

## Facebook Posts – July 2021

### 1<sup>st</sup> July – Rev Anne Richardson



Today we are at the mid-point of the year. Half of 2021 is gone. The other half is just beginning. With all the necessary restrictions to reduce the effects of the pandemic, this year has almost been as strange as last. We have got used to wearing masks and keeping our distance from other people and following one-way systems around our churches!

I like things that point the way and make it easy to know where you're going. There's something about a signpost that always makes me look, to see what's in the other directions. Sometimes it's a glorious view or beautiful ploughed field, or just a grassy lane. There is a certain promise of

what lies beyond – the bit you can't see, round the corner.

Do you know the poem, 'The road not taken' by Robert Frost? The author takes the road less travelled by – and that made all the difference. But before he makes his choice, he considers each way. It reminds me of Jesus's teaching recorded in Matthew 7:13-14 -<sup>13</sup> "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> July – Dee Moden

As I was searching for something, I came across something completely different which I thought it make a good thought for the day! Some may be familiar with this.

A Churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

He wrote: "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column.

Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals.

But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

When you are DOWN to nothing, God is UP to something!

Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible & receives the impossible!

Thank God for our physical and our spiritual nourishment!



**5<sup>th</sup> July – Aileen Fox**

**A parable of two trowels**



I enjoy gardening and my trowel is my most used tool for planting, weeding, filling pots with compost - it's a tool I really cannot do without. A lot of my gardening tools are old, or were inherited from relatives, and some were gifts. If you look at the picture one trowel is rusty, the other shiny. The reason the first is rusty is that I buried it. I weed my borders on my knees and the trowel moves around with me. Unfortunately, in pulling up some weeds I managed to lose the trowel that is rusty by burying it. I searched for several days, but after some rain the ground looked undisturbed. Eventually I discovered one buried trowel, the result is that it's no longer shiny but still useable and I am going to try and clean it up.

However, I haven't learnt my lesson. I was busy planting and weeding at the same time. I went to do some more planting and realised the shiny trowel was nowhere to be found. No sign of it being buried and I was upset needing to dig holes for my plants and sentimentally attached to it as it was a gift, and dependent on it. I pressed the rusty one into service and did my planting. I then walked backwards and forwards checking everywhere. Had I wandered off and put it down somewhere else in the garden? Eventually as a last resort I went to the brown garden bin and started emptying it. I was tempted to give up but pressed on. Half way down I saw it and was able to pick it up. I must have caught it up with the weeds. I wanted to shout and share with everyone that I had found my trowel! (I didn't). It reminded me of the lost parables that Jesus told such as the lost coin and how there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. Everyone who truly repents and accepts Jesus as their Saviour is welcome in the Kingdom of Heaven.

**6<sup>th</sup> July – Rev Jacqui Horton**

The Sunday programme on Radio 4 this last week ran an item about the therapeutic – and spiritual – effects of gardening. This has also been a feature of Gardeners' World recently and much has been made in the pandemic of the surprising number of people turning to gardening, and to their gardens, during the lockdowns.

In our Methodist Circuit, one of the ways in which we tried to bring people together last Summer was to have a virtual Open Gardens. We invited people to submit 3 or 4 photos from their gardens and we displayed them online and on a paper handout. This exercise did bring some joy and some unity to the 24 churches in our Circuit but it also had a spiritual effect. It was quite moving looking at the photos from so many different gardens and gardeners and wondering at the beauty and variety of God's creation. We are doing the same this year and bring the results into our shared worship across the Circuit on July 25<sup>th</sup>. We are calling this a 'Big Sunday' when people will be worshipping in churches, online, and using paper worship sheets with, hopefully, all of us using similar material relating to gardens and creation.

Going back to Gardeners' World, I have to confess to being a fan of Adam Frost (who occasionally substitutes for Monty Don as the presenter). After all his hard work Adam often mentions 'having a moment' in his garden. In other words, stopping and appreciating what he has done and the results in his garden. But, he means more than this. He means a wider appreciation of nature on the one hand and human cultivation on the other, a wider sense that one's well-being is enhanced by taking in all the sights and sounds and smells of the garden. Dare one say that he is advocating a spiritual moment? As we prepare to come out of restrictions, may we remember how we have become more mindful, more appreciative, and more willing to give time to 'having a moment'.

## 8<sup>th</sup> July – Rev Cliff Shanganya

The following message was sent to me by one of my friends. I hope that you enjoy it as much as I did. It is titled....ABOUT TODAY

If I knew it would be the last time  
That I'd see you fall asleep,  
I would tuck you in more tightly  
and pray the Lord, your soul to keep.

If I knew it would be the last time  
that I see you walk out the door,  
I would give you a hug and kiss  
and call you back for one more.

If I knew it would be the last time  
I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise,  
I would video tape each action and word,  
so I could play them back day after day.

If I knew it would be the last time,  
I could spare an extra minute  
to stop and say "I love you,"  
instead of assuming you would KNOW I do.

If I knew it would be the last time  
I would be there to share your day,  
Well I'm sure you'll have so many more,  
so I can let just this one slip away.

For surely there's always tomorrow  
to make up for an oversight,  
and we always get a second chance  
to make everything just right.

There will always be another day  
to say "I love you,"  
And certainly there's another chance  
to say our "Anything I can do?"

But just in case I might be wrong,  
and today is all I get,  
I'd like to say how much I love you  
and I hope we never forget.

Tomorrow is not promised to anyone,  
young or old alike,  
And today may be the last chance  
you get to hold your loved one tight.

So if you're waiting for tomorrow,  
why not do it today?  
For if tomorrow never comes,  
you'll surely regret the day,

That you didn't take that extra time  
for a smile, a hug, or a kiss  
and you were too busy to grant someone,  
what turned out to be their one last wish.

So hold your loved ones close today,  
and whisper in their ear,  
Tell them how much you love them  
and that you'll always hold them dear

Take time to say "I'm sorry,"  
"Please forgive me," "Thank you," or "It's okay."  
And if tomorrow never comes,  
you'll have no regrets about today.

Anonymous



9<sup>th</sup> July



12<sup>th</sup> July



## 13<sup>th</sup> July – Deacon Jen Woodfin

On Saturday Jacqui and I decided to have a walk along the footpaths around Swaffham. This included one path on which we had walked often, but not for a couple of months or so. As we travelled along, the undergrowth got higher and higher, until, in places, it was over our heads. We decided to persevere because we were trying to get to another path and so lead to a new walk for us. (We like to have quite a few options available so that we can choose which one fits our plans for a day off.) On this occasion Jacqui was leading, we take it in turns, and I think she drew the short straw! It meant that she had to negotiate the path ahead, holding back the grasses and brambles and making sure the footing was safe. We succeeded in traversing the path and came to one that was much clearer and easier to walk. So, we completed our planned route and will repeat it again – though possibly not this time of year!

We often refer to our life as a journey. Sometimes the path is clear and a pleasure to walk. Sometimes it is much harder and it is difficult to see the way ahead. Sometimes it feels like we are following in others' footsteps. Sometimes it seems we have to take the lead for others to follow. At all times, though, if we trust God's leading, He will guide us along the right path. Just one step at a time, from where we are to something new. As the hymn says:

One more step along the world I go, and it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.



## 15<sup>th</sup> July – Rev Anne Richardson



I have been busy trying to prepare my garden ready to take a photo for our Virtual Open Gardens. But there are so many weeds!!

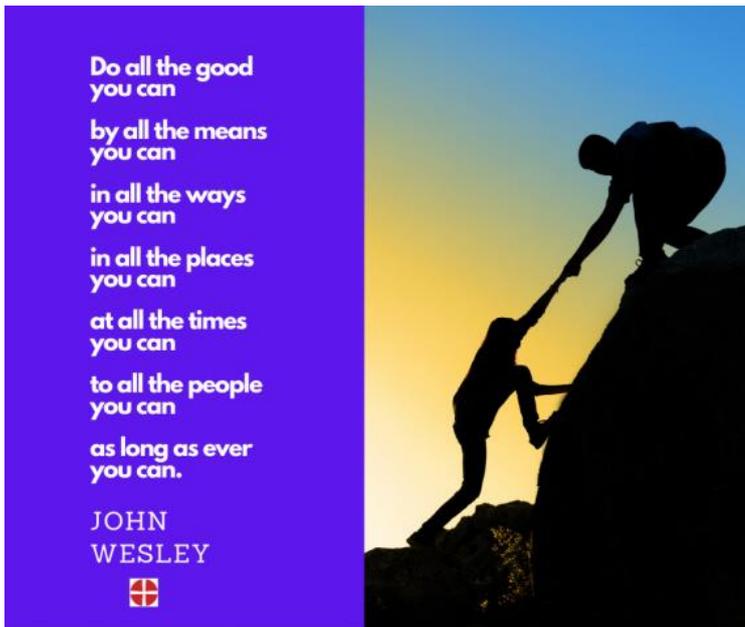
The weeds in the photo are everywhere in the garden! I think it may be called Creeping Buttercup or Creeping Crowfoot or Sitfast. Is that right? I like that last name because it does indeed sit fast! If you try to pull it up, it tears, leaving the roots in place, so it can grow again. It's a clever design for the plant – and although I think it's quite pretty – I don't want it all over the driveway.

This reminds me of the sin that so easily entangles – as the writer to the Hebrews puts it, (ch12:1). How hard it can be to change bad habits, to remove things in our lives that create a barrier between us and God! We may tidy up the surface, but roots remain to grow again.

## 16<sup>th</sup> July



19<sup>th</sup> July



22<sup>nd</sup> July – Rev Cliff Shanganya

In George Orwell's classic novel *Animal Farm*, all the animals enjoy equal rights until it becomes apparent that some animals consider themselves "more equal" than others.

God doesn't 'judge superficially—he judges people by their character and not by their appearance. In this reading, Isaiah celebrates God's impartiality. God's only requirement is that we love and serve him.

Isaiah praised God for his greatness and described God's wonderful acts. Isaiah specifically praised God for making salvation available to all who would turn from their sin. God welcomes "all people of the world" (Isaiah 25:6). God's banquet has an international guest list. This means that men and women of every colour, race, language, and custom who love God will dwell together in heaven. There will be no segregation there.

Be willing to share your life with people who differ from you. Don't discriminate against them just because they are a different sex or different colour, have different customs or speak a different language. Remember, if they also trust in Christ, they are your brothers and sisters and will sit with you at God's banquet table. Include others—it's a very God-like action to take. Have a lovely day. Cliff.



23<sup>rd</sup> July



## 26<sup>th</sup> July – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

### From Darkness to Light

The grain of wheat, wrapped in dark earth,  
Inert like death remains,  
Til warmth caressing, stirring into life,  
It breaks, and from the shattered shell  
The shoot ascends to meet the light

The egg, like stone can stay,  
But feathered warmth and patient days  
Stir up the life within  
And breaking out the chick embraces life.

The womb is dark,  
Wrapped in wet warmth the new life grows,  
Til ripe at last to meet the light  
Through painful travailing a child is born.

The tomb is sealed,  
Wrapped in dark earth his body lay,  
Til love caresses, shattering the gloom,  
And wakens from the sleep of death The Lord of Life.  
The shattered seal could not withstand  
The primal energy of life,  
Nor death contain unconquerable Love.  
The darkness yields to glorious light  
And bathes the world in Easter joy  
Which power of Hell or death cannot destroy.



(wallpapertag.com)

## 29<sup>th</sup> July – Rev Anne Richardson



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I'm not sporty. I always blame my old PE teacher for this. I went to a Girls Grammar school. In the winter, we played hockey and netball and had gymnastics. In the summer we played tennis and did athletics. Being asthmatic didn't help me either – anything involving a lot of running, and I would be wheezing over to the side lines. My teacher looked upon me with disdain and concentrated all her efforts on those whose skill could be developed and be in the school teams. I hated games lessons. I hated and feared my teacher. It wasn't the best environment to learn or develop a love of sport!!

Now I look at the Olympics taking place in Tokyo and wonder at the range of sports, (even skateboarding!) I marvel at the dedication of those who spend all their time practising and honing their skills. Do I ever put as much effort or training or focus into anything?? Do you?

"All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step..."

1 Corinthians 9 – New Living Translation

30<sup>th</sup> July

**If you can't fly  
then run.  
If you can't run  
then walk.  
If you can't walk  
then crawl,**

**but whatever you do, you  
have to keep moving  
forward**

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

