



Planting Faith,  
Nurturing Disciples,  
Growing God's Kingdom

Rev'd Kim Shorley  
5 Ashby Close  
Wellingborough

NN8 5FH

### Nene Valley Methodist Circuit

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that my address and phone number have now changed, as on the 24th May Andrew and I, along with our three cats moved into the manse at Wellingborough. As a child of the army moving is in my blood but I can honestly say that this move was my first 'proper' one; as suddenly I was the one who was charged with deciding what was to be boxed, donated or sadly disposed of (when we first moved into circuit I managed to keep quite a bit at our house in Market Harborough). As the boxes arrived (200 of them) I did my best to channel my inner Marie Kondo, asking each time does this item spark joy in me, and I learnt early on that I had a) managed to lovingly accumulate a lot of items at Raunds, b) it's a lot harder to let things go when you can convince yourself that it might come in handy one day (despite not using it in years – or indeed having replaced it) and c) a packing box full of books is very heavy indeed!

So, my Minister's Monthly Musing is this: **What might we need to let go off to allow God to spark joy in us?**

Guilt and Oughts? If moving has taught me anything it has been that my biggest struggle is giving things away, especially when someone else gave it to me. Of course the majority are gifts and tokens of affection but even when they are not to my taste, style or even abilities I find it so hard to regift them to a charity shop, and so hold onto them for years as they gather dust in a cupboard. Sometimes this reluctance to let go can be reflected in our spiritual lives – we know that in love and through grace that God holds no records, so why do we find ourselves holding onto our flaws, storing negative words about ourselves in our dark and dusty corners? Can we let go of our baggage, those things that bring us down, or burden us through a legalistic understanding of God: Thinking that we don't pray enough, do enough, study enough to simply discover that God always rejoices over us as beloved children.

Taking Charge? Much has been written about the stresses that moving can bring to a relationship and I can confirm that this is true. Now, before you worry Andrew and I are still best of friends, yet we work very differently and this can cause friction at highly charged moments. I am a sort first then pack, whilst Andrew packs and sorts during the unpacking process and whilst Andrew's way is the most efficient and perfectly suitable for our communal spaces I found it hard to relinquish control in 'my' areas, especially as within the study I had begun to lovingly (but very slowly) sort out and organise my desk, but soon found myself being distracted by the smallest of details. Should I file this agenda or recycle it (it had been sitting in my file tray for quite some time) and whilst this may not sound too stressful, I have to confess to you all that this was me on the night before we moved, also that very little progress (or packing) had actually been made by myself. So Andrew had to step in and take me on, grumbling as I followed/challenged his instructions, yet soon the room was ready to go. Sometimes we must let others teach us how to read our context and remind us of what the current priorities are in front of us. As we look to restrictions being lifted what might God be wanting to take charge of in our diaries, in our mission and ministry, in our outreach of others? What new ways of working might be more productive, more welcoming if we asked our communities what their joys, struggles and needs are?



Boxing God in? Even after being in the manse now for a month I find myself with a large number of boxes still to unpack. Whilst I am aware that I have all that I need to hand to do my work I am reluctant to consign these boxes to the garage, as I know that within each one I will find something that will delight, surprise and even amaze me as to how I had forgotten its importance to me, having quickly got used to not seeing it on display or it being in use. I am the person for whom the phrase 'out of sight out of mind' was written for. This makes me wonder if we in our corporate worship and in our personal devotions get too comfortable with God, maybe even boxing God into one particular shape or style?

All too often our experience limits our understanding of a God who we are told 'is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.' (Ephesians 3:20) This is why, through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we find ourselves called to be people on the move (although not always homes and locations) but rather in our perspectives and our attitudes. Even a single step brings with it a shift in our perspective and understanding, bringing with it a new focus and view as we adjust to our new surroundings.

Please don't get me wrong, I fully understand the need for consistency and structure, for I hold many things dear to my heart, but this doesn't mean that we are tied to having always to do things/ or see things in a certain way. It has brought Andrew and I a real joy to be able to re-engage with much loved items within a new home, as suddenly items that might have been overlooked now comes into their own in a gap that appears to have been made for it. Or that pictures that hung in a certain way now need to be re-hung but in a different orientation and you suddenly spot something you had not seen before. Where might God be asking of us to unpack God from both within ourselves and our worship so that we might catch a glimpse of God's inclusive vision for our communities, our society and for the world?

Now as I have mentioned I still have many boxes yet to unpack and maybe I will discover the answers to these and the many more musings this letter may have prompted in you, but in the meantime please know that you spark a joy in God, that God is at work in you, and that God's love for you will always overflow whatever box you put it in.

With blessings to you all



**Over the last year Methodist's from around the Connexion have been gathering to pray for the Methodist Church on Tuesday lunchtimes and they end with this, known as the breakthrough prayer**

God of love, God for all,  
your purposes are more beautiful than we can possibly imagine.  
Fill us with your Holy Spirit.  
Help us let go of all that holds us back.  
Open our lives and our churches to new seasons of humility and faith, of change and growth.  
Shake us up with the Good News of Jesus and show us the way.  
Amen

