



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

John 1: 1-5 'The Word Became Flesh'

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.



Recently I took a burial service at Ocklynge Cemetery – a rare thing for me to do. The cemetery has been ‘closed’ for a few years now – the only burials permitted are where family have already arranged a plot or space already provided for a person. As you can see from the picture, it was a clear, cool, autumnal day, and I parked on Eldon Road and walked along the long path to the other side of the grounds, a distance of probably 200-300 meters as a guess.

What was extraordinary on this occasion, was the sound that filled my ears. As I started along the path, a cacophony of sound came from Cavendish School – must have been break-time – and the shouts, squeals and cheers filled the air. As I continued the Cavendish kids receded into the background, and Motcombe Infants School took over – they’d be delighted I am sure that they were just as loud, if slightly higher-pitched! Then closer to the graveside still, these noises receded and I was left with a mixture of the sounds of birds in the air (with the occasional HGV thrown in). It felt like a moment of real disconnectedness – my eyes were surveying graves and monuments and headstones – while my ears were filled with sounds of activity, nature, and life. Very strange, in a way, to be seeing one thing and hearing something completely different.

It gave me a spring in my step, and I knew God was here. I knew God was present for those gathered in sorrow to remember a life lived. I knew God had been present in every moment of that life we were gathering to celebrate. And I was reminded – and I suspect we all need reminding by God sometimes – that God’s light and God’s life are stronger than anything we can face on this earth. The Prologue to John’s Gospel expresses this reality, and like the sound of children playing or bird’s singing, reminds us this Advent that we celebrate at Christmas God’s light and life coming into our world. Let us receive the life Jesus Christ in our midst with joy.

Prayer:

It is winter	cracking under ice	
It is snow	dancing to earth	
It is sky	blue light through leafless trees	
It is oak	bare fingers, veins, arms upraised	
It is sun	low burning candle white	
It is a gap	a space	a breaking
It is a giggle	a gurgle	a cry
It is the child		
and unto him we are born.		