

Dappled shade

Welcome to our reflection for Church without Walls

Here are some ideas of how to use these reflections:

Pray that God will lead your thoughts.

Sit comfortably, take a few deep breaths and relax.

Let your mind wander as you read the reflection. Write down your thoughts in a notebook. If you are busy, try and pick out something to take with you in odd moments during the day.

You may wish to memorise the Bible verse. Write it out and stick it up somewhere.

Bible Verse

*God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.
And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

(Genesis 1:5)



Reflection

We have had some lovely sunny weather recently but heat and sun all the time can feel quite harsh. When out walking I found myself inclined to move briefly out of the glare and into a place where the sunlight, partially blocked by a pattern of leaves,

created some wonderful dappled shade. I moved gently into the light and back into the shade. The changing patterns moved about me. It was beautiful. I thought for a while how this happens; sun shining, a tree in leaf, but not so fully as to block out all the light. The time of day and the time of year also play a part. The pattern I saw on the ground was formed by the shadow shape of leaves and branches – variety – each unique – and finally, not so far mentioned, the movement of the gentle breeze, stirring leaves and branches so that the light and shade moved, shimmered and danced together. The interplay of shape and form, light and shade, heat and cool lifted my spirits. It felt a real blessing.

Often we use light and dark in contrast as a metaphor for good and evil but, if we set this aside for a moment and look at the creation story, we see that in nature, God created both and named them. We need the day, the light, for activity and the night, the dark, for rest. Heat and coolness too are both needed.

Can you think of times recently when you have appreciated the light and warmth of these long days or, in contrast, the coolness of a breeze or of shade?

The interplay of light and dark in the dappled shade reminded me of life – phases of joy and of struggle, hope and doubt, confidence and anxiety, not always separate but sometimes curiously overlapping. Life's phases are rarely if ever static but move and shift like the tree shadows, sometimes exposed, sometimes sheltered, a picture always evolving.

Have you felt life changing or evolving into something different in recent times?

Have you sometimes been surprised at the way joys and troubles mingle together or overlap?

And of course there is the wind, the breeze which comes and goes unaccountably, raising and turning the leaves to bring life to the whole picture; the breeze which sets the dance of light and shade in motion.

The leaf patterns can be still or filled with life and movement. Can you observe some of this contrast in the phases of your own life?

“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

(John 3:8)

Lindsay Farley