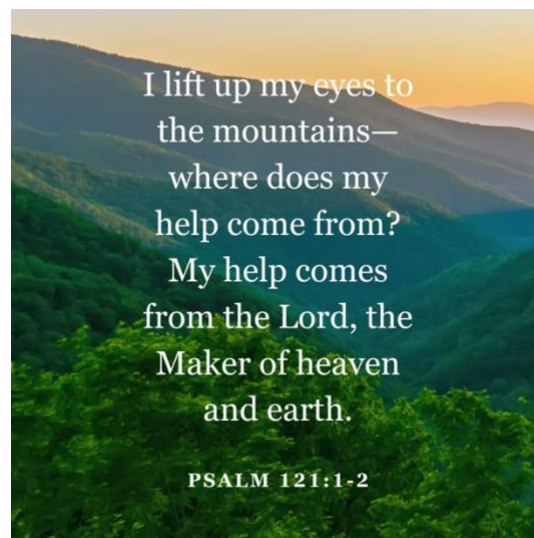


Facebook Posts November 2023

A thought from Sam: On Saturday mornings, I take my daughter Wendy to the livery yard, where she rides and helps out. Last Saturday's journey there was much like any other, until we rounded a corner to find escapee sheep in the road! Because the road was single track we found it relatively easy to herd our new found friends along the road and back into their field (culminating in applause from an onlooker!)

It struck me afterwards that the sheep knew where they had come from and where they were trying to get to, but couldn't find the way back - try as they might. There are lots of Sheepy analogies in scripture, but on this occasion, I am reminded of the artwork Jesus, light of the world by Holman Hunt - which shows Jesus waiting at the door, ready to guide us home. And I was comforted that the sheep persisted, despite the way to the field not becoming evident!



A thought from Rev Rosemary:

We recently had an interesting reading in Romans 14 about not being judgemental. It took me back to my childhood. We were fortunate in having two sets of Grandparents, all Christians, but rather different. My mother's parents were devout and very judgmental. They nearly disinherited my Mum when we moved to the North from London and there was not, in their opinion, a suitable Church. That was when we became Methodists, and Sunday became enjoyable. On Sundays, with my Mum's parents, we went to Church with no Junior Church, and a Very long sermon. After lunch, while they rested, we had to sit quietly and read books which seemed to be mainly about very good children who died young, but it was alright because they went to Jesus.

My father's parents also went to Church but would play games afterwards and have fun and, I suppose, 'spoil us rotten'. To be fair I dearly loved both sets of grandparents, they were all very good people, and thanks to our wonderful home Church we kept a balanced view. It's a pity that my Mum's Bible reading parents hadn't taken in what Paul had written 2000 years before, or what Jesus had said about the Sabbath being made for man and not man for the Sabbath.

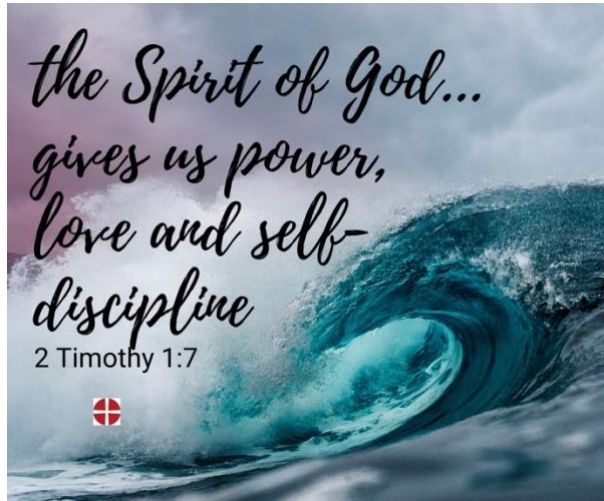


I've bought Merlin a new fleece jacket! I chose the fluorescent one, thinking it would be useful when walking in the dark. It's surprisingly effective!

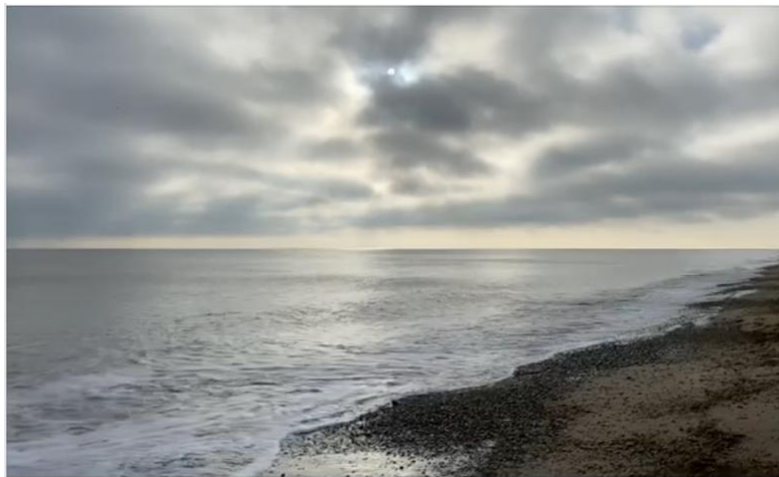
He really stands out when the light is fading. Just as we all need to do in dark times.

Rev Anne





Rev Anne writes: Last week, I had the privilege of attending the District Ministers retreat. One of the great benefits for me was that it was at Sizewell Hall, just a stone's throw from the sea! I love walking by the sea and always find it beneficial. So I thought I'd share it with you. As you watch the video, breathe in... breathe out.... allow your mind to relax let the tension flow from you.... and visualise the power of the Spirit filling you. Enjoy!



Deacon Jen writes:

We were recently lent a jigsaw to do with the words added: "There is piece missing". As we have progressed, if ever we had difficulty in immediately finding a particular piece we would think - is this the one that's missing, shall I give up looking for it? So far, I believe, we have found all the pieces - eventually.

Reflecting on this I note how our attitude can be so easily changed by a single remark. So, what can we learn from this? Could it be that we too could influence someone's thinking and attitude? A single comment can be very powerful. Let us just be aware what our words could mean and let them be to build people up, to affirm the people as they are. Who knows what good could come from that?



A reflection from Sam Parfitt:



Last week, I had the privilege of going on Retreat with other Lay Workers from our District. This Bi-annual event is a gift from the Church and offers us a space, away from all that comes with our usual work, to rest, reflect and refresh our minds, our bodies and our faith. This year we were a stone's throw from the sea, and as someone who always feels at peace near water it was a perfect location for me. Being so close meant that it was very easy to take a promenade along the sea front, which was a little wild and wooly - just how I like it!!

I took these two photographs on one of my walks, one on the beginning and one at the end. They are of the same spot, but what is evident in one is a dot of light, which isn't seen in the other. This dot is, in fact, a lighthouse. I was struck by how the lighthouse couldn't be seen in the first picture, although it was still lighthouseing, but was clear in the second because it was shining in the

darkness. The Christian Faith is full of verses of scripture and rich imagery of Jesus being a light in the darkness, like this passage from Psalm 27:1 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?' Sometimes these verses offer us comfort and other times, I think that they can be quite challenging - I'm sure that if we're honest, what many of us would like is to see the light from the lighthouse all the time, to give us assurance that it's always there, but that's not how the lighthouse seems to work.

However, as I had turned to walk away, I saw light ahead of me, and couldn't work out where it was coming from - it was, in fact, the reflection of the light from the lighthouse shining from something else. I find it helpful, and comforting, that in the times I have doubts about God (because sometimes it's hard to see or feel his light shining) I can, and do, see and feel His love shining through creation - maybe it's the beauty of a laden autumnal tree blazing bright in the sun, maybe it's in the kindness of others, but it is there, and the truly great thing is we don't have to wait for the darkness to find it.

