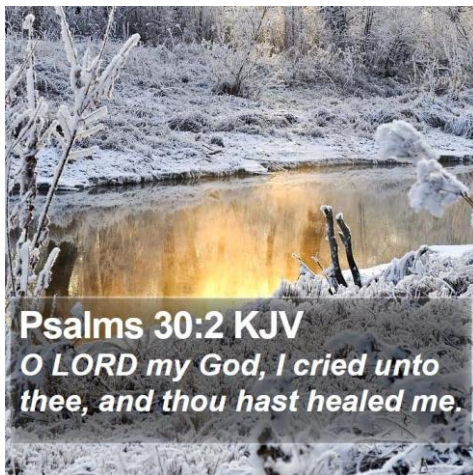
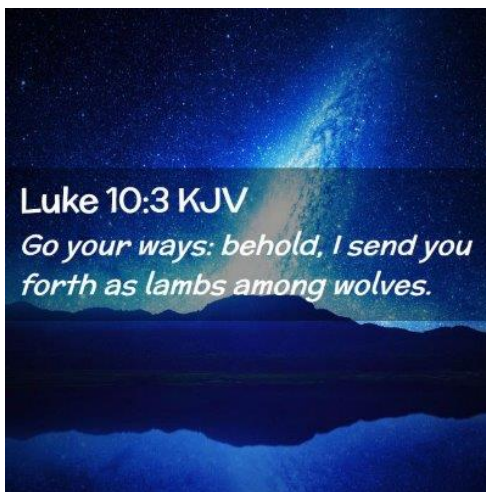


Facebook Posts – July 2022

1st July



4th July



6th July – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

What's your Agenda?

2000 years ago, when Jesus came to live among us, his country men had a very clear agenda, their prophets had promised them a Messiah, another King David. Jesus was a born leader, with authority, charisma and extraordinary powers, so the excitement grew among the ordinary people, but also suspicion and fear in the hierarchy. They recognised Jesus's extraordinary gifts, but he did not fit into their model for an acceptable Messiah, no soldier king, but a spiritual revolutionary, constantly undermining their authority by blatantly breaking their strict purity laws. That as we know, led to his death sentence. But what about his family and loyal friends? They too had their agenda. We know little of

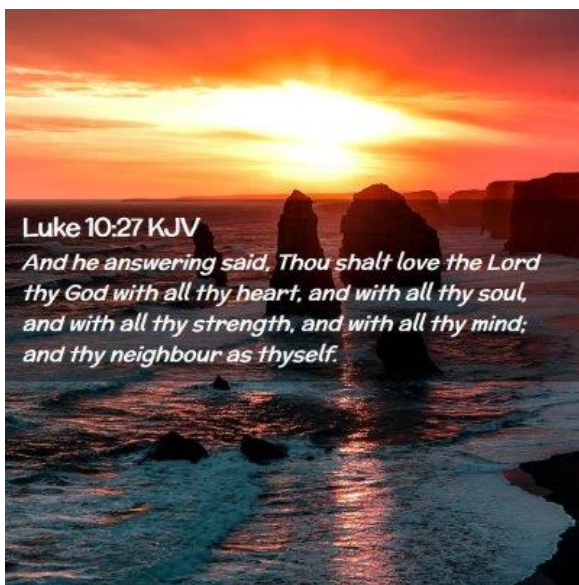
Jesus's early years, but at the height of his popularity, surrounded by a crowd as he healed a sick man, his mother and brothers arrive, possibly with the intention of taking him home. They are scared, they know the authorities are out to get him, maybe they too are in danger. Jesus continues his work. Peter, commended for recognising Jesus as Messiah, then proves he has not understood. He is still locked into human understanding of power. And James and John, two of Jesus's closest friends, ask for leading roles when the Kingdom comes. Jesus's heart must have sunk. Getting our heads round the difference between the love of power and the Power of Love is tough. As Christian's what's your agenda? What's mine?



8th July



11th July



12th July – Deacon Jen Woodfin

There are significant times in a churches life where everything seems to 'just work'. Such was the case over the last few days at Watton Methodist church. There were 5 days of special events marking 95 years since the opening of the present church. Every event went so well with a really lovely atmosphere and all were very well attended. With so much going on I have been particularly struck with how so many people have been involved, offering their different strengths and abilities as was most needed. I thought I would use this example of Christian fellowship for this thought for the day but couldn't think how to frame what I wished to write.

Then I noticed the line of washing I had put up earlier. It was the t-cloths used at the church which I had taken home to wash. I had not put them up in any particular order and yet there were two with words one



close together. One was a poem about friendship through the seasons of one's life. The other was the Irish blessing that ends with the line: 'May God hold you in the hollow of his hand'. Long standing friends, and new friends, had all been involved or had attended something. There was a real sense of fellowship and there was a real sense of God holding everyone in his hand. I wonder, are there events in your life when a similar thing happened?

13th July – Sam Parfitt

I have just finished reading a book called 'Learning to Walk in the Dark' by Barbara Brown Taylor. It is an exploration of the relationship we have with the dark and a reflection of finding God in that darkness. One of the things that Barbara does during her exploration is watching the moon rise, which I realised, whilst reading the book, that I had never done. So, one evening last week, I sat out in the garden with a mug of tea as dusk approached and resolved to watch and wait for the moon. I realised three things doing this; it takes a long time for dusk to give way to night, it doesn't really get 'dark' in a totalitarian sense and finally, before I saw the moon, the stars began to come out. All that time of waiting, and they appeared all of a sudden, in twos or threes. For some reason I had expected that the first stars to shine would be some of the brightest in the sky, so I was surprised when two very small flickers of light were the first to shine. This has prompted reflection; I think when we wait and watch for God we can be looking for something bright and obvious, when in fact God may already be there with us in the smaller, duller places - like that beautiful advent hymn 'like a candle flame, flickering small in the darkness' God is waiting in those places to set our hearts on fire.

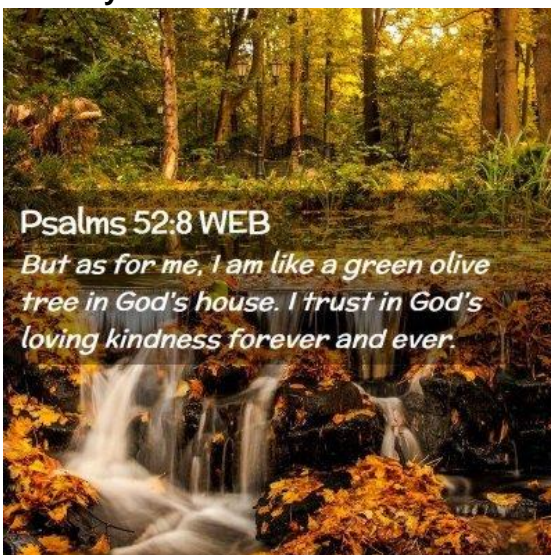


Image: Luc Viatour <https://lucnix.be/>

15th July



18th July



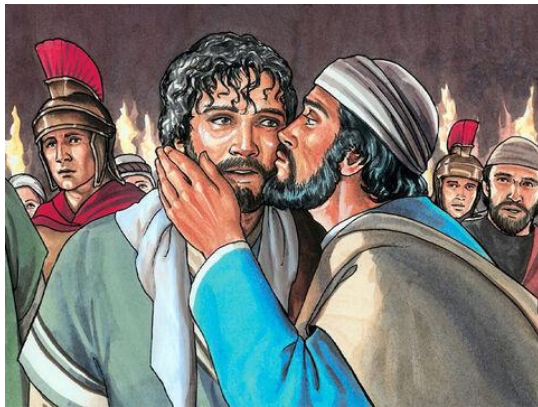
19th July – Rev Jacqui Horton

This current extreme hot weather is re-kindling my motivation to play my part in the fight against climate change. Somehow, the enthusiasm that lasted for some time after COP 26 has dwindled somewhat - in my case - not helped by having covid earlier in the year and then working hard for a series of big national, circuit and church events. I was interested (and concerned) to hear one of the Tory leadership candidates say that they supported the net zero target so long as it didn't hit the economy. If climate change continues at the current rate, there will be no economy! There will be no world that the children of the current generation of children will be comfortable growing up in. COP 27 is in November in Egypt, I hope that, by then, we will all (including me and including the government) be re-motivated to really do something about it.



20th July – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

We know little about Judas Iscariot, except him being one of the twelve disciples and possibly the group's treasurer, so this is my speculation. I imagine he may have been a loner, may be a bit better educated than the others, enthralled and excited by Jesus and patriotic about Israel, eager to re-establish its sovereignty. He watches Jesus's ministry - his teaching, but more his extraordinary power and authority over illness, the natural world, and large crowds. He recognises in Jesus a born leader with all the qualities needed for kingship, so he becomes increasingly uneasy when Jesus talks of suffering and death and danger to come, but goes on healing and teaching his loving Kingdom message. So he thinks Jesus needs a bit of help. If



Jesus was actually put in the position of a confrontation with the authorities trying to get him he would have to use his extraordinary God given powers to overpower them and so bring in the Kingdom. So he goes to the high priest and sets up the arrest. To his horror Jesus goes along with it, no display of divine power. He rushes back with his cry "I have betrayed innocent blood!" and throws down the thirty pieces of silver, and when he only gets contempt he goes out and hangs himself. I think that is more plausible than betraying for money. It is a classic example of recruiting God's power to back his own ideas.

Image: Good News Productions International and College Press Publishing.

21st July – Rev Cliff Shanganya

I believed in you, so I prayed, "I am deeply troubled, Lord."

Psalms 116:10

My God has called us to a life of prayer, of constant and ongoing communication with him, and has purposed that we would turn to him in our troubles. That the almighty, all-powerful Lord wants to hear our needs and hurts is great news. But the fact that he not only hears our prayers but also intervenes and delights in showing us his loving-kindness and doing wonderful things in response to our petitions makes prayer a truly amazing thing.

Through prayer, everything can change—starting with our own hearts and lives—and even when we feel most helpless or are most troubled, God can infuse the worst situations with his light and grace. When we pray, the impossible becomes possible, and the powers of darkness are dispersed.

No wonder Satan tries every scheme to keep us from praying! But because we believe in God and his limitless power, we can take our most honest concerns and feelings to him and know that he will hear us. Have a blessed day! You may want to say a prayer below.

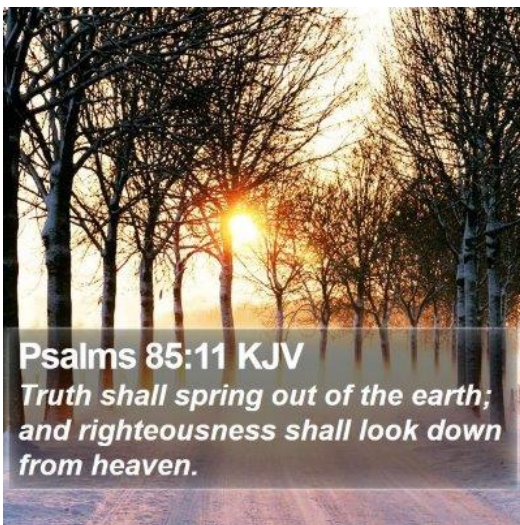


LORD, when I am troubled, help me to run to you the way little children run to their parents when they don't know what to do or where to go. Increase my belief in your fatherly heart and your tenderness toward me, and increase my faith in the power of prayer. Amen.

22nd July



25th July



26th July – Deacon Jen Woodfin

My Sabbatical will be starting at the beginning of August in just 6 days' time. How did time suddenly creep up on me like that? About 18 months ago I had to fill in a form, to send to the District Sabbatical committee, stating what I was planning to do and what 'learning' would come out of it.

I wrote : As a member of a dispersed religious order, the Methodist Diaconal Order, I am keen to have a deeper understanding of a religious community that lives and works together. Members of the Diaconal Order have had a good deal of consultations recently of what it means to be in a Religious Order. I believe this experience will inform my thinking as I compare the two different ways of being in community with others.

I realise now that I wrote that when we were still in the middle of lockdowns through Covid restrictions. Now, we are able to get out and about more and build relationships in a more personal way – through sharing in worship as well as through meetings, social occasions and one to one conversations. This has helped me to have a real sense of Christian community, not just through the Diaconal Order, but with many of you and in many of the circuit churches.

As I go to work as the Assistant Musician on the island of Iona for 8 weeks I will experience 'being in community' with new people but I will also look forward telling you all about it when I return – and teaching some new songs! I will send a weekly blog and would be grateful for your prayers.



27th July Sam Parfitt

I had been on the lookout for one of these tea light holders for some time, so I was very pleased to find one recently in a charity shop. I like the interconnectedness of the figures and had visions of using it as an aid to preaching, illustrating our relationship with Jesus, each other, the Holy Spirit, the list was endless! Having congratulated myself on such a good purchase, I carried my treasure home, to be greeted by Wendy (my daughter) as I walked through the door. She said "That's a funny thing - what is it?" I replied "it's a candle holder", then Wendy asked "why is it shaped like a frog?" It wasn't until that moment that I had seen anything other than two figures blending into one another. But, through Wendy's description I could now see two froggy eyes and a big froggy mouth. How we perceive things is important, and perhaps more importantly, recognising that others may perceive something differently to us and that neither of us is necessarily wrong, we have just been gifted different ways of seeing. Through this diversity of sight, my new people shaped froggy candle holder has become a richer thing with more than one story to tell. This diversity of perception, in my humble opinion, makes us rich beyond our largest measure, especially when we are thankful and respond with love and grace to one another.



29th July

