

Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Facebook Posts

February 2025

A thought from Aileen Fox:

January is said to be the hardest month of the year. People are down after the lights and sparkle of Christmas and the days seem dull and dark and it can be cold. I find January difficult and breathe a sigh of relief when February dawns. Suddenly the snowdrops are visible, driving from Fakenham to Swaffham its really great to see the drifts on the verges. If I want to see even more I can go the Abbey grounds at Walsingham and see the wonderful display there, or go further afield to Anglesey Abbey and other places. Then this will shortly be followed by displays of daffodils, bright yellow in different shapes and sizes. Colour makes such a difference and as this happens daylight begins to last longer, all signs of Spring and hopefully sunshine beckon. It is hard to be cheerful all the time I certainly find it hard.

Thinking about this as I write, I am reminded of the song from Sunday school days, Jesus wants me for a sunbeam to shine for him each day... Yes as a Christian I need to show love, joy and hope to the people I meet every day, and a miserable looking person isn't going to encourage people to ask about Jesus or be prepared to listen to anything I say. God knows us inside out and he is aware of our difficulties and our dark days. Prayer - talking to God helps but it doesn't immediately make a difference though we feel better for offloading our worries. We do need others around us on those difficult days.

This February let's remember that we all have difficult days and, on the days, when we feel livelier let us show this in a visit to someone, a phone call or even a card. Often I've found when struggling a need arises for someone else who wants my advice or just wants to talk. It may seem a surprising answer to prayer but that there is someone else needing you, does make a difference to how you are feeling and your own concerns are temporarily shelved. We talk about God moving in a mysterious way, I am convinced he does. Let's keep praying and serving others as we journey on towards colour and sunshine.



A thought from Rev Derek: *Living in an Alien World*

I was reminded on Tuesday 5th February 2025 that this was the twentieth anniversary of our first visit to the village of Hethersett, and was the day that our youngest daughter celebrated her twelfth birthday. It seems like a completely different world today and I can't help but think about how our lives have changed in those twenty years. In 2005 Karen and I were a couple in our forties with two girls still at high school and prior to that day we had never heard of the villages of Hethersett, Framingham Earl, and Brooke, and the idea of relocating from the industrial, urban north into the beautiful East Anglia District was something that was both exciting and scary.

On my first Christmas Day service in Hethersett, I invited people to bring along Christmas presents, and in those days I was presented with presents that I recognised, without taxing my brain too much. I tend not to include this element in my Christmas Day services today, partly because we don't have the same number of children present as we had nineteen years ago and partly because I can't readily recognise and understand some of the presents that children receive these days. The older I get, the more I admire Father Christmas who must sit in stores during December, desperately trying to understand the desires of young children.



My grandson proudly showed me the little plastic model pictured above a couple of weeks ago. I hadn't a clue what it was and carefully crafted a question which required an explanation. With a degree of disbelief in his voice that there were actually people who were oblivious to the existence of this character from one of the film franchises, he patiently told me, with careful attention to detail, the full story and after about five minutes of explanation, I was none the wiser, but he was delighted, because he believed that I understood now.

Sunday by Sunday, I stand in front of congregations and attempt to make Bible stories from centuries ago meaningful to ordinary people. I think of the times that I have sat and listened to sermons in the past and wondered what on earth had been said. I have heard people with a far higher intellect than I who have presented deep academic sermons that have gone right over my head. I get it that for thousands of people in this country, attending an act of Christian worship is as alien to them as the world of my grandson is for me.

I still believe that the teaching of Jesus is of paramount importance, and I believe that as somebody who has the privilege of speaking to groups of people in Church services and now through the medium of social media, I need to endeavour to speak in ways that make sense to those who hear. If my grandson takes the task of explaining his latest movie franchise to me, then surely I should take equally seriously sharing what I believe.



Please pray for the congregation and community in New Holkham



A thought from Rev Jonny:

Seb and I pulled up an incredible amount of parsnips from the manse garden the other week – far more than we expected (Bagel is there for scale). It was one of those moments that made me pause and think about abundance, about how sometimes things grow beyond our effort or expectation.

God's grace is a lot like that. It doesn't trickle in sparingly but comes in unexpected, overwhelming ways. We don't earn it, and we certainly can't control it, but there it is—far more than we thought we needed.

It's easy to go through life feeling like we're scraping by, but God's grace is already there in ways we may not expect – we just need to notice it.



Rev Anne writes: Do you remember that old TV series called Butterflies with the theme tune - 'Love is like a butterfly'?

It was a Dolly Parton song and the first verse says: Love is like a butterfly
As soft and gentle as a sigh
The multi-coloured moods of love are like its satin wings
Love makes your heart feel strange inside
It flutters like soft wings in flight
Love is like a butterfly, a rare and gentle thing

We talk about love a lot in the church - mostly the love of God but also our love for one another, and our love for humanity and the planet. There is no end to God's love or our call to love, as we are loved. But I find something special in that verse from Dolly's song - multicoloured moods of love - a rare and gentle thing. How do we experience that each day? There are so many who live without love - how do we share God's love with them?

Maybe as part of this Valentine's celebrations, take time to read 1 Corinthians 13 - especially verses 4-8. Reflect on God's amazing love for you and take time to share that with everyone you meet today.





A thought from Rev Derek: Peel here – never give up hoping

It is quite amazing how stressful some of the simplest things in life can be. From time to time, I fancy some bacon or some sliced meat that comes in one of those plastic containers with a sheet of clear plastic sealing the food safely in its little home. Helpfully, the manufacturers give clear instructions how to open the packaging by inserting a triangle in the corner with the words “peel here” and just to tempt the purchaser even more there is a corner of the plastic already free for you to take hold and simply peel back to access the delights within, all exceedingly helpful. However, I would defy anybody to take hold of that small piece of plastic and pull it back, because having lulled the purchaser into the belief that they might actually be able to achieve this simple task, they seem to take delight in supergluing the top in place and, struggle as I might, the top will not shift and on occasions the small corner has broken off, such is my personal strength, and with my blood boiling, I grab a knife and slash the packet open.

You would think that by now, I would have learned, I would have conceded defeat and accepted the fact that this is a ritual that I am never going to succeed in achieving. Yet there is something in me that believes that today might be the day when I grab the little corner, the lid will simply pull back and I will not feel to be a failure. I’m sorry, I can feel my blood pressure rising even as I write this and I know that it is daft, but I truly believe that if it says that this is possible on the packaging, then it must be possible to achieve, and the joy of succeeding might be mine one day, such may be the rejoicing that I might even pen a Thought for the Day about the experience.



This has got me thinking. You might not be surprised that each day as part of my vocation and my discipline as a Christian I pray, and during those times I look at the world at large and am regularly saddened and horrified at some of the things my brothers and sisters around the world and even in in our own country have to endure. I listen to politicians who all seem to believe that they know the answers and if we vote them into power, they will sort out the mess that the previous administration left behind, and day by day I feel helpless; if the elected governments of the world can’t sort out the problems, how on earth can I do it?

Sunday by Sunday I lead worship and pray for peace and, if I’m being honest, I sometimes wonder what the point is, people have told me that my prayers are in vain, because human beings will always want more control, status, wealth and dominance. Am I wasting my time? If I continue to have hope that one day I might just be able to open a simple plastic container, I cannot stop praying for the big things in life that are way beyond my own power and I will keep trying.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Saham Hills



A thought from Rev Jonny:

Sometimes, faith feels like standing on a pier at night—surrounded by darkness, the vast unknown stretching out before you. The ‘dark night of the soul’ is real, those seasons where God feels distant, prayers seem to go unanswered, and clarity is hard to find. It can be unsettling, even overwhelming.

But even in the deepest dark, the moon still shines. The clouds catch the light in ways we don’t expect. Just because we can’t see the sun doesn’t mean it’s not there. Grace often works like that—hidden, quiet, but never absent.

If you’re in a season of doubt or struggle, keep walking. The night never lasts forever, and the dawn always comes. The weight of the world won’t last forever, and God’s compassion and love always wins.



A thought from Dee Moden:

In the past two weeks I have attended three Thanksgiving /Funeral Services. One person I had got to know in the past five years, another only briefly, and the other my brother-in-law, who I had known for many years.

At each one of these occasions, I got to know more about them and their lives than I had known previously, and forgotten things were brought back into focus as thoughts, memories and photos were shared.

Towards the end of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he was reminding them of the message and the teachings of Jesus, of his death and resurrection, and of the enormous sacrifice he had made on their behalf.

We are coming towards the season of Lent where once again we will try to walk in the footsteps of Christ, sharing with one another what it means for us, as Christians together, and personally, to follow him.

As we come together in various ways we may we see something different, giving us a greater fresher insight into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

"Come all who look to Christ today, stretch out your hands, enlarge your mind, together share his living way, where all who humbly seek will find" Richard G. Jones



A thought from Aileen Fox:

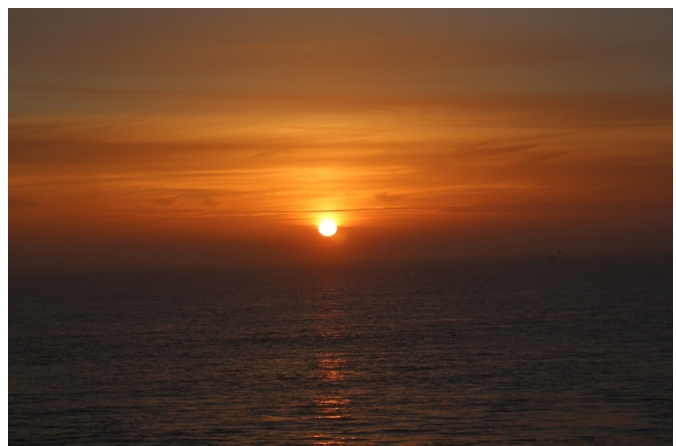
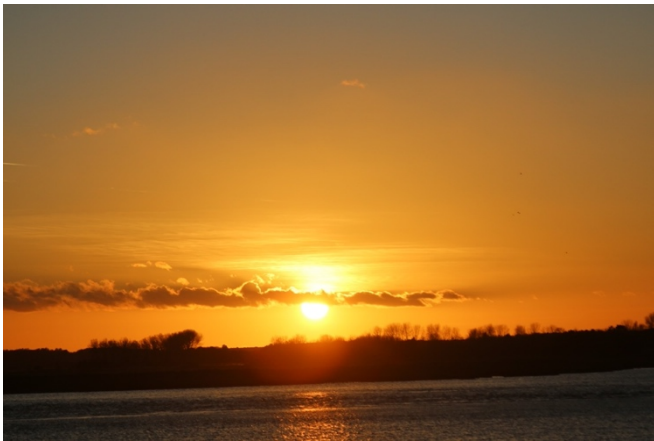
Bleak Days

We all have those days when everything seems a bit dark. The news on TV and radio is bleak and we wonder what is going to happen to countries and individuals, there is anxiety and fear around us. We see and hear stories of people struggling with heating costs, mortgages, rents, food. Anger and hate are growing amongst many people.

Last week was Valentine's day when love supposedly encapsulated everything, it was perhaps a happy day for some but for others it was nothing as they continued the relentless pursuit of keeping their heads above water. Searching for some spring like photographs to use in a service I came across many photos that brought back happy memories.

Sunset and sunrise in Aldeburgh January 2022. I had felt in need of a break (following Covid). On an impulse I booked into a hotel on the seafront at Aldeburgh for one night and was determined to try and get sunset and sunrise photos. I stood for a considerable length of time in late afternoon waiting for the sun to set which it eventually did over the marshes. Even harder was getting up early the next morning, it was very cold but as the sky changed into many different shades of yellow and orange I was excited. I had never seen the sun rise over the sea. To say I looked and snapped and looked again is an understatement I wanted to shout out to everyone to look at the beauty of creation.

However dark and difficult our days, the sun is there rising and setting daily, sometimes its hidden by cloud. The colours are spectacular and I still get a sense of wonder every time I see a sunset and occasionally a sunrise, when I can stagger out of bed in time. That first experience of watching the sunrise stays with me and always will. I moved on to Southwold that afternoon and the next morning I watched the sunrise again, so stunning that even locals stopped whilst walking their dogs, to look at it. What a wonderful world we have. During dark days, God is always with us, like the sun is still there even if the cloud is obscuring it.



A thought from Rev Derek:

A bit of peace and quiet.

We were on holiday in York recently and I had to check on a couple of local supermarkets to see if they had café's so that we could go for our breakfast, sadly neither did, but looking at the Asda website I noticed this comment in their opening hours. I confess that I haven't seen this before and discussing the fact that they have a quiet hour with my wife, I wondered what the point was. She pointed out that for some people with neurodiverse issues, something like this would be important and of course I could understand that.

Opening Hours

MONDAY	6:00 AM - 12:00 AM
Tuesday	6:00 AM - 12:00 AM
Wednesday	6:00 AM - 12:00 AM
Thursday	6:00 AM - 12:00 AM
Friday	6:00 AM - 12:00 AM
Saturday	6:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Sunday	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

We are offering a quieter hour 2.00pm - 3.00pm every Monday to Thursday - During this time we're reducing the noise levels in store by switching off our Asda Radio and reducing tannoy announcements to emergencies only.

We opted to go to a bakery shop with a café for breakfast instead and as we sat for a quiet breakfast, the only diners in the place, I thought about the quiet hour in Asda. The music in the shop was blaring far too loud and having sat for a few minutes trying to hold a conversation, two young girls came in, they were maybe in their late teens or early twenties, and they sat at the opposite side of the café to us. They were sitting facing each other less than four feet and held a conversation at the top of their voices so that, above the sound of the piped music, we could hear virtually every word of their conversation, which was far more interesting to listen to than anything we would ever talk about.

During the course of our holiday, we came across loads of people, not just youngsters, walking along streets talking on their mobile phones. I am old fashioned and hold my phone up to my ear when making or receiving a call, but it seems that most people hold their phones at a distance, maybe because they are using video call, but they then bellow at the top of their voice and I have become increasingly aware that having an hour a day in the supermarket without having music playing and Tannoy's blaring suddenly seems like an attractive idea.

We live in such a noisy world today, with traffic thundering past, music blaring, people shouting at their mobile phones, car radios on so loud that you can hear the thumping of the base line even as you sit with your windows closed. My observation is that younger people seem to be almost incapable of speaking normally but shout all the time and I find that I long for a bit of peace and quiet.

I have been involved in conversations at Church over my adult life about how you shut people up at the beginning of worship to try to create a time of peaceful reflection before the service begins, and I could write a book about the different methods I have witnessed and the failure of many. I have reasoned that if people live alone, it is wholly understandable that they want to chat with their mates beforehand and catch up on news. But everything has a time and a place, and it is good, to be quiet and enjoy silence for a change.

Well done Asda for your attempts to reduce noise pollution, I haven't done extensive research but have found another couple of supermarkets that have quieter shopping times and if folk find noise an issue, it is worth looking at and it is worth us thinking about ways that make unnecessary noise.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Sculthorpe & Fakenham.



A thought from Rev Jonny:

https://youtu.be/WdThd0RYA2o?si=G_DA_obn-u65ts1W

The world is feeling especially tumultuous, so I thought I would post a video from a YouTube channel I watch for today's reflection. Each month, the channel posts news stories about hopeful and happy things people are doing to offer a different perspective on the situation.

We call the Gospel the 'Good News', and I think celebrating and publicising the good things people do is participating in the Gospel. To emphasise the goodness in the world, the hard efforts of those seeking it and creating it, I believe, are joining in with God's working in the world.

I encourage you to promote the things that are happening that are good, to celebrate them and to share them with others. Part of our faith involves sharing stories, and we can share the stories of joy and delight, of support and perseverance, which is so needed right now. You may even want to comment below on what things you know are positive, good, and worth celebrating, even if they appear like everyday things to others. Share good news and the Good News.



HINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

COFFEE SHOP MORNING



Saturday March 1st 2025

10.00am until 12 noon

Come and visit our Coffeeshop and Market

Call in for Coffee, Tea, and Homemade scones.

Browse the stalls and pick up a bargain.

You're sure of a warm welcome.

All Proceeds to Chapel Funds



Coffee Morning

Tea – Coffee – Cake

Books

Bric-a-brac

Handmade crafts



Saturday 10 - 11.30 March 1st

Toftwood Methodist Church

CHAPEL LANE, NR19 1LD

“CHAPEL COFFEE SHOP”



JOIN US FOR
COFFEE AND SCONES



HOMEMADE CAKE STALL

**FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

A warm welcome awaits you.

Come for coffee, scones, and good company!

Enjoy a cuppa (coffee or tea) for only £1

Treat yourself to a scone with butter for just £1

Guest Stall & Raffle

All are welcome!

We look forward to seeing you there!

Toftwood Methodist Church



**THIS MONTH ON
SATURDAY 1ST MARCH**

OUR GUEST STALL IS:

**A GRAND GREETING
CARDS AND
EASTER CARDS STALL**

**STOCK UP FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS
ON INDIVIDUALLY CREATED CARDS**



Rev Anne writes: While we have been having our fair share of grey days, it's wonderful to see the sun shining through the trees! Just the way the colours are lit up, and even the dead undergrowth seems to glow - it cheers my heart! I often remark as much to Merlin, but I think it's the scents that get to him more than the sights!!

These glimpses make me wonder what the glory of heaven will be.

If you read John's gospel there is a different notion of Glory, when Jesus talks about being glorified - it's much more challenging!

Do you have any view of glory? What do you think of when you come across this word in hymns or the Bible?

