

Wildflower Area

This area is allowed to grow long, so that the plants flower, providing food for insects, who pollinate the plants, so they can set seed, and make fruit. The insects, seeds and fruit provide food for birds, and for mammals.

When it is cut, we leave the cuttings lying for a while, so that seeds can go back into the soil. We then rake them off and allow them to rot somewhere in the churchyard. This makes food and homes for all sorts of creatures, and rich soil for more plants.

So creation flourishes. This is part of our care for the amazing, complex ecosystem God gave us responsibility for.

**How many different types of flower, insect and animal can you see today?
Can you see what they are eating? Can you see where they are sheltering?**

Even here, in a place of burial, this is a place of abundant life.

Meeting God Outdoors

“Can I go anywhere apart from Your Spirit?

Is there anywhere I can go to escape Your watchful presence?

If I go up into heaven, You are there.

If I make my bed in the realm of the dead, You are there.

If I ride on the wings of morning,

if I make my home in the most isolated part of the ocean,

Even then You will be there to guide me;

Your right hand will embrace me, for You are always there.”

Psalm 139, Old Testament, The Bible

People often say ‘you’re closer to God in the garden, than anywhere else on earth’.

That may be true. But it’s true also that God is in the wild places—where we aren’t in control. Jesus often went up mountains and into the desert to be with God.

Looking at the wild space, pause, and open your heart and mind to God. How might God speak to you in the overgrowth, in the trees, in the insect life and wild life? Or in the sense that the dead are with God too? What might you draw close to with

God, here? *All bible passages are from The Voice—a narrative translation of the bible.*

Awe and Wonder

“When I gaze to the skies and meditate on Your creation—on the moon, stars, and all You have made: I can’t help but wonder why You care about mortals— sons and daughters of men—specks of dust floating about the cosmos.

But You placed the son of man just beneath God and honoured him like royalty, crowning him with glory and honour.

.....O Eternal, our Lord, your majestic name is heard throughout the earth”

Psalm 8, Old Testament, The Bible

1. Take a moment.

Look around you.

Listen.

What draws your attention?

2. Perhaps you notice a plant, an insect, a bird, a birdsong?

Or the light on the ground.

Look or listen with focus. Appreciate the details.

Imagine you’re noticing for the first time. Do you notice anything new?

3. Now think about yourself: One organism in this complex ecosystem. The writer of the passage above was filled with awe, that God should notice them, as well as everything else in the universe. How does that make you feel?

Reverence

*“The earth and all that’s upon it belong to the Eternal.
The world is His, with every living creature on it.
With seas as foundations and rivers as boundaries,
He shaped the continents, fashioned the earth.*

Psalm 24 Old Testament, The Bible

**How do you think about the earth?
Home? A resource? Beautiful? Broken?
Wild and needing taming? Complex system of structured
chaos?**

**However you believe the world came to exist—how does it
affect your thinking, to view the world as a gift, entrusted to
human care, rather than our property?**

Sustenance

“Blessed is the one who trusts in [God] alone; the Eternal will be their confidence. They are like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots beside the stream. It does not fear the heat or even drought. Its leaves stay green and its fruit is dependable, no matter what it faces.

Jeremiah 17:5-8, Old Testament, The Bible

Trees like this one, are fed and watered through their roots. The health of what you can see of the tree, comes from the part you can't see.

Where are you finding your 'food' in life? Do you feel healthy in your emotions, mind, body and Spirit?

This passage says the nourishment God gives us is dependable. Unending. What sort of fruitfulness do you aspire to? Can you ask God for the nourishment you need for this?

Cattle

“He’ll love you and bless you and increase your population. He’ll bless your children, and He’ll bless your agriculture. The land He promised your ancestors He’d give you will produce abundantly; and you’ll have grain and wine and olive oil, many cattle, and new flocks.”

Deuteronomy 7, Old Testament, The Bible

In the bible, cattle represent security. Their healthy reproduction means food security for the household.

Can you see or hear cattle from where you are now? Perhaps you need to imagine one.

This churchyard sits in a landscape, that people have shaped to their needs. For food, for home, for work, for leisure, for safety, for transport. The things in our land produce our security—and its lack.

What do you notice around you, that makes you feel safe? Or otherwise. Take time to talk to God about that, and listen to what God has to say.

Balance

The locusts blanketed the whole land until the ground was smothered in darkness. They devoured every plant growing in the fields and stripped every tree of its fruit, everything the hail had not destroyed. Not one green leaf was left on any tree, not one plant was left growing in the field anywhere in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 10, Old Testament, The Bible

Can you see any insects? What are they doing?

Most insects feed on plants, removing dead matter and keeping a balance between species. They pollinate flowers—enabling fruiting. They are food for birds and mammals. They are vital to the ecosystem.

Humans can come into conflict with insects. They eat our food, damage our flowers. They might bite or sting. But we need them to live. They are part of the same ecosystem as us.

Like or loathe them, can you watch an insect now, and ask God to reveal its importance?

Insects eating crops were often seen as signs of God's displeasure with people.

Our actions have caused imbalances, such as insect population explosion. We have caused changes in climate and water levels and loss of species that eat or compete with the insects.

Ask God to show you an impact you're having, or a positive thing you could do, to live in balance with the rest of the ecosystem.

Plenty

*Let grain grow plentifully in this land of promise,
let it sway in the breeze on the hilltops,
let it grow strong as do the cedars of Lebanon,*

*And may those who live in the city bloom and flourish
just as the grass of the fields and meadows.*

Psalm 72, Old Testament, The Bible

What can you see from where you are, that shows that people's needs are being provided for? Places where food is being grown, prayers said, people are playing or working?

Take this time to pray for good things for the people of this neighbourhood. For all their needs to be met.

What about the rest of the ecosystem? Is it flourishing? What signs of growth and life can you see? Take a moment to give thanks. Perhaps God might lead you to some way to nurture life here, human, or otherwise.

Moth Eaten

“Some people store up treasures in their homes here on earth. This is a shortsighted practice—don’t undertake it. Moths and rust will eat up any treasure you may store here. Thieves may break into your homes and steal your precious trinkets.

Matthew 6, New Testament, The Bible

Can you find any moths? During the day they are often resting, among long grass, under leaves and on the bark of trees.

We describe old, tatty things as ‘moth-eaten’ because a particular type of moth’s caterpillars eat natural fibres (wool, cotton, linen and silk), and leave holes in clothes.

It’s a good thing that there are creatures that eat natural materials—mostly bugs and creepy crawlies. Moths, slugs, snails, ants—they stop all the dead plant matter choking out new growth; *and* they turn it into food for the other plants. They are part of God’s wonderful provision for us.

It’s good to think on the positives of loss and decay, in a churchyard. We are thankful for the people who have gone before us. They have handed the world on to us who are alive now. We must hold it lightly and with reverence, let it go and pass it on to the next generations.

As this bible verse reminds us, property will not last—and neither will we. We must hold our possessions and ways of life lightly, not be preoccupied with wealth or control. We are trustees, not owners of this planet.

Jubilee

“When the seventh year arrives, let your land rest and lie fallow. Let the poor and hungry among you come and harvest the volunteer crops that spring up in your fields. Whatever is left over, the beasts may eat. Do the same thing with your vineyards and your olive groves”.

Exodus 23:11 , Old testament, The Bible

Can you find a spot to rest? Take a moment to enjoy what you can see, hear, smell around you.

Resting is as important as working to God. In the creation story, God finished making the universe—and rested. It’s not a gap in the story, but an essential part of it. Rest is life-giving, restorative, and joyful. It is part of God’s good plan for the world.

In this bible passage, God commands a rest for the land, every seventh year—which brings food to people without land, and to animals. A weekly rest is part of the plan too, every seven days. In the bible seven represents wholeness—rest makes us whole.

Notice your energy levels. When did you last rest? How do you find rest? Allow God to speak to you about this.

Chaos and Order

“The same evening, Jesus suggested they cross over to the other side of the lake..... As they sailed, a storm formed. The winds whipped up huge waves that broke over the bow, filling the boat with water so that even the experienced sailors among them feared they would sink.

Jesus was back in the stern of the boat, sound asleep on a cushion, when the disciples shook Him awake, shouting: ‘Jesus, Master, don’t You care that we’re going to die?’

He got up, shouted words into the wind, and commanded the waves: ‘That’s enough! Be still!’ Immediately the wind died down to nothing, the waves stopped.

He said: ‘How can you be so afraid? After all you’ve seen, where is your faith?’

The disciples were still afraid, slowly coming to grips with what they had seen: ‘Who is this Jesus? How can it be that He has power over even the wind and the waves?’ Mark 4, New Testament,

Bible

Listen to the wind. How strong is it today? Can you see any evidence of storm damage around you? Has it opened space for growth?

This image of Jesus echoes the Bible’s creation story—in which God the Father speaks and order forms out of chaos. The chaos is creative; God says the order is good.

Does disorder upset or inspire you? Do you long for order? Hear Jesus say the words ‘be still’ over your life. What beauty might emerge?