

Facebook Thoughts for the Day – October 2020

1st October – Judith Semmons

The other day I was in the garden and my husband was rather amused as I was admiring the daisies (in the lawn that needed mowing), more than the flower beds we had spent more time working on! But it was the daisies that prompted me to reflect when, as a child I sat in a circle, amongst friends, making daisy chains. And it reminded me of the last time our granddaughter visited, taking great joy in picking wildflowers as she walked around Scarning Water Meadows. Later on that same day, when taking our dog for a walk, I watched two little girls delight in flying a kite; floating effortlessly in the wind and I observed the sprinkling of yellow on the field, created by dandelions and buttercups. And our dog enjoyed running again and again for a stick. The dog and I strolled onto the stream where the children had created a dam, enabling me to step along the line of stones into the wood where a red admiral butterfly was resting along the path. And it reminded me of some of the poetry of Alison Stedman, who worked as a nurse for the Leprosy Mission in a hospital in Bhutan. Her poetry reflected her life and work there. Here's one of them:

A prayer walk

I followed the butterfly that kept alighting on the path
ahead,
Winking with opened wings as if to say
"Follow me, I know the way."
Ripe grasses, bowed straw pink heads before a breeze
Which stroked up the valley;
Invisible basking insects hummed like an electric
current.
Dragonflies on shimmering wings skimmed through the
air
Like paper aeroplanes.
Checker-board butterflies played chase, carefree,
Rising like bonfire ash....up...up into the sky.....
....Floating, soaring with them my thoughts drifted,
My prayers reached up to You, offered up
Like the fragrance of the pine trees.
Reassuringly You answered me.
"Yes, you've found The Way too."



3rd October – Dee Moden

As we are new to this area some of the outer villages on the edge of the circuit are unfamiliar, and when I was appointed to preach at Great Ellingham Alan and I did a trial run to find out where it was using 'Sat Nav'. It took us on roads seemingly in the middle of nowhere, roads we haven't travelled before but we arrived!

I have a copy of 'Pilgrims Progress' which is very precious to me as it was given as a Sunday School prize for 'good attendance' to my Grandma in 1901 when she was 11 (difficult read for an 11 year old!) Christian used his Bible as a guide, in his dream as with a 'Sat Nav' he went into unusual places!

Through the Old Testament to the New Testament God guides his people he is there to say turn around – refigure a new route – and even taking them to places they didn't think you were going- but always getting there in the end learning lots of new things on the way.

We don't always know where we are going or how we are going to get there or what to expect when we do, but these words of Moses speaking to Joshua are still relevant today.

Deuteronomy 31: 6-8 *"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed"*



5th October – Aileen Fox



We take things for granted and the picture below is the wonderful millennium garden at Pensthorpe natural park. I am a member and love visiting, feeding the birds and enjoying walking around the reserve. I tend to visit out of school holidays and I love the spring, autumn and winter. This year I went in August having to pre-book, so not my usual spontaneous trip. I had never seen the garden in bloom! What a surprise the colours so vibrant. It made me think about how we take things for granted, having to pre-book, and now seeing it at a different time.

We take so much for granted, I know I do, and not only in my home and surroundings, but with friends. And in my walk with Jesus!

How easy it is to get into a routine, say the same Prayers at the same time! Yet as others have said prayer is a two way conversation, both listening as well as talking. When I was working in my last job I had a daily 54 mile round trip and I did get very tired so I retired after 65! But those journeys gave me time to listen and talk to God. I prayed for situations that I heard on the radio. For situations likely to be part of the day, for individuals I would meet as well as situations in my own personal life. On the way home my prayers would be for the day and the people I had met, plus the news.

Being retired, each day can be similar, like many before me 'how did I manage to go to work' is a thought that I often think.

We all need some routine, but we also need to see new ways of being, of doing and take a new look at our lives, our friends and how we interact. Just as the garden in bloom was different and new, yet somewhere I had been often, so our lives need to be examined from time to time, to see what really matters, and what friends matter. I started contacting old friends by newsy cards. These are people who hear from me once a year. The response has been staggering, cards and emails back, we have drawn closer, old friendships renewed. I had taken people for granted I realise.

In our journey with God have we become a little jaded taking him for granted? Let us all pray and seek renewal in worshipping and serving Him.

6th October – Deacon Jen Woodfin

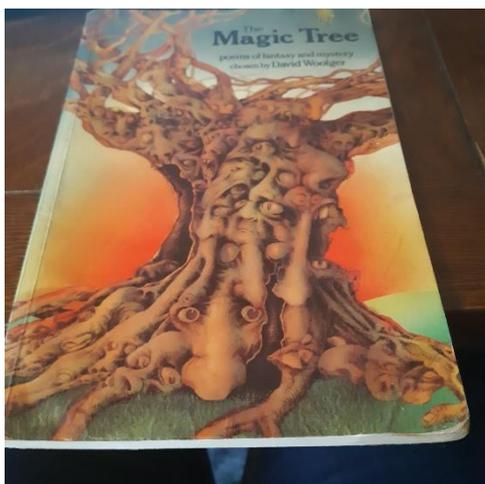
Recently I had a conversation about green tomatoes. Or rather it was whether the tomatoes on the vines would stay green or would ripen to a glorious red. Of course, we don't know what the next couple of weeks of weather will bring and that will make all the difference as to whether they ripen or not. But, either way, we will harvest them and enjoy them either fresh or in a chutney. We can make something special out of something that hasn't, perhaps, quite come up to its full potential.



Living up to one's full potential can, at times, be a daunting prospect. It suggests that there is a level of achievement that has to be reached or there will be some element of failure. But in God's eyes there are no levels to reach. He loves us just as we are and he can use us just as we are. He can use whatever we can offer and make something special. We can only be who we are when we give our lives in service to God and to others. Then God will use us in ways beyond our imagining, and in ways that are unique and right for each one of us.

Anyway, who is to say which is better, a red tomato or a green one in a delicious chutney? It's good to have both!

7th October – Sam Parfitt



When I was clearing out my office a little while ago, I took the opportunity to have a ruthless cull of books. Anything I hadn't read or needed for some time went! Going through this process I came across a book I had almost forgotten about. It is a book of poetry that I was given second hand when I was at secondary school, and in it is my favourite poem, Jabberwocky. Although intentionally written in a nonsensical language I'm sure that I know the feeling of how the slithy toves gyre and gimble in the wabe, despite not knowing what those words actually mean! The book itself is dog-eared, coffee stained and battered. There are certainly much more expensive and prettier books on my shelves!

But this one has been my companion for all my adult life and in some ways each dog-eared page marks a little bit of my story. So, two points for reflection; like Jabberwocky just because something

doesn't make sense doesn't mean we can't feel it and sometimes our most precious things are those which share our scars. This book was definitely a keeper!

8th October – Judith Semmons

I couldn't resist sharing another thought that popped up on Facebook. I hope you are encouraged by it:

"A wise teacher once took balloons to school and told her pupils to blow them up and write their name on one. After the children tossed their balloons into the hall, the teacher moved through the hall mixing them all up.

The kids were given five minutes to find the balloon with their name on it, but though they searched frantically, no one found their own balloon. Then the teacher told them to take the balloon closest to them and give it to the person whose name was on it. In less than two minutes, everyone was holding their own balloon.

The teacher said to the children, "These balloons are like happiness, we won't find it when we're only searching for our own. But if we care about someone else's happiness, it will ultimately help us find our own".



10th October - Rev Barbara Winner

Hearing on the news recently that we might all be facing another period of 'restrictions' brought back difficult memories of 'lock down' earlier this year. However necessary it was or wasn't, for many people including me - it was a lonely time. So I began to think about what helped me through – because I might just need to draw on these again! Trying to keep in touch as best I could with those in a similar or worse position; certain special people who kept in touch in various ways with me; practising Line Dancing in front of the TV; walking for miles; and the tree in the picture. I have always been in awe of trees – but I don't think I have hugged one – yet! I frequently passed this tree in Carbrooke on one of my favourite walks. I would stand and just look at it for a while. On one occasion I met another walker and we looked at the tree together. There is something about this tree which is hard to put into words but which connects me to God's creative spirit and to myself. Is it because it too is alone? Is it the roots which hold it firm? Is it the branches which bear new leaves each year after the winter? Is it the shape? Its not a big tree, its not bending in the wind, but there is some kind of durability about it. The tree is still there – I saw it again on my walk yesterday. Next time I might just go and give it a hug!



12th October - Aileen Fox



In these strange times communication is vital. We have used every means possible to keep in touch with family and friends especially if we have been unable to meet up. Recently I was accompanying our Rural Replanter who is involved in a Community Listening project in Walsingham. It was great to see how chatting and listening made such a difference to the people at the coffee shop, people sitting at tables outside socially distanced of course. And then on my way back to the car we came across the red telephone box I was parked alongside. Once the means of communication for many in villages and towns these boxes have in many cases become redundant. Some have been made into lending libraries, some little shops, all sorts of creative uses. We glimpsed inside and to our amusement saw a trailing plant that covered a large area. Then we saw it was still an active phone box and the cost of a call was now 60p. How many of us remember pennies! It got me thinking. We take things for granted relying on technology a great deal and when it goes wrong really moan, we cannot cope, we cannot get to our emails, download

that important document. Yet Jesus did not use a mobile phone, or email or worship sheets, however he spoke with authority, he taught others who in turn passed on the good news.

In these unusual times, we must not forget that we have ways of sharing the love of Jesus to others. Be it by a telephone call, a written note or a meeting. More importantly how others see us, how we live, how we share. That lovely old song *And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love and they'll know we are Christians by our love*. I hope that is so however we communicate that we have a faith and we try to love others as Jesus loves us.

13th October – Rev Jacqui Horton

Praying each morning for 15 minutes on zoom is quite an experience! I appreciate the discipline of regular prayer at the beginning of the day. I appreciate being able to do it in the company of other people. I appreciate getting to know the prayers in the Methodist Prayer Handbook. And I appreciate not having to go anywhere and meeting in the company of my own home! Of course, there are lots of other ways of praying - I also appreciate interceding for particular people and situations in my prayer corner, I sit in the presence of God in our garden, I talk to God on a walk, I sometimes say the Lord's Prayer at my desk in the middle of the day. But, the zoom morning prayer is a particular experience and I am grateful for it. Of course, if anyone else would like to join us you would be very welcome!



14th October – Sam Parfitt

I did not grow up in an active Christian household, consequently one of the only times I came into contact with the Gospel as a child was during school assemblies, which once a week had a little mini service built into them. We had a wonderful Parish Priest, who led us through the liturgical year and the changing seasons during those assemblies. I'm sure that his example of witness within the community, of the Gospel in action has been one of the driving forces that has brought me to serve in a Pioneering role. Of those assemblies my favourite part without question was singing and one of my very favourite hymns was 'Autumn days when the grass is jewelled' by Estelle White. Even now, as I have grown in age and faith and my hymn palate has become much broader and deeper, I still enjoy singing this upbeat little hymn. As it focuses on the small things we take pleasure in, from the silk inside conker shells to the smell of apple pie, it reminds us that we shouldn't forget to be thankful. It would be very easy during these strange times to lose sight of that and we have all perhaps had times this year when there doesn't seem to be much to be thankful about or indeed look forward to. Today, the warmth of my dog when she lays her head on my lap, the smell of new books and the taste of homemade soup are all very small things that I am hugely thankful for, and I have hope that tomorrow there will be more of these 'mini-gifts' from God. Friends I pray that you too find many 'mini-gifts' to be thankful for today and tomorrow.



16th October - Rev Rosemary Wakelin

Being alone so much brings back memories. I was on playground duty, watching the climbing frame, when I noticed a group of boys making fun of a rather shabby little boy who was not one of the "in groups". They had him against the wall. Before I could get over to him I saw Beverly, aged 7, slip in beside their victim, she said nothing, just stood close beside him. One by one the bullies left. When they had all gone Beverly went back to her friends. Today my son told me about his youngest, Oliver, a shy quiet boy who has just, rather reluctantly, started at the comprehensive school. He is sitting next to a boy who has Tourette's syndrome. Another boy asked Oliver why he sat next to a boy who was so obviously different. Oliver replied " Because he is my friend." The other boy went away. Maybe Jesus was on to something when he said children are the stuff of the Kingdom.

17th October – Rev Liz Jolly

SNAILS AND WORMS

We all know that the chicken crossed the road in order to get to the other side and that we should help lame dogs over stiles; but what about snails and worms?

On my morning dog walks, it is not unusual to see a worm or a snail trying to cross the road. It concerns me that a car may crush them before they make it across, so I pick them up and help them to the safety of the grass verge. (hoping that I have selected the correct verge!)



Worms and snails are most fascinating members of our creation. Ask any toddler about the joy of discovering a worm, and possibly it's taste! Or a junior school child whose teacher has provided the classroom with a wormery, so they can watch the layers of soils being redistributed, or the leaves being pulled into the soil. As to snails, and the way their shell is designed is fascinating to the mathematical mind busy working it out by diagrams, and realising that it is not designed in the same way as the sea shell versions. (why is nature so amazingly diverse?)

We need to treasure the diversity of these tiny creatures that inhabit and enrich our world; God needs us to be stewards of creation.

19th October – Dee Moden



Reading the 'Thoughts for the day' is so interesting, and to me, it seems as though there is a thread running through many of them. There is a greater awareness of nature and the things around us, this pandemic has brought us back to appreciating the things we take for granted. W.H. Davies wrote "What is this life if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare." We all have had time to stand and stare, we have had time to look and really see the beauty of our world, nature has been highlighted – but it's always been there. We have seen lots more

programmes focusing on what is happening right on our doorsteps, poets and poetry have come to the fore, people have been out walking and noticing and seeing different things.

This beautiful wonderful world that, when we are busy, sometimes passes us by, rushing headlong into our days not always noticing the birds – flowers – the arrival of Spring – the blooms of Summer – the colours of Autumn – and the stark beauty of Winter, sometimes only noticing 'the weather!' We have many lovely hymns expressing God's wonderful creation the one that springs into my mind is from Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1892) All things bright and beautiful, the last verse: **He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell how great is God Almighty, who has made all things well.**

20th October – Deacon Jen Woodfin

Last Friday we went for a walk around the longer walk at Felbrigg National Trust. This takes you around the outer edge of the estate away from the main footpaths. Most of the way there was a clearly defined path with only one route. However, when we went into the woods the path became less defined. It was clear which was the general direction but there were various tracks round the trees which you could take. It meant that each individual path was not so clear but, on the other hand, it gave you a choice as to which path to take.

As we travel along our own faith journey there are times when the path is very clear, that we have a real sense that God is leading us and we can easily see the way to go. At other times it is not so clear. We have to make our own decisions and we are aware that they may be different than the decision others' may make. But we have to be true to who we are. We also have to keep going in the direction that God calls us. We may go a different way round to anyone else but, through Jesus, we will be led to where God wants us to be.



21st October – Sam Parfitt

We have taken recently to doing our food shop online. Particularly when I'm having a pain flare, I appreciate having the lifting and carrying work of shopping done for me. Of course, the difficulty can be that sometimes you don't get what you expected to. For example, last week I ordered a loaf of bread, expecting a full-sized loaf and when it was delivered it was dolly-sized bread!! Often in life we will have expectations and it is our human nature to wonder and anticipate. Sometimes those expectations will be met and sometimes what we receive will be very different to our anticipation. I think what makes the difference is how we are prepared to receive. When our dolly bread was delivered it did not meet our expectations, but we received it nonetheless and appreciated that we ate less bread as a result. Jesus may come into our lives not as we have expected, but by asking ourselves how we are prepared to receive him we will be ready for whatever comes our way.



22nd October – Rev Barbara Winner

One of the things which helps me in difficult time is singing hymns – or listening to others singing. There can be something deeply spiritual about the way music and words come together and combine to bring us closer to God.

I recently enjoyed a few days holiday based in Guisborough, Yorkshire. This was a new venture for me and I had been summing up the courage for four years to try something like this.

On the first morning I left the Hotel and began walking. Coming out of a dark path I came across open fields. The sun was shining and in front of me I saw the ruins of the Priory. I began to think about the history and witness of the Priory and the awesome countryside surrounding it. Suddenly I found myself singing out loud (very loud!) the words of John Hampden Gurney's hymn;

Yes, God is good – in earth and sky,
From ocean-depths and spreading wood,
Ten thousand voices seem to cry:
'God made us all, and God is good.'

We hear it in the rushing breeze:
The hills that have for ages stood,
The echoing sky and roaring seas,
All swell the chorus: God is good.



A hymn I had long forgotten and never particularly connected with. Yet here it was – and here was I – singing! It was rather special!

24th October – Aileen Fox

I love watching the birds in my garden and also when I have the opportunity go to Pensthorpe Natural Park 5 minutes from me. As a member I can visit often though pre booking by the day before has to be built into the planning. I am not always a patient person, and the book of Job causes me some difficulty.

I would love to do more birdwatching and I am getting better at sitting for a little while at a hide literally taking in the birds around me, using my binoculars and often taking photographs. Recently I decided I must use my big DSLR camera and long lens, laziness and ease had seen me using a very good compact on days out, but I had spent a lot of money originally on the 'big' camera. I set off for Pensthorpe and sat in one of their hides for quite a while, observing the birds on the water which has green algae on it at the moment. It was fascinating, through the lens I could see close up and I was busy watching the activity. Suddenly I noticed a large bird flying followed by another close behind. Two herons, I must try and get a picture even though I might shake the camera (I don't use a tripod). One picture, two pictures and so it went on. It was absorbing, it was stretching my photography skills, I was having to be patient and observe



and follow carefully with the lens. One came down for a fish, at one point they almost touched wings. One took a rest on dry land for a few seconds before heading off again. The whole spectacle was wonderful. I had sat, been patient and been rewarded. I am often rushing around and this was a little prod about being patient, taking time to see what is around me, being still. Jesus also took time out away from the crowds, to pray to be still.

On arriving home and downloading my photos I am overwhelmed by the result. I never expected this, so many reasonable photos. I have kept

looking at them over the last few days.

Thank you Lord for the wonder and beauty of your world, and thank you for helping me to be patient and still. Amen.

26th October – Judith Semmons

I don't expect readers would have envisaged a bottle of shower gel to feature in a thought for the day. But as I was having a shower the other morning, the words on the side of the bottle caught my eye. (By the way, the actual manufacturers are called Treaclemoon and the gel and bottle are eco and vegan friendly as well). Back to the story: This is what it says: The honeycomb secret. The girl loved bees, precious and clever in their fabulous velvet coats, yellow boots and tiny feet dusted with the souls of millions of flowers.

How beautiful is that? Such creativity from a writer but also highlighting the amazing and intricate creativity of God- our creator:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to it's kind." And it was so. God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (Genesis 1 v 1, 24 and 26)

And amongst all of this God gave considerable detail to such an insect as a bee, (and to lots of other creatures), as well as bees being able to make honeycomb so that we can produce honey. In turn we have all been given creativity in so many different ways including the designer of my bottle of shower gel!



27th October – Rev Jacqui Horton

I found it very hard reaching 60. For a long time I had been a 'young person' in the Church - until I was 30, 40, even in my 50's I found myself younger than most people in the churches I was serving as a minister. But, hitting 60 meant that there was no escape - I was definitely getting older! The only way I could cope was to think to myself "Well, life is going to begin (again) at 60!" I made a series of resolutions including having more time for reading, walking, family, friends, new adventures. And I was really, properly, going to give quality time to God through the day, every day, practising God's presence in my life.

However! I managed the new adventures but, somehow, life continued to run away with me without me doing all the other things. I was 62 before I knew it. Where had THAT time gone? And then came coronavirus, and the lockdown, and the forced slowing down of all of our lives. Suddenly, I was reading more, walking more, giving time to family and friends (albeit at a distance). I found I didn't want new adventures but was happy to be at home, with the added benefit of spending less money. And I was, at last, able to 'press' time for God into the routine of my life - in different ways, some of them very small, but adding up to making a big difference.

Now that life is busier again, many of these changes are sticking. The challenge is not to lose all that was gained. Maybe I will look back and think, "Life began (again) at 62!"

28th October – Sam Parfitt



The clocks went back on Sunday and it will consequently begin get dark an hour earlier, heralding in what for many is a season of darkness and starkness, when the trees are bare, and nature seems dormant. Interestingly perhaps, for Celtic Christians Winter was the beginning of the year, offering time to rest and sustain body, mind, and soul ahead of the transitional season of Spring. Bede wrote much about how seasons were worked out by the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon nations before and after their Christianisation. The Celtic day, like the Jewish day began at night - a symbol of travelling through darkness into light. We will all have faced challenges this year and perhaps embracing winter as a season of settledness and rest is something important we can learn from those who have walked before us so long ago. And as we travel with Jesus this season, may we all feel the warmth of his light.

29th October – David Yarham

Jacqui Horton's recent piece on passing her 62nd birthday gave me an especial "pause for thought" as I have recently passed my 82nd ! For once, I turned for spiritual counsel to what always seem the blood stained pages of the Book of Joshua (ch.14, v.12).

The scriptures tell of Caleb who,
at four score years and four, distained
green pastures by the Jordan's brim
and made of Joshua the bold demand,

"Give me this mountain!"

"There where the Sons of Anak dwell among the crags,
where giants guard the sheep paths to the height,
there would I lead my flocks, and let who dare stand
against this old arm to bar my way!"

I am no Caleb, but I still may herd
a goat or two along the mountain track,
and set my face towards the upper heights
and fight the fight if Anak's sons attack!

We have a lot of octogenarians in our Circuit (many of our chapels would struggle without them)). Perhaps we should form a **Caleb Club** to help us fight against those Sons of Anak (*they've already stolen some of my sight, much of my hearing and most of my wits!*). Hopefully we can still play useful roles in the Circuit's life - remembering John Wesley's prayer '**Lord let me not live to be Useless!**'

31st October - Dee Moden

Like many, I don't sleep very well and I am often, too often, up having a drink- reading and writing in the night. Tonight is no exception! Our views here at night provide a sharp contrast, looking out of our lounge window, at the front, up the street is a blaze of twinkling street lights. As I look at all the houses I wonder if anyone can't sleep like me and what the reason might be.

By contrast, looking out of the patio doors at the back it is completely dark and I often see a star studied sky, tonight the moon is at its fullest and it's almost like day and the stars are shining beautifully. As I marvelled at God's creation I thought about all the creatures scurrying about their business in the quiet of the night.



This reminded me of Genesis 1: 14-19 and 24-25 God creating contrast of day and night the sun moon and stars and all living creatures, then pronouncing them good. Sometimes in these quiet times it is where we encounter God most.

Heavenly Father, at night as we look into our streets we place into your hands the people known to you who are not able to sleep for various reasons and ask that you will be with them in their hour of need.

We give thanks too for all the beauty and splendour of your world by day and by night, and all living creatures therein. Amen