

31st December

Well the last day of the year 2020, what a year it has been.

We have all had to adapt to life with COVID 19, and are still in lockdown and awaiting the roll out of the vaccine.

Yet there have been some happy times in the year, for us the birth of our first grandchild, Daisy Rose, some people have moved to a new home, some have learnt a new skill (having time to do so), special birthdays and anniversary's and much more.

I have continued to try and get out for walks, not as easy when back at work and the days shortened, but finding time when I could.

Well I walked this week from Flakebridge up the fell to Murton and back around through the woods. A walk I have done many times before but normally in May so that I can see all the bluebells, so this was very different. A frosty, crisp day with snow on the higher parts. It was still a little soggy underfoot in places after all the rain we have had, so picking the right path at times was tricky. A little bit like life, having to pick the correct path and hoping you don't sink and if you do getting out and finding a better path. Sometimes going first, sometimes following a friend (Hazel was with me) , sometimes using the reeds as support and sometimes just hoping!!! But we made it, and in life I continue to move forward with Jesus been the friend I follow and rely on for support.

As we got to the road at Murton it was icy underfoot so we still had to watch our footing, but we got some fantastic views of the beautiful countryside we live in. All created by our lord, how awesome is that. What we also got was the joy of hearing and seeing families having fun on Murton pike sledging!!! We stood and watched as they came down with whooping sounds and then watched as they made their way back for another go. It reminded me of fun times sledging when I was younger and with my own parents and children. The laughing we had and the tricks we played, building ramps in the snow to take off over. The feeling of been free to just enjoy special times together, the coldness yet sheer determination to carry on!!! Then once home thawing out in front of the fire with a warm blackcurrant drink. Family time is important and making memories so special. Make them and also remember life with Jesus is fun and you can make memories with him. Just allow him to be with you and keep talking to him and taking time to enjoy special times.

We carried on our walk, and turned back onto the track at harbour flat, we saw Raymond out on his gator, feeding the sheep and stopped for a chat. Catching up with friends is nice, they had enjoyed a quiet Christmas like us all but he also said, to see people out enjoying the countryside and making the most of the year is so special. He said " life on the fells can be hard but also so rewarding, getting to see all the glorious views every day" How right he is. Further down the track as we looked back at the fells, the sun shone and we could see the bowl of hick up nick, it was stunning! I have walked from Dufton up there and have walked with dad from the other side and back down but never walked from Harbour flat side, such a different view. The view made me think it was like our Lords hands held open for us to sit in and be lifted up. "He's got the whole world in his hands" We could be lifted high to see all the glory of the land around us, we could be lifted high and held close in times of

need. "father I place into your hands" I also remembered on a walk around Derwentwater the model of a large set of hands that you are able to climb into and sit, again hands to hold us close and protect us. The lords hands!!

We carried on our walk back towards Flakebridge woods, enjoying the views and seeing gods glory all around. The woods not covered with bluebells but just as beautiful with frost on branches and sunlight shining through the branches. We saw more friends, Sandra and Iain who live in Flakebridge and so caught up with them, again been reminded that even in this year of COVID 19 we have so much to be grateful for.

So as we leave 2020 behind and head into a new year remember that this year was special for many reasons and the lord has held us in his hands and brought us through, he will be with us in 2021 and whatever happens he has a plan.

Have a happy new year and hopefully the vaccine will be soon rolled out and we will be able to meet in person again. XX