

# Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

## Facebook Posts

### July 2025

#### A thought from Rev Jonny:

These tiny kiwi berries are only just beginning to grow in our garden. They don't look much like fruit yet. But deep inside, something beautiful is happening; quietly, slowly, and in its own time. We don't grow the fruit ourselves. We can't force it or rush it. But we can make space, tend the soil, and trust that what's planted will become what it's meant to be. Jesus said: "...I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit - fruit that will last..." (part of John 15:16) So, if you're waiting, or wondering if anything good is growing, take heart. The Spirit is still at work. Fruit takes time. But it's on the way.



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**Rev Anne writes:** This looked rather difficult - nothing to hold onto and worn steps! Yet it was surprisingly easy going up! When we are at the start of a task it often seems difficult, with little support. But, step by step, we get there.

What are you facing at the moment? What support do you need? Why not just take that first step?



**Pray for the people  
Pray for the country  
Pray for peace**



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Please pray for the congregation and community in Mattishall



**A thought from Rev Derek:** *The wonder of nature*

(Picture of my new little friend courtesy of my son in law)

Sitting in my study a few days ago, I heard a clicking noise that I couldn't identify, looking around I spotted a little green bird standing on the windowsill and tapping on the window with his beak (sorry, my new little friend might be female of course) regardless he was a beautiful little chap with bright green and yellow feathers, and was no more than about four or five inches from the top of his head to the tip of his tail. As soon as I turned to have a chat with my new friend, he flew away, but his job was done, I had been watching the news and had been grappling with some online training and this little bird brightened up my day and made me feel as though life is worth living. Nobody could ever describe me as an ornithologist and as far as I was concerned my new little friend was nothing more than simply a little green and yellow bird, but he was so beautiful that I wanted to know more. I Google "little green British birds" and the European Greenfinch seemed to be the closest match and I'm told that they are often seen in Norfolk, so that was good enough for me.

We have lived in a more urban area for the last eleven years and I had forgotten what it is like living in the country, there is very little noise pollution here, and I love sitting in my study first thing on a morning with the window open and listening to the dawn chorus. The morning birdsong is beautiful and much less harsh than the sound of Wood Pigeons and Seagulls, who, in my opinion, prefer a bit of a lie-in because they don't appear to join in until later. I see the same Blackbird regularly standing on the fence at the front of the manse, there is a little Robin who is a frequent visitor and I keep seeing my little green and yellow friend, who will pop up from time to time and tap on the window.

It is a bit too easy for us to get depressed with everything that is happening in the world and there are times I believe that we do well to stop and appreciate the world we live in. People have different views of creation, the biblical story recorded in the book of Genesis and Darwin's theory of evolution. Whatever your belief, it seems to me that the natural world is amazing. Scientists believe that there is an estimated 8.7million species of animals, and around 20,000 species of birds and new species are being discovered by the day. I find it exciting that I never cease to be impressed by nature and whether we thank God, or are simply appreciative we should never take the natural world for granted. My little green and yellow pal reminds how good it is to be alive.



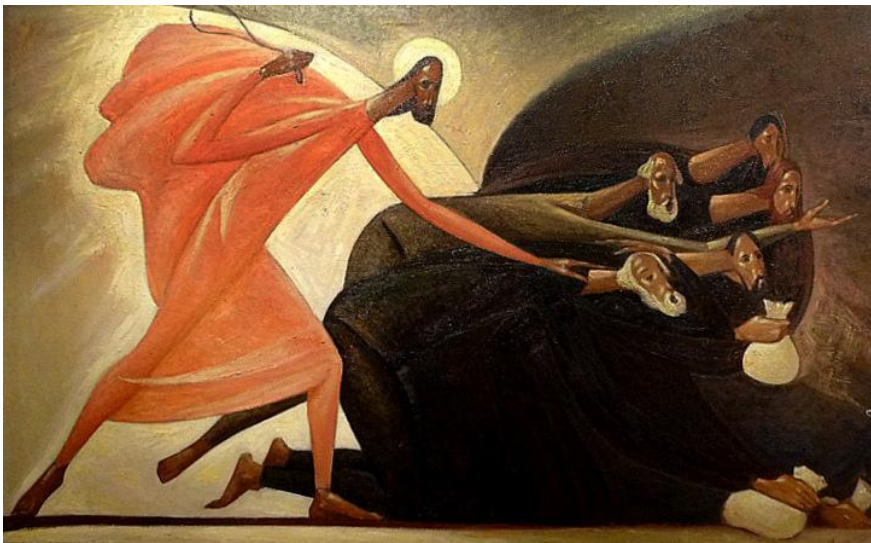


### **A thought from Rev Jonny:**

Today, one of the ways in which we would describe Jesus and his ministry is 'direct action'. Instead of relying on someone else to do the work of change, he did it himself. He went to people and healed them. He stood up to the authorities of the time, regardless of who they were, and challenged abuses of power. In our Holy Communion liturgies, we say, "In words and deeds he proclaimed your kingdom..."

Thinking about the cleansing of the Temple, would he be proscribed as a terrorist by our own country's standards? He damaged people's property – people who were trying to make a living, causing a great deal of criminal damage. He even wielded a weapon and chased people out. Very threatening behaviour, indeed! Yet he is the Son of God. He even took his direct action so far as to take on all the sins of the world on the Cross.

Image: Alexander Smirnov, The Cleansing of the Temple. Oil on canvas.



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Please pray for the congregation and community in New Holkham



### A thought from Aileen Fox:

The phrase I have often used is being in the right place at the right time. So many times I have seen this put into action and I have sometimes been the person in the right place at the right time. But also there are times when being in the wrong place at the wrong time has also applied to me. The outcome may have been beneficial in that I wasn't there and in danger. It might also have been that whilst it was wrong for me it might have been right for someone else that I was there to assist.

Reflecting on the bombings in London on the 7th July 2005 -the 20th anniversary has just taken place; made me think of where I wasn't on that day. I was working from home. Exactly a week after the bombings I was in London at the Old Methodist Church House in Marylebone Road. Like many that day I stood outside at the appointed time to remember those who had died as happened all over London. The taxis stopped, the buses, in fact all traffic stopped, everyone came out of offices and the street was silent. That day I was in the right place to show solidarity and remembrance, but had my meeting been the week before at best my train would have been brought to a halt just outside King's Cross or I might have been in the underground station. For many they were in the wrong place at the wrong time but there were many who despite the situation helped and comforted the injured.

My pictures show beautiful Hollyhocks but look closely and you will see they are actually at the front of my borders. I had 3 tiny plants last year set at the back of the border. I had a few flowers and I let them self-seed. Not one Hollyhock is growing at the back this year, all are in the front. It wasn't until they flowered and I came home after a few days away that I saw how beautiful they were and they hid the weeds and other things that needed sorting. I had been meaning to move and replant whilst they were small but never got round to doing it. They are in the wrong place but the pleasure they have given me is great. Sometimes we may feel we are in the wrong place and at the wrong time, perhaps stuck in a traffic jam because we chose the wrong route. Missing a train because of an accident. Sometimes though whilst we wouldn't have chosen to be somewhere, our plans might have changed, we find ourselves caught up in whatever is going on. I realise that we have to seize the opportunities thrust on us however unwillingly, sometimes we can make a difference. Just like my Hollyhocks brightening up the garden and hiding weeds...

In the gospels we read of Jesus' journeys how he was challenged, questioned but he used every opportunity to share with his audiences the good news. Are we willing to use all our experiences to show love and assistance to those we meet? I received support on an interrupted train journey and the help everyone offered made it more bearable. Every day even if it isn't going well, we can with little effort make a difference. Being in the wrong place can also be the right place if it helps someone else.





### **A thought from Rev Derek:** *Winners and losers*

One lovely warm afternoon recently I had the pleasure of attending my grandson's school sports day. I can only ever remember attending one sports day with my own children because I was always working, so I'm sure that you can imagine what a joy it was to walk down to school on this special day, we joined our grandson and sat with dozens of other families and shared in a huge picnic.

The sun shone, and it was the perfect afternoon for the event, the early years children had competed during the morning and it was the turn of the older school children during the afternoon. This wasn't the kind of event where the elite athletes from each year group competed against each other. The local high school had set up about ten different races and every child in the school were involved, they had been split into teams of five with mixed abilities and four teams competed in each discipline and then moved on when the bell rang. I was quite amused as I stood with other parents and grandparents watching; my grandson is perhaps the least competitive person I know and he had great afternoon taking part, he really didn't care if he won or not. Thankfully there were other children in his team who simply had to be the best and come first every time. Interestingly, the most competitive people of all were the parents, many of whom wanted their children to win at all costs and the most competitive races of all were the dad's and mum's races (I was just thankful that they didn't have a grandad's race) and it got me thinking about the whole question of winners and losers.

From a very early age we seem to accept the concept that winning is good, and losing is bad, throughout my life I have been happiest being somewhere in the middle, because that way I could avoid unwelcome attention. Life would be pretty boring if we didn't have this in-built desire to win, I can't imagine a Formula One race without that competitive spirit to come first, or a football match where it didn't matter who won or lost. We thrive on winning, but it can also be incredibly dangerous when people hunger so much for power that they are prepared to invade countries, initiate air strikes and make decisions that will destroy cities, take and destroy lives, and drive thousands of people into poverty.

As I stood and watched my grandson at the sports day, I remembered similar events from my childhood, I was rubbish at running, jumping, throwing, or anything that involved any physical activity and was never even selected for anything like that. I was always a big lad and the one thing I could do was throw the Discus or the Shot Put and I had my moment of glory one year because I came second. Fortunately, my grandson's team of five had some ultra-competitive children and they held their own and regardless of whether he won or lost, I was proud of him and stood there cheering, we can't all be winners, life is about giving of our best and sometimes that looks different for each of us.



### A thought from Rev Jonny:

Seb and I picked and destemmed nearly **2kg of redcurrants** from our garden! After hours of careful preparation, we've now got **seven jars of bright, tangy jam** to show for it. It reminds me of how something seemingly simple can bear such fruitfulness. Much like our faith and expressing this in being in community with each other, it takes time, attention, patience and joy in sharing it with others.

We may not always see the richness straight away, but when we gather, offer what we have, and give our time and care, something beautiful is created: nourishment for others and delight for ourselves.

As we stirred the bubbling pan, testing when it was ready on a cold plate, and jarring it, we were reminded of God's faithfulness: that in season and out, there is always fruit (even if it is hidden) and there is always a table to share it at.

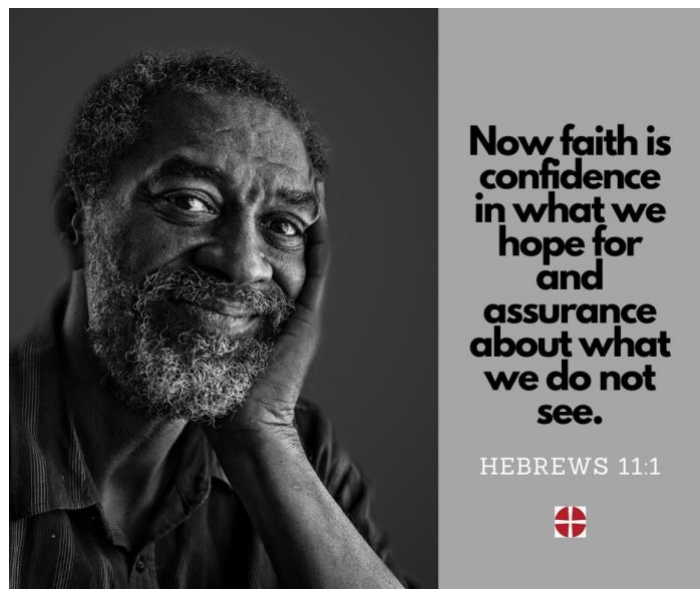


**Rev Anne writes:**

I was on holiday - staying on the coast not far from the Lake District. We drove up to the small town of Silloth (or Silloth-on-Solway) and walking along the promenade came across this fellow!! Looking at the photo later, it struck me how we're all looking in different places. The man is looking out to sea, even shading his eyes to see further. The dog is looking at his ball. I'm looking at the camera!

In the same place, at the same time, but with three different perspectives.

In Luke 10:23 Jesus says: "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see". Look up the verse and take a moment to ask yourself what you're looking at today!





### **A thought from Rev Derek: *Appreciation***

Coming on holiday to Norfolk in the late seventies, I was enthralled by such exciting things as seeing windmills, (or as I was later to learn wind pumps) I can remember stopping the car and taking photographs of thatched cottages, pleasurecraft in the broads and picturesque village signposts that seemed to feature in a lot of the villages we drove through. Each sign seemed to tell a story about the village and they were different to anything I remember seeing in West Yorkshire growing up. Back in those days I was going through a phase of taking slides so that we could have picture shows in the front room when we got home to relive the holiday. Sadly, having moved home three times now those pictures are long gone, but it doesn't matter because we live here now.

As a family we moved from West Yorkshire to Norfolk in August 2005 almost twenty years ago now and we got on with life. To be honest I have driven through the places where I stopped and took pictures all those years ago and have scarcely given a thought to the images that fascinated me over forty-five years ago. By chance I spotted one of the village signs I remember photographing back then and just too late, I thought that it would be a potential subject for a thought for the day.

Photographing that particular sign would have involved a two-hour round trip that I couldn't really justify, so I came up with the bright idea of researching to see if our home town of Dereham has such a sign.

Just over five minutes' walk from our house there is this sign at the top of the High Street at the entrance to the Market Place. It depicts the story of St Withburga, a Saxon saint who was the daughter of King Anna of East Anglia. Legend has it that in answer to a prayer during a severe famine, two deer appeared daily and provided milk for the nuns. A huntsman sought to kill the deer and during his attempts he was thrown from his horse and was killed - and this was believed to be divine retribution for his actions. We have lived in the town for almost a year now and I have driven, and walked under that sign literally dozens, if not hundreds of times and I was blissfully unaware that it even existed.

When I went out to deliberately take this picture for today, I found myself looking above the shop fronts at some of the amazing architecture of the place I now call home, and I spotted things that I have passed dozens of times before and never truly appreciated. I get so used to listening to music, seeing pictures, hearing words and take so much for granted in life.

### **William Henry Davies (1897-1940) wrote**

*What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare.*

*No time to stand beneath the boughs and stare as long as sheep or cows.*

*No time to see, when woods we pass, where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.*

*No time to see, in broad daylight, streams full of stars, like skies at night.*

*No time to turn at Beauty's glance, and watch her feet, how they can dance.*

*No time to wait till her mouth can enrich that smile her eyes began.*

*A poor life this if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare.*



Please pray for the congregation and community in Saham Hills



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### **A thought from Rev Jonny:**

Meet one of the isopods (a.k.a. woodlouse) I have in one of my terrariums. I have a few of them, along with different springtails (tiny insects that look a bit like white fleas), and they feed on the decaying plant matter in the terrarium. Often overlooked, they play a vital role in the health of the ecosystem: breaking down waste, enriching soil, and helping it all be balanced. For a healthy terrarium, these small creatures are needed to keep it going.

In our own little 'ecosystems' – gardens, homes, communities – we are called to do the same. We need to attend to it, nurture it, and restore it. Whether it is a literal ecosystem (like our garden and tending to a patch of soil) or a metaphorical one (like showing care for a friend), our actions ripple outward.

Right at the beginning of the Bible, God calls creation “good” in Genesis. God didn’t call just the grand and impressive “good”, but also the quiet and creeping too. And we, as human beings, are a part of this “good” creation. We can reflect this goodness in how we can get creative and intentional in how we care for the world around us, even if it is as humble as a terrarium. And, when we so, we reflect something of our Creator.

Genesis reminds us that God called all of creation good, not just the grand or the glamorous, but the quiet and the creeping, too. We are stewards of this good creation. When we get creative and intentional in how we care for the world (even in something as humble as a terrarium), we honour our Creator.



### A thought from Dee Moden:

I read an article in the June 'Big Issue' the other day about how 'Apps' can make us better citizens. Today of course there seems to be an 'App' for everything. Apparently there are 'Apps' promoting and offering monetary rewards, unlocking gift vouchers, or spot prizes for good citizenship – putting litter in the bin – litter picking – for using less energy in peak times – travelling by public transport or walking instead of driving the car, and more, all legitimate! Seemingly successful!

I asked myself do we really need to be rewarded for being a good citizen, to care for the environment, to care for one another, to look after this wonderful God given world?

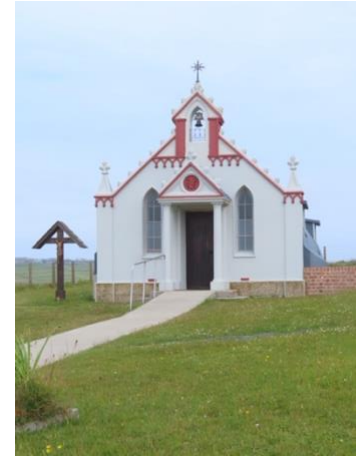
Paul in his letter to the Galatians speaks of the Fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. All pertinent to everyday living, surely if we practise living in this way, we are good citizens and our reward is that the world will become a better, cleaner, safer, more productive, and pleasanter place for all.





## **A thought from Aileen Fox: The Italian Chapel.**

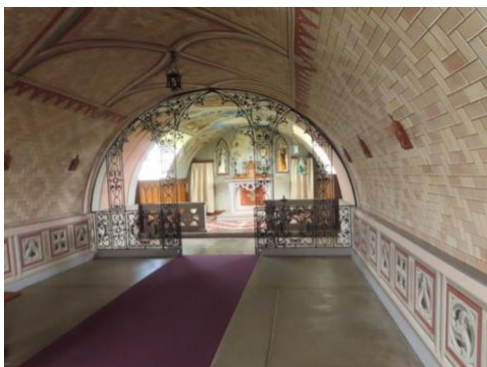
A recent holiday gave me the opportunity to visit the Italian Chapel on Lambholm, Orkney. Ever since I had read a fictional account of the chapel I had been intrigued by it. Camp 60 where the chapel stands, held Italian prisoners in the later years of the II World War, who were brought in to build the Churchill Barriers at Scapa Flow. The chapel is built from two Nissen huts. An artistic prisoner Domenico Chiocchetti was inspired, and with a team using basic and often scrounged materials made the lovely special building we see today.



When the Italians left the island on 9th September 1944, it was not long after the chapel was completed, a promise to the prisoners was made that Orkney would cherish the building. A place of hope, inspiration, of people overcoming the situation they were faced with. Domenico stayed on for a few weeks after because he wanted to finish the font he had started making. Camp 60 was eventually demolished leaving only the chapel and the statue outside.

In 1958 when the chapel had deteriorated, a committee of local people was formed to try and restore it. Local and national interest saw the BBC involved and the story of the chapel was relayed throughout Italy in 1959. This included contributions from Orcadians and a conversation with Domenico Chiocchetti who had been traced to a village in the Dolomites. In March 1960 Domenico was able to return to Orkney with the BBC paying his expenses, and to meet and talk with local people. He spent three weeks and worked on repainting the chapel and carrying out other repairs assisted by a local Kirkwall man. Domenico was the special guest at the rededication service on 10th April 1960 to celebrate the restoration, this was attended by 200 Orcadians of all denominations. Part of the service was broadcast in the Italian National programme on Easter Monday. Domenico was the first person to receive Holy Communion at the service.

Father Whitaker presiding at the service remarked that all the material items for the needs of camp 60 were gone, but the two things that catered for the Spiritual needs remained, the chapel and the statue of St George outside [by Chiocchetti]. Faith that flourished out of adversity; there is such a sense of faith and love, of talent and gifts, very apparent as you enter. A very special place.



## A thought from Rev Derek: Stress

Purely by chance the other day when I was in the supermarket, I spotted this box and I thought “what a brilliant idea” and it made me smile. When I was a child, my parents would say to me “stop fidgeting” and it made me believe that fidgeting and fiddling with things was an altogether bad thing and something we shouldn’t do. In no way am I criticising my parents, they did a good job of bringing up my brother and I, and I will always appreciate that, but even now I find it incredibly difficult to sit and do nothing without fiddling. Whenever I attend meetings, I take a retractable pen and fiddle with it, I struggle to know what to do with my hands when I am preaching and sometimes they feel to be two limbs too many. I can’t just sit and watch the telly, I normally have a sudoku or a game of cards, or a jigsaw on my tablet to entertain me. I don’t claim to have any neurodiversity issues to contend with, I just accept that this is who I am and I struggle to just be still.

My grandson has neurodiversity issues and has a range of sensory aids, which he finds helpful particularly when he finds himself in stressful situations. There was a time when fidget spinners were all the rage, and I remember back in my management days the concept of stress balls and those five balls suspended from a metal frame clicking away in an almost hypnotic manner on the executive’s desk. Today sensory aids have become more sophisticated than ever and some of the items my grandson has are intricate and when I visit my daughter’s home, I enjoy just fiddling with something that doesn’t require me to think, but occupies me. One of the advantages of moving house is that we buy bubble wrap to protect our treasures and I can entertain myself for hours popping the little bubbles, it is one of the most satisfying past-times I know.

The older I become, the more stressful I find the world. There was a time when I used to just take everything in my stride, never seemed to bother much about anything. Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley wrote a musical released in the West End in 1961 entitled “stop the world, I want to get off” and it seems to me that in the sixty odd years that have passed since then the pace of life has got faster and far more intense and maybe the sensory box in the supermarket reminds us how stressful some people can find simple things like going shopping.

As a church leader I find myself asking “what does this say about the role religion plays in the world today?” I understand that it is no longer trendy to be religious and there are plenty who would say that religion has had its day. Yet, I still believe that prayer can play a central part in our mental wellbeing. Sitting in silence in one of our Churches can bring us a feeling of peace and comfort, even sitting and drinking a cup of tea with folk can help our mental wellbeing. Church is far more than singing hymns and listening to long sermons, it is part of our place of release in a stressful world.

Maybe you would like to sit for a moment and find your own place of peace.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Sculthorpe & Fakenham.



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**A thought from Rev Jonny:**

These are some of the flowers in our garden over the past few months (courtesy of Seb's photographic skills!) Each bloom is a different shape, shade and structure, and yet each one is beautiful. I am reminded of the metaphor of God as the Great Gardener: creating the world with joy and variety; sustaining it by attending to it and loving it; leading it towards wholeness and flourishing.

Last week, I mentioned about how God calls creation "good" in Genesis 1. In Genesis 2, the second account of creation, we have an image of God walking around and through the garden. If we continue to take this image of God as a gardener, each of us are like these images of flowers. We are diverse, different from each other, and we all have our own needs like the flowers do. Some need more light, some need more water, some need different types of soil and so on. And all are full of potential to bless the world with colour and presence.

So, take a moment today to pause. Look around. Notice what is growing in your life, what is being nurtured and blessing the world. And give thanks for the Great Gardener, who plants, nurtures and brings forth fruitfulness in due season.

