



Meditations
around
The Rectory
Woodland Garden

**Perhaps, as you wander, listen to the sounds in the garden,
of traffic, the train, bird song, insects,
the wood shavings under your feet
and pause to be attentive...**

**Be aware of the smells, of rotting leaves, of plants, flowers and pause to
be attentive...**

Feel what is under your feet, the sun, the rain on your face...

**Be aware of the play of light, the shifting shadows, the almost unseen
path of a bird's flight, the variety of even the colour green, pause to be
attentive...**

**Slow your senses to become more aware of what your senses tell you; sit
and just be; allow yourself to be aware of the presence of God and allow
his still small voice to be heard...**



Easter garden

A simple and inoffensive cross, yet such a powerful symbol of the love of Christ seeking to bring us new life.

The cross points backwards to the garden of Eden when humankind and God were in harmonious relationships with one another.

It reminds us of the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus chose the way of the cross out of love for us.

It reminds us of the garden where Jesus made himself known to Mary after the resurrection.

Simple and inoffensive? No rather complex and life transforming. Look at the painted stones each painted by a child reflecting on the love of God expressed on the cross.

What does the cross mean to you?



Echo seat

Perhaps you can imagine that I once was mighty beech tree.

But cut down because of disease and danger of falling.

I had had a history of providing shelter and for a time I was just a stump.

Now my trunk offers shelter from the rain and seat from which to look upon the garden.

The sound echoes in this seat. At times it almost seems to speak. What Echo of God's voice would you hear as you sit and contemplate his presence?



Kingfisher

Why a Kingfisher? Do you remember the first time you saw one? Quick as lightning flash blue and then gone.

But every time you go back to the place where you saw the Kingfisher, you look for him.

Perhaps the Kingfisher reminds you of the Holy Spirit and those times in your life when you have a particular experience of his life giving and life-sustaining presence.

Perhaps now it feels rather pedestrian, the flash of blue long gone and yet you would see the Kingfisher again.



Parent and child

I was just a flat plank until one of the soldiers, who created the garden, fixed me up right and I stood almost like a sentinel; the outlines of my face and shape had not yet appeared.

Then Sarah the sculptor, creator of Winter's End, took a chainsaw and carved some lines upon my person.

Most visitors to the garden now see me as a parent holding a child. What do you see?

What lines would you have God, carve upon you?

Who is it that you wish to be in him?



Monk

I wonder what you think about the presence of a monk in the garden? Perhaps you identify a particular saint, perhaps Cuthbert, Wilfred, or even Gregory.

The monk here gives an opportunity to reflect upon a life of discipline, of regular prayer and worship, and generous hospitality found in the order of St Benedict.

Look at the monk. Reflect upon such an expression of living the Christian life and think what this might look like for the 21st-century visitor at the garden.

Perhaps imagine the monk with his hood thrown back and his face open and smiling. What image of the disciple do you present?



Outdoor classroom

Remember those days when you pleaded with your teachers to be allowed to have lessons outside in the summer? Well, here is your opportunity.

When was the last time you learned something new about God?

What would you like to learn about God now?

Look around you and allow this God to speak to you of his overflowing life-giving life enhancing creativity.

Look at the willow hedge and how it is in the process of being woven. Take a moment to reflect upon God and his character. Allow him to surprise you. He invites you to learn of him, and your life and his to be woven together.



Stumpery

The water in this bog area arises from a natural spring, a spring hidden in impenetrable brambles. Yet the spring continued to give water. The stumps appeared to be dead, yet they give life.

The stumps are upside down.

What Jesus offers in his invitation to enter into his kingdom is a spring of ever living water of life from death.

Everything in his kingdom is topsy-turvy as he encourages us to see ourselves blessed in ways alien to our way of thinking.

His kingdom is also hospitable. It invites the stranger into its life. Look around and see the bird boxes, the BUG hotel; an invitation to share the life of the God.

Winter's end

What do you see when you look at me?

A rounded lump of limestone made smooth?



With my layer of green lichen, I am beginning to blend into the landscape.

You are aware that my name is Winter's end. I stand motionless, pondering the winter just passed. I am still in the presence of God. I can do nothing more than stand in his presence. Sometimes he feels far away. Sometimes the winter doesn't feel as if it has ended. But I must stand here and ponder. Like Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Take a moment to sit or stand with me and ponder who God is for you and in the depths of your being to find him. So, be still and know that he is God. Be still and know that in quietness and confidence you will find your strength. Be still and allow his still small voice to speak to you.



The path to the graveyard

Connecting the garden to the graveyard is an opportunity to welcome those who mourn into a place of refuge and sanctuary; a garden teeming with wildlife and birds; a promise of hope that through

Christ we are offered away into eternal life.

He will never force himself upon us; the choice for life is ours.

Take a moment to allow your senses to be overwhelmed by the life that is in this garden. Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness.

Our God is creative and committed to our flourishing, and growth. May the garden speak to you of his love and peace.



The wild area

Entering into this area may remind you of childhood.

What dens you could create here!

What games of hide and seek could be played here!

These activities may be fun or fraught with danger, with risk.

Perhaps you feel you are playing hide and seek with God, or that he is playing hide and seek with you.

May this area speak of the secret den, the sanctuary God offers in himself.

Come as a little child to the one who is entirely secure and trustworthy.