

Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Facebook Posts

October 2025

A thought from Rev Neil:

On being a learner.

One of the priorities for us as we moved from South Africa was to buy a car, and of course, following from that learning to drive on British roads.



That should be an easy matter, our South African drivers' licences are accepted here and it is a simple matter of exchanging them for British ones, we drive on the same side of the road and most of our traffic signs and road markings are very similar.

But despite having been a driver for thirty-five years I find myself driving like a learner all over again. Everything is familiar, but not quite right. A process that had become automatic now requires thought: thought about what the sign really does mean, thought about how to manage the traffic conditions, thought about what the (much more polite) British drivers are going to do next.

Driving in South Africa is crazy and dangerous, but after many years' practice is second nature to me. I need time and practice for driving in the UK to become as easy in spite of better road conditions and drivers.

I'm finding the same to be true of being a minister! I've been in ministry for a similar amount of time, and indeed, the British church is very similar to the South African one, but not the same! It's those little pauses needed to think about everything before acting that make life a little more complicated.

I wonder how often we become complacent and automatic in our faith, doing things by rote? We've been doing it for a lifetime and are quite comfortable with what we know and how to be a good Christian, yet Jesus always challenges us to follow him - often into places that are unknown. There may be a familiarity, yet everything is slightly different. The language is different, the mood is different, the people are different, maybe simply differences between generations and what they find meaningful.

As we continue to follow Jesus we are always invited into the new and he invites us to be learners again and again as our own and the world's circumstances change. We're always called to adapt our witness to the changing world around us as we continue to share the good news which remains the same.

I'm reminded of the hymn "Come let us Sing of a Wonderful Love" (443 in Singing the Faith) in which Robert Walmsly urges us to be "lowly and humble, a learner of thee."

Being learners means allowing ourselves to be uncomfortable with the new, even as we trust Jesus and his leading into the places where it isn't always as easy as it used to be. May God bless us all on our journey of discipleship!

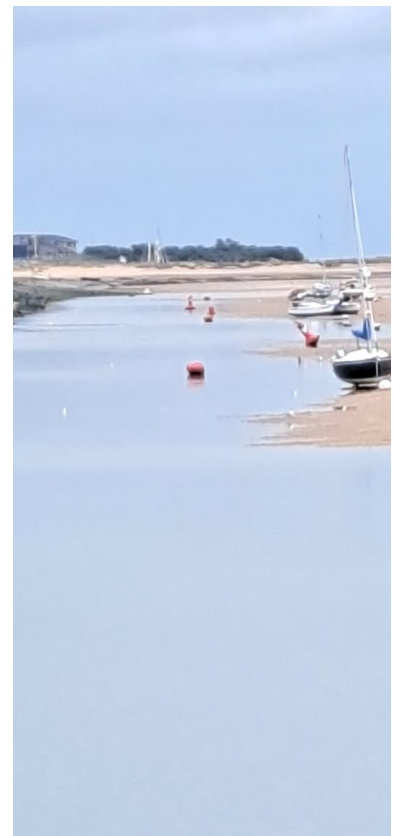
A thought from Aileen Fox:

Taking things for Granted

A week ago I visited Wells-next-the-Sea and on my way back to the car park, walked alongside the Quay. Looking out at the water I decided to take a few photos on my phone. I was feeling quite relaxed; it had been a good visit to a friend, a little shopping and the temptation (which I gave into) of fish and chips for tea. It was around 5.30pm and there was no sun but it was pleasant and still light.

I wandered on, got into the car and drove the 10 miles home. Later I sent off some photos to my daughter to remind her of her time in Norfolk. She doesn't always comment but this time there was a response, "The sea looks very still" I had to look again at the photos. She was right, it was very still, and I hadn't taken it in. Seeing a familiar scene which I love, I had failed to notice how still it all was.

So often we take things for granted, not noticing the subtle differences and really failing to appreciate the detail. Life is like that and we forget, each day is a gift and yes some days may be hard and others a real joy but they are different if we really look. We are guilty sometimes of taking the everyday scenes for granted and yet there is often a hidden or overlooked gem. Having attempted to prune and cut back my vigorous and tall roses without harming the late blooms, I noticed a cluster of large white roses as I drove down the drive. The care and attention had worked and there was an abundance of white roses, when I thought that particular bush had stopped flowering for the season. I could so easily have missed this beauty in my hurry to get down the drive and onwards to my destination. Perhaps we need to have those moments when we stop and look at our surroundings and see what is new, different or in need of attention.



A thought from Rev Derek: The A47 love it or loathe it

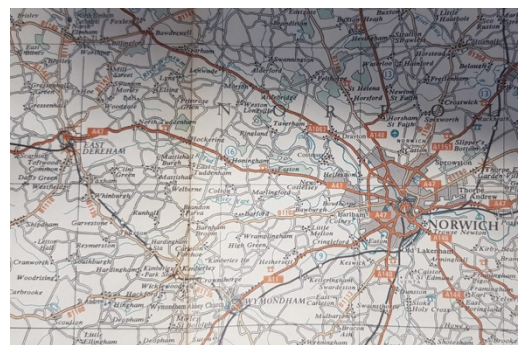
We don't really do motorways in East Anglia, although during the twenty years we have lived here we have seen a rapid expansion in house building and consequently have seen some road improvements. I remember coming here on holiday in 2003 and leaving the A1 at Newark we began our one hundred and thirty mile trek across Lincolnshire on the A17 and then from King's Lynn to Great Yarmouth on the A47. Our girls were fourteen and ten at the time and were watching Shrek on DVD in the back of the car, which was entertaining them, but in the front of the car all we could do was listen to the dialogue and it wasn't quite as enthralling for us, but I wondered whether we were ever going to see the sea ever again, I had forgotten what a large county Norfolk is.

Today, the A47 has become a part of my life, there is construction work being undertaken currently to dual the road all the way from Dereham to Acle which will make the journey faster, however, I might avoid Acle during the school summer holidays as all the traffic tries to squeeze down to fit onto the single carriageway delights of "The Acle Straight" (look it up on a map if you've never had the joy of travelling on the road).

Having said all of that, I love East Anglia and I have so many happy memories of this part of the world. This is a wonderful place to live and work and I feel so privileged to have had this opportunity in my life. My first encounter with Norfolk came in August 1966 when our parents brought my brother and I to Great Yarmouth for one of our first family holidays. We travelled on the coach overnight from Bradford that year, and all I remember of the journey was stopping along with loads of other coaches at the Cross Keys at Gringley on the Moor a popular stopping off point for coaches heading to the Lincolnshire and East Anglian coasts, and I remember arriving at Great Yarmouth in the early hours of the morning.

The following year we set off in our little Red Reliant Regal as soon as day broke and travelled the epic journey from Calverley in West Yorkshire to Hamilton Road in Great Yarmouth. According to Google maps, the journey should take around four and a half hours today, and is around two hundred miles. If my memory serves me right after all these years, I think that the journey in 1967 took us over ten hours with toilet and lunch breaks. We moved to Dereham last summer and it feels strange to think that almost sixty years ago we travelled right past the end of the road leading to our house. Unsurprisingly I remember little about that journey either as I was only eight at the time and I guess that I was losing the will to live having sat in the back of the little car for several hours, but I wondered where exactly we travelled back then.

I have become a bit obsessed by this, so you can imagine my delight when I spotted on one of the online auction sites, a copy of AA Readers Digest Book of the Road 1967 and I made my purchase, the book has seen much better days and has clearly been well used. It makes me smile reading about motoring in the 1960s when cars were far less prominent and as sophisticated than they are today. Looking at the journey my parents made all those years ago in my now antique map book, we would have travelled through every town, city and village, there were no bypasses, very few dual carriageways and, whilst I might get frustrated today by the roadworks I endure almost daily, I am thankful for the process of evolution, and it is another reminder that the world is evolving and not all change is negative.



A thought from Dee Moden:

When we were on holiday in Jersey a couple of weeks ago, and beside the marina in the archways there was a Summer Art Exhibition. This was based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem The Ancient Mariner taking the words: "Water water everywhere but not a drop to drink" as their theme.

Five local artists and a couple of schools contributed. There were scenes of different creatures living in the sea, some were fished for food and some it was their home, "The Fruits of the Sea". Some depicted the uses of water in our daily lives, "The Power of Water" and the schools showed messages in bottles bobbing about in the water, of their hopes for the future of Jersey, for themselves and for the environment. All very interesting and enlightening, and some very profound! A local poet, Mary Venturini, had written a poem for the occasion, here are a few lines from it:

Water water everywhere but how long till there's none to drink?
We consume, we waste, we throw away,
And reservoirs run dry.
Then, "Where has all the water gone?" goes up the anxious cry
The earth is dry the sea is dead, the animals have all fled!
This was all to make you think, and it certainly did!
Will this be a reality if we don't care for our world?
What message would we send?



Please pray for the congregation and community in Dereham



A thought from Rev Neil: Everything comes out in the wash

When I was a teenager in high school my mother received a small inheritance from her aunt, and with it she bought an automatic washing machine.

With great excitement the machine was delivered and installed, and, having read the instruction manual, we were ready to do the first load of washing!

The instructions on loading were quite clear: load the drum, leaving a hand space between the top of the load of washing and the top of the drum. That's a practice I have used as a general guideline most of adult life, but it's not always helpful.

When Lynn and I bought a new washing machine I realised that the hand space was no longer the guideline, and now the machines seem more concerned about weight: 7kg for a full load, maybe 1.5kg for a hand wash. Now I duly weighed the washing, but in many cases found that a full 7kg of washing was actually too much for one load, so back to the hand space!

Of course, it's not really that difficult. The issue is that the washing must have sufficient space to agitate in the machine; some fluffy washing may be very light and pack the drum full, but would compress when wet and so on.

What matters is that one has the experience to evaluate one's laundry load and pack accordingly. I think the same should be true of our approach to Christianity.

It's easy to take a very legalistic approach on exactly how things should be done, but as one matures into a relationship with Jesus hopefully grace becomes more important, and we realise that nothing is black and white. With love and experience we make space for different experiences and we discover that the law of how to do the washing is less important than we thought.

Blessings as you do your laundry!

Photo by Adrienne Andersen from [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)



A thought from Aileen Fox: Little things can make a difference.

I had just gone into Walsingham Methodist Chapel ready for a school visit, it was a bit of a rush as I had an earlier appointment with just enough time to get from Gressenhall to Walsingham. We have had a storm and as I walked in I spotted a few dead flies so grabbed the dustpan and began sweeping them up. We do suffer as an old building especially if the front door is open.

The school group came and we had a great time, lots of interest, sharing stories, a really good group of 5th and 6th formers. I apologised for any flies and off they went to visit the next church. I'd closed and locked the door and a few minutes later someone rattled the handle. Wondering if someone had left something behind, I opened it to find two people wondering if they could look round. I invited them in, and they went upstairs. As they came down I heard a cry 'oh look at the flies! Urgh!' Going out I saw one of the windows crawling with flies. They were not there when I came in. I apologised and once the visitors had gone I started the clearing process.

Unfortunately, with an old building there are cracks that little insects can get in. I could see where this was happening plus when I opened the door the movement disturbed their hidey holes. I suspect the storm and winds had sent them sheltering against the chapel walls. You can guess the rest! Several flies in the building had multiplied meaning hundreds and upstairs too! I've almost cleared it but it's got me thinking, perhaps in our daily lives we could do a little thing, like smiling at people, saying hello, perhaps writing a letter or signing a petition. Little things when they come together can make a bigger difference. I would prefer it if the flies had stayed outside and not got together but there is a lesson even from them, that when we do little things for others it can make a huge difference. Wandering down the High Street in Walsingham after cleaning and calling in to a couple of shops and looking at an item turned into long conversations about the Methodist Church. Little things can multiply and come together for good.

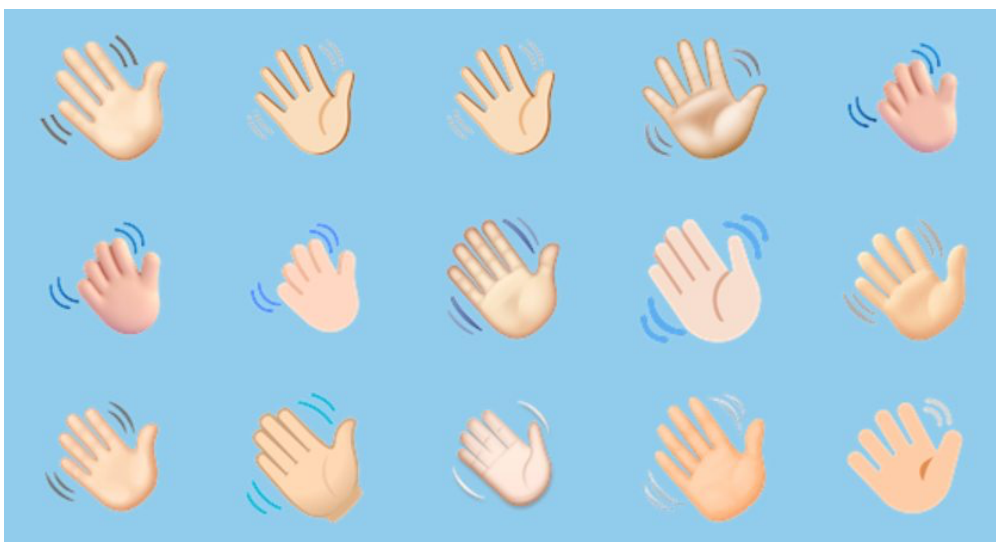


A thought from Rev Derek: The Waving Man

Life is a bit tough at the moment and as I set off on Sunday morning to lead the service at Holt Methodist Church, I confess to feeling a bit down. I had three services ahead of me which is no big deal, I knew that I would be spending time with some wonderful people and I thought that I had a half decent sermon in my pocket. I was tired and for some reason felt down. I had a drive of around 20 miles which would take just over half an hour along the B1110. I drove through the village of North Elmham and just a bit further along the road I approached the four blocks of semi-detached houses to my right, and as I approached I spotted the hi-vis clad man who waves at cars. I pass this man frequently, I have little idea of what he actually looks like because every part of him including a hat and gloves is bright yellow/green fluorescent and he wears white, broad rimmed sunglasses. With it being Sunday morning, I had the road virtually to myself, so I flashed my lights as I approached and gave him a thumbs up, he responded with a double thumbs up and smile beamed across my miserable face. The dark cloud that had hung over me for the first ten minutes or so lifted in an instant.

For obvious reasons, I can't include a photograph of the young man on the B1110, but after I passed him on Sunday morning, I started to think that we have similar ministries. I wonder whether he is even aware of the joy he brings into people's hearts who pass him along the road. I Googled him when I got home and "The Waving Man on the B1110" Facebook page had a following of 6.9 thousand people which speaks volumes about the people he influences. He never addresses crowds of people, he is not a member of that ever-growing group of people today who are referred to as influencers, I don't know his name and could walk right past him in a crowd, yet this one man stands outside what I assume is his home and simply waves at passing motorists. We are politely asked not to blow our horns and respect the neighbours.

On Sunday morning I headed for Holt with a smile on my face after all, and I made my best attempt to share with the people of the picturesque market town a message of Love, Peace and Hope. In a week when we have witnessed the horrible attack at the synagogue in Manchester during the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur. The world felt to be a dark place and it becomes increasingly difficult to preach a message of hope. If ever you chance to be driving up the B1110, look out for the dazzling sight of the hi-vis clad man just beyond North Elmham and give him a wave, I can almost guarantee that your day will brighten up, but please do not blow your horn, it would be sad if this man was stopped from performing his vital ministry.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Fulmodeston



A thought from Dee Moden:

I was reminded of these iconic words by Leonard Cohen, by someone who has, and is going through a difficult time.

“Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There’s a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in.”

Very profound words offering hope, a sense of worth, and encouragement of never giving up. Walking around our garden looking at the shrubs and plants that had a hard time during the hot spell, and didn’t seem to flower as usual, now after the rain and cooler days, they are flourishing offering us this wonderful late display.

At this time and season of year it reminds me of the hymn by Fred Pratt Green. **“For the fruits of all creation”** giving thanks for the gifts we receive both physically and spiritually.

There is always something we can offer, something we can do, it may seem small to yourself, but may have a profound effect on someone else and brighten their day.

“Ring the bells that still can ring.”





A thought from Rev Neil:

The concept of the Kingdom of God has played an important role in my spiritual formation. Without going into any great depth, the simple assertion that Jesus makes at the beginning of Mark's gospel (1:15), that the Kingdom of God is at hand and one needs only a change of mindset (repentance) to see it, has been deeply meaningful to me.

So, as I go through daily life, I try to be aware of the presence of God in the places I go and in the people I meet.

A short while ago I was in Norwich to sort out a problem with my car. I had to leave it there for the day, so planned other business in Norwich, and Lynn joined me for part of the morning. As we walked together, we noted some of the churches in Norwich, St Stephen's, the Methodist Chapel Fields church, and a small chapel that we passed called St Julian's.

We'd walked past it on our way elsewhere, and on my way back - Lynn had left by bus already - I decided to take a closer look. The doors were open so I thought it might be a nice place to be quiet for a moment.

As I started reading some of the information about the church posted in the foyer and at the back, the pieces started falling into place! Julian of Norwich!

Julian was young woman who, in the 14th century, suffered a life-threatening illness during which she received life-changing visions from God. After a miraculous recovery she took vows to live as an anchoress, living in a small cell in the very church which I had chanced upon.

It was here that she wrote down her visions, later in an expanded work called *The Revelations of Divine Love*, possibly the first book written in English by a woman.

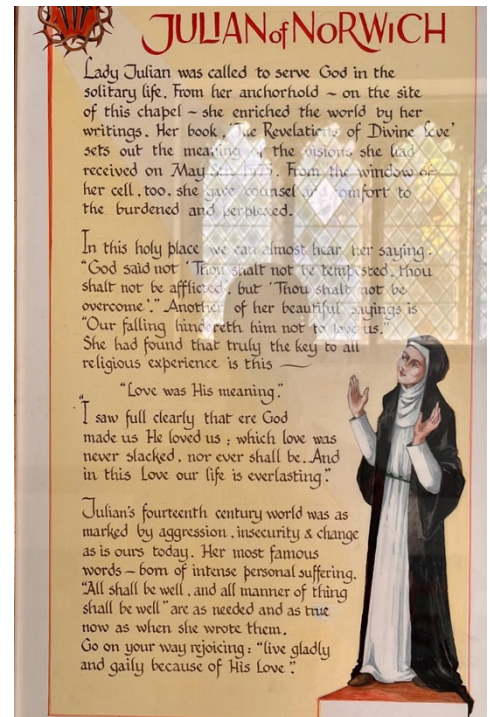
I had encountered her in my studies through Richard Rohr, and enjoyed her spirituality, and now - purely by chance - I was in the place she lived and wrote!

I hadn't consciously thought of her, or the fact she was Julian of Norwich, since hearing that we would be moving to Norfolk.

Yet here, unexpectedly, I encountered her, and God!

By being open to God's kingdom, I realised once again that it truly is at hand!

So, I spent some time in her cell - slightly changed over the past 650 years - in prayer and reflection, remembering, in her words, that "all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well," as indeed it shall be.



A thought from Aileen Fox:

Memories

I am not sure if it's because of the nights beginning to draw in, or Facebook sending me photos from several years ago as memories, but I was looking back at some photographs taken on my holiday in June this year walking in Orkney. We visited so many standing stones, and cairns that I started taking a snapshot of the information boards to remind me where we were. One such board about Taversoe Tuick Chambered Cairn, a neolithic two-storey tomb, had the following words that on looking again at the photo really struck home. 'What a pity the stones cannot speak and reveal to us the intentions of their builders.' Eliza Burroughs, 1898. She was the wife of the owner of the property where this cairn was excavated.

What of us, will our lives speak to others? Will what we have achieved be of benefit to those who follow after us? What we do now will have an effect on generations to come, so are we willing to make sacrifices, sow seeds of love and faith?

Thinking about chapels that are struggling and those who have closed, sometimes we do not know the effect these congregations have had on others in the community. The actions and love will hopefully carry on after we have moved on, so it's important that we do the best we can in the time given to us and it's the same for our buildings and congregations.

Memories are good if they help us avoid mistakes but they are also part of our story, of what we tried to do, sometimes achieving it, sometimes falling short. It doesn't matter if we didn't quite achieve something, as long as we tried and showed our love and trust in Jesus, leaving hope and support for those who follow us. Sowing seeds and not always being the one to harvest.



A thought from Rev Derek:

Toys or Collectables?

One of my prized possessions when I was a child was my 1960s Corgi Austin A60 De Luxe Motor School Car. I think that I might have received it as a Christmas present when I was about seven or eight years old. My brother had an identical car, so I am guessing that they were Christmas presents. I loved that little car, and it was just part of a large collection of Matchbox, Dinky, and Corgi toys that we had. This little car was special because the red wheel on the roof turned the front wheels so that the car would steer and I remember practicing my parallel parking on the windowsill in our front room, long before I ever knew that parallel parking was a thing. The box was thrown away on the day of purchase and the car was chucked in a box with all our other cars when we cleared away after playing. That at least is how I remember it; my mum, bless her, would possibly remember a very different version of the story and her tidying up after my brother and me when we had gone to bed.

Over the years of my childhood, that little car was played with and abused. There was a time in my early teenage years when I found a tin of red paint in the garden shed and spent time repainting the little car (not very well, and with scant attention to detail) and the thing became a somewhat questionable matt red colour. The once clear plastic windows were scratched and no longer

transparent and the little car looked nothing like the proud blue and silver model that it had been as it was lovingly taken out of the box. After getting married, my wife Karen became a registered childminder and over a period of about twenty years, the little Austin A60 motor school car was played with and loved by a whole stream of other children. It moved from Bradford to Hethersett and then to Ipswich with us and last summer it moved to Dereham and sits not in a box on top of our wardrobe and will shortly be owned by my grandson.

I looked at an online auction site and see that a model in mint condition with its original box would cost me £75 today, one optimistic Italian seller is asking £242 plus £34 p&p, even a tatty, played with model is up for just short of a tenner; looking back to the early/mid sixties when my parents bought my little car, I can't imagine it costing more than a few shillings (less than a pound). That present was never given to be an investment for the future, to be stored away and retained in pristine condition. It was bought to be played with and as I think of the car I recall a story that Jesus told of a man who left his workers in charge of his property, each was given a share. Two had invested wisely and returned a profit, while one hid his gift away and handed it back in pristine condition.

My little car might be worth nothing in monetary terms today, but it is worth a fortune to me in memories and hours of fun. Gifts are given, not to be stored away, but to be used. I hope that you are using to the full the gifts you have been given.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Garvestone





A thought from Rev Neil:

Everything must go!

My parents lived in the same house for nearly 46 years of their life and, as you can imagine, when it was time for them to move to a retirement complex it was tough to leave, mostly because of all they had accumulated along the way.

I was cut from the same genetic cloth and am a hoarder by nature. I love holding onto things that are important to me long after I should have gotten rid of them. A few years prior to our move to the UK we were being asked to give an inventory of our stuff for insurance purposes. It was so overwhelming a task that I eventually gave up!

Then we started speaking about moving and I realised that we couldn't take all our stuff with us, and so we started to get rid of things.

My dad's cement mixer (c1985), toys from childhood (late 70s and early 80s), hobby equipment (again from the 80s through 90s), objects from parents and grandparents I'd held onto for sentimental reasons. Everything must go! Some was sold for what we could get, some was intended to be kept, but broke in the packaging process and so was discarded. Some precious things (mainly books and photographs, and some memorabilia) were kept.

Limitations on what we could realistically bring with us meant that we initially limited our move to 6m3 of goods to bring overseas with us. That soon grew as last minute items were added because "we can't get rid of that!" or because we simply had gotten tired of sorting and trying to decide what to bring, what to sell, what to give away and what to trash.

When Jesus sends his disciples out, he tells them not to take even an extra shirt for the journey and to shake off the dust from the towns that do not welcome them (eg Luke 9:1-6). Metaphorically I believe that Jesus is telling us to travel lightly. Do not allow things, material or emotional, to define our lives.

Jesus invites us leave behind even the things that have shaped us: that bicycle that gave you your first taste of independence as a young teen? It must go! The clothes that you wore thirty years ago that have been kept because of that special time, no longer necessary (and they probably don't fit anymore!) University notes from the first time you lived independently. Your subject has changed anyway! Your awards in whatever you achieved when you were in primary school - and since!

The things that we cling to that represented our hopes and dreams of the past, that things that we think we need for our future security, the hurts that have made us fearful and angry. While all of those things may have shaped who we are today, we are no longer that person and the more we are willing to let go, the greater opportunity not just to live into life as it is now, but also to become who we're meant to be in the future.

It's been just over two months since our stuff was collected and right now (a little facetiously, perhaps!) we're hoping for a mishap at sea because, frankly, we haven't missed anything and really don't want to have to deal with all that stuff again. (Two caveats - we were very well provided for by the Circuit and the appliances that Rev Anne left behind, and there are some irreplaceable items which, although we don't miss them, we would hate for them to be lost).

As we've embraced a new life we've realised that the things of the past had far less meaning than we thought and we're now we're able to live much lighter. I commend to you the grace of letting go!



A thought from Aileen Fox:

LOST!

We are used to seeing signs on notice boards, on social media, and usually it's about a lost cat, dog or sometimes a personal item such as a purse, sunglasses or a bank card. Equally we can all get lost or lose something.

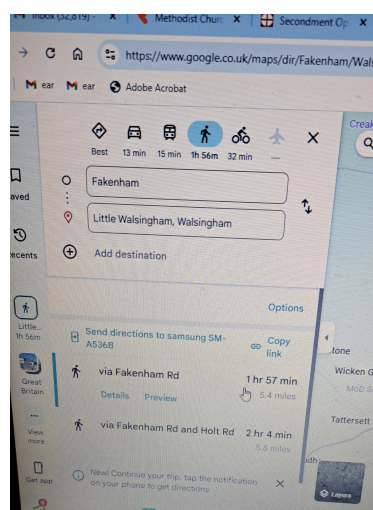
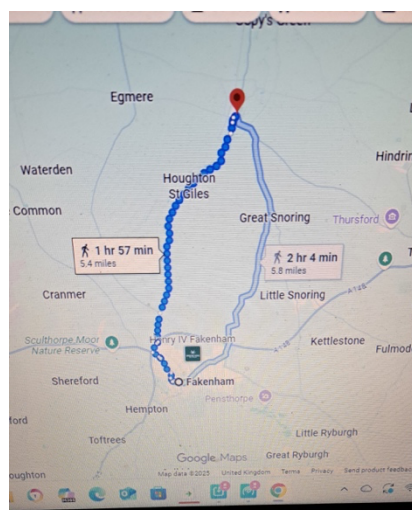
I am someone who has always got lost when driving and have had several plug-in navigation systems, but found that keeping the screen at an angle in my car was difficult without obscuring vision. I tried using my phone but finding a holder for it was impossible, even the dealer couldn't help! I then changed my car and insisted that it must have a built-in navigation system*. For the majority of journeys, it has proved ideal and I have reached my destination safely and in a calm state of mind. That is except for being sent down a road that has been closed at the end due to roadworks, or the system tells me to take the 3rd turning but has counted exits at a roundabout to include a track. Of course, I do as I am told and take the numbered turning. Shall I just say a former member of staff had a very bumpy journey across a field on one occasion as it was beginning to get dark and when we also met a farm vehicle!

As you have now gathered, I dislike going anywhere that I am unfamiliar with. There are one or two Chapels in our circuit who have been on the receiving end of my lack of navigation. I have actually been to every chapel but there is still one I have difficulty finding and they had a recent service delayed by 10 minutes whilst I travelled round and round their village several times because the chapel doesn't appear on my sat nav system nor on Google maps. I do have it now firmly embedded in my mind.

Getting lost is not only time consuming but can be frightening. But being lost isn't always about a physical journey. We can become lost in so many ways, losing our focus because life has given us a real problem. Lost because someone we have shared our lives with has suddenly died or has gone on a different path. The loss of family, friends, a way of life, a job ending and a chapel closing can all lead us to feeling lost. I know I have experienced situations of loss and yet been in a church meeting or community and felt lost even though people were around me. As we put the clocks back this weekend and the evenings draw in, spare a thought for those feeling lost. They may not tell you that they feel lost, but think of those who are alone, perhaps make a telephone call or offer to pick them up for an outing or evening meeting.

I am reminded of the Children's hymn 'Jesus friend of little children be a friend to me'. This winter can we try and be a friend to someone who may be feeling lost?

* To save everyone's blushes but especially mine, the directions and sat nav map in the photos show Fakenham to Walsingham, which is a route I know very well, rather than the church I was late for.



A thought from Rev Derek:

A question of patience

Many years ago I remember singing one of Graham Kendrick's songs and, come to think about it, I haven't sung it in ages. The lyrics went "In your way and your time that's how it's gonna be in my life". In all honesty, I liked the tune and would give the song lip service, but in truth I was living a life that went along the lines of "in my way and in my time".

Back in the eighties, I was driven by my career, I was a young man with my life spread out in front of me like some kind of open book, full of experiences and opportunities and I wanted to do it all and do it now. I guess that I would describe my younger self as being an optimist; I believed that everything was possible and I was desperate to get myself and my family to where we wanted to be.

After starting down the route of preparing for a life of working in the ordained ministry, I learned very quickly that the way of The Methodist Church is that you learn what you need to know when you need to know it. I was about to embark on a completely new way of living - the way the stationing of ministers works is that if you offer for the itinerant ministry, your future is in the hands of "The Stationing Committee" and you can find yourself located anywhere between The Shetland Isles and the Channel Islands. We were "sent to Norfolk" and learned that life moves at a completely different pace here. You learn very quickly the discipline of patience as you follow yet another tractor, having just passed the previous one. Life here has a completely different pulse rate to inner city Leeds and Bradford and one of the things I have been forced to learn is what it means to be patient.

As many of you know, my wife, Karen, has been very ill over the last three months and she has been in hospital now for eight weeks. She can just about manage to get from seated to standing, but it is hard work and she is exhausted after just two or three attempts. We desperately want to be back together in our home in Dereham, but we have had to accept that there is still quite a mountain to climb. We trust that one day in the not too distant future that day will come and we are learning to take a day at a time, working slowly towards our goal.

I have reflected over and over on the words penned by Graham Kendrick in 1976 "In your way and your time" as I sit in a queue, negotiating my way past the University of East Anglia on my journey to and from the amazing rehabilitation hospital that is home for Karen at the moment - as it feels like every teenager in the whole of East Anglia tries to cross the pelican crossing, then run the gauntlet of the "five ways roundabout" my patience is stretched to the limit.

As I get older, I find that everything takes longer, we are increasingly at the mercy of other people and rushing over anything at all is that bit slower and maybe I would find that hymn, much less of a challenge today than I did forty years ago.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Gressenhall.



A thought from Dee Moden:

I don't know if there are other people like me who are irritated when we see Christmas cards etc. in the shops at the beginning of September, I suspect there are! Then of course it gathers momentum, anytime soon we will have Christmas music playing in our stores.

The beginning of October saw the arrival of Halloween and Bonfire night and all the paraphernalia that goes with that, all mixed in together. Imagine my amazement when the other day in a local supermarket I spied 'HOT CROSS BUNS,' and then again in a Farm Shop from a local bakery! But then I have been told that they are sold all the year round! I expect before December is out there will be Easter Eggs on display, the Seasons Celebrations mixed up and all rolled into one.

Yes, I personally could eat a mince pie or a hot cross bun anytime, but these foods are symbolic to our Christian Festivals, and do have a significant meaning. This just reduces, confuses and loses the connection, and it is just something else that is being slowly diminished. I love celebrating all these joyous seasons but at the right time.



In Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 it describes how there is a specific time for everything – God has set these times, and the times of the Birth Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

As we look around our world today, we really do need to hold on to these important Christian Festivals and celebrations, defining them, putting them into perspective for people to realise how significant they are, and what it means to us today.

Food for thought?