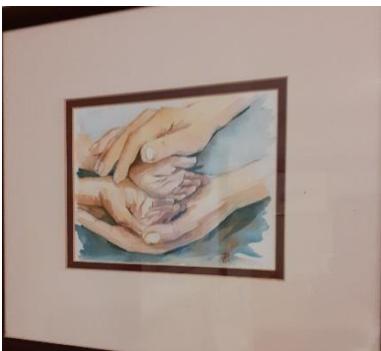


## Facebook Thoughts for the Day – March 2021

### 1<sup>st</sup> March – Judith Semmons



Have any of you experienced 'the mental block' moment? The time when you suddenly have no idea what you're supposed to be doing or the thought goes completely out of your mind? Like getting to the top of the stairs and wondering what you've gone up for! There is the suggestion that it happens more frequently as we get older! There were times, however, when I could be involved in a concert and completely forget the words of a song I'd sung many times before: sometimes lah-ing or substituting alternative words comes in handy!

Unfortunately the same thing happened when I was assisting in a Church Circuit zoom service the other Sunday morning as we started to share the

Lord's prayer - I'm afraid to admit it but my mind wandered: being a service on zoom I was unnerved by the fact that I couldn't hear people joining in; then I worried that my speed of delivery might be different and that we wouldn't be 'united' in our prayers. Before I knew it, I'd lost track as to where we were in the Lord's prayer - ironically at the point of 'Lead us not into temptation.....'. So for anyone listening on that Sunday, I can only apologise that the prayer had a very different ending to usual!

I spent some time reflecting on that experience - something that has never happened to me before. I realised that I shouldn't have worried about other people's response because we are united by our faith and God's infinite love for us; not by speed and co-ordination. As individuals we are also all very different- with unique personalities and mind sets but we are still united. We can read in Philippians 2 v 1 and 2. 'If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.'

Next time I'll keep the words of the Lord's prayer handy....just in case! And I'll remind myself that whatever happens we're still united!

### 2<sup>nd</sup> March – Rev Jacqui Horton

Isla has sent us this photo of a butterfly she spotted recently. The patterns and colours are amazingly beautiful. Oh - and I have just seen the shadow... and it looks as though there are 4 antennae but, of course, the butterfly only has 2. It keeps being said that one of the benefits of the last year has been that we are taking more notice of simple things. I myself have certainly learnt more about wildflowers, birds, butterflies, trees than I ever did before. It also keeps being said that we must not lose the good things as life opens up again and we start rushing round again. I really want to continue to appreciate nature and to live life at a slower pace than before! How are we all going to make sure this happens?!

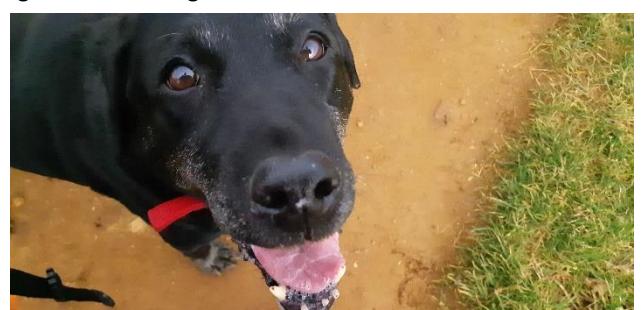


### 3<sup>rd</sup> March – Sam Parfitt



our daily when I've needed to be 'on site' at Blakeney. We always choose the road less travelled and as we walk out and leave the world behind us, we are left in

One of the things that I have valued and enjoyed during this lockdown has been getting out for my daily walk with Deefa dog and heading out into some sort of 'wilderness'. A real treat has been taking



the company of just each other and the Creator. A couple of weeks ago, as we began to walk back towards the village, I felt an awareness that we were returning to civilization again and my thoughts turned to how this walk felt like a mini wilderness experience. There were conversations, challenges and thoughts that I had left behind me out there and I was aware of coming back a very slightly different person. I used to think of Lent as a heavy, oppressive season of penitence but this year, against all the odds, it feels the opposite - a time of lightness, of laying down and a time of reconnecting with each little trip into the wild yonder.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Cliff Shanganya

Read Nehemiah 8:1–10:39

*1 The people assembled again, and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. 2 Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. 3 They remained standing in place for three hours while the Book of the Law of the Lord their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the Lord their God. . . . 10:28 Then the rest of the people—the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Temple servants, and all who had separated themselves from the pagan people of the land in order to obey the Law of God, . . . 29 solemnly promised to carefully follow all the commands, regulations, and decrees of the Lord our Lord. Nehemiah 9:1-3; 10:28-29*

Think back to your childhood or adolescence. What is one lesson you have learned from that time? Get out a photo album if it'll help. What guiding principle did you pick up from those earlier years?

The Israelites seem to have forgotten the lessons learned from their past, so they ask Ezra to read the Scriptures to them. As the Levites explain the meaning of the passage, the Israelites weep. Nehemiah reminds the people, however, that this is not a time for weeping but for rejoicing. Let this passage prompt you to reflect on the mighty acts God has done for you and the profound lessons he has taught you over the years.

Many prayers and speeches in the Bible include a long summary of Israel's history. The summary of God's work in Nehemiah 9:7-38 reminded the people of their great heritage and God's wonderful promises. Like the Israelites, we, too, should remember our history. Reviewing the past serves two purposes: (1) it helps us to avoid repeating the mistakes of our past and (2) it shows us the pattern of our spiritual growth. This process, therefore, can strengthen our faith as we remember how God has forgiven us for our sins,

and how he has been working in us and through us to make us more like Christ. Take time to reflect on your personal history, then thank God for what he has done in your life. Learn from your past so that you can live for Christ in the present and become the person God wants you to be in the future. Blessed Lent Journey to you all.



#### 5<sup>th</sup> March – Dee Moden

It was interesting reading Sam's thought for the day clearing out the loft jogging memories from the past, taking us back to another time in our lives. We have quite a few 'treasures' that belonged to different members of our families which brings them to mind when dusting or sometimes looking for something else and they pop up!

A great treasure of mine is a small white tablecloth, it originally belonged to my mum, and it had all names embroidered on it including mine. It was from the small village chapel we all belonged to, and it must have been for a special occasion, it is over 50 years old.

The Chapel is no longer there now, and most of the people are no longer with us. But getting this cloth out periodically, looking at the names, and remembering those people who were part of my life, and those who influenced my faith journey, is both a joy and blessing.



This made me think about the people recorded in the Bible, some only briefly but had great influence, some short letters, but significant to the people receiving them and still relevant to us today, and stories of compassion, sacrifice and love. We need these reminders in our journey of faith, especially at this time of Lent when we look back to what has been, and look forward at what is to come.

## 6<sup>th</sup> March – Pippa Cook



Are we sometimes like that with our lives? As long as we can live from day to day without disasters happening, we don't always look to the final goal. We comfort ourselves with the words of Jesus, advising us not to worry about tomorrow. We look to the immediate future with little thought of our destination. We don't even bother to say with Thomas, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?' We are far more likely to say in our independent way, 'Lord, I don't need guidance.' Why then, is He always there when we need Him?

## 8<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Graham Pickhaver

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March is CENSUS Day. Soon a postcard will drop through our doors telling us all about it! Thirty years ago, I worked as a CENSUS officer distributing the forms, helping folk to complete them and finally to collect. Now, of course, you can complete on line or if you wish fill in a form.

Statistics is not everyone's cup of tea but for governments knowing accurate population numbers and peoples' work and social details enables them to plan for the next ten years such as how many houses will we need and number of school places.

We read about a census in the Bible many times particularly in the time of Moses and Joshua. We know of course the census that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. The book of Numbers is all about counting heads. Moses was told to count the number of males over twenty who could fight (the total number was 603,550) and Joshua sent out spies to survey Canaan to see how strong the opposition would be.

Throughout history there were times when a census was carried out for an evil purpose such as the counting of Jews within their communities for the purpose of transporting many to their deaths.

In the book of Revelation, a census takes place of all those who stand before God the Father and God the Son lost in worship and praise (Revelation 7:9-10). What's wonderful about that picture of heaven is that the crowd of people is described as an innumerable number from all nations, tribes and languages.

The government hopes that everyone will be included in the 2021 CENSUS but not everyone will be, some may even refuse to complete a form. In the same way not everyone will be in that crowd in heaven but let's thank God today that through the blood of the Lamb His redeemed people will be and not one will be missing!



## 9<sup>th</sup> March – Deacon Jen Woodfin



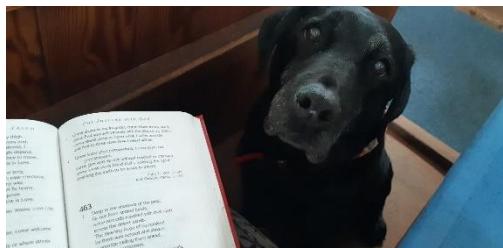
There is a lovely display of tete à tête daffodils in our garden. Each clump has come up well and is brightening up the garden in a very striking way. There are other daffodils, the larger types though I forget the names, some of which are in bud and some have only their leaves showing, and will be some weeks before they flower. Each of these types are in distinct groups separate from the others.

This has made me realise that there are distinct groups in society now. The schools were re-opened yesterday so for that group of people, both the

children and the parents, there has been a huge step forward back to 'normality'. Many people have now had their vaccines and are feeling safer and more protected. But there are still more people who haven't had their vaccines. There are still many people who are still having to shield or are fearful of going out again. It seems to me that as restrictions lift, and more people get the vaccines, we are in danger of becoming more and more separated apart. We must continue to think of one another, to care for one another, and work through these coming months as one. It is amazing how everyone has all pulled together through this difficult year. Let us keep that sense of unity as we move forward so that all of us will have something to celebrate in a few months' time.

### 10th March - Sam Parfitt

We are approaching the one-year point since the first lockdown and the subsequent restrictions. The last 12 months have been challenging beyond measure at times, certainly the difficulties of life haven't been furloughed during lockdown! I have been thinking lately about the things that have been sustaining during



the year and I'm sure (and hopeful) that there will be things that have sustained you also. One of my most sustaining things has been Deefa dog, my constant companion. She steals my socks, eats a menu of disgusting things, licks my glasses when I'm putting my shoes on and snores like a freight train. She has in her time eaten a wall, tried to walk on water (unsuccessfully and needed rescuing - twice) and knows the joys of having a good roll

in the smelliest thing she can find. Also, she never leaves my side, climbs on my lap when I'm sad and we have walked through the hardness of the last 12 months together. At the grand age of 13 her life has blessed mine in abundance and all of her adventures have been life enriching and sustaining. I am a great believer that where we find love we also find God, sometimes in the most paw-fect places!

### 11<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Anne Richardson

I've just been surprised to see a pheasant walk past my kitchen window! I have a lot of pigeons, the occasional blackbird and robin, but it's the first time I've seen a pheasant. It felt out of place! They're normally in the countryside, (often trying to cross the road as you're driving along!!) As I watched it walk past, then stop to take a drink from a puddle, I wondered if it was feeling out of place. It made me stop and think.

Where do I feel out of place? For many of us, coming back to shops after a long time of being at home, or thinking of coming back to church, it may feel very odd. (I had to run out of Superdrug last week, because it was just so noisy - not from people but from the music playing!!) What about you?



The Pheasant just plodded along calmly - yet it was watchful. That's quite a good method to adopt as we prepare to ease out of lockdown. Be calm. Be watchful. And also, let other people know how you're feeling. If you're feeling out of place, a friendly smile, a hello, and someone coming alongside you is what you need. What we need, we can also offer to others. I hope you can do that this week.

### 12<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Rosemary Wakelin



**Tough Love.** Our expectations of God differ widely. I remember in Kenya a preacher telling our nursing students that if they said their prayers and trusted in Jesus, they would pass their exams. In Handsworth I attended a service where the preacher told an expectant congregation that if they came to Church and read their Bibles they would soon have a BMW standing outside their door, and when my husband was dying we had a visit late one evening from an eager lady who informed us that she had a special message that if we prayed together he would recover. I remember my

husband's patient smile, he knew the score, he suggested I got us all a cup of tea. Maybe what we want is a fairy godmother. What we have is a loving Father who longs for his children to join the family business of establishing a Kingdom of Love. C.S.Lewis, in his space novels presents a picture of a planet under siege from alien influences and what God does about it. Of course, he is talking about our world where the loving Power of God is under attack from the desire of human beings to replace God with themselves in control,

resulting in the mess we are in. God allows it because he has given us the right to make our own decisions, but he sent his Son to work out the blueprint of the original intention - to make Love work - which meant taking Love to the Cross. So, perhaps it's no wonder that following Jesus is tough. He never said it was anything else. His followers are the resistance in an occupied land, so if you sign up to follow Jesus you must not be surprised if the going gets tough. It is the battle of good against evil. Of course, the fight was won on the Cross but the clearing up is taking a long time.

### 15<sup>th</sup> March – Aileen Fox

Beauty for Brokenness is one of my favourite songs and I use it as a prayer. During the last year there are times when Like many I am sure I have felt useless and a bit broken. However, looking at my (many) photographs and particularly at some stained glass in Manchester Cathedral I am reminded that when all the pieces of glass are put together they make a stunning display as shown in the photos. It's a reminder to us that we are all part of life and our little efforts can make a difference especially when we work with others. A card, a phone call can help people know that they are part of a bigger community. God cares for us all, we are all important however insignificant we might feel.



### 16<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Jacqui Horton

**Starter March 27<sup>th</sup> 2021 The Third Sunday in Lent**  
For each of the Circuit areas there is a Starter sheet on another page.  
**Hymn MMB 677**  
We love him, for God's where his honour dwells;  
It is the house of prayer, wherein saints always dwell;  
It is the house of grace, wherein servants meet;  
and thus, O Lord, setteth there thy chosen flock to greet.  
We love him, for God's where his honour dwells;  
It is the song of hymns, wherein saints always sing;  
Lord Jesus, give us grace on earth to love thee more,  
in heaven to see thee, and with thy saints adore.  
**Lenten Message**  
Along the road, whereon Jesus Christ started forty days in the wilderness  
He was tempted as we are, yet without sin:  
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;  
and, as you lead us through Lent, so may we know your power to save;  
Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.  
**Psalm set for today Psalm 19**  
**To think about:**  
The Lenten Message from the hub will be available online.  
Please do carry with you into the coming week.  
**Scripture Reading we for today John 3 v 19 - 22**  
**Hymn MFB 71**  
Jesus Christ is walking, walking in the streets; no one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.  
I love, love Jesus; I can hardly tell you, friend or stranger, If I could eat you.  
Jesus Christ is walking, walking in the streets; no one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.  
Love, love Jesus; I am angry too! If this kingdom's excess let me rage with you.  
Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets; where such a sight of hatred he, will have, defeats.  
Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets; who will join my journey? I will guide their feet.  
Jesus, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few, walk one step before me; I will follow your feet.  
**Message from a Circuit Friend**  
The Circuit Message is now available online. It is a weekly magazine produced by the Circuit. It is my sincere desire to keep this message accessible to all. I believe that the information contained within is of benefit to all. I do not agree with all of the content, but it does seem timely that we serve Jesus. "We despatch the Circuit Message to all the Methodist circuits in the UK and Ireland. It is a weekly magazine containing news, features, and information from across the circuit. It is also a platform for sharing news and information from other Methodist bodies and organisations. It is a way of keeping in touch with what is happening across the circuit. We hope that the Circuit Message will be a valuable resource for all those involved in the work of the church. We have at the beginning of the magazine, been asked "God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we are three in one, but in the change of the water my son, Jesus, was born, working in Galilee. It is just culture, however, and Jesus goes into the temple in Jerusalem... we have already

It has been great reading the feedback from our Worship Sheet questionnaire. People who are not online, and who otherwise may not have felt included in Methodist Church worship or community in the pandemic, have been writing in to say how much they have used, and valued, the weekly Worship at Home sheet. There have been some lovely comments e.g. "I look forward to receiving the sheet with anticipation and joy", "I have still felt part of the church", "I sit down every Sunday (with the sheet) and think of my friends worshipping too", "I really appreciate the 'Circuit Message'". A whole year of producing weekly worship on paper has been worth it! Each edition separately crafted so that it has balance, holds together, contains old and new hymns, is both comforting and stimulating. Accompanying pictures bring it to life and, in recent times, the provision of circuit information at the end has enabled us to communicate, and inform, in the region of 500 people. What the future holds, who can know? A year ago this week, it

was occurring to people all over the country that something by way of a worship service needed to be got out to people - as an unthinkable closure of churches (just before Easter) loomed on the horizon. What will the landscape look like a year from now, I wonder...

### 17th March – Sam Parfitt

Today is St. Patrick's day, which in the 21st century has become a celebration of all things Irish, and often it seems to be steeped in the product of St.James's Gate Dublin! St. Patrick was born in Britain and taken into slavery in Ireland, from where he escaped to then return as a missionary and spread the Gospel throughout the country, which he did in a way which was very relevant and relatable to the people he met. ( He also had a run in with the authorities back in Britain over how they were treating the Irish Christians) One of the images he used when he visited communities was the shamrock, which he used to explain the concept of the Trinity - the three in one. As a Pioneer in the Church St. Patrick reminds me today of the need to be contextually relevant, to trust in God's purposes and to be a prophetic witness for and in our communities (and that God never promises us an 'easy' ride in doing so!)



## 18<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Cliff Shanganya

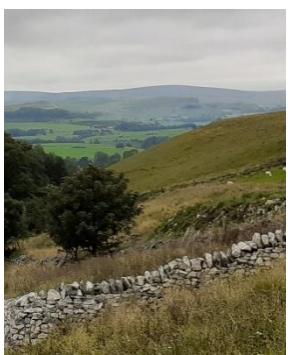


Ephesians 3:14-15 NLT

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, [15] the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.

The family of God includes all who have believed in him in the past, all who believe in him in the present, and all who will believe in him in the future. We are all a family because we have the same Father. He is the source of all creation, the rightful owner of everything, and he has all power at his disposal. God promises his love and power to his family, the church. If we want to receive his blessing of this inner strength, it is important that we stay in contact with other believers in the body of Christ. Those who isolate themselves from God's family and try to live their lives alone cut themselves off from much of God's power. Let us continue to be one God's family.

## 19<sup>th</sup> March – Judith Semmons



Derbyshire is one of our favourite places to have holidays in. Living in Leicestershire as a child made it an easy location to get to; now of course, the journey is considerably longer but well worth it. These photos were taken during our holiday last year and I have often reflected on the contrasting pictures which remind me of hymn 82 in Singing the Faith. 'When through the woods and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees. When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur, and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze. Then sings my soul my Saviour God to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!'



## 22<sup>nd</sup> March – Pippa Cook

Ffion started school in September and has had home-schooling for the past term. She is a good girl and settles to her work, although it is probably a good thing that the teacher doesn't watch her fidgeting on her chair, or hear her telling her mother how boring the lesson is! She was playing 'Dobble', a game where players try to be first to spot matching objects as cards are turned over. She was actually playing on her own, so not very competitive, when her father offered to play with her. Her response was, 'No Daddy. This is *my opportunity*.' Just at that moment she didn't want help, advice or competition. She was honing her skills, the better to be more competitive next time!

There are so many times in our lives when we have opportunity. It may be to get a task finished that has been waiting for a long time, it may be to support others, it may be just to rest in the middle of a busy life. We should always make best use of the opportunities that we are given, especially those that we can use to come closer to God. Jesus took his opportunities to go away to pray, and sets us that example. Each time we practise the skill we shall be stronger when opposition comes.



## 23<sup>rd</sup> March – Deacon Jen Woodfin

March 23rd is a date that we will all remember, I am sure. It is, of course, the day the first lockdown started a year ago today. At the time none of us could conceive that we would still be in a lockdown a year later. We also couldn't have imagined the number of people that have died, within 28 days of receiving a positive diagnosis of Covid 19, during that time. Up to now there have been 126,172 people whose lives have been cut short and this means that there will be hundreds of thousands who have been bereaved and suffered the devastation of losing loved ones.

As a nation, we are all asked to take part in a day of reflection. On the Marie Curie website it states: Join us on 23 March, the first anniversary of the first UK lockdown, for a National Day of Reflection to



reflect on our collective loss, support those who've been bereaved, and hope for a brighter future. There are still tough times ahead, as the death toll continues to rise. This annual day will give us all time to pause and think about the unprecedented loss we're facing, and support each other through grief in the years to come.

There will a minute of silence at 12 noon across the country and online. This will give everyone the opportunity to honour those who have died and reflect on the last year. At 8pm we are asked to stand outside with a candle, torch or the phone, to shine a light to support those who have been bereaved.

As we join with many, many, people across the country may we thank God for all his goodness to us. We thank him for always being with us through the hardest of times. We pray that God's love will surround all the people who have been bereaved. We pray that God will lead us forward into the future to love and serve.

## 24th March – Sam Parfitt



This year I couldn't decide what to 'give up' for Lent, so after much thought, I decided not to give up anything. Instead, I committed myself to a Wild Lent, each day doing an activity that was based outdoors and found a great book that set out daily activities for exactly such an adventure. I have drawn hearts in mud for people to find on their walks, eaten breakfast outside and watched a sunrise to name but a few things. Some of the things have been quite challenging - hugging a tree, for example. I didn't fancy hugging our Monkey Puzzle Tree (they're very spiky!!) so decided to do some guerrilla tree-hugging on one of my lockdown walks with the dog ( I'm not really a public tree-hugging type of gal!) I picked a stout looking tree and, assured of our solitude, gave the trunk a great big hug! To my great surprise, there was something very comforting in hugging something that was ancient, solid and connected to the earth. It was a very grounding experience and, although way out of my comfort zone, a very enjoyable one. Much of my Lenten experience has been about being prepared to take a step into the unknown, just as Jesus was asking people to do near on 2000 years ago. The hymn "Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world" has been with me through Lent, and I pray that you too have found ways to wander and welcome the world anew this season.

## 25<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Anne Richardson

The other morning, (on my day off!!) I took my coffee back to bed to enjoy reading my book. Nestled into my pillows, I was enjoying the sunshine and breeze through the open window when there was a loud buzzing – and a huge bumblebee was outside!

It was the first one I've seen this year.

They're amazing, aren't they – and for little insects they make a surprisingly loud sound!

Apparently, (or maybe it's an urban myth?) NASA has a poster hanging up, with photographs of bees, and it says -"Aerodynamically a bee's body is not made to fly. The good thing is that the bee doesn't know."

I failed physics at school, so I'm not in a position to say if this is true or false.

Perhaps you know?

I just know for that moment I was distracted by the sight and sound of the bumblebee. It gave me cause to thank God who has created with such detail, that each insect and creature has its own amazing beauty and part to play in the world. It reminded me of our interdependence and that I must play my part too.

(The Image is by Rudy and Peter Skitterians from Pixabay)



## **26<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Rosemary Wakelin**

What rubs off?

I remember a boy coming in to school on a Monday morning in tears. I asked what was wrong and he said he had been with his parents on the Sunday hare coursing and he was appalled at the cruelty. When I saw his mother I mentioned his distress, she simply said he had to toughen up. I wonder which attitude remained with him. What rubbed off. On a happier note I was having a conversation with my West Indian Pentecostal colleague, Lebert, in the Prison Chaplaincy when I told him I had taken part in a service in Birmingham Cathedral when Archbishop Desmond Tutu was the preacher. In the vestry before the service he had gone round shaking hands with all the clergy sharing the service. I was the only woman, and when he got to me he gave me a hug and a kiss. Lebert was silent for a moment, then he said, "Desmond Tutu hugged and kissed you, you have often hugged and kissed me, do you think some of it rubbed off?" What a lovely thought! What does rub off? Our upbringing, education, life-events, friends - -?

Many with bad backgrounds grow up to do terrible things and end up in prison, others with equally bad beginnings make something good of their lives. It seems to depend on what we do with our experiences, the choices we make. Jesus knew this and his most condemnatory remarks were to those who put stumbling blocks in the way of his little ones. Probably none of us has a completely untroubled past, we all have bad memories to deal with, hurts to heal, but one thing that does unerringly rub off is our companionship with Jesus himself. The more we walk with him the more rubs off.

## **27<sup>th</sup> March – Aileen Fox**

### **Memories**

There was almost a disaster today as I went to warm up my cup of tea. As usual I had got engrossed in typing something and my tea had gone cold. I went to put it in the microwave and caught it and over it crashed spilling tea everywhere on the unit. It was a mess but I was more concerned about the mug. It is a mug my husband bought in 2004 whilst on a trip to Prague. I know the year as its on the inside. It is the sort of mug you buy as a souvenir, hundreds of them made. But it brings back many happy memories. We first went on holiday to Prague earlier on a coach tour, a city I had always wanted to visit ever since the tanks rolled into Wenceslas square in 1968. I had learnt of the death by self immolation of Jan Palach in 1969, when being involved in a remembrance service as youth leader. I also had a penfriend in Pilsen. On that visit she phoned the hotel and we were able to meet up (how we did was remarkable as we had no idea what each looked like). During the holiday we saw the memorial to Jan Palach, saw the difficulties people had with restrictions, living conditions and little money and a lasting memory of communism and invasion. Since then I have been back many times and as I gaze at the mug it brings back those meetings, walking tours around Prague, and visits to the Plzen brewery. Seeing also the Church basement the place where Czech paratroopers hid following the assassination of Nazi Reinhard Heydrich in 1941, and visiting Lidice and the memorial to the village raised to the ground following the assassination. Harsh memories of hatred, reprisal, but also of friendships, history, enjoyment. So many memories and a longing to go back again to Prague and Plzen when able. Memories are important some are happy others sad. At this time we are all seeing and feeling sadness as well as joy. We are struggling to reach out and offer comfort when we cannot hug. When Jesus died there was tremendous grief and sadness from the disciples who only had their memories. But when he appeared to them again and when they began to understand what he had said and to take in more, they were able to go out and spread the good news. Memories whether sad or joyful are important hold onto those memories even if they make you cry. I'm glad I saved my mug today.



## 29<sup>th</sup> March – Dee Moden

As I was gardening this week, enjoying the Spring sunshine and having close encounters with new growth – plants coming back to life and buds bursting forth. The hymn that immediately sprang into my mind was 'Now the green blade rises from the buried grain' this was written by the theologian and poet John Macleod Campbell Crum. I discovered that he wrote it in 1928 but it was neglected until 1951 when it started appearing in our hymn books. Now of course it is one of our popular Easter hymns. This hymn for me is such a vivid expression of what Easter means for us, and I like the directness of the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse 'Forth



he came at Easter like the risen grain! Jesus bursting back into our lives again, just when all seemed lost giving us hope for the future. At this moment in time when people are feeling fragile and lost,, dead and bare, needing hope and comfort, what better time to relive the story of Easter to delve deeper into what it means to us all. So as we look in our gardens or as we walk, or even look in other peoples gardens as we pass! Let us think about the last verse of the hymn: **'When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain, then your touch can call us back to life again, fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been Love is come again as wheat that springs up green'**

## 30<sup>th</sup> March – Rev Jacqui Horton

A year ago today, we were getting used to the first lockdown and I was writing daily 'chatty' emails to around 60 people (it grew to nearer 100). Two years ago, I was on Sabbatical and staying with friends Matt and Barbara in Kansas. I was preparing to talk the next day to folk at their large United Methodist Church as their 'English Pastor' (see photos). Three years ago, Jen and I were working hard on our garden preparing for our second 'Wymondham Open Gardens' participation. Four years ago, my siblings and myself were taking it in turns to sit with my mum in the West Suffolk Hospital during the last few days of her life.



What will I be writing a year from now? That on March 30th 2021 I was reflecting on a whole year of lockdowns and restrictions and wondering whom to meet up with outside? Looking back at what I wrote in my 'chat' a year ago, I included this quote from the internet, "The coronavirus emergency is already causing terrible human suffering. But it's also just possible that it could put us, together, on a far better path into the future." Amen to that!

for more  
you!

7:00PM / off site  
**Joy Circle**  
Tuesday, March 26  
11:30AM / off site

**DRIVE**  
MARCH 20  
- 7:00PM  
• held in  
case contact  
1105 with  
or to

**Guest Speaker**  
**Sunday, March 31**  
Several Sunday School  
classes are meeting  
with English pastor  
Jacqui Horton, the  
Campbell's summer pastor, to  
include comparisons of English  
and American Methodism. all are  
welcome in Room 52/53 during  
the second hour.

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