

# Facebook Posts March 2023

**Thought of the day from Rev Rosemary Wakelin:**

*Surplus to requirement:*



I wasn't prepared for what it felt like to be old, really old. For all my adult life I had been at the centre of things, necessary, involved, belonging. Now I sometimes feel it is of no consequence whether I am there or not. The busy world sweeps on and I am afraid of being a hindrance to my friends and family whose affection is real but whose time is already spoken for.

My balance is gone, I walk very slowly, I am liable to fall, and have done, my memory is shaky in some things, (and amazing in others), but my mind works much the same as it always has. I know a lot more because I have lived through so much, but it has

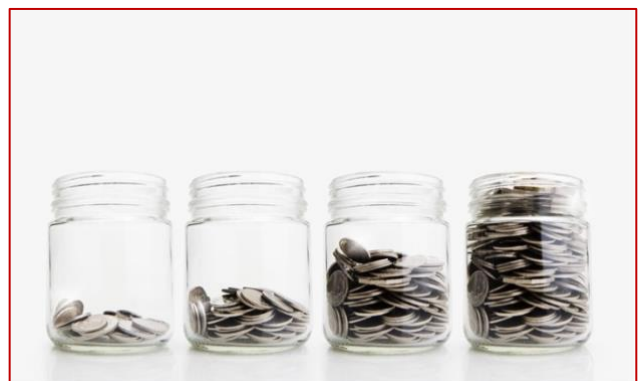
little relevance in modern life. Our culture does not venerate age and experience. So it's easy to become depressed.

So - I am grateful that the Methodist Church has not discarded me, I am not patronised or sidelined but still feel included and part of the scene. Best of all I am still allowed to take services and share the theology that I find so dynamic and exciting - so Thank you Central Norfolk Circuit!



**Rev Anne writes:** I hope the season of Lent has started well for you.

One of the things many of us try to do in Lent is to give more generously to a charity or cause that we support. Yet this year, we are beset by financial pressures: rising energy costs while the Government support scheme comes to an end, increased cost of living, wages/ pension not keeping up with inflation. Can we afford to give this year?



However, can we afford NOT to give? The charities and causes we support are suffering equally. If we scale down our support, we can guess that many others are doing the same. What will happen to the front-line work without the funding?

Perhaps the real question is to look at the money/ resources we have at our disposal and ask where they come from. Do we need to change our perspective? Are we not just the stewards of God's good gifts? And in God's kingdom, where we have been freely given so much, the way we manage our money and resources must reflect that. Proverbs 11:24 says "One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty." When we hold what we have lightly, and give freely, of our money, our time, the things we have, it is amazing how God blesses it, uses it and encourages us through it.

Let us always reflect the generosity of God!

### **A Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen:**



I had the pleasure of playing for the World Day of Prayer service that took place in Watton last Friday. I found it very moving but also very challenging. I had been busy throughout the service so it was only afterwards that I had time to reflect on it properly. The recurring theme was about giving thanks for someone's faith. Many passages were read where different people were being thanked for the ways in which their faith were being demonstrated in practical ways. There were wide-ranging examples from a girl asking for the right to education through to a cleaner committed to working throughout all the Covid restrictions. Whatever had been done, thanks was given for their faith that was evident through it.

In last week's Thought for the Day on Tuesday, Rev Jacqui highlighted the phrase 'heard about your faith and challenged us as to whether that could be said about our church communities. A further challenge I would add is: do we thank anyone for their faith? The last two lines of short chorus that we repeated after each example was: I have not stopped giving thanks for you, and remembering you in my prayers. It may be natural to give thanks if

someone had done a special favour but this was about thanking someone for the faith. It has certainly made me think about thanking and encouraging people in their faith journey in a much more direct way.

### **A thought from Sam Parfitt:**

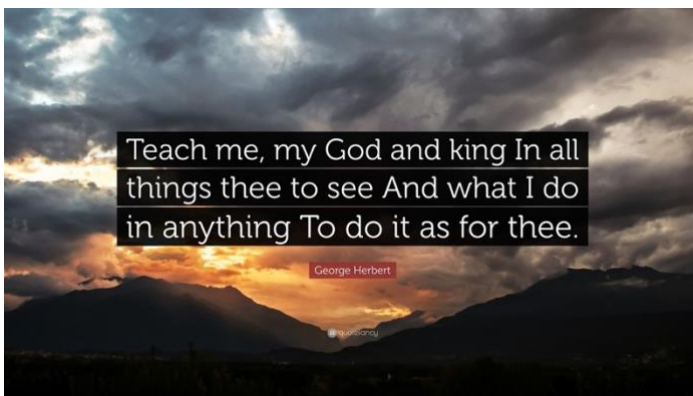
There seem to have been a lot of road closures lately in these here parts, every time I have ventured out in the car I have encountered those large red warning signs and been on some magical mystery tour of a diversion. Sometimes I have followed the carefully planned diversion route and other times I've gone for the 'best guess' approach. There is something unsettling yet also exciting about not knowing where you are, exploring the proper roads of Norfolk (that are single track and have grass growing along the middle!)



Sometimes I think that life generally can feel much the same, we think we know where we're headed, but life twists in another direction and we are diverted unexpectedly. That's how I've felt lately, but I haven't felt unsettled as the words 'all shall be well' have kept finding me, that soothing promise made in the shewings of Julian of Norwich. The phrase has popped up in all sorts of places, from prayers to songs to t-shirts! A reminder that life changes and challenges often, but God's love for us is steadfast throughout.



Deacon Jen writes:



Have you ever thought of doing some cleaning as a spiritual activity? Well, I have to admit I haven't. However, last week I challenged myself to think in that way.

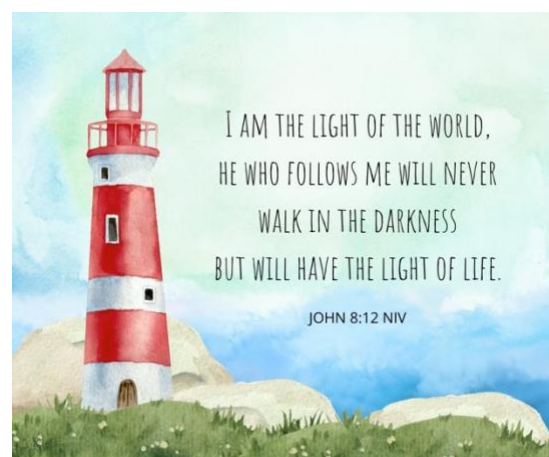
Throughout Lent I had decided to spend a short amount of time each day in the garden and, as well as doing whatever task that seemed the most urgent, stop and focus on one small part in a meditative and spiritual way. Not unsurprisingly, this all turned out to be most beneficial and

enjoyable to me. But there was one day when circumstances were such that I felt I had to some cleaning instead. After some reluctance I made an effort to see this in a positive light and, indeed, to see God in it. I duly did not only the cleaning I had intended, but also much more. I had kept going because, amazingly, it did feel spiritual and God centred.

It seems to me that when we offer God our everyday activities, He will always give us so much more in return. In so doing it makes each chore or task special and a service to God.

I am reminded of the hymn Teach me, my God and King by George Herbert (died 1633), in particular verses 1 and 4 written here.

Teach me, my God and King,  
in all things thee to see,  
and what I do in anything  
to do it as for thee.  
A servant with this clause  
makes drudgery divine:  
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,  
makes that and the action fine.





## A thought from Rev Rosemary Wakelin:

### Love

I remember a young minister friend saying that John 3:16 - 'God so love the world - - ' was the Gospel in a nutshell. He'd got a point. The whole heart of the Bible message is that God is Love and how that works out in the human story. The word Love gets very corrupted and diluted. It can be used for sentimentality, slushy relationships, hearts and flowers (not that I don't like flowers) but actually Love is the toughest thing in the world, and Jesus came to show us how it works.



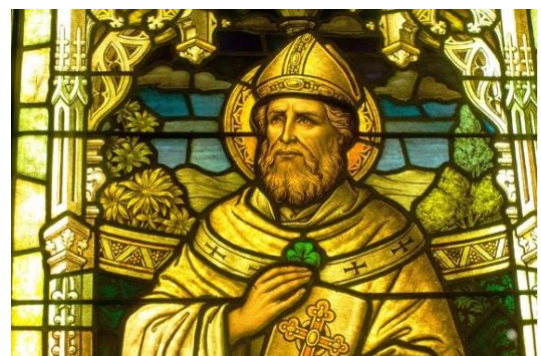
We all know the easy bits, cooing over a beautiful baby, flattered by a lovely gift, encouraged by recognition, indulged by loving parents, falling in Love!! And that's all fluffy and cosy. But what about when things go wrong? When you are told that someone deeply loved is so ill they will be little more than a vegetable - when someone you trusted fails you, when you get the diagnosis you most dreaded? I remember the dreaded telegram in the war telling us that my Dad was missing, believed killed. That's when the Gospel kicks in.

Jesus's desperate prayer in Gethsemane is very much hoping it won't be what he dreads, but leaves the outcome to his Heavenly Father. He will only see his life in the context of God's will, and God is Love, and Love must go the distance. He accepted the inevitability of taking Love to its logical conclusion - you can do your very worst to me but you cannot stop my Love. He even experienced that ghastly moment of feeling abandoned, but was then able to commit himself to God.

'Sin and death and hell shall never o'er us final triumph gain; God is Love, so Love forever o'er the universe must reign.



**Rev Anne writes:** today is St Patrick's Day - always celebrated on March 17 because that is the day that St Patrick died. He is known for bringing Christianity to Ireland and it's thought that he died in the small village of Saul in 461 AD, not far from the town of Downpatrick in Co Down, where he is buried. As with so many celebrations, a day that began to remember a patron saint has gradually turned into something more about Irish culture, having parades and having a big boozy party! (On Sunday, we celebrate Mothering Sunday - another day that has changed over the years.) It's not surprising that festivals develop over time, particularly under the influence of big business.





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But there is still something important at the heart of these occasions worth recognising. For example, St Patrick used the 3-leaf clover (also called the Shamrock) to explain the Trinity, with each leaf representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three leaves are also said to represent faith, hope and love.

May the Holy Trinity bless you today and always.

### Today's 'Thought' is from Rev Jacqui:

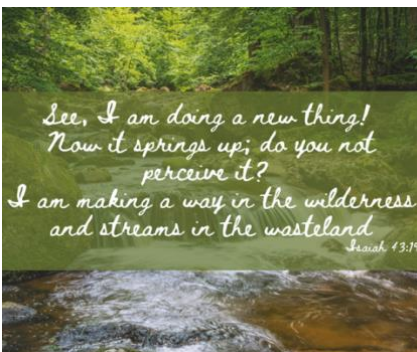
A week ago, Jen and I were taking a Sunday afternoon walk near where we live in Swaffham. We had crossed the field near our estate and were walking up the North Pickenham Road. A few families were waiting by the roadside - what were they doing we wondered? We reached the point where we would go up White Cross Road and back home through the town. We stopped. Should we do this or return the way we had come and thus enjoy the field (and the nearby sheep) again? It was a dilemma. We would have to walk past the waiting families again... Then, a decision was made! We would go back down the road and across the field in reverse. Half-way down the road, there was suddenly a huge burst of activity. A whole procession of tractors - that seemed to go on forever - was trundling up the road. We got ourselves onto the grass verge and the driver of the first tractor waved his thanks. Jen waved back, then thought she should wave to the next tractor hard on its heels. She ended up waving to every tractor in the procession with many drivers waving back and/or hooting their horns. Quite an experience!



We read in the EDP later that there were 63 tractors driven by members of the Young Farmers Club and £1,500 was raised for charity. Good for them!

So, what is my thought? Life can be very different depending on decisions that we make. Even innocuous ones. To walk on or walk back? If we had walked on, we would have missed all that excitement. All we can do, each and every day, is open ourselves to the Spirit and to the flow of God's love for us and experience everything that God has in store for us.

### A thought from Sam Parfitt:



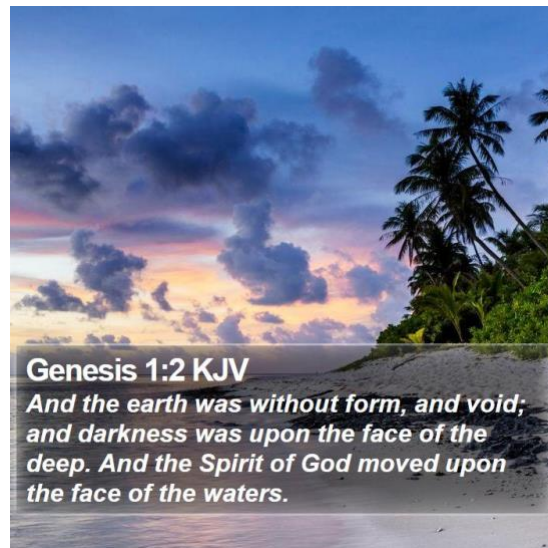
I made myself a promise when I became a Christian that I would always be honest with people who asked me questions about it.

Over the past 6 years that's happened quite a lot after someone asks me where I work! Michael, Wendy and I were out for a meal on Saturday as part of a big group and inevitably someone asked me what I do for a living. 'So you're into all this Jesus stuff then?' was the question that followed and I answered 'yeah, I guess I'm into it fairly heavily, but thankfully you don't have to be very good at it - God loves a trier!' from that grew a conversation about faith, Jesus and Christianity. The next

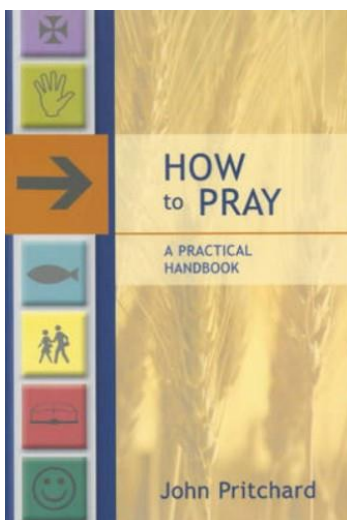


day at church, someone was talking about the source of the river Ouse, which I know as the enormous river that runs through Kings Lynn (when living in West Lynn I used to get the water taxi across it - great fun!) They had traced it back to its source as a spring.

We have these small conversations about faith don't we, humble moments of sharing. Seemingly unimportant, but perhaps they are the beginnings of springs of faith which may one day grow to be great rivers of living water.



### An afternoon Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:



People across the circuit have been telling me that they have been enjoying one or other of the two books we have recommended for Lent - both on prayer.

I, myself, have been re-reading 'How to Pray' by John Pritchard and once again have found it really helpful. Here is just one little story to make us think from one of the chapters:

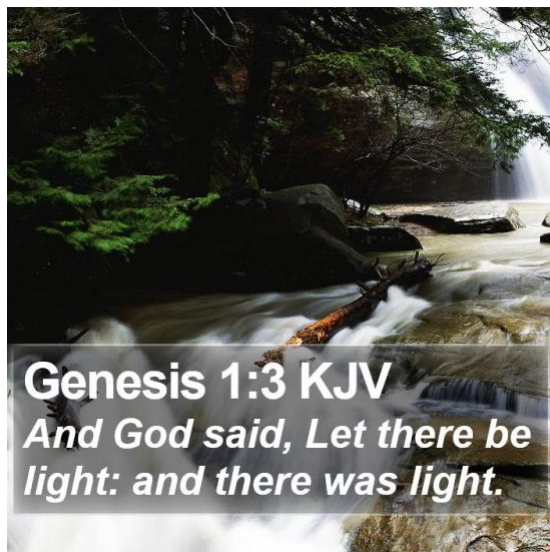
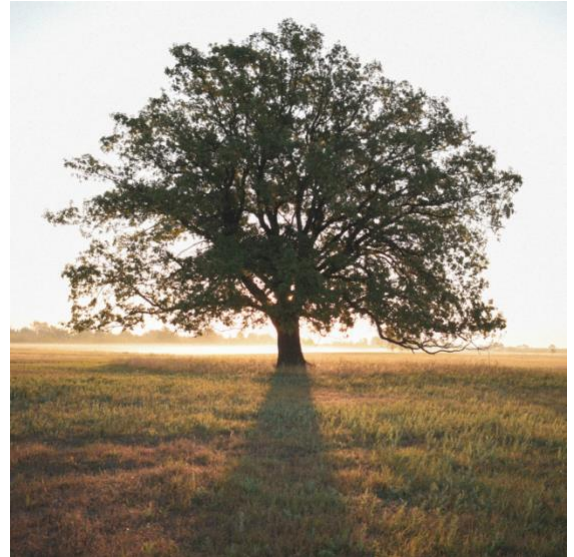
"A man found his friend on the ground under a street lamp, searching for his keys. He joined in the search but they had no luck. Eventually the man said, 'Where did you lose the keys?' 'At home', said the friend. 'Then why are you searching here?' asked the man. 'Because the light is brighter here' said his friend.

Search for God where he's likely to be found, not where the lights are brightest."

## A thought from Rev Rosemary Wakelin:

### Trees in April

The trees stand waiting, strenuously still.  
How improbable that from their fibrous fingers  
should unfurl the fragile fronds of infant foliage.  
Stately they stand,  
patiently imprisoned,  
root sunk in sullen soil,  
sucking the sappy strength  
to lift aloft stiff limbs in silent salutation.  
Wordless they worship as they celebrate  
the cycle of the seasons.



**Genesis 1:3 KJV**  
*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*



**Genesis 1:4 KJV**  
*And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

**Rev Anne writes:** I spotted this little crocus growing in the crack between the tarmac of the road and the kerb. It spoke to me of the tenacity of life and resilience in the face of difficult odds!

We face many challenges, and yet there is always hope and new opportunities to take hold of.

There is an inspirational saying written by Joanne Raptis: "Be like a tree. Stay grounded. Connect with your roots. Turn over a new leaf. Bend before you break. Enjoy your unique natural beauty. Keep growing."

Jeremiah 17:7-8 says: "But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,

whose confidence is in him.

8 They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

Whether we can identify with the tree or the crocus, both have life and growth, and so may we.

