

'Church Yard Pilgrimage'

We have created this pilgrimage trail around the churchyard of St Andrew's church, North Kilworth.

In 10 locations you are invited to stop, to discover some aspect of local history, or to gain some insights into church architecture, and you will also be prompted to take a moment or two to meditate on a question and maybe even have a new sense of God at work in you in some way.

We hope you will enjoy this experience and find it helpful.

One of the basic Christian beliefs is that wherever we are, God is there too. So as we move through this space we pray that we will all meet God, who is already here.

Map – This will help you find the spot for each activity.



I. Church Clock

Stand on the path between the 2 gates and look up at the church clock.

Did you know.....

It probably dates from around 1864. Until the late 18th century, time was normally determined in each town by a local sundial. But solar time was only approximate. The development of railways showed there was a problem: the differences between the local times of neighbouring towns. For example, Oxford Time was 5 minutes behind Greenwich Time and Barrow almost 13 minutes behind. So in the 1840's 'Railway Time' was taken up by all the railway companies. Train schedules and the time on station clocks were brought in line with the local 'mean' time for London (or "London Time") - the time set at Greenwich by the Royal Observatory, already widely known as Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Thinking.....

Stand still for a minute or two.

- Take time and see if you can see the hands of the clock move.
- Does time move slowly for you or it is going too quickly?
- What 'time of life' are you at? How would you describe it to someone else?

Psalm 90:12 says this: *'Teach us to number our days, so that we might be wise.'*

2. Individuality

Move into the main churchyard. As you go, take a moment and read some of the gravestones. Many of them have verses from the Bible, or poems about the person they commemorate. Each of these gravestones marks a unique individual, with a particular life and who did particular things. Each human being is a precious one-off creation of inestimable value and irreplaceable.

Did you know.....

Grave-markers cannot be put up immediately after someone is buried. The ground needs time to settle and firm up. If you put up a grave-marker before this happens it would quickly fall over. So normally a simple wooden cross is used until the permanent marker can be put in place.

Thinking

- Do you recognise your own unique worth?
- Do you treat yourself as someone worth taking care of?
- What would you like to have written on your gravestone?

Psalm 139:14 says, *'I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.'*

3. Glory / Shame

Go all the way around the church from the main door. Stand facing south down the fields with the church behind you and find this grave - Admiral Man DOBSON (1755-1847)

Did you know.....

Admiral Dobson served under Lord Nelson in the West Indies. He captured Burma for the British Empire. So even in our village there are direct connections to conquest and the evils of slavery.

Thinking

- What things are we doing in our time that later generations might find hard to understand?
- Are we using the earth's resources well?
- What are doing about global warming? Are we really trying our best?

A verse in the bible speaks of a land laid waste by the actions of people - *'They have made it a desolation. Desolate before Me, it mourns; all the land is laid waste, but no man takes it to heart'*. (Jeremiah 12:11)

Will you 'take to heart' the desolation of the earth? What might you do to reduce your environmental impact?

4. Laurel in the Hedge

Stand with the big arched church window behind you. Walk to the very end of the churchyard and find the section in the hedge that is laurel.

Did you know.....

The laurel wreath was used by the Ancient Greeks. It was a symbol of Apollo, and they believed the leaves had spiritual and physical cleansing abilities. The Greeks gave laurel wreaths to the winners in the Olympics and poetic competitions. They were made of branches shaped into a circle or horseshoe, and people wore them on their head or neck. In Roman times successful commanders got a laurel wreath. Even today in some countries the laurel wreath is used as a symbol of the master's degree. The word "laureate" in 'poet laureate' refers to the laurel wreath.

Thinking

- What things in your life need to be celebrated?
- How do you celebrate them?
- What are you celebrating and honouring in the lives of those around you?

5. Named Graves and a Cross

Face the church with your back to the low stone wall and the tower on your left. Can you see a large area that is marked off using stones? There are no railings around it now, but there used to be. There is a large cross here.

Did you know.....

The Entwistles were the prominent family in North Kilworth. They made their money in the cotton mills north of Bolton and bought Kilworth House (now the Kilworth House Hotel) as a hunting lodge. It was conveniently placed, being half-way to London.

Thinking

There are lots of different crosses on the graves around. Some are very fancy and are engraved and decorated. Some are simple and made of wood. The size of the headstone and the decoration don't really matter. 100% of people end up dead!! What is important is valuing people for who they are, not what they have achieved.

Isaiah 43:3-5 says this 'Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you....'

- Are you afraid? Can you say what it is you are afraid of?
- Tell God about it and know that He understands.

6. Orientation

Stand on the path near the gate to the village centre as far away from the building as possible. Can you work out which way is North? or South? The church building can help!

Did you know.....

Like most ancient churches, St Andrew's Church is oriented on a West-East axis. The altar is in the East so we facing this direction when we pray. The reasons for this are a bit obscure, although we know Jews face towards the Temple in Jerusalem when they pray and Muslims face towards Mecca.

The eastwards orientation is mentioned by Tertullian (c.160-c.220), who remarked on facing "ad lucem" (to the light). In a very old book from the 4th century it says this: "let the building be oblong, pointing towards the east . . . like a ship," and "let all [the worshippers] stand at the same time and pray, looking towards the east"

Thinking

- What brings life and light into your life?
- What draws and attracts you?
- As we lose the light and head into winter, how does that make you feel?

7. Paths and Seats

Notice the paths that lead you around the churchyard. They help us navigate around and make tripping up less likely! Some lead to seats where you can rest reflect, reflect and enjoy the peace in this place. Some of them have things written on to help remember people who are buried here. Find a seat that is free and sit down.

Did you know

You can't just decorate a graveyard how you would like! There are some rules – quite a lot, actually – that help us keep this as a respectful place for those who visit. We don't have fairy lights and decorations. But we do have lots of ways to remember the way people have lived.

Thinking

- What path are you on in your life?
- Do you know where it is leading?
- What is making your life's journey easier, helping you not to trip up?
- Where are the moments in your life in which you find rest and relaxation?

You might like to offer a short prayer to say thanks for all that is making your life easier and better. You might ask for help for those you know who are struggling with life at present.

8. Weather Vane

Stand back from the building and look up....all the way to the top of the tower. Can you see the cockerel right at the top?

Did you know.....

There is a reason why we usually see a cockerel on the top of a church tower. In the Bible story Jesus forgave St Peter for denying he knew him. Jesus said this would happen just before the cockerel crowed 3 times. It did - just as Jesus said, and Peter felt awful. But Jesus forgave him, and so the cockerel has become the symbol of the second chance. Our churches are 'communities of the second chance'.

Thinking.....

We all make mistakes....take a minute to think about them now. No matter what you remember, God says he forgives. In Micah 7:19 it says God will '*trample on our sins and throw them in the sea.*' A great picture!!

- Are there things you really regret doing – or not doing?
- Are there people you need to 'give a second chance' to?

9. Church Walls

Move up close to the building and have a look at the differences in the stones.

Did you know.....

If you look closely at the church walls you will see that the stones are really different – some are regular and lots are round! These are cobbles - stones dug out of the fields around here by local farmers. They sold them as building materials, so lots were used to build the church. Some of these rounded cobbles were formed during the movement of glaciers around 65,000 years ago. Nothing was wasted in the process of building – stones that were unwanted in the fields are really useful here!

Thinking.....

There are lots of different shapes in the walls of this building....and all are needed! 1 Peter 2: 5 says this talking about Christians in community: '*you also, like **living stones**, are being built into a spiritual house*'. Although we are not all the same, we are working together to become the church of God in this place. The building is a great resource, but we – the people of God – are the church.

- Do you sometimes feel as though you don't quite 'fit in'?
- Do you have any 'rough edges' that need to be rounded off?

10. The Small Door

One of the doors into church – not the main entrance – is really small. Can you find it? Maybe you would have to bend down to get through.

Did you know

One of the misconceptions is that people were smaller in ages past. Would it surprise you to know that the average woman living in London in the Middle Ages was the same height as the average female Londoner today?

There are a couple reasons for this misconception. Historians used to use door heights and bed lengths as indicators of height. The problem is that short doorways and beds aren't indicative of short people. Low doorways are common for heat retention in Northern European houses. And short beds are indicative of how people used to sleep; it was thought that lying flat was unhealthy so people slept partially sitting up, bolstered by pillows. Therefore beds were shorter

Thinking

- What misconceptions might you be living with?
- What data might be interpreted differently if you knew 'one more fact'?
- When we are tempted to jump to judgement about people or situation, how can we hold on to the possibility that another view is possible, that 'one more fact' might radically change our view point?

We hope that you have enjoyed your churchyard pilgrimage.

If you have any comments or suggestions please get in touch.

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