

From the Manse: A Thought for the Week

Sunday 6th April 2025

Dear Friends,

As I have a dog, I seem to spend a lot of time in Anagach Woods. There's something sacred about walking in the wood—surrounded by towering trees, the rustling of leaves, and the quiet presence of creation. In a world filled with constant noise, notifications, and demands, stepping into the stillness of the woods can remind us of a deeper rhythm—one that is not rushed, not frantic, but steady and sure. God knows this, for Ezekiel 34:25 tells us:

“I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.”

In Scripture, the wilderness is often a place of encounter—a place where people meet God in stillness, in struggle, and in revelation.

Moses met God in the burning bush on a mountainside, a moment that changed the course of history.

Elijah, exhausted and afraid, fled to the wilderness and heard God—not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire—but in a gentle whisper.

Even Jesus, amid His ministry, often withdrew to lonely places to pray, to be alone with the Father.

When we are in the woods, the peace we often find there can thankfully remind us that sometimes we need to step away from the distractions of daily life to truly hear God's voice.

Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

But being still is not always easy. We are so used to filling the silence—checking our phones, listening to music, keeping busy. Stillness can feel unfamiliar, even uncomfortable. And yet, it is in stillness that we begin to sense God's presence in ways we might otherwise miss.

Among the trees, there is no rush. The trees don't hurry to grow; they simply stand, their roots deep and their branches stretched toward heaven. The birds do not worry about tomorrow; they sing because today is a gift. The seasons move in rhythm, changing at the right time, trusting in the Creator's design.

And we, too, are invited to slow down—to breathe deeply, to listen, to rest in the presence of the One who holds all things together.

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." How often do we take Him up on that invitation? How often do we allow ourselves to simply be with God, without agenda, without distraction?

I wonder, where do you find stillness? When was the last time you stepped away from the noise and simply listened?

Maybe this week, you will find a moment to pause—to step outside, to walk slowly, to notice the beauty around you. To be reminded that God is present, not just in the extraordinary moments of life, but in the quiet, the simple, the everyday.

Peace and blessings,

Rev Jade 