

Facebook Posts September 2023

A thought from Rev Anne: I bought some stamps yesterday. Do you ever have that feeling that something's not quite right? I had that when the stamps were passed over to me. Something looked 'off' and I couldn't quite work out what it was. Then of course, light dawned, and I realised these were the first stamps I'd bought with a different head on them! Here was the profile of King Charles, when for all my life, I had bought stamps with Queen Elizabeth! It felt strange - it was something familiar, yet it had changed.

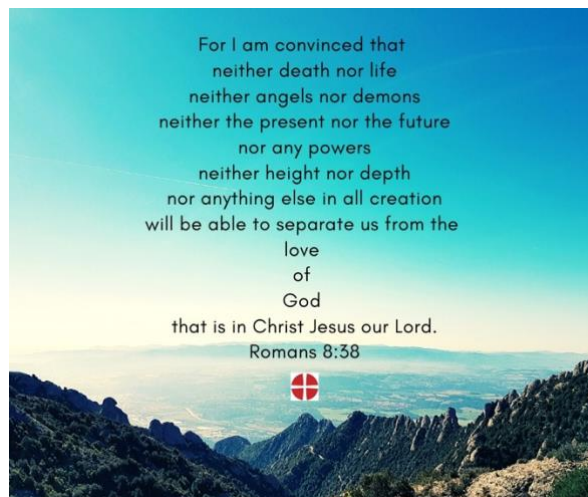


Embracing change is not always easy. Sometimes change is forced on us through illness or accident. Sometimes it comes more slowly - often people say to me, don't get old! As the body ages, it will change, yet because we feel the same inside, it's hard to reconcile. Should we fight against change? Where change brings injustice or hardship for others, perhaps it is our duty to do so? Where change brings opportunities for new things, or new appreciation for old things, perhaps we must welcome it in a different way.



The Newsreader, Journalist and TV Presenter, George Alagiah died on Monday 24th July, at the age of 67, after nearly a decade of living with bowel cancer. The BBC played a video he had recorded, talking about his diagnosis. In the video, George said: "I have got to a place where I see life as a gift and rather than worrying about when it's going to end and how it's going to end, I've gotten to a place where I see it for the gift it is. I feel that gift keenly every morning."

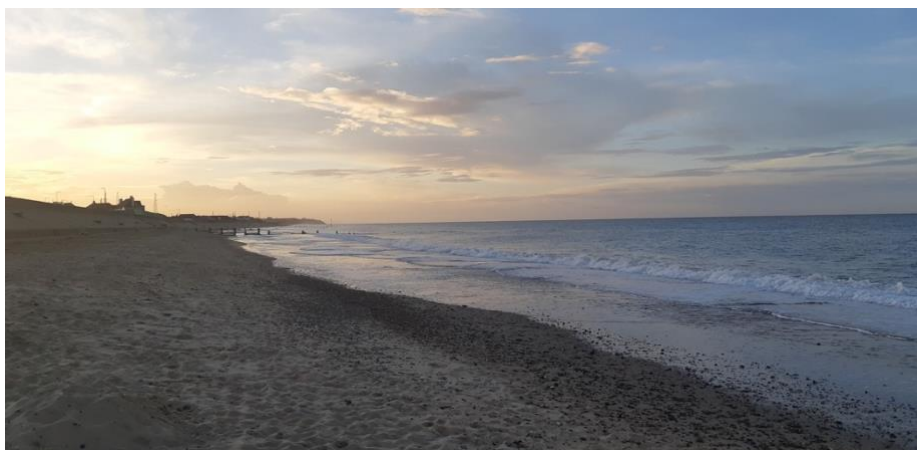
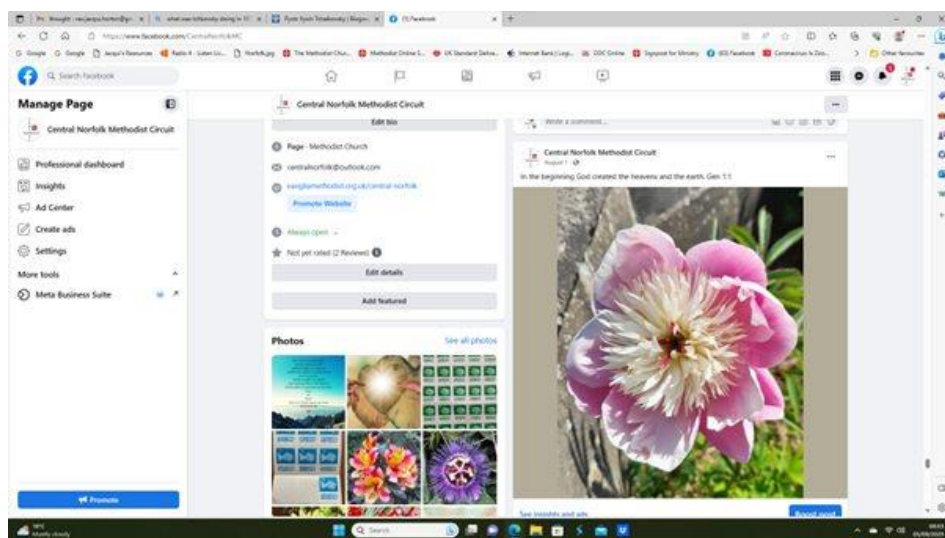
In the midst of the changes that always confront us, let's look at the gift of life, given freely to us by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who came that we might have life, in all its fullness.



A Thought from Deacon Jen about the August flower posts:

Now that September is here the written 'thoughts for the day' have resumed and the daily 'flowers for reflection' that took place through August have stopped. So, for me, there is a different pattern to a part of my day. I am aware that I feel a slight sense of loss. I have spent the last three months consciously looking at flowers and photos evaluating whether they could be used for the reflections. It was, of course, a commitment that I made to everyone and to myself that I would continue throughout August. I found it exciting at first but then, when busyness seemed to overtake me I had to draw on that sense of commitment to continue. I'm very glad I did! After flagging a little I felt a new sense of delight in what I was doing and enjoyed choosing the photos for the last few days and, of course, I had a real sense of satisfaction that it was complete.

Why am I writing all this? Well, it seems to me that this can often be a pattern to our lives. We can sometimes be swept up with the excitement of something new and that seems very important. But the deeper fulfilment is when we follow through our own sense of commitment. It may not always be easy and may need a renewed sense of determination but it is when we persist through difficulties that we can live the lives that are meant for us.



I was in a bit of a grump on Saturday - I was in pain and tired - and the last thing I felt like doing was driving the 50-mile round trip to the livery yard (which is my regular Saturday commitment) Reluctantly I convinced myself to get into the car, my mood not particularly improving on the journey there and by the time I arrived I might have given dear Old Ebenezer Scrooge a run for his money!

However, once there, I noticed a few blackberries along the lane and thought to pick a couple to cheer myself up. Well, a few turned into quite a few and I went along the lane and marvelled at the abundant harvest that was before me. As I was picking, the smell of the fruit and the purple stained fingers took me right back to my childhood and the sound of a red kite soaring overhead caused me to pause and realise how beautiful creation is. Needless to say, my grumpiness was cured and I've since reflected on the importance in scripture of taking time out to just be in nature, Jesus often taking off up a mountain or another quiet place (and often communicating with God there) So, as we start another Connexional year, I hope to remember to make room to simply be, and to remember the words of W.H.Davies;

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?-

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.



It is the Historic Church Bike Ride today - please wave to any Methodists you see cycling, walking or mobility scootering around churches! They will appreciate being sponsored as well. Many of our Methodist churches are



open for bikers, and others, to sign in. It is also the weekend of the Heritage Open Days and Trinity Methodist Church in Dereham, as well as Swaffham and Walsingham Methodist Churches are all open today for heritage visitors.



A Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:



Once again, the Historic Churches Bike Ride and the Heritage Open Days went very well for the churches in our Circuit which participated. Despite the heat!

Well done to those who were raising money (half goes to the Historic Churches Trust and half to the participant's church of choice) and to those who staffed desks and offered drinks and refreshments.

Is it a coincidence that these events take place (nationally) on the same day? It is very useful for churches that want to open for

Heritage purposes to have them staffed for the Bike Ride. But, of course, the bikers and walkers are raising money for heritage buildings so there is a definite thematic connection as well as a practical one. And it all goes to show that heritage, and historic, buildings are important! They proclaim the faith of the past, many remain open for faith and worship in the present, and they tell us where we have come from so that we can trust in a powerful God as we go forward into the future.

A thought from Rev Rosemary:

'Red and green should not be seen
Without a colour in between.'



So we were told, but God doesn't seem to bother too much about human rules, I have many examples in my garden of that rule being broken - so beautifully. We only have to follow Jesus through the Gospels to realise that. We take so much trouble over our appearance, and spend a great deal of money on clothes and jewellery, and Jesus says "Consider the lilies of the field - - "

Thanks to the modern trend for 'wilding' we can occasionally enjoy meadows rich in wild flowers and colours, but in our gardens we can indulge our choice of favourites.

However, I still enjoy the unexpected little flowers that I have not planted but which appear anyway - possibly weeds but so what! Some years ago a kindly man gave me some Hollyhock seed - he did not warn me that they are promiscuous. Now, not only do I have a splendid array, but so too do my neighbours, though no one has complained. The Bible story begins in a garden and the triumph of Love is revealed in a garden. It seems gardens have a special place in God's curriculum.



A thought from Rev Anne:

Sam's post last week struck a chord with me. - about the stress we often feel and the need to stop and stare and just 'be' for a bit! I was sitting in the garden, 'being' and noticed the frenetic activity in the hedge in front of me. All the bees and insects racing around on the Common or English Ivy. Apparently, the Ivy flowers are the main source of nectar for them in September and October. It was hard to watch, as the bees were so fast, so I videoed them on slo-mo!! It's quite absorbing to watch.

It made me reflect that busyness, stress and stillness are very individual things. Someone recently commented how lucky I was to be busy - as she had time hanging on her hands. Perhaps it is for each of us to appreciate the rhythm of our lives - and make the most of each part, knowing that we are held in the hands of one who stands outside of time, yet holds time within His hands.



A Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen:



Last week I went to Ashill Dump with a load of greenery. When I had finished unloading everything, I noticed a lady struggling to lift a heavy bag. I offered to help her which she accepted. Then, somehow, we got into a conversation about all manner of subjects, including gardening, Iona and faith. I was enjoying this but then I heard a loud hooting. It was a van driver who clearly wanted to come into the space my car was occupying (it was busy so there were no other spaces available). I said cheerio to the lady and drove away quickly.

On reflection afterwards I thought that I may well have made friends with that lady but, perhaps, it was just not meant to be. It is interesting to note that some people come into our lives for a long while, others for a specified amount of time and others for just a very short while indeed. Each interaction can add to the person that we become and equally we can give a little of ourselves to the those we meet. In that way we are all intricately linked together. We may know a good deal about a person or just a very small amount. We may feel we know someone at a very deep level or there are others that, even though we have known one another for a long time, it seems as though we have barely scratched the surface in our understanding of each other.

I thank God for all those encounters. For all those opportunities to share a little time with so many interesting people. I thank God that he created us in all our differences. I thank God that he knows each and every one of us at a very deep level and that he loves us just as we are.



21st September:

Today is the International Day for Peace: <https://internationaldayofpeace.org>.

The prayer attributed to St Francis of Assisi is a good one to pray:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is error, the truth;
where there is doubt, the faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.



A Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:



I met up with my friends Matt & Barbara, from Kansas, recently. They have a home in Wymondham where they spend a month or so every year. I was able to welcome them to the new East Anglia Methodist Heritage Centre in Wighton and to the oldest Methodist Church in East Anglia (still in use) in Little Walsingham (<https://walsinghammethodist.com>). Barbara played a tune or two on the Wighton organ, pumping the pedals and taking us back to a much earlier time in the history of Methodism.

I love the fact that we create history all the time and that that visit - especially with the photographs - is now part of the history of the Heritage Centre (as is, of course, the visit of every individual, couple or group that comes). We become part of the places we visit, and they become part of us. I wonder how often we miss out on the richness of the things that we do, the places that we go, the people we meet, by taking them all for granted? Today, I am going to make the most of everything!



A thought from Rev Rosemary:

Surplus to Requirement

Being old is challenging. You become aware that you are out of touch with much that is going on, and even worse you don't particularly want to be involved in much of it. I am blessed that sight and hearing are not too bad but my balance is shaky and I walk very slowly, and feel very, very tired! I keep telling God I am ready, but it seems I still have things to learn. And then someone rings up from the past, desperately needing someone to talk to - someone who understands where they are coming from.

That happened this evening - a man from long ago. I had been alongside him during a difficult time and now he was faced with serious health issues and wanted a listening ear. And then of course there is the Prison. I was there last Saturday with my dear friend who is shortly to be released - so much to be discussed. So ok, I'm aware there's much now that I can't do but there are those who need someone who has the time to sit beside them and talk about the things that matter. Being old and retired means you have that sort of time to share without always having to rush off. I remember seeing my sister-in-law's diary open on the table, with her commitments, one of which was "Time for child" - she was very busy, and a young widow, but I did feel for her daughter.

Rev Anne writes:

I had a moment of child-like delight on my regular dog walk today! Conkers!! Just there, nestled in the grass! Immediately it brought back childhood memories of collecting conkers, my dad carefully drilling a hole through them and fixing a shoelace through it, so we could play! Simple pleasures mean a lot don't they? Did you play conkers too? It reminded me of the Bible reading at the baptism service we had at Trinity the other week. During the passage from Mark 10:13-16, Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."



I know we have to be grown-up - but let's not lose that joyful acceptance, that child-like wonder. The baptism service says - for this child, Jesus Christ came into the world. For them, Jesus lived and showed God's love; for them, before they can know anything of it. We love because God first loved us. Isn't that amazing?!