

Facebook Thoughts for the Day – February 2021

1st February – Dee Moden



There has been much said thought and read these past few weeks on people who have been called into God's service. Samuel, Jonah, Isaiah, and many more, we have John the Baptist called to give the message of the coming Messiah, and Jesus himself calling his disciples saying "Come follow me" great tasks ahead of them. Then, as now, there are also people who are called into God's service in different roles, people in the background supporting and enabling; Zebedee didn't say to his sons James and John you can't go because I can't manage without you, he hired help so they could answer God's call – Martha sustained people by providing hospitality and comfort behind the scenes and the list goes on. In

this time of great need there are many people working quietly in the background to support others, showing the love and care that Jesus taught us, sometimes from unexpected places which can surprise us. The other day a nice man rang from the Library in Fakenham, to check whether we were ok and if there was anything he could help with, and gave us a link to E-Books we could download. We were reminded on Sunday morning by Catholic Priest Father Mark Hackeson about a saying from Saint Francis of Assisi "Preach the gospel at all times, when necessary use words!" We should never minimise the role we can play.

2nd February – Deacon Jen Woodfin

A group of people, from across the circuit, are participating in prayer wheels each day (until Lent) through which we are praying for a local circuit church as well as a wider theme. Though not huge numbers of people are taking part, I believe it plays a significant part in the spiritual life of the Circuit. When I phoned one of the participants to introduce that day's theme for prayer, we had a chat about the various circuit initiatives that began in January, and will continue through February. Some of these activities are engaging with many people, some with just a few. All of them, however, are connecting people together to create an ongoing sense of community and church. We discussed that it is like threads in a piece of woven cloth. One thread may be quite thin and apparently inconsequential, another may be quite chunky and flamboyant, but both are needed to make a beautiful piece of cloth.

Whilst we are in our own homes a good deal and not being able to meet up with others, it may seem that we haven't got much to offer. But rather than fretting about what we can't do, let us think about what we can do. Perhaps giving someone a call, sending an email, writing a letter or a card, a kind word to a neighbour or a carer or the postman. Nothing that we do for others is inconsequential, or worthless. It all adds up to wrap our families, our friends, our communities, both near and far, in a cloth of care and compassion. It all adds up to show the love that we see in Jesus – what could be more worthwhile than that?



3rd February – Sam Parfitt



Yesterday was Candlemas, which is one of those liturgical celebrations which often passes by quietly in Methodism. It celebrates light, the coming ministry of Jesus Christ as he is presented in the temple and celebrates the patient hope of Simeon and Anna, who have waited a lifetime to meet the Messiah. In the Church, is a time for blessing candles and for looking forwards with positivity. Perhaps this year more than ever, Candlemas, an ancient festival, seems relevant and well timed. At a time when the world appears to be in darkness, to celebrate and bless the light seems very apt. To be reminded of the patient hope that is ours to carry at this time is very fitting, as we continue to look for light and wait during this time of lockdown.

4th February – Rev Cliff Shanganya

To change our desires to be more like Christ's, we need the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1:19), the influence of faithful Christians, obedience to God's Word (not just exposure to it), and sacrificial service. Often it is in doing God's will that we gain the desire to do it (see 4:8-9). Do what he wants and trust him to change your desires. Blessings, have a lovely day.



Philippians 2:13 NLT

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

5th February – Rev Rosemary Wakelin



27th January was Holocaust Memorial Day. Rev Rosemary Wakelin brings us a poignant thought; Some years ago I went to stay in Poland with Zibi and Bernakta. Zibi stayed with me in Holt for a year when he was working as a Care assistant when work in Poland was hard to find. He insisted that we visit Auschwitz the notorious concentration camp in southern Poland. I shall never forget it. Seeing it all physically hits you in a way that pictures never can. All those children's shoes, cooking implements, false teeth, suitcases, toys heaped up - there were hundreds of visitors and yet it was strangely quiet. We went round the huts with the shelves where people had tried to sleep and the rows of open toilet seats over an open ditch, we saw the

blown up remains of the Crematorium. Back at the old army base was block 11. Here some of the worst atrocities were committed. Here was the cell where 10 prisoners starved to death. The old army buildings had been used to house the forced labour men who worked in the local arms factory. There had been an escape, so there was to be retribution, 10 men were chosen to be locked up until they died. One man called out in protest - he had a wife and family - before there was a reaction, a small figure came forward and offered to go in his place. Amazingly the Officer allowed it to happen. Maximilian Colbert was a Roman Catholic priest. Along with the other 9 he was locked in the death cell in Block 11. I stood alone in that cell for some time. Zibi waited for me. The only sound was of shuffling feet as people passed. They died slowly, it was reported that Maximilian created a community of love in that appalling place and was the last to die. I have no words to respond or explain. I can only look at the Cross.

8th February – Rev Graham Pickhaver

Missing the Mark!

In better times I'm an archer! It may only be a sport now, even up to Olympic standard, but at one time archers were the backbone of any nation's defence. In fact, without his archers Henry V would not have won the battle of Agincourt in 1415. There are many references to archers in the Old Testament – an ideal bible study!

Learning this ancient and noble art is not easy. It takes time and patience and the first sign of progress is actually hitting the target. Gradually you improve and arrows start finding their rightful home but oh dear that bullseye is very illusive! You just keep missing it! However hard you try you are either so near or so far away!

I like the study of words and what they mean. The word sin is one such word and it means to miss the mark. You see God has revealed His standard, or if you like the bullseye, in the Ten Commandments and every time we try and keep them, we can never hit the bullseye, we keep missing the mark! It's no good whether we are a centimetre from the bullseye or fifty we cannot achieve His goals or standards. That's what Paul means in Romans 5:23, 'for all have sinned (or, missed the mark) and fall short of the glory of God.' But thank God today that Jesus always hits the bullseye on our behalf and that by trusting in Him God accepts us as we are and enables us to love and serve Him.



9th February – Rev Jacqui Horton

Our circuit 'Tuesday at 7' this evening is a time for sharing poems so here is a seasonally appropriate poem ('To a Snowdrop');

O delicate flower,
why hang your head low?
Are you humbly demure?
Or just searching below?
Should you not be proud
and hold your head high?
Or are you afraid,
or just very shy?
When viewed from afar –
a vision of white,
amassed with your friends –
a beautiful sight!
Perhaps it is well
you are not like the rest.
As proclaimer of Spring,
you are simply the best!
© Jacqui Horton 1995



10th February – Sam Parfitt

I suffer tremendously with cold feet; they are notorious in our house for being as cold as ice. My husband suggested I needed a new pair of slippers and here they are! For those of you who know me this beautiful pair of flamingo toe warmers will come as no surprise because I quite like things that are a little bit silly!! Of course, there is a time for silliness and a time for seriousness, in fact a time for all things as we are reminded in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. Also, throughout the New Testament we follow Jesus as he does lots of serious things throughout His ministry, but he also reminds us that we need to have fun to. In times such as this it is easy to think that we must be serious, and these are serious times, but I don't think we should neglect the value and benefit that having a giggle (or even being just a tiny bit silly!!) can bring. (PS the flamingo's heads 'peck' as I walk).



11th February – Rev Anne Richardson



Most Tuesdays, I've been interpreting the weekly Methodist Prayer meeting into British Sign Language. It's something I've been doing every week since September. This prayer meeting happens on Zoom and is live-streamed to the Methodist Church Facebook page where you can find the recordings from previous weeks.

It's only 15 minutes out of my day but it has been a learning experience.

For example, I try my best to interpret the prayer meeting accurately, but there are still mistakes. I could record it again and again, and there would probably still be something that I was unhappy with. Is it ok to settle for your best effort – that it's good enough for the purpose? If someone else interpreted it and there was a mistake, would I focus on it in the same way?

I wonder if you're like that? Do you judge yourself more harshly than you should? Do you focus on things that should be let go? I know of people who tell me of past arguments and upsets. Why do we remember and rehearse old sufferings? We

often remember the unkind word, the snub, or rudeness and yet forget the kindnesses, the love and the generosity. It's human nature, but not the Christian way. The past has so much to teach us, but let's not carry things into the future that should be left in the past. What are you holding onto that should be released? Christ died and took our sin with him. He was raised to life to give us freedom and life in all its fullness. Are you still living with the pain of Good Friday, rather than in the power of Easter Sunday? If so, it's time to re-read again John 11:25-26 and John 10:10! Which Bible verses help you – why not put them in the comments below!

12th February – Rev Rosemary Wakelin



Cap. Sir Tom has captured the national imagination. Maybe it's nostalgia for another age which disappeared after the war. In 1945 we entered a very different world from the world of 1939. We talk now about getting back to normal when the virus has been contained, but will it be the same? Things have changed and so have people. News pictures reveal how mixed our population has become and how dependent we are on people we once thought of as immigrants. We also feel much less secure and much more vulnerable. Life is constantly changing, and imperceptibly we change with it. The most drastic change in my lifetime is in our national ethos. For centuries this country had at its heart a shared, if tacit understanding, of good and evil. This

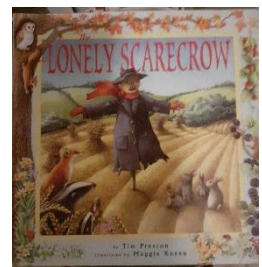
did not mean that people behaved well - they often didn't - but wrong was recognised. But we have abandoned that narrative that once informed our culture, based (loosely) on the Bible. Now anything goes. Christians have responded by withdrawing into the safety of our buildings and falling over backwards to accommodate other faiths. Of course, there have been exceptions, but for many Faith has become a private affair. Our denominational differences don't help our image and aggressive evangelism can be counterproductive.

What will we take into the post-Covid world? The first Christians, and many since, have lived through very challenging times and have not only kept their faith but shared it. We have had to leave the safety of our buildings, we have found new ways to communicate, and many opportunities for being good neighbours - maybe this will enable us to share our faith, express a Kingdom perspective, especially as we move on to the urgent need to tackle climate change. And we are not alone - as Charles Wesley writes:- By thine unerring Spirit led, We shall not in the desert stray; We shall not full direction need, Nor miss our providential way:

As far from danger as from fear, While love, almighty love is near.

15th February – Judith Semmons

Don't judge a book by its cover. When I take our dog for a walk, I'm often amused that some walkers seem immaculate regardless of what they're wearing and others, like myself, look a bit rough and ready! I was reminded of the lovely book below that our son received many years ago. It tells the story of the scarecrow who looked so scary that the animals stayed away from him and he was very lonely. All he wished for was to befriend them. But when the winter came, along with the snow, the scarecrow was transformed into a beautiful snowman who no longer looked fearful and terrifying. So, the animals returned, finding warmth and comfort in the layers of the snowman's clothes. The scarecrow was delighted but feared what would happen when it became warm again. Sure enough as the snow dispersed and began to thaw, the snowman's true identity was revealed. The animals were amazed and realised that they had misjudged him. They remained friends with him and he was never lonely again.



In 1 Samuel 16 v 7 we can read:

For the **Lord** does not see as mortals see; they **look** on the outward appearance, but the **Lord looks** on the **heart**."

16th February – Deacon Jen Woodfin



This last Sunday the lectionary reading was of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Whenever I read this passage I think of snow. Equally when I see a good deal of snow, as we have had in the last week, I think of the Transfiguration. Why are these two things so strongly connected for me?

Well, I remember a particular day in January 2004 when I was shut away in my small room in Queens Theological Foundation, Birmingham, typing away, struggling to write an essay. It was based on the Mark version of the Transfiguration. I was struggling to get an image of it in my head. Then I read the word 'dazzling' and this focussed my mind on a particular type of light. Looking out of the window I saw that it had started snowing quite heavily. As I watched, the snow settled very quickly and the quality of light changed. It became bright, clear and highlighted certain areas of the view that I hadn't noticed before. The following morning, I knew, even before I had opened the curtains, that it had snowed some more and the light was even brighter, my view had been transformed. For Peter, James and John, who had witnessed the Transfiguration, their view of Jesus had been transformed. That experience changed my understanding of that particular bible passage. Are there any experiences that you have had, which have changed your understanding of a Bible story or Christian belief?

17th February – Sam Parfitt



One of our lockdown activities has been having a poke around in our loft at the things we'd forgotten were up there. One of those things was my great aunt's violin, the case of which was lined with this page from The Radio Times, dated February 1949. I was drawn to this advert for shoe polish and its wording; 'never let your shoes suffer for want of a good polish. Make a habit of giving them their daily shine with 'Nugget'. It only takes a moment, keeps them brilliant all day and gives a leather preserving finish which makes shoes last longer'. Today marks the beginning of Lent, which is a time for reflection on ourselves and our relationship with Jesus. It occurs to me that if we take the words of the advert and swap shoes for lives and Nugget for Jesus, the advert speaks much of what Lent is about, giving our lives their daily shine with Jesus over 40 days and building up the layer of the Kingdom of God in our lives which is preserving and protecting. So, here's to 40 days of polishing!

18th February – Rev Cliff Shanganya



Titus 3:5 NLT

he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.

Here Paul gives a profound summary of what Christ does for us when he saves us. We move from a life full of sin to one full of God's Holy Spirit. This transaction begins with God's kindness and love. *All* our sins, not merely some, are washed away. The cleansing process, however, will occur throughout our lives until we reach heaven. When we become Christians, we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour. We have a new life through the Holy Spirit, and he renews our hearts (also see Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:22). None of this occurs because we earn or deserve eternal life. Paul reminds us to have confidence and hope in God's plan of redemption. Hence let us all join Christ and walk the Lent journey together. Have a lovely day!

19th February – Rev Graham Pickhaver

Snowy the Cat – not quite! From time to time wandering cats would make their way to our home and we would gladly take them in. The children loved them and gradually the cat would decide to adopt us as their own!

Of course, we gave them a name but nothing special, might just be kitty, it was a cat, or in the case of one such adoptee or rather adopter, Snowy. The names always stuck and it was never a problem calling them for their meals for they would always be waiting at the door but he or she would soon get used to their new name.

Snowy was as you can image white. So, we thought until one day similar to a few weeks back it snowed heavily. Everything was covered in white. In fact, you could have been on a Swiss mountain it was so bright. Well Snowy had found herself indoors for breakfast. It was now time to go walkabouts and as soon as she shot out of the door into the snow we all had a shock. Snowy had suddenly changed colour she was now very grey as she raced through the snow. The pure white snow had made Snowy who we thought was white look so grey and dirty.



Isaiah was a prophet or messenger of God. The people at that time thought they were doing well with God but that was far from the case. In fact, they were a bit like Snowy – appearing to be white and pure but in the light of God's purity and glory they fell far short. Isaiah likens their sin to a piece of scarlet coloured material. Scarlet as you know is a dye and cannot be washed out. Yet Isaiah says to them: 'though sins are like scarlet they shall be white as snow'. How, if they show true repentance and turn back to the Lord He will forgive their sins and restore them to a new relationship with Him. What Snowy really wasn't (white) we can be through Jesus who cleanses us from all our sin when we turn to Him.

Snowy played by an actor

20th February – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

Temptations. After his Baptism and affirmation from God Jesus goes into voluntary "isolation" to prepare for his special calling - no less than to establish God's Kingdom, to share with the world God's blueprint for human community. It's big, it needs Power to get things going, but what sort of power?

So - Controlling basic needs? food - hunger was an ever-present threat then, as it is now in some places. People will comply to ensure a food supply. But people are more than that, they are made for eternity, for relationship with God.

So - what about force? He lived in an occupied country which had been taken by military force and was governed by brutality, you can do a lot with an army and there were plenty of resistance fighters waiting for strong leadership to kick the Romans out. But that would mean serving power for its own sake, he was there to serve his Father.

So - the most subtle and dangerous of them all, do your own thing, be spectacular and say it's because God is on your side, Jesus raps out in effect - you do not recruit God's name to back your own ends. He looked at three of the most common ways of controlling people, all in full use today, and dismissed them, choosing instead to use only the Power of Love.

The first two Temptations are in the news most days, we may not always recognise the third because it hides itself. It is the one most obvious in Church history and the most commonly still used by Christians who don't even realise they are doing it. Most frighteningly it was in evidence in the invasion of the Capitol in Washington. The beautiful word "evangelical" has been highjacked. Perhaps we need to get back to what it really means.

23rd February – Deacon Jen Woodfin

There was much anticipation and waiting for the announcement that Boris Johnson made yesterday evening. It seemed like a good deal of detail had already been leaked out. And yet, for me, it seemed important to hear directly what was being said. Then as I listened, I was aware that there would be more waiting and more anticipation. Though this could be measured in a few weeks and months. When we read the Old Testament much of it is about anticipation and waiting, but, of course, that was for many, many centuries and generations. When Jesus was born, that waiting was fulfilled. He taught us all how to live and love. As we come out of this lockdown, I pray that we will reflect on what has been good and life enhancing in the last year. We must take forward those good things and, as we once again engage with 'normal' life, let us carry Jesus in our hearts as our own 'road map' for the future. Let us learn from both the good things and those that have been difficult, to live our life as Jesus taught the Israelites 2,000 years ago and still teaches us today.

24th February – Sam Parfitt

This is a photograph of my Dad and his brother, with my Grandad and Grandma. My Grandma was a Yorkshire lass from Goole, a lady of strong character and, as you can see, was not of diminutive stature (I think my Grandad was close to 6ft in height!). In my early twenties, I really wished that I looked like Cheryl Cole (who is very petite!!) and lamented the fact that I didn't. Then I found a set of photographs of my dad's family, which included this one, along with one of my Grandma in her mature years, striding across the front at Cleethorpes and I knew that my dreams of being Cheryl-like were never going to happen! But it was okay, as I knew in that moment that I was perfectly and wonderfully made to fit into the world exactly as I should. Sometimes we may all feel like this, and it sometimes takes years for us to see that every one of us fits perfectly, sometimes not in the way we think, or indeed are born into, but there is a place for us all at the table in the Kingdom of God.



25th February – Rev Anne Richardson



The spring weather is very welcome this week, isn't it? I've been getting a lot of pleasure from seeing snowdrops and crocuses in the gardens. Daffodils and tulips are on their way up - and particularly when the sun shines, every time I look at them, they seem to have grown taller!

I was fascinated by the story on the news last weekend, about the Moonflower at Cambridge Botanical Gardens. Did you see it? It is a rare Amazonian Cactus - and it's the first time it's flowered in the 6 years it's been in the glasshouse. Flowers only last a day - they usually open at night because they are pollinated by moths - and the scent changes from something sweet into something rancid.

Thousands of people, all over the world, watched it open on webcams!! In our sophisticated, fast-moving, technological world, with all the problems facing humanity, we can still be captivated by a flower!!

Perhaps it is because of everything going on, that we need to pause and look at something so small and yet so amazing, and just wonder! I hope you find moments just to do that, and as you do, allow your heart to open to God's love that surrounds you unseen, every day.

26th February - Rev Rosemary Wakelin

In 1939, shortly before my father was called up, he took us up into the Peak District. We had walked quite a long way and came to a dry-stone wall by a gate hinged on to a huge rock with a shallow dip on the middle. He lifted my sister brother and I on to the rock and said he was going to tell us a true story. It was about the village that we could see across the field, called Eyam. You may know the story. The plague had struck London, and the village tailor had ordered a barrel of second-hand clothes from London to sell. It had arrived infected with lice and fleas carrying the plague. People began to fall sick. There were two rectors, an elderly man who was a victim of Charles 2nd's Great Ejection of evangelical clergy in revenge for his



father's death, and his replacement. They swallowed their differences and called the villagers together and put it to them that the plague was deadly but contained in the village. If people fled or left the village for whatever reason it would spread through the district causing unknown deaths. If they isolated themselves it could be contained. People would die, but there would not be a massacre. Amazingly the villagers agreed. The rock we were sitting on was where they put the money to pay for the food people brought from the next village. Thousands of lives were saved. My father finished the story saying "That is what Christians do." Although many have obeyed the rules today, many have not. Had a

community been faced with that decision now I doubt the answer would have been that of the villagers of Eyam. They shared a narrative and faith which are missing today. We have them, let's share them.

27th February – Aileen Fox

Psalm 24 which begins The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it; is a reminder of the world we have been given. So much has been written recently, so many have shown concern at the way we are polluting and misusing this fantastic resource. There is a concern that we may have left things too late. We are urged to do more, reduce our consumption of meat and our love of fast fashion, stop using plastic and reuse, and recycle.

These are difficult times for us all, loneliness, restriction on who we can meet, where we can go and what we can do. Life in lockdown is hard for everyone, we worry about our relatives, our children not being in school, the effect on their future. For many it is the worry of little or no money coming in, no job, and if as in some industries not knowing when or if they can work. For prisoners locked up for 23 hours in some instances and denied visits, for relatives with loved ones not able to touch and hug especially for those with dementia. But if we go back to the Psalm everything the world and all who live in it are the Lord's. My hope is in the Lord God. And I see it in nature, the trees budding and leaves soon to come. The beauty of the recent snow and the recovery of primroses and snowdrops. Watching the birds as they start hunting for their nesting spots. The daffodils already showing colour. My hope is in the Lord who has given us so much as we watch the beginning of spring. I see his love through the work of others reaching out in his name to make a difference. I see that his love extends to all. We must hold on to that hope and show our love to others so that they too may find hope, and we must do our best to try and protect God's world.

