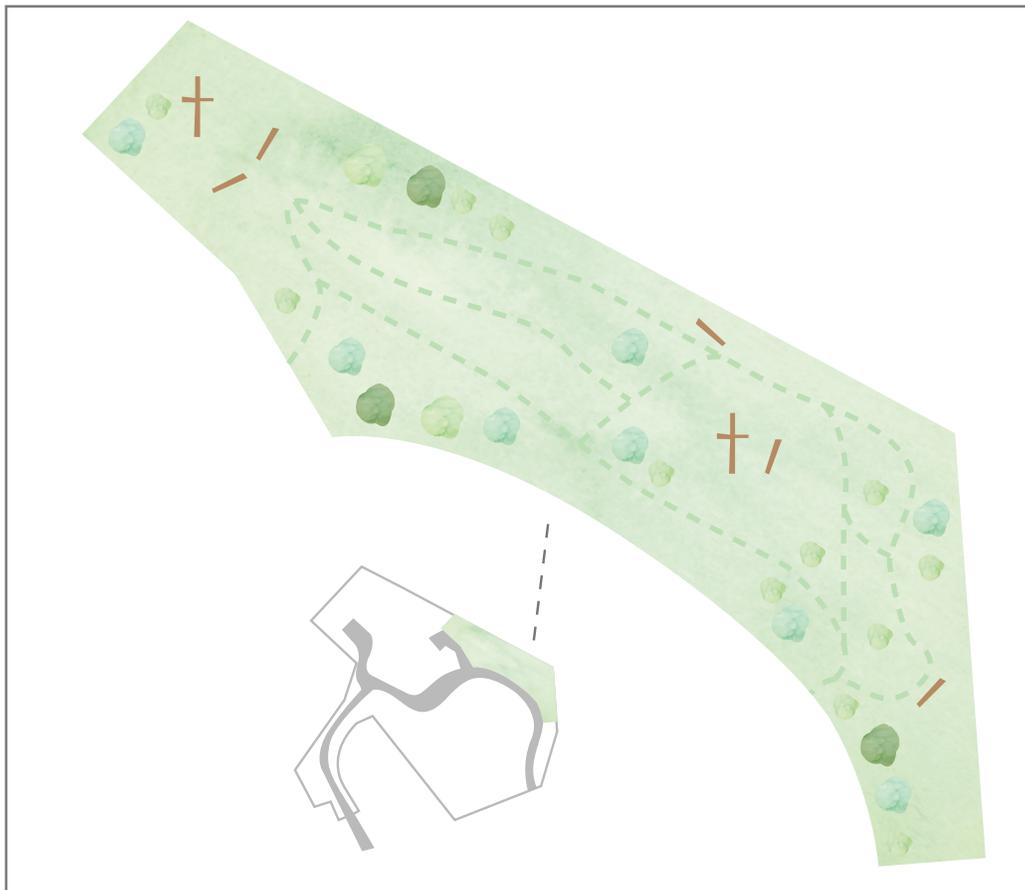


Woodland Prayer Walk



Ways to Use the Woodland Prayer Walk

At the beginning of your prayer walk find somewhere to sit or stand, close your eyes and spend some time listening to all that is around you. You may find that you can hear more than you would with your eyes open. You might also like to take some time to look around and see the plants, colours and animals around you. Take a moment to lay down all your burdens and just worship God for who he is and what he has made. If you are unable to lay down your burdens, then use this time to remind yourself of who God is and how he holds everything in his hands and worship him despite your burdens.

When you are ready, walk along the paths and talk with God as you do so. We have written a number of reflections based on things you might come across as you go that you can use to help you draw

close to God, reflect on his goodness or direct your prayers. You may also like to use one of the seasonal reflections at the end of this leaflet.

We have prepared a sheet of scripture verses (that can be used with the reflections in this booklet or on their own to help you reflect and pray) so that you do not need to take a bible around with you unless you would like to.

Alternatively as you walk around our woodland stop to look at objects or animals that you come across. What do they tell you about God's character? What do they make you think of? How do they make you feel? Allow what you see and your reflections on what you see guide your prayers.

Reflections on Things Found in the Woodland

A flower: See how delicate the petals are (Matthew 6:28-33) God takes great care over all his creation. You are incredibly valuable to him. Think about all that means. If you find it hard to believe that you are valuable, consider asking God to show you how valuable you are.

A stinging nettle: Work was intended to be a blessing to us. However when Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:17-19) part of the judgement on them, and through them us, was that obstacles were put in the way of their/our work. This caused work to be harder and meant that not all of the results of our labours are good and useful. In Jesus this curse is broken but it is not yet removed so that we still struggle with it. Spend some time to bring your work before God. Are there any struggles that he wants to overcome with you? Does it feel futile and fruitless? Is it a blessing to you that you want to thank God for? Are there any "nettles, thorns or thistles" that he would like to deal with or that you want him to help you with?

Some deadwood: How long has the piece of dead wood been there? Is there anything living in it or growing on it? Would any of those things be growing or living in a living tree? As you look at the deadwood reflect on the following scriptures: John 12:23-26, Romans 6:5-11. What does it mean to be dead to sin and alive to God? In what ways does this produce fruit?

A rock/stone: God is described as a rock in at least 19 Psalms. The idea being that he provides safety and security, refuge and salvation from enemies. In Matthew (7:24-27) Jesus says that anyone who

listens to his words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house upon a rock. Do you feel safe with God? Do you or does anyone you know need to know God as refuge or a firm place to stand? If so ask God to help you/them know that or ask him to be that. Consider also praying for the persecuted church around the world.

A bird: Birds appear in several places in scripture as a reminder or demonstration of God's provision (see Matthew 10:29-31, Isaiah 40:28-31 and 1 Kings 17:5-6). Remember and give thanks for ways that God has provided

A tree: The kingdom of God is described by Jesus as like a mustard seed that starts out very small but grows into a tree, the largest of garden plants, and birds came and perch in its branches (Matt 13:31-32). Think and pray about ways in which coming into God's kingdom provides shelter. Where is the kingdom of God growing in your own life or around you? Where would God like to grow it more? If you don't know ask God to show you.

A bird or insect box: Reflect on how God invites us to share in his work with him in both little and big ways. Think about the details God paid attention to so that different species and forms of life could live side by side. Consider asking him what he is inviting you to share in. Consider talking to him about or thanking him for his attention to both the big and the small details in life and/or his sovereignty over the whole world.

Seasonal Reflections

The woodland looks very different at different times of year so we have added a different reflection for each of the seasons.

Spring: From the time when the snowdrops come out at the beginning of spring until the leaves start to grow on the trees can seem like a long time. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV). Reflect on the certainty of God's promises. What promises are you still waiting on?

Summer: Take a moment to look around you and across the drive at the garden. How many different shades of green can you count? How many other colours are there? How is it that despite the number of different shades there are, none of them clash? How many different shapes and plants can you see? Even in a small piece of land, there is great diversity. You may wish to reflect on the creativity of God or

on the way he designs things to work together for good even when it is hard to recognize.

Autumn: Autumn is a time when trees get rid of waste by putting it into their leaves before they drop them. Dropping their leaves also protects them from damage during the winter months. It is also a time for sowing seeds. Squirrels bury nuts and often forget where they hid them and birds help scatter seeds. Is there anything in your life that you need to get rid of or put aside for a time? Are there any seeds God wants to plant in your life or use you to plant elsewhere?

Winter: Winter is a time of rest for plants and for many of our animals and insects. This rest protects them from the hardships and harshness of winter. How easy do you find it to be still before God? What does it mean to be still before God? Psalm 62:5-8, Psalm 37:7

Finishing Your Walk

Finish your walk by climbing the mound to the cross using the grassy slope or sitting on a bench where you can see the cross.

You might like to reflect on the following: "Your value is very great in the eyes of God. It is not dependent on what you have or haven't done or on what you can or can't do. His love for you is not something you can earn. Rather he loves you because of who you are." "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" Roman's 5: 8 & 10

Alternatively you might like to finish with the Lord's Prayer, a prayer of thanks that God has heard you/for anything God has said to you, a prayer that reflects on the cross in some way or the prayer below.

Lord God, thank you for the care and attention you give all that you have made. Thank you for your love for me. Help me to know your presence as I go about my daily life. Cause my love for you to grow and help me live a life of love that pleases you each day. Please give me wisdom to know the way that I should go so that I will remain in you all the days of my life, Amen.

When walking in the woodland please take care. The ground is uneven, may be slippery when wet and there may be rocks, twigs, brambles or nettles on the path. Please also take care if you climb on the mound. Use the grassy ramp to ascend and descend. Laminated sheets with the bible verses mentioned in this booklet on them are available from reception. Please return them when you have finished.