

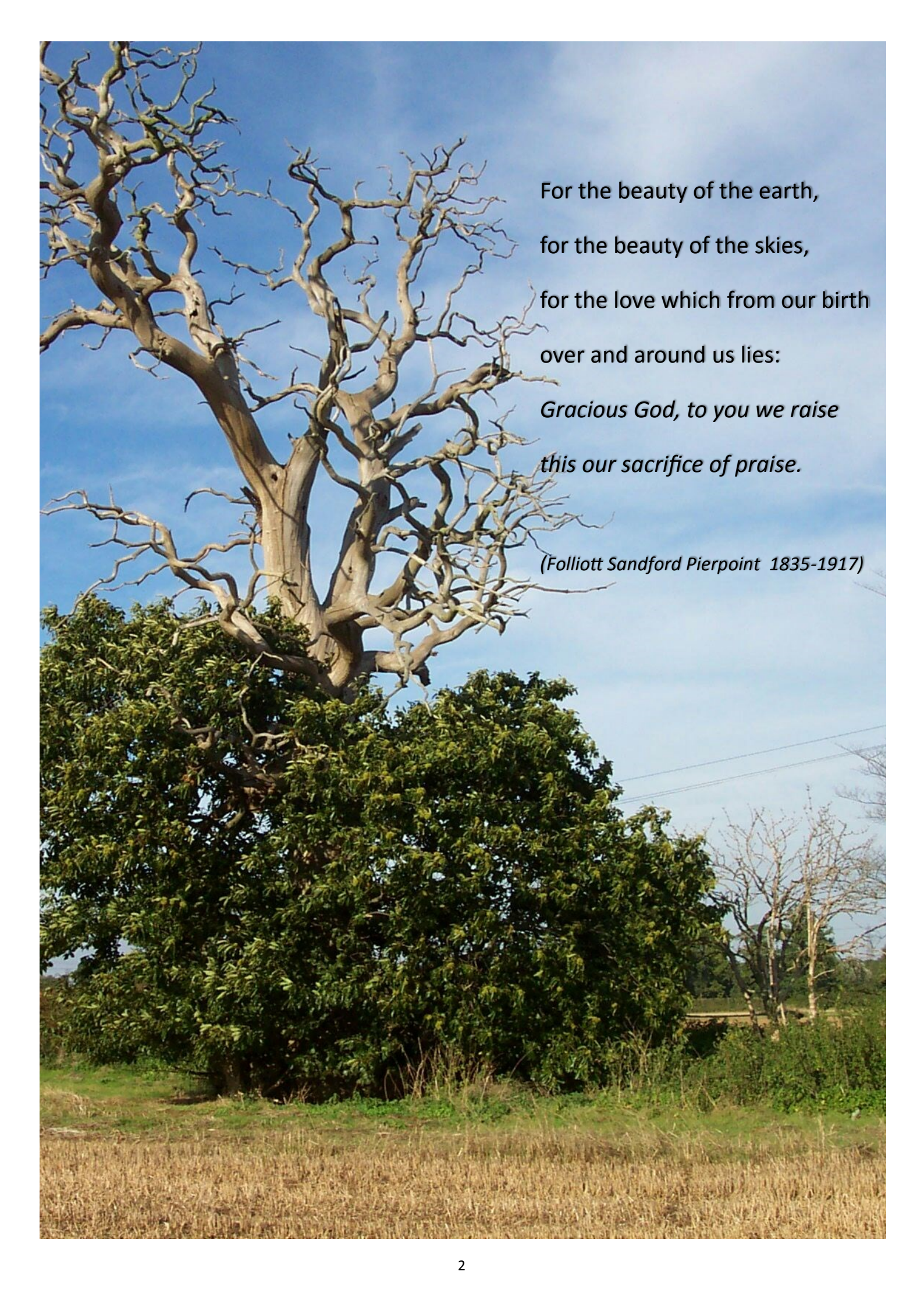


Grapevine

April 2016—Issue Number 28

CELEBRATION

East Anglia District of the Methodist Church



For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

*Gracious God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

(Folliott Sandford Pierpoint 1835-1917)

Welcome to grapevine

Welcome to this issue of grapevine, which we have called 'Celebration'.

We are grateful, as always, to those who have contributed. Alicia Holmes has given an insight into how she has encouraged residents at Norwood Methodist Home to celebrate Easter. Briant Smith celebrates life on the Broads in picture.

Two ministers celebrate their ministries as they reflect on their different milestones. David King will "sit down" in August. Rita Carr is anticipating ordination in July.

We hope you will find these and other articles inspiring.

Please remember that we are always pleased to receive church and circuit news relating to our season of publication.

The next issue is due in September. You will find contact details on the last page of this issue.

The Editorial Team:

Barbara Garwood, Jack Lawson and Alison Travis

grapevine

April 2016 Contents

Meditation	2
Rev Julian Pursehouse	4-5
What if we can?	6-7
How God has Affected My Life	8-9
A Celebration of the Norfolk Broads	10-11
District News	12-13
Celebrating Early Years in Ministry	13
Celebrating Easter at Norwood MHA	14-15
District Agricultural Chaplain	16-17
Yet, Carries my Heart Your Love	17
Cultivation ... Not Just of Plants	18-19

*Cover image by Rev Briant Smith
Sunrise Over the River Yare
(See also pages 10—11)*



Celebration

Rev Julian M Pursehouse

As the father of two young children (9 and 11) I have learnt the importance of celebration within the context of family life. My children remind me that there are often good grounds for a special celebration – a birthday, a special occasion, an award of merit at school, a sporting achievement and a significant birthday for a member of the wider family. The list is endless and it is often accompanied by the plea for a party, a trip to a special restaurant or some other means of marking the occasion!

Celebration should find a proper and appropriate place within the life of the Christian church as we respond to the Gospel of God's love in Christ and recall all that God has done for us and wider creation.

This fact is acknowledged in our own tradition when as a church, we define Our Calling in the following way:

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission

WORSHIP:


*The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to **celebrate** God's love*

There is a clear statement of purpose here, that as a church we are called to be a community of

worship and mission. Central to that vision is taking the opportunity to celebrate God's love in a life of worship both individually and collectively as a church. This will take many and varied forms in numerous places but a central focus for this will be when the church gathers around the sacrament of Holy Communion and shares in the bread and wine, symbols of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour. In this means of grace, God's people joyfully gather together around elements of bread and wine, to celebrate Christ's presence with us and to give thanks for the life-giving Spirit that binds us together as the Body of Christ.

From time to time, there will be other occasions and events that warrant celebration in the life of the church – the opening of a new building, thanksgiving for ministry of lay and ordained or a new piece of outreach in the wider community. I do hope that you will enjoy this issue of *grapevine* and that you will be suitably inspired by the different insights that people offer into this rich theme.

*Revd Julian M Pursehouse
(Chair of District)*



Wicken Methodist Church is available for quiet days and retreat days for any District churches. It is within walking distance of the National Trust's Wicken Fen.

It is offered at cost or by donation only.

*Contact Susan Hall - Tel: 01353 722632 or
email : adele.borrowman@googlemail.com*

Wicken Fen by Revd Colin Watkins



How Wicken Methodist Church looked before the work was completed.

What if we can?

By Adele Borrowman

Once upon a time in a far off land (well about 10 years ago in a different District) a church council met for the final time. The church congregation was dwindling and they had tried various initiatives to attract new members, such as paint the front door in a bright colour and hold extra coffee mornings, but it wasn't working.

There was only one proposal on the table for an alternative way forward and that was to transform the church into a weekday day centre providing company for the increasing number of older people in the village, but make sure a sanctuary for worship remained. The members felt it was just too much of a change and instead opted for closure. The congregation dispersed and Songs of Praise on the

television became the main form of worship.

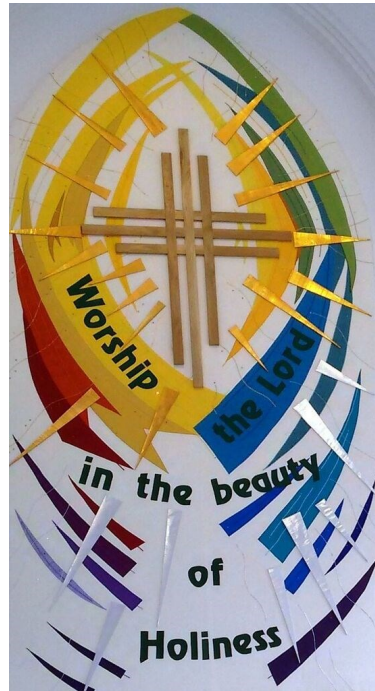
This sad story is one of many across the Connexion, but we've learnt lessons from them in Wicken, in the Ely and Newmarket circuit. We are small, but not dwindling and quite active really so we turned around the 'What if we can't carry on in the future?' attitude to, 'What if we can?', and addressed the need to update our church building to be fit to serve in today's world, enabling us to carry on our mission.

" ... we turned around the 'What if we can't carry on in the future?' attitude to 'What if we can?' ..."



Very happily the building work has been completed with help from many Funders, including the District.

We had a wonderful opening ceremony led by Rev Julian Pursehouse, and the premises were more packed than they would have been 100 years ago. We are excited about what the future holds, and although we are still using our deckchairs for worship,



whilst we await the arrival of our church chairs, we worship in front of an inspiring artwork surrounding the cross.

Crucially, having the cross as the focal point is about the only thing that hasn't changed, and as we commemorate 225 years since the death of John Wesley, we celebrate that his legacy lives on in our little patch of England.



The ribbon was cut at the opening ceremony by the oldest and youngest members of Wicken Methodist Church—Magnus Borrowman (age 3) and Greta Randall (who had just celebrated her 80th birthday).

How God Has Affected My Life

by

Revd Heather Sorrell



As a child, I attended our local Methodist church every Sunday and often accompanied my father to his appointments as a local preacher. When I left school I had no qualifications. During a circuit youth service I made a commitment to follow Jesus and was commissioned as a local preacher in 1970.

I married in 1972 and continued to work in retailing, always speaking about my faith to my colleagues. We moved to Leicester and while there, our daughters arrived. When they started school, I enrolled with the ecumenical East Midland Ministry Course and achieved a Certificate in Religious Studies from Nottingham University. It was a three year, part-time course and my life was transformed. I trained alongside a diverse group of forty people.

After completing the course, I worked as part-time lay worker, developing links between the community and church on a large post-war estate. We then moved to Stanton, Suffolk, and I was appointed Lay Pastoral Worker there and in the Thetford Circuit. While there, it became clear that God was calling me to candidate for the ordained ministry. I tell people I was dragged kicking and screaming to ordination!

I was accepted and attended Wesley House Cambridge, part-time for a further two years while working as a Probationer Minister. I was ordained in Bolton in 1991, twenty-one years after being accredited as a Local Preacher. I was amongst the first group to be accepted as a non-stipendiary Minister in Local Appointment.

Shortly after ordination, I was appointed as an officiating chaplain at RAF Honington. I was one of the first female ministers to be appointed to that role. For nine years I went to the RAF station one day each week. I found great needs among the families based there, as it was at the time of the Gulf War.

The District then invited me to become part-time Evangelism Enabler for Suffolk. Rev Graham Thompson then asked if I would consider full-time, stipendiary ministry. My immediate reaction was to say 'NO!' After mentioning it to my husband, Peter, and with his encouragement, I was offered and accepted stationing in the Acle and Loddon circuit as Superintendent Minister. After the circuit reorganisation, all changed and I became deputy superintendent of the East Norfolk circuit. I served there for seven years and 'sat down' in 2011.

In October 2015 I was commissioned as President of East Anglia District Methodist Women in Britain.

God has certainly taken me at my word when I have said, during the Covenant Service, "I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you as and where you choose". I am living proof that with God, all things are Possible. I am thankful he has guided, equipped and enabled me to do more than I could have ever dreamed of and for his continued leading in my life.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Methodist Church www.methodist.org.uk

Singing the Faith www.singingthefaitplus.org.uk

District Website www.eamethodist.org.uk

There is a website administrator in most circuits.
Please make sure your church website is up to date.

A Celebration of the Norfolk Broads

Revd W Briant Smith, Chaplain to the Broads



Backwater at Ranworth 'behind' the Maltsters Pub



The River Bure near St Benet's Abbey

“Britain’s Magical Waterland” and “The Broads National Park” are the two main branding logos for the Broads.

While the water is central and the ‘hero’ of the area, there is so much more – ancient churches, wind-pumps and pubs punctuate the landscape, great wildlife and fantastic views, all under the famous huge skies.



Hunsett Mill on the River Ant



St Benet's Abbey gatehouse with wind-pump tower



A field of oilseed rape near Neatishead



Potter Heigham bridge in the early morning sun



Ranworth Church - the 'Cathedral of the Broads' from the staithe

So many things to stop
and admire, take photos,
sketch or write about,



Coot at Ranworth with white bone forehead - hence "as bald as a coot!"

while engaging in new
ways with God as
Creator.



District lay-workers enjoying the 'Ted Ellis' Nature Reserve, Wheatfen



Wind-pump sails serving as a cormorant roost



Neatishead Staithe



Skeleton wind pump near How Hill

A new photo and a thought about the Broads are tweeted and posted on facebook every day by Briant as 'Broads Spirituality'

DISTRICT NEWS

East Anglia District
of the Methodist Church

invite you to come and celebrate ministry during an

Ordinand's Testimony Service

at

Trinity Methodist Bury St. Edmunds

on

Tuesday 24 May 2016

At 7 pm

Preacher - Revd Dr Jane Leach

Ordinands - Revd Rita Carr & Revd SangWoo Seo

Everyone expected! Everyone welcome!

A Joint District Study Day
for Presbyters and Deacons in the East Anglia District and
Beds, Essex and Herts District

Led by

Revd Dr Stuart Jordan

27 April 2016 10.30 am – 3.30 pm
at Bar Hill

Bar Hill Church Centre, Viking Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8EH

To book a place please contact: Alison Travis, District Administrator

Tel: 01603 625765 or email: eadistrict14.office@btinternet.com

Celebrating Early Years in Ministry

by Revd Rita Carr

As a probationer minister in the Bury St Edmunds circuit, my own ministry centres around the small town of Stowmarket and reaches out into more rural parts of the Suffolk countryside at Old Newton and Cotton. I am very blessed to be in this part of the country, as my usual commute takes me through some beautiful and picturesque scenery. It is a real joy to see the sun setting, leaving bands of red and pink across the sky.

Like Mahatma Gandhi once said, "When I admire the wonders of the sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator."

Starting my ministry here has been a real blessing where, with the support of my colleagues and congregations, I have been

nurtured and allowed to grow.

I have discovered that ministry is busy! It is so varied that there are never two days the same, which can be both a joy and frustrating. One day I could be supporting and taking the funeral for a bereaved family and the next day I could be baptising a baby. Both are a celebration in their own right. A celebration of a person's life well lived and a celebration of a new little one coming to know Jesus Christ for the first time.

I have a lot to be thankful for so far. I am sure that with God's grace I will continue to grow in my role as presbyter and be enabled to serve the people in my care. I would appreciate your prayerful support as I continue my early years of ministry here in rural Suffolk.

Celebrating Easter at Norwood MHA

by

Alicia Holmes, Chaplain

We love celebrating festivals at Norwood. This Easter, a small group of us gathered on Maundy Thursday afternoon to remember the momentous events of Jesus' life through reflective storytelling. As well as residents we were joined by our Manager, Deputy Manager and Administrator.



There was already an atmosphere of excitement as the eggs in our incubator had been hatching during the previous two days. The chicks were brought out and let loose on the table in front of the residents, who loved watching and holding them. After a few minutes, the chicks were returned to their box and we were ready to start the story. As we traced the events of Jesus' life and heard about God's rescue plan for humanity, nearly all the residents entered into the story and listened carefully. Jesus' birth and baptism were outlined, his ministry was remembered and bread was broken to remind us of his last supper.



Then, as a large candle was lit to represent Jesus' resurrection, behind us a final chick poked its way out of its shell in the incubator and came into the light.



We wondered together and talked about the parts of the story we liked best.

As a response to the story we made Easter gardens reflecting the sadness and pain of Good Friday and the joy of the resurrection on Easter Day.

The gardens were used as a focus during our Good Friday service when everyone was given a cross made out of nails.

Later, they were displayed in residents' rooms and in a communal area. It was clear that they meant a lot to some of the residents who held on to them tightly.



As we sang Easter hymns in the Good Friday service a lady with quite advanced dementia joined in with the words of 'When I survey the wondrous cross'.

In the solemn quietness of the service we thought of Jesus' suffering and sacrifice and wondered whether we dared hope that this was not the end.



George Frost

District Agricultural Chaplain



How fortunate we are in East Anglia when we look back to all the flooding and wind damage in other parts of the country over the last few months. We had some flooding in low lying parts but rarely in our towns.

I'm writing this in February. The countryside looks really well at present although, with the mild weather we've had, some crops are too far advanced for the time of year, and some are looking stressed because of excess water washing the nutrients away. Nature has a way of recovering as we have experienced in the past.

There are so many problems with the farming sector and I have no wish to depress everyone. I have never known everything to be below production costs, but that is as it is. Planning ahead is difficult but the land needs to be farmed even though cropping is an unknown for returns a year on.

The media try to encourage everyone to buy British, but in the end it is the price at the till that counts. TV highlighted the loss of £10 per pig, but in the street interview afterwards, two people supported buying British and one person didn't care where his meat was from.

Some supermarkets are buying British, but not all. Look for the little Red Tractor sign.

At the time of writing this, the farm payments which were due in December have only been paid to 70% of farmers and consequently there has been an increase in calls to the helpline of FCN (Farm and Community Network.) This is adding stress to our volunteers to make sure that all enquiries are acted on. Why DEFRA (Department Food Rural Affairs) cannot get their act together I don't know, but people's lives are at stake here.

At a difficult time like this, I would ask that you pray for all those connected with agriculture, whether it is manufacture or farming the soil, that they might know of our prayers when we meet them, whether in the workplace or the street. Pray also for the volunteers who are walking with those who cannot see clearly the outcome of their efforts in maintaining a living wage.

Remember God's promise that seed time and harvest shall not cease. Thanks be to God.

Revd Andrew Fielding

'I was asked to reflect on ministry as I move to retirement. I have never written poetry before, but offer this believing God continues to renew me.'

YET, CARRIES MY HEART YOUR LOVE

The weight of human hands,
then rising, the lightness of Christly love
between ground and air.
God above and church below,
why place me so?
Surely Lord you are to me
both malady and remedy;
absent I desire you,
present I deny,
my courage for the summons,
my calmness for the fear.

And the kindness of others,
constellations bright when darkness falls,
with prayer bring your kingdom near.
If I like them could only be
you would make a son of me.
Yet, carries my heart your love
my bread your body
my wine your blood
my lips your word.
Others find you here.
But I search for me.

And so gentle Spirit,
from the church save us!
I once stood bound in shameful flame,
lighted, they said, in their father's name.
In that flame's heat my rainbow shone.
Comforting dove you stayed with me.
Yet, more violent is your holy fire,
that does both good and bad devour,
for such is your unity.
All the day long my face is burning
by your close, fierce fire.

I step back now, and sit down,
to enjoy the warmest hour.

© Andrew Fielding

Cultivation....not just of plants

by Revd David King

I can't remember many times in my life when I was not involved in the cultivation of a patch of ground, or some plant or other. Cultivation, in its various forms, is essential for the survival of the human race. The cultivation of soil in the practice of both agriculture and horticulture involves the breaking up or the tilling of the land by use of hand tools or with machinery. Cultivation prepares soil for seed of plants, destroys weeds, aerates the soil and allows the ground to absorb rain.

Good cultivation is required both before and after the plants are sown or planted. The Bible is full of references to cultivation. Cultivation is a feature of Genesis, the first book of Bible. The parables of Jesus speak about and infer the process of cultivation. In the New Testament, St Paul teaches that, no matter what skills we may have, God makes plants grow... "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes all things grow". (*1 Corinthians 3:7*) Clearly the process of cultivation is also important.

Cultivation is also an important aspect of the Christian faith. It is God's will that each person grows and matures in faith. This does not happen without God at work in us and among us, yet also involves the individual playing their part. Jesus sets the standards high in the Sermon on the Mount.

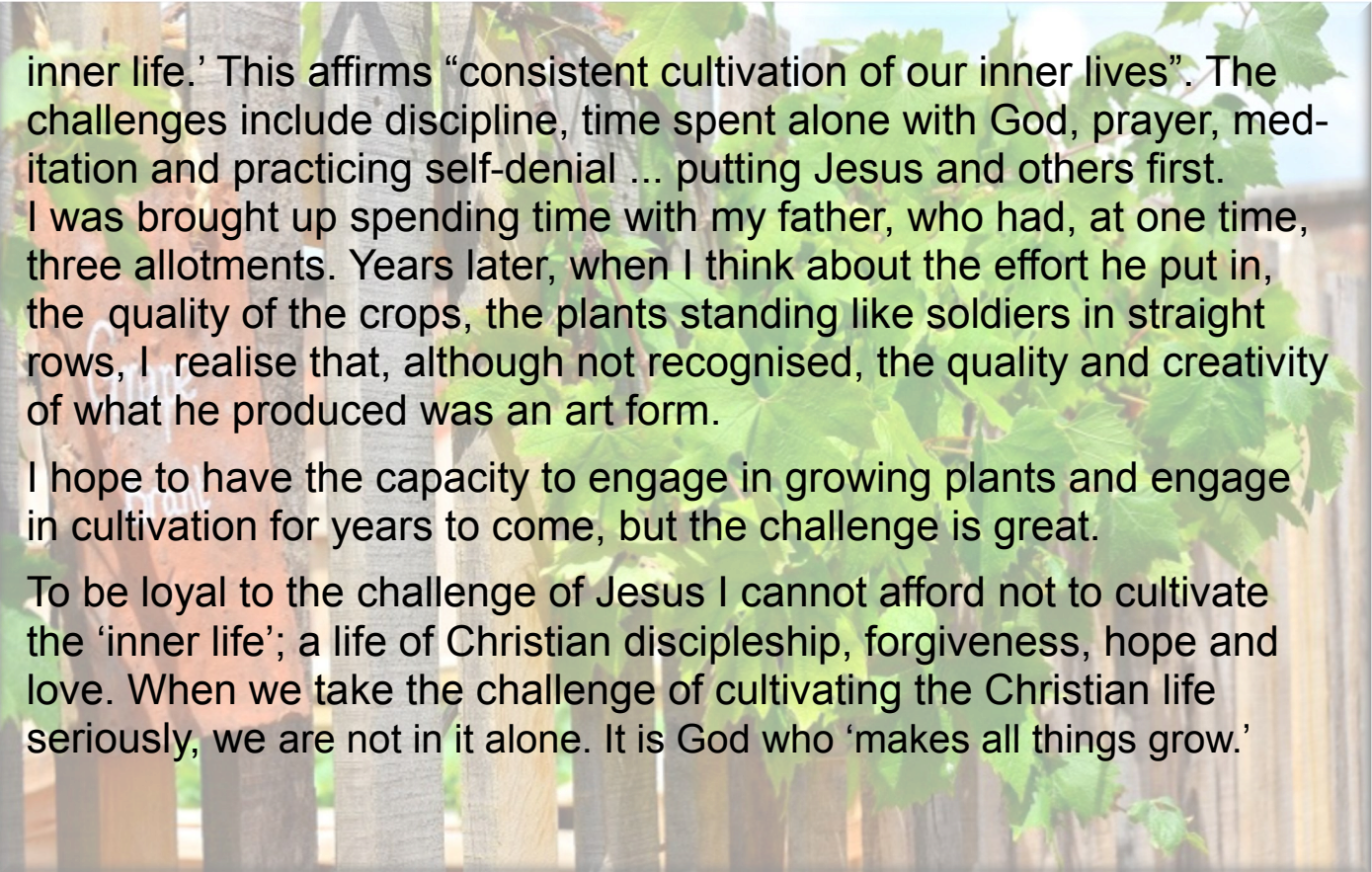
"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of Heaven." (*Matthew 5:20*)

When it comes to plant cultivation there are various methods - using the back of a fork, or one of the various forms of hoes. Tools used can be of the most primitive kind to the most sophisticated of agricultural machinery.

Cultivation of faith involves avoiding that which is not of God, yet giving serious attention to the scriptures and a growing knowledge of Jesus.

A Salvation Army publication offers useful advice in the *Call to Cultivate Faith*. It affirms the Christian call is to mature in faith and to become equipped for faithful life and service in the world. Some of the 'secret' of cultivation of Christian faith is in what the report calls 'the

Continued on page 18



inner life.' This affirms "consistent cultivation of our inner lives". The challenges include discipline, time spent alone with God, prayer, meditation and practicing self-denial ... putting Jesus and others first. I was brought up spending time with my father, who had, at one time, three allotments. Years later, when I think about the effort he put in, the quality of the crops, the plants standing like soldiers in straight rows, I realise that, although not recognised, the quality and creativity of what he produced was an art form.

I hope to have the capacity to engage in growing plants and engage in cultivation for years to come, but the challenge is great.

To be loyal to the challenge of Jesus I cannot afford not to cultivate the 'inner life'; a life of Christian discipleship, forgiveness, hope and love. When we take the challenge of cultivating the Christian life seriously, we are not in it alone. It is God who 'makes all things grow.'

grapevine

is available in large print
and on CD (audio) on request

Please ring the office:

01603 625765

or tell your church distributor if you
require these.

Contributions

Please send your letters, good news and beautiful photographs for the October 2016 issue of *grapevine* by Thursday 1 September 2016 to:

eagrapevine@gmail.com

or

'grapevine', District office
Chapel Field Road Methodist Church
Norwich, NR2 1SD

District Office: 01603 625765

Please send short items in plain or rich text format. Photos should be sent electronically in .jpg only, separately from the text.

We cannot guarantee inclusion of contributions.

The Methodist Church East Anglia District

Registered Charity Number 1129451