Phrases like "I am no longer my own, but yours" and "Your will, not mine, be done in all things" challenge our self-centred nature. They ask for surrender, vulnerability, and a willingness to embrace God's call without reservation. In a world that often tells us to hold on tightly to our autonomy, these words can feel disruptive, even uncomfortable.

But that discomfort is part of the journey. It's okay if we can't fully say them with conviction this year. The process of growth is gradual. Some days, the words may feel impossible, but that doesn't mean we should avoid them altogether. We can come back to them again and again, even when they don't come easily. Each time we return to the covenant, we may find that we are a little closer to the place where we can truly mean what we say. Even if we have said them in the past with ease, that doesn't mean that it remains easy. Our journey is no linear.

Faith is not about perfection but about the willingness to keep coming back, even when it is hard. If we can only offer part of ourselves at times, that's okay. God knows our hearts and meets us where we are. The covenant is an invitation to a process, not a test. Over time, the words may come more naturally, but in the meantime, repeating them when we can is enough.





A thought from Rev Neil:

One of the things that has surprised me in the UK is the Highway Code.

In a country that seems very cautious about many things, attitude towards road safety is far more laissez-faire.

I'll be driving along a tiny country lane on two narrow strips of tar with grass in the middle, yet the speed limit is sixty miles an hour.

And the lack of stop signs is also remarkable, most intersections seem to be yields rather than stops.

The same could be said of the attitude towards pedestrians and road safety. I believe, and please correct me on this, that while there are pedestrian crossings of many descriptions (I have no idea which is which!) I understand that one may cross the road wherever one please. There are no laws against jay-walking.

The reason for all of the above, I'm given to understand, is that the authorities trust their citizens, in this area at least, to behave sensibly.

If the intersection demands a stop, you're expected to stop, even though there's a yield sign, if the road is only safe for thirty miles an hour, you're expected to be sensible enough to stick to thirty, and not drive at sixty. You're expected to know how to cross a road!

There are so many reasons why this would not work in South Africa!

I think the same could be said of healthy religion.

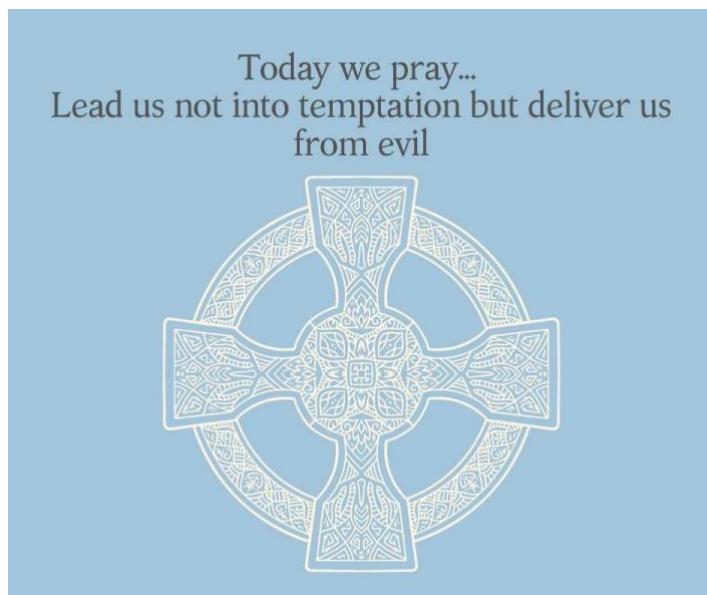
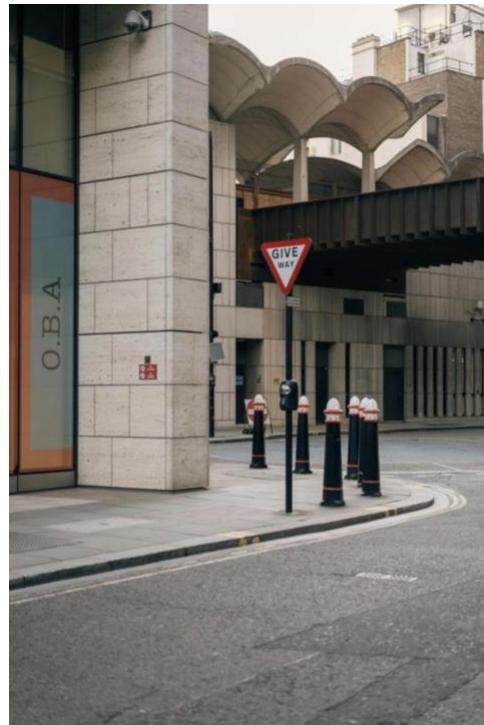
One of the things that I struggle with is that so often it seems that the religions which are most controlling are the ones which are fastest growing.

People seem to be looking for a way that guides them, an religious organisation with clear rules, laws, boundaries that will shape their lives, that they can live according to, and measure themselves by. These type of religious organisations, and I include some churches, but I'm certainly sure that it is broader than this, often seem to be the fastest growing and most popular. By contrast those that are less dogmatic are seen as wishy washy and less attractive, consequently struggling with membership. Who wants to belong to something that doesn't really seem to be anything?

My understanding of God is that we're invited into a mature relationship with the Creator, and not to more rules and laws. While laws may be helpful in growing up and learning responsibility - look both ways before crossing - there comes a time when as adults we know how to cross the road. As followers of Jesus, we're invited into a mature relationship with God which relies less on rules and laws and more on the ability to make sensible choices - life affirming choices - in our interactions with others. Very early on in my spiritual walk I came across a quote which said, if I remember it correctly, "it is possible to be obedient to the Word of God without being obedient to the spirit of the Word of God".

Very similar to the British Highway Code, we're given a guideline and expected to use our own best judgement in executing it to care for others, rather than control them. Sadly, all too often we default to the letter of the law and bad religion is the result.

May I encourage you today to reflect on the way you - perhaps as a follower of Jesus - respond to the many and varied circumstances you face? Do you respond from a place of law - this is how it must be done, or from a place of grace, offering love, healing and acceptance?



A thought from Aileen:

What's the story?

16th January and it's half way through the first month of 2026. Time seems to flash by - I'm told it's a sign of age!

What's our story for 2026? Is it the same as last year? Have we decided to do things differently or have we slipped into the same old routine? On my various visits to the Stockport area, if there is a home game and my season ticket friends can get me a ticket, I go along and support Stockport County football club. I was there when they won the league and also at Wembley for the play off, they lost.

The photos accompanying this show various scenes from the match against Doncaster just after Christmas and to get some of the story you need to look at the scoreboard. There is the initial photo of the players, but also a 0-0 scoreboard, then a 1-1 scoreboard. This would indicate that the two sides were evenly matched so far. In fact, County had actually been 1 down before the equaliser.

What the scoreboard doesn't show us, is the hard-fought effort to get the score to 1-1, how County nearly lost it all and gave away a penalty but came back with the final score 4-2. It was hard watching and it makes me think how life can seem a struggle to us but to people looking at us it might all seems good. Sometimes things don't go right and we battle to regain focus and get on with things. The same is in our churches. We think all is well, we cruise along, but is it? What's the full story beneath the surface both for us as individuals and our churches?

Do we really know how those who come to our churches whether for a coffee morning, a service or other activity are feeling? So many people are hurting, lonely, sad, have problems, yet they put on a smile and pretend all is well. We don't always know their stories and it can be difficult to find out without being nosy. Sometimes we need to pause, perhaps just sit and listen.

A lot of people didn't know about Jesus, local people knew he was the carpenter's son, others wondered who he was, however they all knew he was special, different. Yes, he sometimes challenged them, made them think and it wasn't always what they wanted to hear and yet the story continued through ordinary people, his disciples, the women who followed and looked after the group. Even after the crucifixion and resurrection the good news was passed on, because those entrusted told the story and knew what was if you like the whole back story.

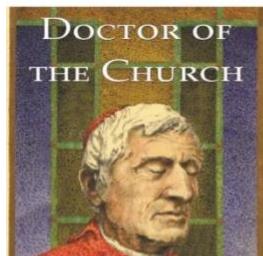
The story needs re-telling today, offering people the opportunity to discover who Jesus is, his love for all. This may not be through conventional or traditional worship. It could be because a Christian befriends someone by passing the time of day, helping with a task and in doing so is able to quietly share how Jesus has changed their lives. We all have a story, some of it we share, some we keep to ourselves. Are we willing to use any opportunities given to us, to share how the love of Jesus has made an impact on our lives? Jesus loves us, forgives us and cares for us, can we share this story?





ONE BODY - ONE SPIRIT TALK

ON SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN
22nd January 2026 at 6.30pm
Methodist Church, Little Walsingham



A TALK BY
FR KEITH TULLOCH SM
On the enduring relevance of
Newman for all Christians in
the Modern World



Join us on **Thursday, 22nd January 6.30pm** for an evening of reflection and learning as we explore the enduring relevance of Saint John Henry Newman for Christians today.

 Speaker: Fr Keith Tulloch SM

 Date: Thursday, 22nd January 2026

 Time: 6.30pm

 Venue: Methodist Church, Little Walsingham

Everyone is warmly welcome to come along for this thoughtful and engaging evening.

A thought from Rev Derek:

Blackout!

Travelling home from my evening service on Sunday 11th January, I drove into the Market Place and noted that the streetlights were all out and the traffic lights weren't working. It felt quite eerie as I drove along streets normally illuminated by the white street lamps but now in total darkness. I breathed a sigh of relief as I noticed that the streetlights just beyond the entrance to our cul de sac were lit. As I approached the manse my heart sank, because it was clear that our very sensitive security lights didn't come on and the light in our entrance wasn't lit. Having just led three services, I was looking forward to making a pot of tea, putting my feet up and watching Call the Midwife. My plans were completely scuppered! Fortunately, my son-in-law has a powerful rechargeable floodlight, which was fully charged and it was like daylight in our lounge, my wife was in her adjustable hospital bed which dominates our lounge, but it was flat and the special mattress not only wasn't inflating and massaging as it ought to do, it was bleeping in an irritating way to tell us that it wasn't functioning correctly. The evening carer had already been and of course the riser, recliner chair that we depend on was useless, and getting Karen into bed had been quite a challenge.



Reading in the paper the following morning I learned that an estimated two thousand homes in two separate areas had been left without power for almost two hours. What was particularly irritating was that the neighbours on one side of our house had power, while neighbours for almost five miles to the west of us including us were in darkness, it was as though the hedge to the east of our property was the boundary! How irritating is that? The lights went on again about fifteen minutes after I arrived home, but those fifteen minutes were intensely stressful. The constant bleeping of the hospital bed, the knowledge that Call the Midwife was in full swing, but we were being denied it, the mug of tea that I had looked forward to on my journey home, the fact that the central heating wasn't working and the fact that I had to negotiate my way around the house by the light of the torch on my phone sent my stress levels skyrocketing, maybe because I was tired.

As I lay in bed, it occurred to me that the life I had just experienced for all of fifteen minutes was possibly not dissimilar to what my dad had known in the first decade of the twentieth century and I felt like a bit of a spoilt brat, the kettle was boiled moments after the power came on, the mattress pump stopped bleeping and got back to doing its job, Karen was able to adjust her bed to a more comfortable position and Call the Midwife was on the telly, albeit we had missed the first twenty minutes, but we can even catch up with that on the iPlayer.

For a few moments, I took stock of just how fortunate I am. They say that you only really appreciate something when it is taken away and perhaps I learned that lesson once again.

Maybe we should all take a moment at the beginning of 2026 to note the things and the people who are precious to us and rather than craving what we don't have, appreciate those things we do have.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Dereham



A thought from Dee:

How many of you made 'New Year's Resolutions', and how many have already been broken?

I don't usually make one, but this year I decided mine would be to go through all my cupboards and drawers and get rid of all the things I don't need, things I have held onto for years which I won't use or wear! I am getting on well with this task and making room for the things that are used and important.

This made me think! How often, as we go through life, we hold on to things weighing us down, old grievances, old ideas not having room or time for things that really matter, no room for new thinking we are so bogged down.

So, as well as clearing and making room in our cupboards and draws, let us take stock of our lives and have a good spring clean all around, and I am sure we will feel better and find we have room to do something different or expand the important things in our lives.





**Beetley
Methodist Church**

Coffee Morning



**Saturday
24th January**

9.30-11.30am

**25% of the proceeds will go
to St Martins Housing Trust**



You're warmly invited to a welcoming and informative day exploring Methodism – ideal whether you are new to Methodism or would simply like to understand more about its story, faith, and direction today.

Led by: Rev Helen Hollands

Where: Swaffham Methodist Church

When: Monday, 27th April

Time: 10.00am – 2.30pm

To book a place, please contact Aimee at [\(Please include any dietary requirements.\)](mailto:aimee@eangliamethodist.org.uk)

Today we pray...
Forgive us... as we forgive



A thought from Aileen:

Preparation

January, a new start, plans are starting to be made for the rest of the year. I am conscious of how much preparation needs to be done for almost all our activities. When you read this, I will have hosted the first school visit of 2026 to Walsingham Methodist, plus a talk through Norfolk and Waveney Churches together on St. John Henry Newman again at Walsingham. These events need some planning, agreeing times, content, ensuring heating is on for the talk and refreshments ready! It isn't just events that need planning, every single day we will be involved in making a decision, planning how the day will go and what we need to help us.

I have to say that my plans constantly change; I have something planned in my mind but a phone call or message will see the day completely changing then it's often hurried preparation.

When I plan a short break anywhere, I am often asked several days before whether I have packed my case, the answer is usually not yet, it will be last minute as usual. When I went abroad at the end of November for a few days solo, I did my preparation early and it really paid off. There was a lot to prepare like digital boarding passes, taxi numbers, plus gathering together booking documents, the address of the hotel, passport and currency.

Already we are seeing the early signs of spring around us and looking forward to flowers. Yet in order to have a show of flowers we have to plan and prepare the ground in readiness months before.

Do we plan and prepare our time with God? Is it an add on or an essential part of our life. As a preacher there is the preparation for a service, choosing hymns, understanding the readings and preparing a message. What though for the days I am not preaching? What about the other activities I have agreed to? What preparation do I do then for serving God? Spending time with God is essential like breathing, but sometimes we arrive out of breath, our minds on other things. We need to prepare ourselves to be with God. Preparation so that we can truly focus on God even for a few minutes before the day takes over.





A thought from Rev Derek:

Interlude

The Grimshaw family took delivery of our first ever television in 1972, it was a rental set from the DER shop in Pudsey and even though the signal left a lot to be desired, we were connected to the delights of BBC1 & 2 and ITV and our lives changed forever with this wonderful new medium in our front room.

One of the features on the BBC back in those days was the "brief interlude" when we were entertained to watching a potter moulding a piece of clay into a bowl while a piece of instrumental music is played. In preparation for writing this thought I watched the interlude on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F4n90yiBrM> and found it relaxing, although in my teenage years I found it unwelcome as I waited for Top of the Pops or Wheelbase, the precursor to Top Gear, two of my favourite programmes of the day. It is years since the interlude was used, according to Google the interlude was introduced in 1953 and was to cover the many intervals in programming, to allow for changes between studios, or for the all-too-frequent studio breakdowns and whether we were watching the potter, or a kitten playing with a ball of wool, they were moments of calm and relaxation.

Watching television today we have a council worker sweeping the litter away from what looks like a street market and rather than finding it relaxing and quaint, I find it extremely stressful. Checking social media, I find that they are also frustrated, but their angst seems to be related to the fact that the council worker is using the brush incorrectly and there are pages of comments about that, which to be honest I hadn't even noticed. My problem is about the ignorant cyclist who must be able to see that the council worker is sweeping the street and cycles right through the rubbish he is clearing up, with scant regard for the efforts of the other man. I was always taught good manners as a child and I think that the BBC are promoting total ignorance, I rant at my poor wife every time I see the filler between programmes as an announcer informs us what other delight are awaiting us. Of course, there is nothing my wife can do about it and it is possibly a reminder to me that life had changed immeasurably in fifty years and I am far less patient today than I was back then.

The older I get, the more important the interlude becomes in my life, whether it is completing a Sudoku puzzle or playing cards on my phone, doing jigsaw puzzles on the computer, or sitting and making Lego models. Watching the potter's wheel takes around six minutes and the interludes I need in my life these days get shorter. Life seems to move at such a pace today and we all need to step back momentarily, put the kettle on and have a short break.

During my time in Ipswich we developed “Bite Sized Church” a ten-minute service which is published every Wednesday morning at 10am and can be found using the following link.

<https://methodistic.org.uk/category/bitesizedchurch/>

The idea was always to give a short interlude in the middle of the week; it takes but a few minutes but is the Methodist Churches Interlude and can be viewed at a time that suits you best.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Little Walsingham



Swaffham Methodist Church

Shrove Tuesday



Soup and Sweet Lunch

Tuesday 17th February



11.30am – 1pm

(following normal Drop-in session)

Choice of home-made soups & sweets,
followed by tea or coffee
(Vegetarian, vegan, dairy & gluten-free options available)

**No charge, but
donations welcome.**



All proceeds for Church funds

Charity Registration No. 1163777



Toftwood Methodist Church

CHAPEL LANE, NR19 1LD

“CHAPEL COFFEE SHOP”



**JOIN US FOR
COFFEE AND SCONES**



HOMEMADE CAKE STALL

**FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

A warm welcome awaits you.

Come for coffee, scones, and good company!

Enjoy a cuppa (coffee or tea) for only **£1**

Treat yourself to a scone with butter for just **£1**

All are welcome!

We look forward to seeing you there!