

Dear Friends,



Have you ever heard about 'Ikigai'? Well, I hadn't until I attended a 3-day course in Hertfordshire recently where the concept was explained to clergy like me who – let's face it – are getting ever closer to retiring gracefully. Not just yet, mind, still some time to go, thankfully.

Ikigai is a Japanese concept that has to do with finding **your** unique self, **your** singular talent, **your** passion in life, and it is based on these 10 Rules, so are you ready? 1. Stay active and don't retire from everything * 2. Take it slow * 3. Eat a little less than your hunger actually demands * 4. Surround yourself with good friends * 5. Exercise – just a bit of gentle daily maintenance will do * 6. Smile * 7. Reconnect with nature * 8. Give thanks * 9. Live in the moment * 10. Find your 'Ikigai', your passion, your unique talent.

Sounds easy when written down like this, doesn't it, but I know I should struggle with 3 and 5 for starters! There's honesty for you.

Over the next few months I plan to look at just some of these in greater detail (unless something more interesting comes up of course), but for now may we remember that we are in the season of Lent leading us eventually to the high point of the Christian year which is Easter Day. And may we also remember that Jesus during Lent was tempted and tested in the desert, often lonely, sad and frustrated – wouldn't you be? – yet with his eyes set purposely and never wavering on the road ahead and himself prepared as well as able to prepare others to follow, to see, and yes to realize their uniqueness by his guidance and example. Living the moment yet always looking ahead!

There's a lot to take in during Lent and this is why in so many churches Lent courses are taking place to stimulate us all in our thinking and helping us become the best that we can be.

God bless you!

Rev Preben Andersen