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## Walking with Psalm 23

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**Introduction:** This walk will take you from Wallingford Baptist Church, along the river and into Castle Meadows. There are places for you to stop and read part of Psalm 23. As you walk from one place to the next there will be some ideas for reflection (in purple). You may find it helpful to have a stone (or several small stones) with you.

### Starting Point: Wallingford Baptist Church (Thames Street, Wallingford OX10 0BH)

*The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need (Psalm 23:1)*

From the church walk down towards the High Street (with St Peter's Church on your right). Cross the road and follow the Thames Path signs down to the river (to the left of the Boat House pub). Stop at one of the seats along the path.

As you walk think about what this first verse of the Psalm means for you.

Think about what it means for the Lord to be your shepherd.

In what way does that mean that you have all that you need?"



### Take a seat by the river

Here is verse 2 in different translations.

*He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams*

*He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water*

*He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters*



As you sit (and as you continue to walk) reflect on these questions.

What does rest look like for you?

Do you feel that rest is something God lets you do or something he has to make you do?

What things prevent you from resting and being refreshed? (This is what your stone/stones are representing)

What does God want to say to you about this today?

## Continue walking along the river until you reach a small wooden bridge

Stop here for a while and read and reflect on the first part of verse 3 in these different translations – the result of the rest and refreshment that the Shepherd provides for us.

He renews my strength

True to your word, you let me catch my breath

He restores my soul

He gives me new strength

He refreshes my soul

He restores my inner person



In what ways have you seen the benefit of this rest and refreshment?

Reflect again on those things which are preventing you from resting and being refreshed.

As you feel ready to do so, then lay those things down by throwing your stone(s) - carefully - into the water.

## Keep walking along the path until you reach the gate into the field



Read the second part of verse 3 in these different translations

He guides me along right paths, bringing honour to his name

You send me in the right direction

He guides me in the right paths, as he has promised

He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake

Now go through the gate and follow the path across the field to the gate at the far side. As you do so think about areas of your life where you need to be 'guided in the right paths' or where you need God to point you in the right direction.



**Continue through the gate on the far side into Castle Meadows.**



**As you reach the top of the slope take the path to your left and you will come across a gate into a small 'nature reserve'**



**Go through this gate and stand at the top of the steps**



*Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)*

*I know that this isn't a 'dark valley' but as you go down the steps into it think about those times when you have walked through dark times.*



**Stand by the pond for a while before going back up the steps you came down.**



Thank God for bringing you through those dark times - thank him for his protection and presence then and now. Pray for those you know going through dark times at the moment that they will also know his loving presence with them.

**Turn left once you have come back through the gate and make your way along the path to the information board about Wallingford Castle**



Stop here for a while and look at the place where the castle once stood.

You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.  
You honour me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.  
(Psalm 23:5)

Think about the feasts or banquets that may have been served in this castle.

However lavish a feast we can imagine, that is nothing compared to all the good things the Lord has provided for us, is providing for us now and will provide for us in the future. These are the things that no-one can destroy or take away from us.

As you head back the way you came – or continue your journey elsewhere take a few minutes to think about the final verse of our Psalm.

*Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

*I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;  
and your house will be my home as long as I live.*

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