

Facebook Posts – June 2021

1st June – Deacon Jen



"This is my happy place" is a phrase I heard on television recently. It was said by a man who had a large shed with a model railway set up. It had three trains running and when he was there, sometimes with his grandson, he could busily lose himself for hours in pleasurable activity. My happy place is being in the garden a little before 7am when the birds are singing and there is a freshness to the new day. My sister came to stay over the weekend and her happy place is "Where-ever my dogs are". (Photo attached) I mention all this because a 'happy place' is a phrase that has caught people's imagination and is now quite well understood to mean that place where there is deep sense of contentment, of being restored, of being fully engrossed in the present time and place. It is also a recognition that life can have many challenges that could overwhelm us. But if we can find something, somewhere, or someone who can help us to be totally at peace with ourselves for a while we can build up our inner resources to face those challenges head on. And when we have found that happy place let's not forget to thank God for it.

3rd June – Rev Anne Richardson

Do you own a bicycle?

There are many advantages to riding a bicycle.

- It helps to maintain fitness;
- you can greet walkers, passers-by and other cyclists as you travel;
- it can be a sport and a hobby
- it's environmentally friendly - no emissions

There are many disadvantages to riding a bicycle.

- open to the weather, so it's easy to get wet, splashed or too hot;
- it can be very tiring;
- cars often come too close
- there is always an element of personal risk! (Or so it feels to me!)



The General Assembly of the UN announced that June 3rd should be celebrated as International World Bicycle Day. It is celebrated to recognise the versatility and environment-friendly nature of bicycles as a mean of transport.

The Methodist international development charity, 'All We Can', says that Change begins with a Bike. Having a bike can be a way to break the cycle of poverty.

See <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/donate/bike/>

Will you help someone to have a bicycle who really needs it?

4th June



7th June – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

I watched a Songs of Praise the other Sunday which homed in on Prayer. The interviewer asked different people if their prayers had been answered. The replies were very positive. The more I watched the more I got back to the idea of an attitude to God as a sort of Fairy Godmother (or Father) who would grant our wishes if we said the right things, which meant that our prayer had been answered. Hurrah! So presumably, if the person didn't get better, or we didn't get the job, our prayer had not been answered. What if it had been answered but the answer had been No? Is that an answer? What about the millions of prayers that must have been prayed in the Concentration Camps, in War, in hospitals and so on? We live with God's human family to whom he has given free will to choose what we do. He has given us guide lines and Jesus to show how it should work, but we make the decisions. The result is that we live, not just with our mistakes and bad choices but also with those of everyone else - and some people make terrible choices - read the history books or the newspapers! And being a Christian does not mean we are exempt from the consequences. So, let's turn to the Master of Prayer. Jesus lived as we do with the choices of other people. His frequent disappearances to pray were presumably, not to take a shopping list of requests to God, but to keep this intimate relationship which enabled him to work with his Heavenly Father in his Kingdom plans. The nearest he gets to a request is perhaps in the Garden - "If it is possible - - - , but nevertheless, not my will - -" He had total trust that God knew best, which is why we have a Church to belong to. Maybe he's telling us something!

Image from wallpaper tag.



8th June – Rev Jacqui Horton



Community Gardens are definitely 'on trend'. The Countryfile programme on 23rd May <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000wg2g> was all about them and many organisations – from the BBC to the RHS are promoting them and publishing guides on what to do. A quick internet search this morning has revealed that there is one on Grapes Hill in Norwich and I have already known about the one in Swaffham on Campingland. So – it is great, that our Lay Pioneer (Sam Parfitt) is developing one

outside Blakeney Methodist Church, along with a team. This is part of the Circuit project 'Re-planting Rural' and we are asking for support from a whole range of community, circuit and wider friends. There is more information at our Just Giving page <https://bit.ly/34VejxT> if you are interested. In other garden news! we are again inviting photographs of circuit members' gardens for a virtual Circuit Open Gardens event in July. We will be showing the gardens off (on screen, website and paper) for our 'Big Sunday' on 25th July. In the meantime, here is a thought: "Gardens and flowers have a way of bringing people together, drawing them from their homes." Clare Ansberry

9th June- Sam Parfitt

There has been much about the commemoration of the 77th Anniversary of the D-day landings in the news and on social media recently, including interviews with some of the remaining few veterans. My husband's grandfather (who passed away some years ago) was a Royal Marine Commando and took part in the Normandy landings. He spoke very little about his experiences there, I imagine the memories were too painful and he was sparing us from them too. However, the one thing he would always mention when talking about that time was how, in the midst of everything, he was surprised to find that the Salvation Army was there on the beaches, serving tea to soldiers. From that day on, he never would hear a bad word said about the Salvation Army. Reflecting on this, I think sometimes we feel that our offers of Christian love and hospitality have to be grand gestures, when in fact, sometimes a simple cup of tea is the best gift possible. Image – goodfreephotos.com



11th June



This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Psalm 118:24



14th June – Aileen Fox

'Unexpected Places';

Like many people, I have explored my locality during these different times of lockdown and restrictions. For many years I travelled past a sign that said Foxley Woods but I was always going to or from work. The name I liked for obvious reasons as it could be an amalgamation of my birth surname and my married name. I knew there were bluebells there but never made it to see them. 30 years in Norfolk and I hadn't made the effort. A close friend visited last year and told me about them and was planning a visit this year so we arranged to meet in the car park there for a walk. It is a lovely place at any time of the year for a walk. There are majestic trees, grasses and wildflowers and it's peaceful, but the bluebells! All around us there is beauty if we only look and make the effort to get out of our comfort zone and do different things. I thank God for this beauty. However, as Christians we can get complacent about our faith and the way we reach out and show God's love. Restrictions have eased and may ease further but it is surely a reminder of how we reach out to others now and in the future in our daily lives and in our church communities. Sometimes we need to change our approach, refresh, seek new opportunities all showing what the love of God means to us, and is offered for all.



15th June – Deacon Jen Woodfin



A little while ago we had invited some people to our garden. So, being a bit of a perfectionist when it comes to gardening, I did some extra weeding including pulling up all the forget-me-nots that had just begun to go over. When the visitors arrived, they looked round and made appreciative comments. This included a friend saying "I was attracted by the lovely acers in pots, with their fresh new leaves, but when I went close to them, I saw a few forget-me-nots and, although there aren't many of them, they have their own special beauty too. How easy it is to be caught up by the dramatic, showy, plants and so miss the beauty of the smaller, 'ordinary', ones." So, I hadn't pulled up all the weeds after all - and that was a really good thing!

As I reflected on this later, I had two trains of thought. Firstly, just because I no longer saw the value of the forget-me-nots, my visitor most certainly did. We all have different views and ways of seeing beauty in God's creation. So let us celebrate the diversity of people and creation.

Secondly, we shouldn't be so quick to dismiss the old in favour of the new. It is in the combination of the old and new that we can move forward throughout our lives. As we are progressing out of lockdown, we must look at ways of incorporating the best of the old alongside new ideas and new ways of working.

16th June – Sam Parfitt

This hammock was a birthday gift given to me the year I turned 20. At the time it seemed an unusual gift as I was living in a second floor flat! However, it travelled with me, unused, for the next two decades until last week I stood in the garden and thought 'ooh, I wonder if that hammock will fit across there?'. It did and as I lay in it gently swinging, I reflected on how sometimes gifts of the spirit seem confusing when we are given them, but for every gift there is a time and a place where they come into their own. So, I wonder, what unusual gifts have you been given and when have they been most useful? (gifts of the spirit or of people!)



17th June – Rev Anne Richardson



How are you feeling today? Feelings are complicated things because we as humans, are complicated too. Feelings are inevitably tied up with how our body feels, with what's been going on in our lives and those of our families and friends. Even the simple hormonal and chemical changes in our bodies can have a huge effect on our feelings.

So – how are you feeling today?

The photo is of an outbuilding I passed on a walk. Dilapidated and run down, someone enjoyed naming it appropriately! Do you agree or would you have put a different name on it – something perhaps more hopeful, seeing the potential in the space for another use?

As we mix with others today, have a care for how they may be feeling and how you're feeling. And for those days when you're at your wits end, remember that God is always faithful. Like the Psalmist when we say, "Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;" (Ps130) we always find that nothing will separate us from the love of God. Read Romans 8:28-39.

18th June

For I am convinced that
neither death nor life
neither angels nor demons
neither the present nor the future
nor any powers
neither height nor depth
nor anything else in all creation
will be able to separate us from the
love
of
God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:38



21st June – Aileen Fox

I have never been brilliant with exams and there have been occasions when due to lack of confidence I have failed or not prepared enough. Growing up and attending a secondary modern school (11+ days) we were made to feel inferior to our friends who went to grammar schools, but a teacher later explained that only so many could be accepted so a line was drawn for the top so many achievers throughout the area in the exams. So we were not failures. Sometimes I have had to have several goes to achieve the passes I needed except for my Local Preaching exams. I remember being asked by a tutor just before I moved to Norfolk as to where I had been hiding on my health education course which I passed, and it did increase my confidence as I had studied along Nurses, environmental officers and other health professionals. I have often been tempted to give up something new or hard, but realise that if I try and persevere I can often achieve. My garden squirrel is an inspiration as well as making me laugh. I have installed squirrel proof bird feeders but also some ordinary feeders for the larger birds. The squirrel as you can see has worked out that if he hangs down he can get his mouth into the hole and eat the fat balls, as does the blackbird on the same feeder. Before going onto the fat ball feeder the squirrel did the same on the seed feeder. It took him a bit of working out how to balance and where to put his feet but he did it. I need to be more like him and keep persevering even when the going gets tough and when I put my trust in God I know a way will be found even if not the route I thought.



22nd June – Dee Moden

CHANGE! CHANGE?

This is a word that seemingly some churches are frightened of, and looking at the past there were for many reasons for this.

I have just been reading the latest 'Preach' magazine which is focusing on our changing churches, articles have been written by Justine Welby, Jonathan Hustler, and others.

Justine Welby says that we do need to change but not hastily, changing the wrong things! He reminds us that to follow Jesus Christ is to change, and of those familiar words: 'Repent' - 'Be Transformed' 'Renewal of our minds.' He says '*Jesus is the ultimate revolutionary of minds and hearts, of churches and Christians as well as societies.*'

This past year has taught us so much new ways of reaching out to people as we have been thrown prematurely into the digital word where some have unexpectedly embraced it, but not all are able to do so. Jonathan Hustler says:

'These times have been hard but, as pandemics in history have shown, human beings are resilient. As we recover, we have reason to hope and to offer that hope to the world. He goes on to say 'The biggest change we see might be in becoming a church that is ever more aware of it's dependence on God. Whether our numbers go up or down, whatever our structures are, however much we meet in person or online, in the ways in which we need to interpret the Good News for different social economic circumstances, we continue to hold on to the last words of John Wesley: "The best of all is, God is with us" The church that does that is a church equipped for change. Food for thought!



25th June



28th June – Aileen Fox



We get into a routine, we do the necessary. The weeks seem to fly past, one minute it is Monday and suddenly the weekend looms. I suspect the way we have adapted during the pandemic has seen us adopt different ways of living. However there is a danger of getting complacent. As I go in and out of my front door, I noticed the creeper was sending out new shoots. I try and cut these to keep the creeper in check. But I suddenly became aware that the creeper was growing across the kitchen window, and it was getting dark inside. It was time to act and reduce the growth and ensure I could see out and that the creeper would remain strong. It's a bit like us we can get complacent, set in our ways and we need to stop, take stock of ourselves and make changes. Are the things we do necessary, do they make a difference to others, are we doing them well or spreading ourselves too thinly? Are there more effective ways of serving God? I am thinking of the parable of the Fig tree where it had not produced figs for 3 years and the owner wanted it cut down, but the gardener pleaded to allow it to stay for one more year where he would nurture it give it manure and if there was no

fruit in 1 year he would cut it down. Of course Jesus was talking about repentance of the people in response to a question. How they must repent, or everyone would suffer. For me the message is to cut out the things that are not right in my life, to prune just as I have to prune the creeper. Its not easy but is needed and will hopefully enable me to reach out and support others.

29th June – Rev Jacqui Horton

When I was much younger than I am now – and much more ambitious! – I had an idea that I wanted to be the first woman President of Conference. Well, Kathleen Richardson had that honour in 1992 and I lost any desire to Methodism's top job for presbyters a long time ago. My life has gone in different directions. However, it is instructive to note that there was not another woman president for 9 years – until Christina Le Moignan in 2001. Then another 9 year wait until 2010. But, in recent years, the frequency has increased and, in fact, 4 out of 5 of the last Presidents have been women. Including this year!



And, indeed, this year both President and Vice President are women (Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton), and Sonia is our first black woman President (and the first black person for over 20 years). Racial, gender and relationship issues are all on the Conference agenda this year which is making for an interesting time! If you would like to follow what is happening go to the Conference section of the national Methodist website. OR, follow our own record being written as a blog by Aileen Fox who is one of the East Anglia District representatives. My ambition now? To follow God's call on my life wherever he leads me and whatever he wants me to do. At the moment, that means being minister of 9 churches and offering leadership to the Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit. And, fortunately, I am happy doing it – feeling the right person in the right place. Thought for the day though: Let's celebrate God's unique call on each of our lives and pray for those who have been called to serve as our Methodist Presidency in these challenging times.