

Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Facebook Posts

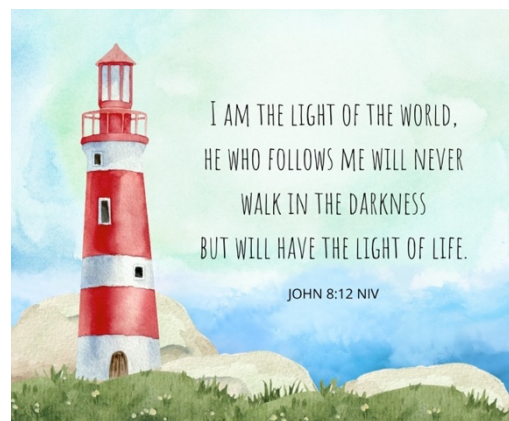
September 2024

Please pray for the congregation and community in Mattishall



Pray with us today

Among our worries or despair,
you are there.
Among those who are anxious or frail,
you are there.
In the times when we care,
you are there,
and in the times when we fail,
you are there.
In our calling,
open our minds and our hearts to your ways,
so that we may know how to help those in distress.
Enable your Church to be a voice that can be heard,
a people who bring hope to those who feel hopeless,
and to have the courage to face challenges together,
by the power of your Spirit,
Amen.



A thought from Dee Moden:

I wonder how many of you are like us? We get up in the morning with thoughts of what we are going to do, planning the day ahead – then a phone or a text comes and everything changes, and our day turns out to be completely different than we expected. Sometimes, it's because we live near our family!! But we wouldn't have it any other way. Or it's just a sudden change of circumstance.

Alan (my husband) and I are both open to these challenges as we both had careers where no day was the same, and to expect the unexpected, so I think that helps us to be flexible.



Jesus often calls us to do things that are challenging leading us in unexpected places. We never know who we are going to encounter in our daily lives or what impact we will have. This, as always, brings to mind a hymn!!

Singing the Faith 664: 'Lord you call us to your service' written by Marjorie Dobson, the second verse particularly:

Life for us is always changing,
in the work we share.
Christian love adds new dimensions
to the way we care.
For we know that you could lead us,
as you need us
Anywhere

A thought from Aileen Fox:

Water

The famous line 'Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink' often misquoted, comes from the Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and refers to there being water all around but of no use.



Water is essential but do we really appreciate it? I recently walked around the King Cross area in London and watched the fountains emerging from the paving. There is something about water that draws us to it. The birds in my garden love the bird bath and they need water to drink as much as food to survive. I realise how much we take for granted turning on a tap, watering our gardens; yet for many in parts of the world safe drinking water is not available. In Jesus' time water had to be collected from wells in heavy containers and carried many miles. God has given us a world on loan with so much, but sadly we misuse it and we are selfish. The harvest hymn "All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; then thank the Lord, Oh thank the Lord, for all his love." Do we remember to say thank you God?

Rev Derek's Thought for the Day

My small world



As we sat in a queue on the outskirts of Knaresborough, North Yorkshire recently, I spotted a house named “Troydale” and the name brought back memories from my childhood in the 1960s. The Pudsey bus stopped right outside our house, the service was run in those days was run by the Samuel Ledgard bus company established by a Leeds entrepreneur and fondly known as locals as the “Sammy Ledgard” It was only when looking at the house name near Knaresborough sixty years on that I remember that the Pudsey bus went to either “Troydale” or “Acres Hall” we always alighted outside Pudsey town hall and the bus then went on to one of these two

mystical, unknown places. I know where Troydale is today but have had to look “Acres Hall” up on Google and discover that both locations were less than five miles away from where I lived, but I hadn’t a clue where they were and I believe that my parents didn’t know either.

As I look back, I think “why would we know?” we had everything we needed in our little village community. My mum and dad both worked in the village, my brother and I went to school in the village, all our family and friends lived locally, we went to chapel in the village, had to my recollection around thirty shops selling everything we needed, we had a well-stocked library, a lovely park, and two pubs, although being Methodists, they remained as mystical and unknown to us as Troydale and Acres Hall. We did venture to Pudsey and Shipley to do our shopping, but by and large our world was small, and we lived primarily in the confines of “the village” venturing out only when we had to.

Seeing the familiar name brought back so many memories and Karen and I reminisced as we travelled along. I lamented over the fact that most of the shops I remember so fondly from my childhood are now gone forever and have been converted into houses. Two of the mills that employed significant numbers of villagers have closed and been demolished years ago and houses built on the land they once occupied, and the village has become a popular dormitory for commuters working all over West Yorkshire. The place that holds such fond memories for me has changed beyond all recognition. It is almost forty years now since I last lived in the village and there are times when I long for things to be as they used to be with the old Sammy Ledgard bus grinding its gears and chugging up the hill with a full compliment of passengers, I long for the insular life when we used to cross the road after chapel and spend time with my grandma, or wander with the family down the road to see my granny who lived about a mile or so away. I even long for the days when we used to walk to the mill to meet dad as he finished work. They were very different, but wonderful days.

However, there is so much of the modern world that I appreciate. Today, I can share my thoughts with people around the world at the press of a button, I can see names pop up on my computer screen as people “like” “Comment” and “share” my posts which are read by people who live around the world. I live in a global village today and that offers so much that simply wasn’t there sixty years ago.

If you like what you have read, please share with the people you know, or click “like” best of all, it is always good to read comments, even if you think that I am talking rubbish, so long as you are not offensive. It is good to keep in touch and that sense of community I remember from my childhood in the confines of a small West Yorkshire village is so much bigger today, but just as vital.

Please pray for the congregation and community in New Holkham



A thought from Rev Jonny:

"Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the heavens!" - Psalm 148:1-4 (NRSVUE)



During August, I had some annual leave and Seb, our dog Bagel and I went to Lincolnshire for a few nights. We found a beach that was beautiful, as you can see in the picture. Yet, we were completely alone. We couldn't hear anything but the wind and each other.

Moments like these remind me of the first few verses of Psalm 148. You can feel creation and how it praises God just through its existence. It is only in moments like these that we manage to perceive it. I wonder when you have felt moments of creation where you can feel it 'praising' God?

A thought from Rev Anne:

Today is Friday the 13th! A day when it is unwise to walk under a ladder, or to spill the salt. Really? Are you superstitious? Being superstitious is a little like walking along a country path in the autumn - there are always brambles creeping out to trip you up and nettles waiting to sting you as the wind blows them hither and thither!

The opposite of being superstitious is to trust - trust the one who cares for you and has already shown you how much you are loved. Why would you need luck when God is for you? What do you think? Put your thoughts in the comments!



Pray with us today

Let us praise God,
who summons us to live as people of hope,
who lifts us when our hearts are weary,
and raises our eyes, restoring our vision,
to see a new heaven, a new earth,
which breaks in where we least expect it;
inviting us, beyond imagining,
to involvement in making real God's purposes of justice, righteousness and peace.
Let us praise God,
who leads us beyond death, to life in all its fullness,
not for our sakes, but for the sake of others;
that by God's Spirit we live with courage, compassion and commitment;
so we might be agents of change, sharing the gospel of truth and love,
as we join with God's work in the world.

A thought from Rev Derek: *Harvest Thanksgiving*

I'm currently doing the round of harvest festivals, which given my new appointment in rural Norfolk is a sheer delight, last Sunday I watched pigs grazing in the field over the road whilst I led worship. Harvest Festivals in my lifetime have changed significantly, when I was a lad, we used to have a display of home produce, fresh fruit and veg from the gardens of Church members and not a tin or packet in sight. Today the harvest, even in my village chapels is about sharing what we have with those less fortunate than ourselves.

I remember taking a school harvest festival assembly in one of my Ipswich chapels with around three hundred children aged three to seven years old. I remember watching as the seemingly endless line of children entered the building, some staggering under the weight of carrier bags stuffed full of goodies, others with nothing. It took but a few moments to skilfully cram the children and teachers in and as I started to do my bit, something wonderful happened. I watched as the children with bags full started to share what they had with their friends so that when the time came for them to leave in a regimented fashion, every child had a gift to leave on the tables.

Added to the harvest offering of the church the previous day there were two or three large tables groaning under the weight of all the gifts. These in turn would be taken to a local charity who provided a food bank service in the town and once again the process of those who have plenty sharing with those who have nothing was repeated. There are times when I mourn the passing of the old harvest festivals, with the huge displays of produce so that we could thank God for all that he had given to us. I even miss the dreaded harvest auction, when I as the minister was expected to flog dozens of carrier bags full of apples and produce that I have never seen before and left me looking like the horticulturally incompetent person that I am.

The harvest of today goes a stage further and I think that it a good lesson for life. Today we thank God in our harvest celebrations for the bounty of his creation and respond to his grace by sharing what we have with others.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Saham Hills

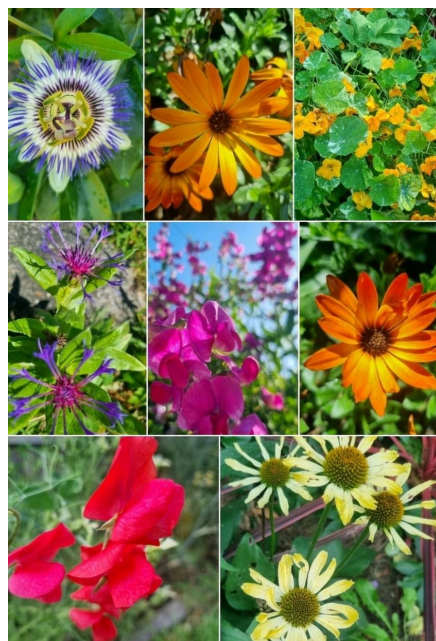


A thought from Rev Jonny:

Gardening is new to me, as I hadn't had a garden until moving into the manse (I had always lived in flats as an adult). My husband (Seb) and I love it. We grow a lot of fruit and veg, but here you can see the flowers we have been growing. I can't take credit for the photos, as Seb took them.

Psalm 104:16 depicts God as a gardener: "The trees of the field are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted" (NRSVUE). There is something beautiful of the metaphor of God as a gardener of creation. Making the ground fertile, planting seeds, and tending to them as they grow. Knowing too, that when something grows, you can only do so much for it and it must grow at its own pace. Indeed, you don't make it grow at all, it does that by itself.

When we tend to our garden, we plant things, hoping they take and seeing how they develop, but never knowing exactly how it will turn out. I wonder if that is how God feels, giving us free will and allowing us to choose, not knowing exactly what we will do and how we will respond.



A thought from Dee - Local Preacher:

We are now in the midst of Harvest Festivals, lots of celebrations, wonderful produce, Harvest meals and so on.

Harvest has changed from years ago in so many ways! The machinery we now have, the way crops are managed and farmed, and our Harvest Festivals have changed too. We have food from around the world in tins bottles cartons and packages, as well as our grown produce, which many of our churches donate to the food banks, for people in need.

As we sing hymns like 'All things bright and beautiful' we are mindful, that for some it isn't as we hear of failed crops in different parts of the world, because of weather conditions – too much rain or not enough, fires and floods. We also sing Think of a world without any flowers – trees – animals etc. for some this is a reality as we see destruction and devastation daily from continual fighting and bombing as wars drag on.

So while we are thankful and we do rejoice we are also mindful of others who are not as fortunate as ourselves, and for those whose lives and livelihoods are so different from our own.



Pray with us today

God of all, we praise you for the life that you give us,
even when we cling to it by no more than our fingertips
and, in Jesus' name, we protest the inequality created by human greed. Amen.

Find more ways to pray at methodist.org.uk/prayer.

A thought from Aileen Fox:

We have just had Heritage week and Walsingham Methodist Church has been open some of the time. On Saturday it was the Norfolk Churches Trust annual cycle or walk event, where you try and get sponsors for every church you manage to visit. I walked last year and managed 10.

This year I opened up Walsingham. 25 adult visitors plus 4 children and 24 cyclist/walkers. What was and always happens when we open, is the number of people who want to talk about their own experiences. They talk about going to



Sunday school in a similar building. They want to hear about the history, what we do, they leave thanking us. Some are not connected to a church, others share about their childhood and many come from different traditions. On Saturday there was a Catholic Pilgrimage and several pilgrims came into the chapel. One lady spoke about working together and serving God she was part of the organising group and felt privileged to come into the Methodist building.

Usually the cyclists come in just to get their sponsor form signed. This Saturday many came in and immediately commented; there were gasps and photos taken and despite wanting to move on they asked for the history. It proves that we can sow seeds by offering a welcome, showing interest and sharing together. For me it is a lovely time to share in fellowship and I hope that some will come and join us at our monthly service (2nd Sunday) and share in a meal. However, it is a simple A board that attracts, which says who we are and all welcome, we couldn't offer a welcome without the board telling people that we are Walsingham Methodist as we are set back away from the road. Do we use every opportunity to tell people who we are? Mission comes in many forms.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Sculthorpe and Fakenham



A thought from Rev Derek:

A matter of appreciation

Moving on a minister is always an unusual experience, as the big day of departure looms closer people will approach my wife and whisper to her that the Church has had a collection for me and what does she think that I would like. Her answer is nearly always the same "I haven't a clue, but please do not give him a book token!" As we prepared to leave the Ipswich Circuit and move on to Dereham in Norfolk one of my Churches kindly gifted us a garden bench, which is a lovely gift and gave my brother and grandson an afternoon's entertainment erecting it in our garden. The plan is that Karen and I can sit out in the sun and chill, so far, this hasn't happened because we are busy unpacking boxes, so we had to make an effort for this photo shoot, and I am sure that said bench will give us hours of enjoyment in the future.

We never do what we do to receive gifts or plaudits, and I have repeatedly commented as we have said our goodbyes to a range of different communities, I have been paid to do a job and have endeavoured to do it to the best of my ability, despite being faced with a range of situations I was never trained to deal with. I never expect people to show their appreciation, but I have noted over the years that a word of appreciation never goes amiss. Whenever I chair meetings in church, I make a point of thanking people for what they do, I can only do my job effectively if I am supported by an army of other people who offer their expertise and experience, often as volunteers and I appreciate them.

Sadly, all too often I get frustrated when I have put myself out for others and given generously of my time, experience and even money. When I have fought people's corners and done everything I can to support

them, and they can't be bothered even to say those two important words "thank you" Karen and I always insisted that our children said thank you and I am pleased to see that my daughter does the same with our grandson. I'm not particularly fussy and don't want sweeping gestures, but I feel used if somebody can't even show their appreciation. We have been moved by the generosity of so many people as we have said goodbye, but I feel quite used by some people who haven't even been bothered to say "goodbye"

People like to feel appreciated, it cost so little but means so much. I wonder how often we say "thank you" to God?



A thought from Rev Jonny:

At Sheringham Park, you can see the sea from the main path at a couple of points. This photo is one such view. It reminds me of Gerard Manly Hopkins's poetry. And one such poem, 'God's Grandeur', fits very well:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.



A thought from Pippa Cook:

I was taken out for a ride on Sunday. I don't know whether I would find it again without a Satnav, and there seemed to be nobody else there at the time. The paths were cut so it was fairly easy walking and there are places to stop and think, such as the labyrinth and the question mark. Then there is a shelter for just sitting. I tried to take a photograph of the question mark, but it was too big. And life is like that. There are times when we need to stop and sit and think, but some questions seem too big for us to answer. That is the time when we turn to prayer and If Not Now, When?

P.S. It's near Suffield!



I wanted to share with you all this photo of **Garvestone's Harvest Festival** - what an amazing display. (Thank you for taking the photo Aileen)



Rev Anne writes:

A muddy stagnant puddle, or a flowing clear stream - which do you prefer?

Both have their place in the eco-system and both are life-giving in their own ways - but Merlin knows which one is the best for a paddle!

Jesus said: "whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (Jn4:14)

Don't stay thirsty! Don't exist on short rations! The water of life is there for the asking!



A thought from Rev Derek: Are people really selfish?

In a week when we have started to hear of the alleged abuse of power by the former boss of Harrods and heard in the media how some of our government ministers have allegedly accepted gifts from wealthy donors to their party, it is easy to imagine that we live in a corrupt world where people abuse power and make the most of their status. Personally, I don't really care who buys the clothes of our senior politicians or when our Prime Minister buys his spectacles, but there is more than just a hint of greed and abuse of status and to an ordinary bloke like me, it feels as though everybody is out to get as much as they can and don't care who they trample under foot to get what they want. That doesn't sit well with my understanding of the command to "love your neighbour"

It does my heart good on days like the London Marathon and the Great North Run when thousands of people cram our city streets and run for the sake of others. I have a vested interest in the GNR because over the last twenty odd years my brother and other family members have been part of the crowd runners. The point is not to win the race for the vast majority of those who stand ready to start in the north of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne, because by the time the estimated seventy thousand people have cross the start line, the "elite runners" have already finished! The aim for most of the runners is to reach the finish line in South Shields and for the serious runners to achieve a personal best. I know from my brother and nephew (pictured above) that the run follows weeks of running to train for the big day and the amount of effort put into getting to the finish line is far greater than what is done on the actual day.



The modern-day parable for me, is the fact that in comparison to the greed culture spouted by the media, the participants in marathons and half marathons run by millions of people in cities around the world are doing this in part for themselves, but primarily for others. Millions of pounds, dollars, euros, or whatever other currency you might add are raised for charities and the real benefactors are those who have needs that can't be met by government spending and taxation, this is voluntary giving of time and effort to help others. I am proud of my brother and nephew and other family members who ran and raised money.

I guess that the majority of runners don't do this because of a commitment to God, but I believe that God is smiling when he sees the wonderful things decent people can do for one another!

Please pray for the congregation and community in Sporle

