

OUTDOOR MEDITATIONS

These five outdoor meditations are set in the grounds of the church, Memorial Garden, and our nearby river side.

They have been written on behalf of our Eco Church Group to take advantage of the beautiful setting this congregation enjoys.

We hope they will enhance your own faith journey.

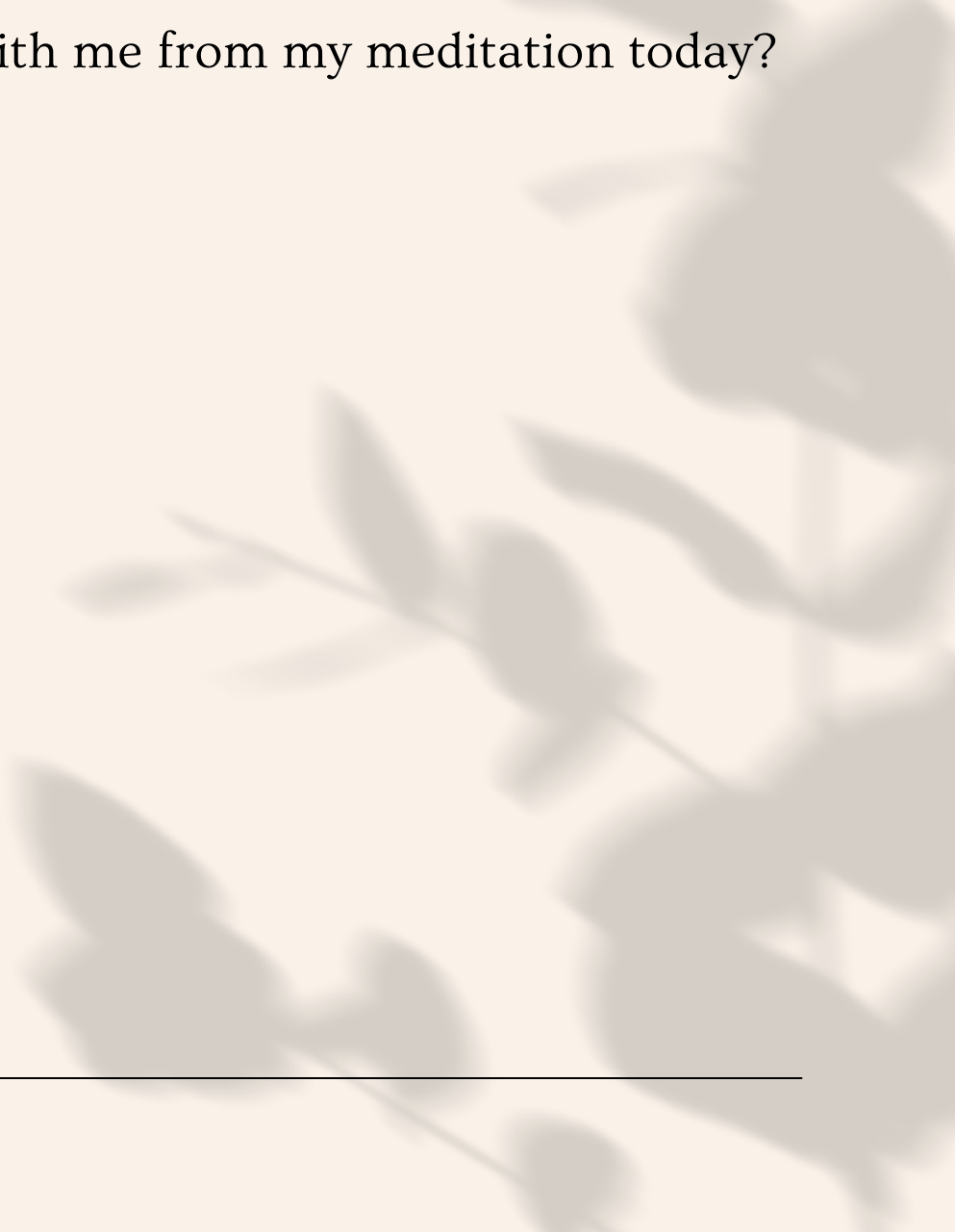


MEDITATIONS

1. Doors
2. Time
3. Living Water
4. Renewal
5. After Death

NOTES

What do I take home with me from my meditation today?



WEEK 1. DOORS

Action Walk slowly around the church admiring its structure.

Choose one of the doors and go up close, touch it, look at its features, where it is placed, the materials used, its function etc.

Now find somewhere you can comfortably sit or stand where you can still see the door whilst you carry out your meditation.

Scripture Read the verses below more than once and think of what they mean to you.

Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to them, and will dine with them, and they with me. Revelation 3 v 20.

Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. Matthew 7 v 7.

Meditation Allow yourself to remember doors and thresholds you have experienced throughout your life.

Do the memories differ according to the occasion or activity taking place? Are the memories a mixture of happy and sad, positive and negative?

Are there doors in your life and circumstances you are hoping God will open for you?

Are there doors God is knocking on in your life hoping you will open for Him?

Poem You want a door you can be both sides of at once...But any open space may be a threshold, an arch of entry and leaving.
(From "Threshold" by Maggie Smith)

Prayer For the world: Across our world, please close the doors of violence and war, behind which councils of hatred and discord plan for evil and not for good. Please open all the doors where justice, love, and peace can flourish and Your will may be done.

For myself: Make me an instrument of Your peace. Please allow me to hear Your knock and to respond by opening my heart and mind to bid You welcome, and all that might mean.

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WEEK 2. TIME

Action Walk into the church Memorial Garden and take time to observe what is growing there today.

Stand by the sun dial and look at it closely, its structure, the materials it is made from, what use it is designed for.

Now find a seat where you can see the sun dial whilst you carry out your meditation.

Scripture Read the verses below more than once and think of what they mean to you.

There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3 v 1.

Oh Lord, You have searched me and known me You know when I sit down and when I rise up...You are intimately acquainted with all my ways You wove me in my mother's womb...and in Your book were written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. Psalm 139 v 1, 2, 3, 13, 16.

Meditation What do you feel when you think about God knowing you before you were even born?

How does it make you feel that God knows everything that has, and is, and will happen in your life?

When we talk about time, we use phrases such as wasting time, losing time, drifting, time passing by, making the most of time, grabbing time, borrowed time and time running out. At this point in your life, how are you feeling about how you use your time?

Poem Of time you would make a stream upon whose banks you would sit and watch its flowing. Yet the timeless in you is aware of life's timelessness, and knows that yesterday is but today's memory and tomorrow is today's dream. And that which sings and contemplates in you is still dwelling within the bounds of that first moment which scattered the stars into space. (From "The Prophet" by Kahil Gibran)

Prayer For the world: Thank you for building times and seasons into our world and our lives. As humankind, help us to take the long view about the wonder of creation and the history of the earth, and a short view about our part in relieving present day suffering and injustice.

For myself: Where there is hatred, let me bring love. Make me aware of Your timelessness and my own place in eternity. Day by day, please help me to know how to use my time wisely and in Your service, so that Your Kingdom may come on earth as it is in heaven.

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WEEK 3. LIVING WATER

Action Walk down to the river side. Find somewhere to sit and watch the water flowing.

Be aware of what can you see and hear around you connected with river life.

Scripture Read the verses below more than once and think of what they mean to you.

How blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked...they shall be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water. Psalm 1 v 1&3.

If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink. Anyone who believes in me, as the scripture said, from them shall flow rivers of living water. John 7 v 37&38.

Meditation How does the river speak to you about life?

Have you ever known physical thirst and appreciated the life-giving nature of water?

Have you ever known spiritual thirst and asked God to quench it?

Are you, or have you been, aware of rivers of living water flowing from you to others as you seek to love and serve God?

Where could you go, or what could you do to experience this if you wish to?

Poem If I were called in to construct a religion I should make use of water. Going to church would entail a fording to dry, different clothes; My liturgy would employ images of sousing, a furious devout drench, And I should raise in the east a glass of water where any-angled light. Would congregate endlessly. (Water by Philip Larkin)

Prayer For the world: Across the earth, where there is too much water that brings flooding, or too little water that brings draught and death, in Your mercy, please enable governments and charities to build systems and solutions that relieve and prevent suffering.

For myself: Where there is doubt, let me bring faith. Let me be aware of my life being planted by water and being fruitful. Please help me to be thirsty for Your presence so that rivers of living water may flow from me to others in all that I do.

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WEEK 4. RENEWAL

Action Enter the church yard and slowly walk around the large yew tree with the circular seat.

Study the bark, branches and berries, noting the textures and colours.

Now find a place to sit where you can see the tree whilst you carry out your meditation.

Scripture Read the verses below more than once and think of what they mean to you.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 2 Corinthians 5 v 17.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12 v 2.

Meditation Yew trees have grown in burial places for centuries. Christianity adopted these trees as symbols of renewal and resurrection.

Think about times in your life when there has been renewal – was it easy or did it grow out of times of difficulty?

Are there situations in your life today where God might wish to bring renewal, or clear the ground for planting new seeds for fresh growth?

Poem Roots accept their place in this world, their tentacles a hidden anchor for the tree's display of art and beauty.
The roots softly initiate renewal of a tree's spring growth, bare limbs morph to leafy glory, grabbing the accolades.
Yes, there are some things roots don't do – like show gratitude, mediate, offer prayer and worship. They leave those...to us.
(From "The Living Roots" by Roger C. Jones).

Prayer For the world: For all those people who are refugees, dispossessed and unable to put down roots in a safe place, we pray for Your mercy and protection. May You grant sustainable success for all the organisations and governments across the world seeking to bring relief and protection. May those suffering physical and spiritual devastation find peace and security in Your love as it is expressed through humanitarian aid.

For myself: Where there is despair, let me bring hope. Thank you for the places where I know you have rooted me and I feel strong. Please make me open and receptive to the areas of my life where my thoughts and actions need renewing. Help me to be a source of renewal wherever, and whoever, I serve.

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WEEK 5. AFTER DEATH

Action Walk slowly round the church yard and Memorial Garden taking in the gravestones and memorials to people who have died and are buried there.

Now find somewhere you can comfortably sit or stand where you can still see the memorial whilst you carry out your meditation.

Scripture Read the verses below more than once and think of what they mean to you.

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Job 1 v 21.

For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 1 Timothy 6 v 7.

Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life; anyone who believes in me shall live even if they die, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die". John 11 v 25&26.

Meditation What do you believe about where you will go after you die?

What would you like people to remember you for?

What legacy would you wish your life and faith to leave for others?

Are there things you need to do or say whilst you are still able so that you will not have any regrets?

Poem Finish, then, Thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love, and
praise!
(From the hymn "Love Divine , All Loves Excelling")

Prayer For the world: The world is so full of unnecessary pain and suffering, and so much fear and darkness. Please may Your people in every country and community shine in the darkness and bring Your light and life, Your hope and goodness, Your joy, peace and justice to every situation You place us in.

For myself: Where there is darkness, let me bring your light. Please make me so certain that in You I will never die, that death will hold no fear for me. May the light of that peace and hope spread to those I meet who are afraid about their future. May my emotions, actions and reactions speak to others about the security faith in You can bring.



ST MARY'S CHURCH

TWICKENHAM

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