

## Up Hill and Down Dale

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

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

(Philippians 4:5-7)

### Reflection



On Christmas day, seeing less of the family than would usually have been the case, we went on a long country walk. It was seasonally cold but bright and sunny. Whilst walking, I found myself noticing how many ups and downs there were, going steeply up for a way and then, inevitably, steeply down. Uphill was harder, more taxing, more physically demanding, taking more effort and concentration, sometimes boring, sometimes discouraging. Downhill, by contrast was more relaxing and easy going as gravity played a positive role. There was more breath left for conversation.

The up and down experience varied; the first was clearly visible ahead; a steep hill down and then its mirror image up on the other side. One knew exactly what was going to happen. Others were less obvious, going downhill easily and confidently, forgetting that the change would come and then, turning a corner, perhaps there would be a flight of steep steps leading straight up or winding up and around with no clear end in sight. How much further to go?

As I walked onwards, I began to compare these ups and downs to life. Sometimes these days, in lockdown, things can seem an uphill struggle. We miss the family gatherings, activities and opportunities of former times, the hairdresser and the dentist. Pre-pandemic times were, by comparison, downhill days but did we take for granted some of those many blessings when we had them? When they are restored will we value them better?

Perhaps give thanks now for all we have received in the past and pray with hope of better things ahead.

On both uphill and downhill stretches there were landmarks which gave encouragement; a beautiful view would open up, a church spire become visible, the sun would break through or another helpful signpost would say just 2 more miles to go.

What simple joys or positive facts give you encouragement now?



The pictures you can see are of the same path, simply taken from a different angle, looking up or looking down. So the same terrain looks different depending on where we stand. Are there helpful ways in which you might change your outlook?

The words from Philippians 4 may provide inspiration.

*Lindsay Farley*