

Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Facebook Posts

June 2025

A thought from Aileen Fox:

A path along a canal, sunlight slipping through the trees, all peaceful with a few people passing by and saying hello. Then a slight movement and I spotted the heron silently and slowly moving along looking for fish. A passer-by "Oh are you looking for babies?" I slowly pointed to the heron near the bank and it took them a few seconds to see it. They were expecting ducklings but there was this beautiful bird slowly looking, listening in its quest for food. Occasionally its beak stabbed at the water but whether it found fish or not it was too quick for me to see.

Sometimes we wander along in life not seeing the things around us. Do we notice people, do we notice features in our streets? I am reminded of the time Jesus asked who had touched him. Crowds were pressing all around him but he felt power going out from him. A woman had believed in him that he would heal her if she just touched the hem of his cloak. This was so and when she owned up to touching him (she'd been too frightened and embarrassed to go directly up to him) Jesus was compassionate and told her that her faith had healed her.

There are many people who are frightened to approach others to ask for help, to chat about a problem. Are we prepared to look out for those who need us but are afraid to approach us?



Please pray for the congregation and community in Great Ellingham



A thought from Rev Derek: Freedom!

We are the proud owners of a new vehicle in our household. My wife has been reliant on a wheelchair for the last couple of years; she is extremely independent and using walking aids to keep her as mobile as possible but can't walk very far and finds it extremely painful. We had a holiday last year in Blackpool and used the wheelchair extensively travelling everywhere by tram rather than using the car. If you've never been in this situation you might not be aware that there are two basic problems. Firstly shoving a wheelchair around with a grown adult passenger is hard work, kerbs, even if they have been dropped can be a nightmare and pavements with cambers are quite a challenge for the pusher. Secondly, the passenger is completely at the mercy of the pusher, they can only go where they are taken and lose all sense of freedom.



The scooter has changed all of that. My wife has never driven, so she is just getting used to her new vehicle and, having had a go myself, the top speed is a bit of white-knuckle ride and I suddenly respect the folk who zoom around our town centre on their scooters putting the fear of God into pedestrians, they must have nerves of steel! I am thankful that so far, we travel at a sedate speed. The most wonderful thing that we have discovered is the freedom that this investment has brought. I am no longer needed, my wife can go wherever she pleases, she can travel around shops and supermarkets and spend time looking at the things she wants to see.

Our house is just a short walk from the centre of town and she can go there on her own now, instead of having to wait for somebody to reluctantly push her. She even managed to go to school to meet our grandson earlier this week, which is something she has never done before.

All this has made me think how much we take our freedom for granted, I am reminded of the words of Jesus to the disciple Peter recorded in John:21 18 "Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." Before the mobility issue raised its head in our family we always came and went as we pleased within reason and it is good to see my wife enjoying that freedom again. Today is the Sunday after the Christian Church has marked Ascension Day, the day that Christ was taken back up into heaven and the disciples were left to their own devices to make their own choices, to go where they pleased and live as they saw fit. I think of people in the world who don't have that freedom and it makes me start to understand how privileged we are.

We welcome **Jade** as the new premises manager and centre administrator for our Methodist Centre at **Watton**.



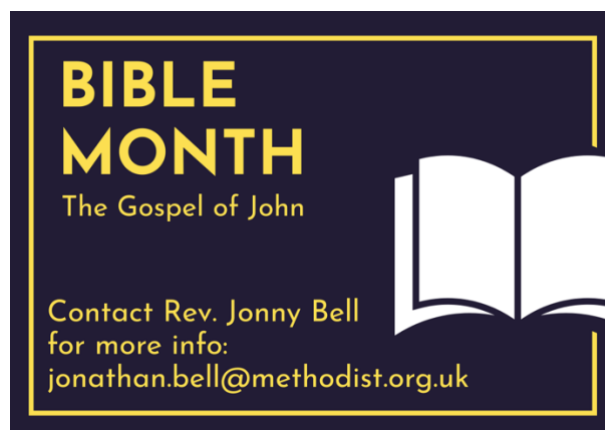
Rev Jonny writes:

June is Bible Month and this year's book is John's Gospel. Each week, I will use excerpts from the study guide I produced for the Circuit. We are meeting at Holt Methodist Church each Thursday at 7 pm to explore John.

Passage for this week: John 1:1–18

This is one of the most influential passages of the New Testament and introduces many of the themes that can be found in John's Gospel. It is called the 'Prologue' because it sets the tone for the whole gospel. Much like an overture, the Prologue is peppered with ideas and themes that can be found throughout the whole of the gospel.

Question to reflect on: What other themes can you find in the Prologue? Write them in the box on the next page.





Rev Anne writes: Hi everyone! Did you like my little video? Unfortunately, Facebook wouldn't let me put any words in with it! But have you guessed what it's about? Tomorrow we celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit. We're told that the wind of the Spirit blows where it will - and seeing this little dragonfly being blown by the wind made me think of this verse. Are we moved by the Spirit? When the Spirit 'blows' do we move with the power - does it make us fly away, or do we hold on and adjust our 'wings' to move together?

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1HJQYn3DUb/>

A thought from Rev Derek: *Making memories*

We have just spent a wonderful week in the North East on holiday with our eldest daughter and our grandson. I had two main objectives for the holiday: the first was putting the new mobility scooter (mentioned last week) through its paces and secondly, as my daughter puts it perfectly, making memories for our grandson. During the course of the week we visited places like Northumberlandia, Lindisfarne, Bamburgh Castle, Seahouses, Alnwick Garden and on Friday we went to Beamish, the living museum near Stanley County Durham. In the process of making memories for my twelve year old grandson I found myself reliving memories from my past, when my parents took my brother and I to this part of the country for our holidays for several years and that was when I fell in love with the place and the people of the North East.

The age difference between my grandson and I is about the same as the age difference between my father and I, Beamish Museum was much smaller when we visited for the first time back in the early 1970s soon after it had first opened to the public in 1972. I can remember being enthralled on my first visit all those years ago and wanting to see every exhibit. In more recent years we visited not long before the end of my father's life and it is only now that I fully understand that some of the exhibits we look at as relics from a bygone age, were far more memorable for my dad, who was born in 1903 and lived through two world wars in a world that looks very different to our modern day.

There were three things that stuck me as we walked around the 350 acre site with over a quarter of a million exhibits.

- Firstly, there is way too much to see in one day. Our first port of call was the coal mine and with my grandson being a devotee of the computer game Minecraft, he wanted to see every exhibit, I was conscious that we had only just set foot in the place and there was so much more to see and we needed to move on. In the end we possibly saw less than half of what was on offer, meaning that we need to go back.
- Secondly, I became aware of the difference in pace between my grandson and I and for maybe the first time in fifty years, I could empathise with my father, who never complained about running around with my brother and I. It is only now that I can start to understand how drained he must have felt at times.
- Thirdly, I became aware of the difference in pace between life in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and our modern-day world. We had to queue for over an hour for fish and chips cooked in coal fired pans, everything moved at the pace of several generations ago and I started to understand that maybe it does us good to slow the pace down every so often.

I apologise for the quality of the photograph, having stood in a queue for over an hour for my dinner, then walked downhill for over a mile, trying to keep pace with the scooter, then shove my way through crowds of people queueing up for the sweetie shop I had to find a bench and consequently, exhausted, I took this picture. Finally, I was reminded that there is sometimes a cost to making memories, but that is soon forgotten as we look back and treasure those moments.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Gressenhall



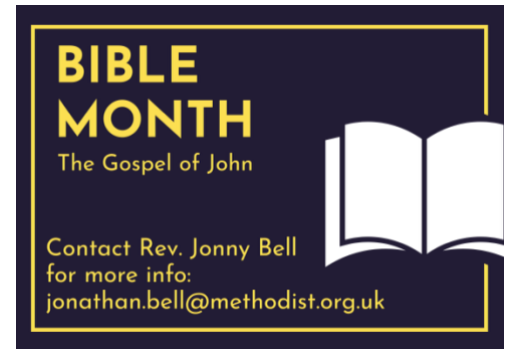
Rev Jonny writes:

June is Bible Month and this year's book is John's Gospel. Each week, I will use excerpts from the study guide I produced for the Circuit. We are meeting at Holt Methodist Church each Thursday at 7 pm to explore John.

The Gospel of John presents seven specific miracles, which John calls "signs," to reveal Jesus' identity and divinity. At the end of chapter 20, in vv.30-31, the author says:

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." (NRSVUE)

Questions to reflect on: Can you remember all seven signs? Why do you think the author chose to include these particular signs?



A thought from Dee Moden:

Having a conversation with our youngest Grandson, Max, aged 7 about his 'Gramps' who died last year, he asked about my Daddy. I told him he was no longer with us and his reply was that he will be in Heaven with Jesus like 'Gramps.'

He then proceeded to tell me that although Jesus is in Heaven he is also everywhere around us looking after us.

Sometimes we can over complicate our believing, by searching and delving too deeply and getting confused and mixed up! Here, in Matthew's gospel, Jesus is emphasising the importance of humility and a simple childlike trusting faith.

Matthew 18 v 1-5 NIV

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **2** He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. **3** And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4** Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **5** And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.



A thought from Aileen Fox:

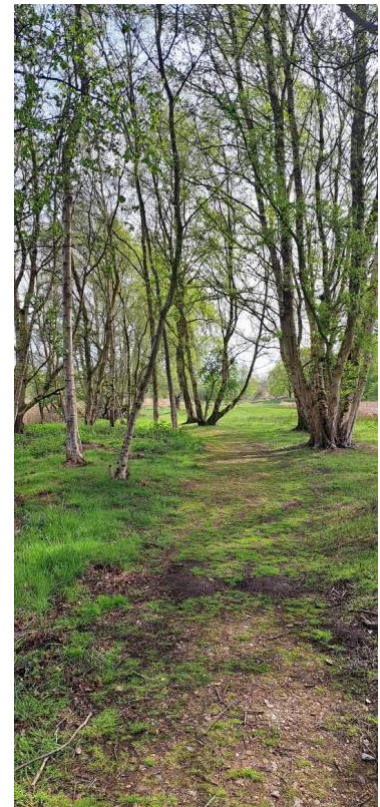
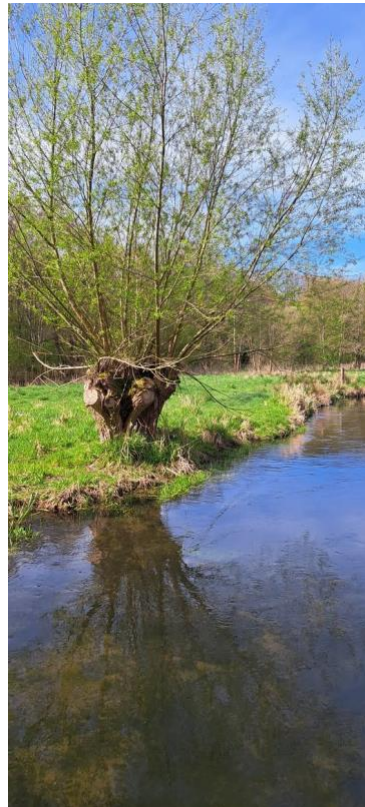
When you read this I will hopefully be on my way back to Inverness after a week walking and exploring Orkney with my daughter and a small group of fellow explorers. I hope all will have gone well and I have 2 days alone to explore Inverness area.

I write this 2 days before my journey starts. There is a lot I am considering, my adult daughter and I get on alright but this will be a whole week in close company. Going through my head at the moment is 'will I keep up on the walks? Have I really checked I have everything I need from the list sent to us? Will I be an embarrassment to Katherine?' I should explain that my daughter will set off on a Saturday and walk 10 miles easily. The group leader tells us it will be gentle walking up to 7 miles a day and to be fair, Katherine has attempted to get me fit by giving me a gift voucher for Pilates, which I've used and kept up the one-to-one sessions. My Fitbud also a present, records the steps I take each day and it is deflating some days to see the meagre total I've done. My other anxiety is missing the train to Inverness, no problems about meeting the other 6 members of the group!

When something is different it can be the smallest or silliest thing that can make us anxious. The way of life Jesus offered his Disciples and followers was very different to fishing or tax collecting yet they embraced it, finding it difficult at times and challenging. With Jesus at the helm, they felt relatively safe but then came the challenge to go out and carry on spreading the good news without the physical Jesus alongside. Instead the Holy Spirit guiding them. But they were still free to make mistakes, encounter difficulties, change perceptions about who they were to go to as in the case of Peter sent to preach the Good News to the Gentiles.

What are our challenges daily? Can we listen and be ready to 'do different' (as in Norfolk speak) Are we really prepared to be challenged? Are we up to the challenge that we might have to follow Jesus differently as part of our witness?

I show pictures of lovely Pensthorpe close to my home and a reminder to me to exercise physically as well as mentally (less computer), that too for me can be a challenge making time to walk.



A thought from Rev Derek: The Trinity

Firstly, an apology for such a wintery picture in the middle of June. When I looked at the photographs that I had taken on a recent holiday I was surprised to see some pictures from our holiday at the beginning of February when we went to our beloved Yorkshire Dales. We sat in the car park at Semmerwater in the hills above the picturesque village of Bainbridge and ate our picnic lunch in freezing conditions, and unsurprisingly there were no other signs of life apart from a couple of ducks bobbing up and down on the normally tranquil lake. It occurs to me today on Trinity Sunday that this photograph demonstrates the three very clear characteristics of water, the water in the lake, the snow on the hills and the clouds in the sky.

When talking with a Muslim leader once, he made the remark “you Christians don’t half make life difficult for yourselves, why do you need “God in three persons” life for us is much simpler, we believe in God, who is God and that is it” and in some ways that made sense. He believes that there is God and that Jesus was simply a prophet in the same way as some of our prophets of old, simple in his view.

As I look at the picture above, I am mindful of the essential different characteristics of water, each having its unique identity and use. I mowed my lawn just before the recent dry spell and it remained a sandy brown colour until the rain came, and now it is now a lovely shade of green. I think of people in other lands who dream of having a tap in their home from which they can draw life-giving water, and yet we have several. Shortly after taking this photograph we ventured over Fleet Moss, one of the Dales passes from Wensleydale to Wharfedale and in blizzard conditions we turned back. I was reminded how ice is vital to our lives, it preserves, it cools and it can be used to clean, I am told that ice baths are good for us, but have never had the desire or courage to try one. Even in its gas form, steam has been used to power engines for generations it sterilises and cleans and I am of the mind to say that “water is amazing stuff”.

So, why do I see the benefit of God in three persons? Despite all the arguments to the contrary, I still believe in God, not as some super human being, but as a central force in the world, as Miss Gray, one of my primary school teachers once put it “there is no coincidence that there is one letter difference between Good and God” and fifty years on that is still a fundamental of my life. I read the words of Jesus, a man, flesh and blood and it is hard to ignore the fact that his teachings have shaped human lives for over two thousand years. And I believe in The Holy Spirit. Day by day, week by week I churn out messages to share with people through meetings, services and more recently online. I’m just an ordinary bloke with an average secondary school education and I believe that I am a conduit for God through his Spirit. That might all sound weird to some folk, but for me, God in three persons matters and makes faith work for me.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Hingham



Rev Jonny writes:

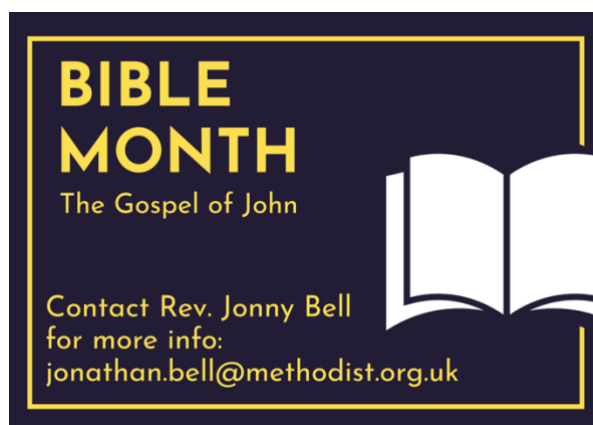
June is Bible Month and this year's book is John's Gospel. Each week, I will use excerpts from the study guide I produced for the Circuit. We are meeting at Holt Methodist Church each Thursday at 7pm to explore John.

There are two passages to read this week: John 4:7-26, John 3:1-21

Here we have two passages: one of a powerful man (Nicodemus) coming to meet Jesus at night; another of a nameless woman who happens to meet him when she is thirsty. In the Orthodox traditions, they call this woman Photini (meaning 'enlightened one' or 'luminous one').

Then there is a change in the encounters: one person does not 'get it', another does.

Question to reflect on: Notice how Jesus responds to Nicodemus versus the woman at the well. What differences do you see?



Rev Anne writes: When you read this I shall be in the middle of my annual leave! Like Merlin here, I hope I will be refreshed by lying down in green pastures - taking time to refresh my soul!!

I'm not sure if King David had these sort of green meadows in mind when he wrote what we refer to as Psalm 23! Maybe not, but this lush greenery always brings this psalm to mind. I hope that you will also know the provision of the Good Shepherd today, whether you are enjoying still waters, or walking through a shadowed valley.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Holt



A thought from Rev Derek: *Am I going mad, or just getting old?*

We had a family trip out to a garden centre recently, arriving with my wife and my two daughters, I got the wheelchair out and went to load my wife, she looked at me as though I was mad and said “do you know that you’re wearing odd shoes?” looking down at my feet I noticed that I had a formal shoe on my left foot and a trainer on my right. I got a little stropky stating what a ridiculous question she had just asked as though I had made a deliberate fashion choice. I was self-conscious as we walked around, fortunately it was a Monday morning and the place was almost deserted, but I suspected that everybody was looking at me and saying “have you seen that nutty old bloke over there, he’s wearing odd shoes”! It was helpful that I was pushing a wheelchair which I hoped would make it less obvious. To make matters worse, when I arrived home and went to correct my fashion choice, I discovered that I was wearing my left trainer on my right foot!

I continued to question my sanity the following Sunday. I’d had a morning service and when I set out for my afternoon appointment I couldn’t find my mobile phone anywhere. I stressed about this as I led the afternoon service. I had played one of the hymns during the morning on my phone, so in the gap between the afternoon and evening service I drove back to the venue of my morning service, my anxiety levels increasing by the second. The phone wasn’t there, the logical thing was that maybe the steward had spotted it and taken it home, so I called on them, but they hadn’t seen it. As I drove back home, I thought of all the hassle of buying a new phone, setting up all my apps and all the other work involved and was a nervous wreck by the time I reached the house. While I had been out, my daughter had turned the house upside down and couldn’t find it. I started looking in ridiculous places that there was no way I was ever going to find it. I gave up, took my suit jacket off, put my car keys on the hook, my wallet on my desk and as a natural reaction reached for my shirt pocket to take out my phone, and I had had the thing pressed to my chest all the time!

Don’t you think that it is ridiculous how we get so stressed out by things that are trivial. I look at the news and am horrified by the air crash in India, the fighting between Israel and Iran, the situation in Gaza and Ukraine and who really cares whether a senile old bloke is walking around a garden centre wearing odd shoes, or loses a phone that is in his pocket all the time. Yet we all do it, we get anxious when we can’t find out car keys, or spend ages looking for our glasses which are on our heads all the time. As I reflect, there are much bigger issues to be concerned about in life. It is those things that are way outside my control, that I have to rely on God for and I find myself praying about some of the big issues in the world all the more as I grow older.



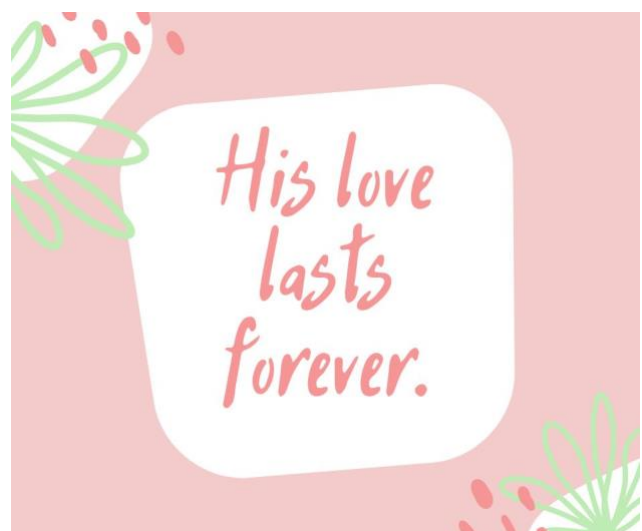
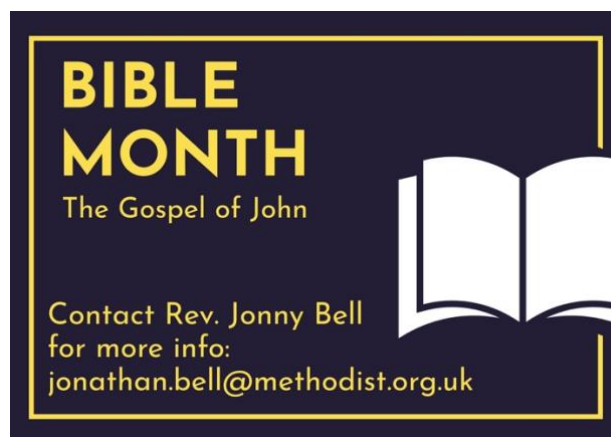
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The 'Christological confessor' is the theological term for the person who declares who Jesus is. We see Thomas do this in John 20:28, saying, "My Lord and my God!". Peter is often seen in Matthew's Gospel to be doing this role in Matthew 16:16. But there is a potential that Mary is the key person in John's Gospel to confess who Jesus is. She is the first person to meet the Risen Christ and to tell the other disciples what had happened.

There is some scholarship to say that Martha is a later addition to John 11, and it is actually Mary who is the character speaking with Jesus and 'confessing' who he is before Lazarus' raising. There are two passages to read this week: John 20:11-18 and John 21:15-19.

Question to reflect on: How does Jesus treat Mary and Peter? What differences do you see?



A thought from Aileen Fox:

Gift moments - Not things

My iPad where I keep my photos regularly sends me memories and one memory recently showed an autumn holiday in 2023 in Bergamo Italy. It brought back very happy memories of a week exploring the old town of enjoying lovely weather and seeing lush pastures, old buildings and sitting outside drinking coffee and watching the world go by plus lovely Italian food! Life moves on and the last year for the friend I went with has not been good for health and other reasons. As I was looking at the photos that had come up in my photo memories and revisited all those experiences. I saw the railway that took us up to the old town. I hadn't noticed the slogan on the front/back and no doubt it was intended to encourage people to buy tickets and make memories. Perhaps gift vouchers were available. It made me think and look back at things and remember what I had experienced and enjoyed.

I have in a fit of enthusiasm signed up to a walking challenge for Pancreatic Cancer UK to walk 60 miles in June that appeared on my social media. I signed up knowing that some of it I could do on a walking holiday. But it was the memories of my Mum and my Aunt her sister, who both died from this hard to diagnose disease, followed a few years later by their cousin. I had not thought to fundraise for the charity before and seeing this brought back memories of their deaths, but also happier memories of our times together. My aunt was nearer in age to me than to my mum. Looking at the other people who have signed up and sharing on social media, so many have lost partners, family and friends to this disease, some just a week after diagnosis. They are walking in memory and to help with research.

Seeing that slogan on the train made me think too of all my memories both good and bad. We've experienced the terrible events up to the Crucifixion and then the joy of Easter and the Resurrection of Jesus. Followed by the appearances to the Disciples, their final parting at the Ascension and then the excitement of the Holy Spirit falling on the Disciples at Pentecost. Memories are important good and difficult; they make us who we are by our experiences. It made the disciples into the people to spread the Good News of Jesus. The slogan is a reminder, let's all make time and memories with those we love, strangers and friends. Memories are so important.



A thought from Rev Derek: *Making space in Heaven*

We were woken in the middle of the night by a clap of thunder the other night. Normally you hear rumblings in the distance warning you that a storm is on its way and in fairness that might have happened while we were sleeping, on this occasion we both woke with a start as there was a loud crash which sounded as though the house was falling down, and then the night sky lit up and moments later the rain started falling with force. With pulses racing at an all-time high we lay in bed terrified, but then the rumbles started to fade and the flashes became less severe as the storm made its way across the county. I always have to smile at times like this, my auntie Elsie, my mum's cousin, used to sit in the cupboard under the stairs for the duration of thunder storms, my mum always insisted that we turned the telly off and unplugged the aerial lead lest we should all fry as a bolt of lightning would select our house.

Over the years, Karen and I have noticed that thunder and lightning often seem to coincide with somebody we know and love dying and we always comment that they are moving the furniture around in heaven to make space, or throwing a party to welcome someone home. I'm sure that there are plenty of people who think that we are mad to even consider something like this and there are plenty of people who think that in our modern scientific age when we can look into the universe for around 93 billion light years, we must be mad to even contemplate the existence of heaven. I equally struggle to think that when we die that is it, a line drawn, nothing, the end. I spend hours of my life talking with people coping with bereavement and I never feel the need to explain issues like where heaven is, how it functions and all that, I simply know that when we are mourning, it is important to believe that it is not all over.

My auntie Elsie said to me years ago "I'm not fearful of death, because I know more people on the other side than I know here, and I'm looking forward to seeing them again". As life goes on, I am starting to understand what she means, and let's face it, rather than hiding in a cupboard under the stairs, I find thunder storms have taken on a whole new meaning and I think of people I know and love and rejoice that they have lived, and continue to live on in my heart.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Litcham

