

FACEBOOK 'Thoughts for the Day' May 5th – 30th 2020

May 5th 2020 **Jacqui Horton**

One of the Swaffham church members was really surprised recently to see both flowers (catkins) and acorns on the oak tree in his garden. He had never seen this before. I am the sort of person who likes to understand things so I looked it up. It seems that oak trees have male flowers that pollinate female flowers that become acorns and that last year's acorns can hang around into the Spring. Thus, both on the tree at the same time. So – the tree was just doing its thing in its usual way. Was it that Grant was just being more observant, and mindful, in these unusual times? Certainly, it seems to be the case for a lot of people, that they are noticing more about nature and about their own lives. I have found an interesting Bible verse that has come to life for me "You (the Lord) have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; THE EARTH AND ALL THAT IS ON IT; the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; AND THE HOST OF HEAVEN WORSHIPS YOU (Nehemiah 9 v 6)



May 6th 2020 **Jacqui Horton**

I wrote yesterday about the way that we are taking much more notice of nature in this lockdown time. I am also finding this with my reading of the Bible and my singing of the hymns (which we do every Sunday morning in our household with the circuit worship sheet). The words seem to come alive in a different way in the present context and, because of the circumstances, one takes more notice of them anyway. This last Sunday, our worship sheet suggested that we re-read the passage in John 10 – we had read it once – and see what strikes us. What struck me was something I had never noticed before, that the disciples didn't understand what Jesus was saying and he had to say it AGAIN. How much do we not understand, or misunderstand or not notice at all? One of the good things coming out of this lockdown is that we are all taking more notice of things that usually pass us by. It is a good job that we have a loving heavenly parent who notices everything with us – even the hairs on our head are numbered!

May 7th 2020 **Aileen Fox**

All around me are people, in their houses, gardens, in the streets as I walk, and in the shops, yes even in times of social distancing as we queue to get our essential food shopping, people are around. What do we know about them really even if acquaintances? We all have our public faces which hide a lot. As things began to get serious a weary checkout person was being asked questions as she tried to serve me. One was can I have several bags of dog food? I told her she was doing a great job and she looked at me almost in tears and said I just want to be able to feed my daughter she hates texture in food and I am frightened I won't be able to buy her food. I left feeling very humbled and wishing her well and praying for all the hidden anxieties we hide. *Loving God whatever path we tread today, help us to remember that other people may be hiding anxieties and be worried for family and friends. We bring before you all who we will meet today at a distance. May we show compassion, patience and love even when we may not be feeling so good ourselves. Amen*

May 8th 2020 **Jacqui Horton**

What is the difference between a celebration and a commemoration? The dictionary says that a celebration is an enjoyable event caused by something pleasant or an anniversary. A commemoration, on the other hand, is remembering something (the beginning of memory is in the word) and, most importantly, honouring the memory. I find it difficult to celebrate anything to do with war but I shall certainly commemorate the anniversary today and remember, and honour, the joy and celebration (and relief) that people must have felt on May 8th 1945 with the announcement of the end of hostilities.

May 9th 2020 **Malcolm Hunt**

Lockdown helps us appreciate what is nearest to us.

Here are sightings of Bradley Apple blossom, lilac blooms and a pheasant hen incubating 13 bluish speckled eggs. She appreciated a handful of birdseed each day!

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the works Thy Hands hath made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Chorus:

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!



May 11th 2020 **Dee & Alan Moden** (newly moved into the Circuit)

Life has been tough in different ways for all during the past few weeks. For us it has been quite a challenge, we moved into Norfolk right at the beginning of the lockdown, and couldn't move into our bungalow as it needed improvements. We moved here to be close to our family, only a mile away, but cannot see them! Our six-year-old Grandson made us a picture of a rainbow to put in our window, this reminded us although they can't see us, they are still there loving us. We are greatly missing a church family too but are grateful to be able to share in the printed services and read about the different churches. We have now moved into our bungalow, not quite finished yet, and the rainbow is still there reminding us of many things, Hope – Love – Faith are just a few. In the Old Testament God sent the sign of the rainbow, in the New Testament God sent his beloved Son as a new covenant giving hope to the world. In the words of Julian of Norwich "All will be well"

May 12th 2020 **Aileen Fox**

This morning I saw a shape on the bird table but hadn't got my specs on. Then, as it moved, I saw enough to realise it was a squirrel. It suddenly launched itself into space and landed in a nearby tree. I have a love hate relationship with squirrels in my garden. I love watching them, but they keep burying their hazelnuts with the result that I have Hazel trees sprouting up everywhere. The problem is these seedlings get well established before I find them and are hard to dig out if left too long. Another issue with my squirrel is the attempt to raid the bird feeders. Yes, I have squirrel proof ones but he or she can be seen hanging from them. I also have ordinary feeders and they eventually have to be replaced, as they are chewed so much that all the seed falls out. What I have to admire is its sheer determination at trying to find food, but also its attempts to store up supplies for the future. As it stores too many and the nuts grow, it reminds me of Jesus' words in Luke 12 "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."



13th May 2020 **Judith Semmons**

Like many people, we have recently had more time to sort things out: It's amazing what treasures we've found!

It seemed very fitting then that during the VE day celebrations, last Friday, May 8th, I stumbled upon this poem which my grandfather, who I never met, wrote as a memento of his struggles as a Prisoner of War in 1918.

I have previously shared it during some church services but hope people may find it helpful, particularly during the challenges we're facing today.

ROUGH AND SMOOTH

Tune: Whitburn

1. My life is like a stormy sea,
If I am on that sea alone;
Jesus, the Pilot, waits for me,
Shall I accept Him for my own.

2. He bids the angry waters cease,
The raging winds obey His voice,
He gently asks for perfect Peace,
And makes the fainting heart rejoice.

3. My life is like a garden sweet,
Kept free from tares and harmful weeds;
Blessings come from the Mercy-seat
If I to God apply for seeds

4. Lord, make my life a garden sweet,
Help me to trust in Thee complete,
O Saviour, guide my wandering feet,
Till face to face I Thee shall meet.



Pte. Arthur E.S. Bevin of the Leicestershire Regt

14th May 2020 **Malcolm Hunt**

We will meet in Church and our joy will be matched by our thankfulness on that first worship occasion. What will be the first hymn we sing? Allow me to recommend Charles Wesley's 'And are we yet alive and see each other's face'. As a young minister in South Africa I remember that the annual church Conference always began with this hymn. The third verse is often omitted but it fits our present situation:

Verse 3

'What troubles have we seen / what mighty conflicts past
fighting without and fears within / since we assembled last'.

A silent unseen sinister virus has invaded our land. We witness how our 'Health Army' fights it. Everyone has anxiety, uncertainty. Many have endured privation and many thousands have suffered loss of loved ones accompanied by the trauma of not being able to hug them or say "Goodbye".

Verse 4

'Yet out of all the Lord / hath brought us by his love;
and still he doth his help afford, / and hides our life above.'
(refer to 1 Corinthians 2 verses 9 and 10.)

15th May 2020 **Betty Trinder**

Sometimes terrifying circumstances come into our lives, and we, who fear the unknown, don't like the unexpected visions they bring. The disciples were terrified when, in the middle of a storm in the dark of the night, a figure walking on the rough water approached their boat. This (in the popular phrase of the day) was unprecedented, nothing like this had happened before. Was it a ghost? Did it mean to harm them? Jesus allowed them their momentary panic but He did not leave them in the dark, He quickly identified Himself, "It is I, do not be afraid"

His presence is our vaccine against terror, Jesus calms storms, whether those storms rage outside of the boat or inside our hearts. One way or another, He brings peace, if we only hear His words, "It is I, do not be afraid".

Life is full of circumstances that are terrifying at first glance and can consume us with worries about the future. Financial crisis, health crisis, spiritual dilemmas, emotional needs, and any other vision that threatens us in a storm which causes us much stress. When we take all those concerns to God in prayer we find Jesus coming to us to heal, strengthen, encourage and guide us through the storm. We will, like the disciples, take Jesus, "into the boat" and he will take us back to the safe shore. (Read John 6: 16 – 21)

16th May 2020 **Jen Woodfin**

I drove to Great Cressingham church recently and, as I was getting near, there was a speed limit sign for 30mph. "Do many people speed along here?" I pondered and was so engrossed in my thoughts that I drove straight past the church. As I turned around, I realised that I had been driving too fast (not above the speed limit!) to stop, even though I was not in a rush and had plenty of time.

In these unusual times many of us have plenty of time but do we use that time to spend more time with God? Do we get easily distracted and fill our days with all sorts of things? But we don't have to do so. We can use these extra precious moments to be still in the presence of God, to bring our concerns, to listen to God, to just be in His wonderful creation. It may not always be easy in these unusual days but it can become special when we share it in a meaningful way with God.

God bless all your times.

18th May 2020 **Jacqui Horton**

We have recently completed our 7th jigsaw of the lockdown. This 1000 piece one is of the 'Little Chapel' in Guernsey and, although hard to do, was very enjoyable. It had me reflecting on different levels of pleasure and fulfilment in our digital age. I take delight in visiting the Little Chapel itself (which I have done on several occasions), I very much enjoy taking my own photos and looking at them on my computer, I took great pleasure from buying a jigsaw of the attraction the last time we were on the island, we have thoroughly enjoyed putting the jigsaw together and, finally, I love the finished result and now don't want to break it up!

Our multi-layered lives have disadvantages – mainly that there is often too much choice and too much opportunity to cope with – but they also have huge benefits. Not least, the opportunity to enjoy God's world in so many different ways. As it says in Psalm 104, 'O Lord, what a variety you have made! And in wisdom you have made them all! The earth is full of your riches.' (v 24) Now, which puzzle shall we do next?!



19th May 2020 **Rosemary Wakelin**

The anniversary of VE Day and indeed this 75th year since the end of the war flooded me with memories. I remember one day which changed my mind. It was a Friday night. The sirens had gone and we were all in the shelter. It was a very bad raid and very frightening. In the middle of the noise of bombs and gunfire, we heard the Air Raid Wardens cheering after the sound of a huge crash. We found out later that the guns had shot down an enemy aircraft. Everyone was jubilant.



In the morning it was my job to go to the shop with our ration books to get the weekend shopping. The shop was full, everyone was talking about the raid. A woman came in in tears. "What's the matter?" we asked. She said she had just come from the Church where the body of the pilot had been placed. She said he looked about 18, was blond and looked like her son in the RAF. The shop fell silent. That night in my prayers I thought of his parents, and

prayed for some German girl of 9 like me who was probably as frightened as I was.

20th May 2020 **Norman Wagg**

The world of today seems more than ever to stop us in our tracks. And it gives us time to think about the best way forward. Young and old, we are faced with a dilemma that causes us to want to run away and hide. We are in lockdown, unable in many cases to see a way out of our own four walls. But one must not be disheartened. As my word to many at Easter was 'Ask the Lord to help, comfort and strengthen you, he will carry you through.'

In 1951 at the age of 21, with my schoolgirl sweetheart and marriage on the cards, both of us fell in with the youth of the Swaffham Circuit. We both found great pleasure. A youth rally was held and procession at Bailey Street Chapel, Castle Acre. At Swaffham there was a final rally in the evening. A special speaker needs a Chairman. I was asked which needed great thought. The answer to the problem was solved by a visit to my girlfriend's aunt whilst they played dominoes. I looked through some magazines and, out of the blue, found my thoughts. Think about square pegs in round holes, I was – possibly. By right thinking, a lot of thought, square ends fall away and success follows.

21st May 2020 **Dee Moden**

In the midst of celebrations and commemorations in the past few days, very different from 75 years ago as we are fighting a very different fight, neighbours have come together at a distance but still sharing and caring. We are very lucky as we have always had good neighbours wherever we have lived, and our 'new neighbours' seem nice and friendly too, in this past week we have shared clapping – silence – and afternoon tea, all at a distance. We have had advice as to the things we may need and walks we may like to take, all very welcoming, but to have good neighbours we have to be one too. In Luke's gospel a lawyer trying to trick Jesus asked the question "Who is my neighbour?" and we are all very familiar with the reply, the story of 'The Good Samaritan.' Jesus ends with the words "Go and do likewise." In the words of John Wesley: "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as you can."

In Jesus' name we pray that this coming together and bonding will remain, and a greater understanding and tolerance will endure, and the world will be a better place. "Best of all is, God is with us"



22nd May 2020 **Betty Trinder**

We are in Mental Health Awareness week. I think all of us to a lesser or greater degree will have experienced some mental health problems throughout this time of crisis, from mild anxiety to full blown panic attacks and deep depression...."Lord give us all a greater understanding and compassion for anyone struggling with their mental health, give us the courage to reach out and ask for help if needed, guide and comfort us and enable us to see chinks of light in dark places and always keep us hopeful...Amen"

23rd May 2020 **Cliff Shanganya**

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you". (ISAIAH 43:2 *NKJV)

There are times in our life when we find ourselves in difficult situations. Times when our faith is put to the test. We may even feel that God has abandoned us, and that we are all alone. When you feel that way remember that it is written,

"I will never leave you nor forsake you". (Hebrews 13:5)

"So we may boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6)

Therefore, when you pass through the waters of difficulty, and the flames of distress, know that God is always there with you. For, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who trust in him. (NAHUM 1:7)

So Friends, always remember that you are walking, hand in hand, with your Heavenly Father when those difficult times arrive, and that He Loves You very much because you are one of His beloved children! Amen!

25th May 2020 **Jen Woodfin**

This embroidery, which was given to me at my ordination, hangs above my small prayer station in my room. It shows verses from Psalm 150 and encourages us to use instruments in our praise to the Lord. If all those instruments were all played together it would indeed make a joyful noise! On Thursday evenings many people come together, using homemade 'instruments' and clapping, to make a noise to thank NHS and key workers. This has a feel of community all being together. But as Christians we are called to continually praise the Lord. Perhaps we should be thinking of how we can make more 'noise' in our praise, how we can demonstrate our faith more visibly, and how we can build up our community in Jesus Christ.



26th May 2020 **Judith Semmons**

I recently shared this photo on Facebook as part of a 'My life is good' challenge. The task is to post one image a day over 10 days which give me joy and to encourage other people to do the same. I'm not usually fond of this sort of thing, but reflecting on what gives me joy has been very uplifting, particularly with our current situation as well as working in the NHS. Sadly, for some people; those who have lost loved ones to Covid19; those working as key workers; those struggling to juggle work and home schooling, (the list is endless), it may be very difficult to find joy.

In the case of our dog, Trix, sitting amongst a large (unfortunately!) patch of dandelions, she found great joy....in a simple, unwanted plant offering her a nice shady resting place on a hot day. It's interesting how many Facebook friends have 'liked' the picture and hopefully also got pleasure from it.

Trix doesn't seem to have a care in the world. Jesus talked about our worries in Matthew 6 v 25 - 34, concluding with: 'Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.' Easier said than done but let's pray that our worries can be eased by our faith and like Trix that we feel as if we don't have a care in the world.



27th May 2020 **Cliff Shanganya**

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditations
Of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord,
My strength and my redeemer. (PSALM 19:14 *NKJV)

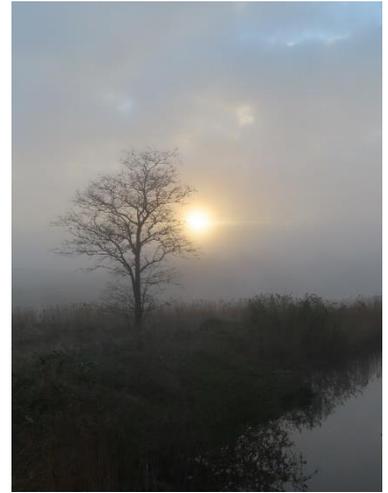
The Prophet David, in this Psalm, asked God to approve his words and thoughts as though they were offerings brought to the altar. When you think about it, God hears all of our words and knows all of our thoughts. For;

“The Lord knows the thoughts of a person, that they are futile”.
(PSALM 94:11)

Therefore, when we think loving thoughts and say kind things to others, our words and our thoughts are also like offerings brought to the altar. Thus, they are loving and pleasing to our Heavenly Father. Have a blessed day!

28th May 2020 **Aileen Fox**

'Anticipation' - During lockdown we have all experienced different emotions. We have missed the contact with family and friends the touch or hug especially if living alone. For some there has been grief at losing a family member and possibly not being able to say goodbye. We anticipate all sorts of things good and not so good. I was reminded of a walk I went on last year at 4.15am in Pensthorpe Natural Park, a favourite place for me. It was misty as we followed the warden and peered at various things and heard about the different areas. Eventually we heard the birds and saw some flying. It was rather strange, just us as a small group. I had my camera with me and was beginning to feel slightly disappointed that we would not see a sunrise because of the mist. Then we paused at a bridge and the sun appeared and the beauty was made by the mist. Often, we are sensing disappointment but then the unexpected happens as my picture shows. In life there are ups and downs, but then a picture, a flower, a phone call, something unexpected can turn the day round.



29th May 2020 – **Rev Betty Trinder**



Father Brian Darcy did a brilliant Pause for Thought on Radio 2 this week saying God always forgives, humans sometimes forgive but nature never forgives. He said we have been given the opportunity as a world where Coronavirus has crossed all borders without a passport to reflect on how we can live alongside the natural world in the future, after generations of taking greedily without thought for the consequences, "Lord, forgive this human world for our selfishness, give us the desire to start afresh working with nature as good stewards not cruel masters...Amen"

30th May 2020 – **Rev Jacqui Horton**

Which do you think is the most important Christian special day? Christmas Day – God entering our world as a new-born baby? Good Friday – God in Jesus being killed by crucifixion as a way of 'reconciling the world to himself'? Easter Day – Jesus triumphing over death by being resurrected? Ascension Day – Jesus leaving the physical world for ever, promising to be with his followers for ever, in spirit?

What about Pentecost? The equipping of Christian disciples by filling them with God's spirit so that they are extraordinarily empowered? We have the chance tomorrow to enter into that story and ask for the infilling of that same spirit. If you would like to re-live the Pentecost story in a dramatic way, there is a handout at <https://eangliamethodist.org.uk/central-norfolk> as well as the Circuit Worship at Home sheet for this week.