

## Stop and Stare - Lent 2026

*Leisure by W H Davies*

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?  
No time to stand beneath the boughs,  
And stare as long as sheep and cows:  
No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:  
No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:  
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance:  
No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began?  
A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.



This may be a very northern Europe centric poem, but it does deal with a modern global issue, of being over busy. How often do we say, doesn't time fly, or we comment on something that seems like just yesterday when it is a good few years ago. Life appears to rush on, at full speed, and we get caught up in so many things. So, this Lent I am inviting you to 'Stop and Stare'.

To create a small amount of space to reflect on life, the universe and everything, in other words on God. To make space and take time to take note of anything that comes to mind and, most importantly, listen to what God may be saying to you. We will be using William Henry Davis's poem and I encourage you to take time using these short sessions to explore where God is and what He is placing on your heart.

Each session read the whole poem and then the extract from the poem and then sit and ponder it. What does it bring to mind? What thoughts spring from it? You might like to have something to write on to make some notes of what comes to mind. If you are with a group explore the questions together; if alone, ponder them each for a few minutes before moving on.

Each week you may like to have an object or a picture of a wonder or beauty that inspires you. If you are in a group, you may like to share it with others, as we all try to 'Stop and Stare' this Lent.

At the end of each session, read the whole poem through once again, pause, and then you might like to use this Celtic Benediction as a closing prayer.

**Deep peace of the running wave to you.  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.  
Deep peace of the infinite peace to you  
Amen**

Finally, thank you to members of the congregation who have supplied the photos from around the island which I have used in this leaflet.

## Week 1

**What is this life if,  
full of care,  
We have no time  
to stand and stare?**

### **Psalm 55:22**

*Cast your cares on the LORD  
and he will sustain you.*

What does 'full of care' say to you?



What bible texts can you think of that offer help when we feel burdened?

Can you think of times when Jesus appeared to be full of care?

Often the most important step to dealing with cares and worries is to acknowledge them.

What do you believe is the most serious 'care' for:

You personally?

The Church?

The world?

You may like to write down your thoughts so you can come back to them later.

Take time to think about these, then in a time of prayer hand them over to God.

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## Week 2

**No time to stand  
beneath the boughs,  
And stare as long  
as sheep and cows:**

### **Matthew 11:22**

*Come to Me,  
all who are weary and heavy-laden,  
and I will give you rest.*



Taking time out is important; it can prevent serious illness and being mindful of our needs is important to our ability to engage with others.

Think of some of the times when Jesus took time out.

How do you know when it is time to take time to recharge?

How do you recharge?

Can you think of some who may find taking time out difficult and challenging? How might we help?

Can you think of something specific you might do for someone this Lent to help them take time out?

## Week 3

**No time to see,  
when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide  
their nuts in grass:  
No time to see,  
in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars,  
like skies at night:**



The above refer to ordinary things that too often are overlooked in the busyness of life. God is present in the ordinary as well as the extraordinary.

Can you think of a way in which the ordinariness of life speaks of the extraordinary nature of God?

**Psalm 8.** Read it quietly a few times

*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,*

*the moon and the stars that you have established;*

*what are human beings that you are mindful of them,*

*mortals that you care for them?*

*Yet you have made them a little lower than God*

*and crowned them with glory and honour.*

*You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;*

*you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen,*

*and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,*

*whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

What does it say to you about the wonder of creation?

What challenges do you think it gives us?

How do you think this should shape our concern for the environment?

Note one thing that you could do this week to appreciate the world around us.

## Week 4

**No time to turn  
at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet,  
how they can dance:**

### **Genesis 1:31**

*Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*

What aspects of creation most cause you to catch your breath in wonder?

Can you recall a particular moment when creation held you captive with its beauty?

How can we learn not to take the beauty of the world around us for granted?

In what ways does the natural world speak to you of God?

In what ways does the natural world challenge your faith?

Note some of the challenges we face both individually and globally.



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## Week 5

**A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time  
to stand and stare.**

Stopping is important, we are human beings not human doings. There is something special about being present in the moment, without thinking about the next thing. To sit and to be.

### **Psalms 46:10**

*Be still and know that I am God*

How often are you quiet before God?

Do you find silence helpful in sitting with God or do you need to fill the space? If so, why might this be?

What are the advantages and the disadvantages to silence?

Do you manage to find quiet time in the week to sit and be? If so, how and when?

In many ways, our lives have become overly busy and noisy. Life in past times was slower as in general it took longer to do things. What 'old' practices do you think people could benefit from in this busy world?

Is there one thing you might try to slow down and have time to 'stand and stare'?

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