

**Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post**

**17 October 2012: Rev'd Jeanette Richardson, Minister Petersfield Methodist Church**



**A time to be born and a time to die**

As a minister in the church the work I do is richly varied, ranging from trying to discern how God may be wanting us to respond to current issues to ensuring that building projects are proceeding as planned.

From talking with people about their deepest fears and anxieties to sharing in times of joy and celebration. One area that I find very rewarding is conducting funerals, and over the past few months I seemed to have spent a significant amount of my time meeting with families who have lost a loved one, listening to them, supporting them during a life-changing experience, and planning a funeral that is both honouring to the person who has just died and appropriate for those who are mourning.

The service itself, usually includes a tribute to the person's life. After the service people frequently say 'I never knew that my friend/relative had done so much.'

The trouble is we often keep the different areas of our lives separate, and our colleagues, friends and family know very little about the totality of our experience. Another problem is that we seem to have little time for those conversations to happen. Perhaps it is safer to watch life through the fantasy of a soap opera or a novel than engage with real flesh and blood.

It is always sad when people leave a funeral saying 'I never knew...' maybe now is the time to be sharing together the rich experience of life that we have all enjoyed. As the evenings draw in there will be lots of opportunities to sit in the warmth of our homes, turn the TV off, and learn about each other. Is this an opportunity that we want to take?