

St Paul's Surroundings: Wellbeing Trail

Wellbeing means different things to different people. It has a lot to do with how we feel about ourselves and our lives. Our sense of wellbeing is always changing and being influenced by different factors that are both in and outside of ourselves. Some of these are out of our control but we can help our wellbeing by regularly taking time to check in with ourselves, reflecting on what we need.

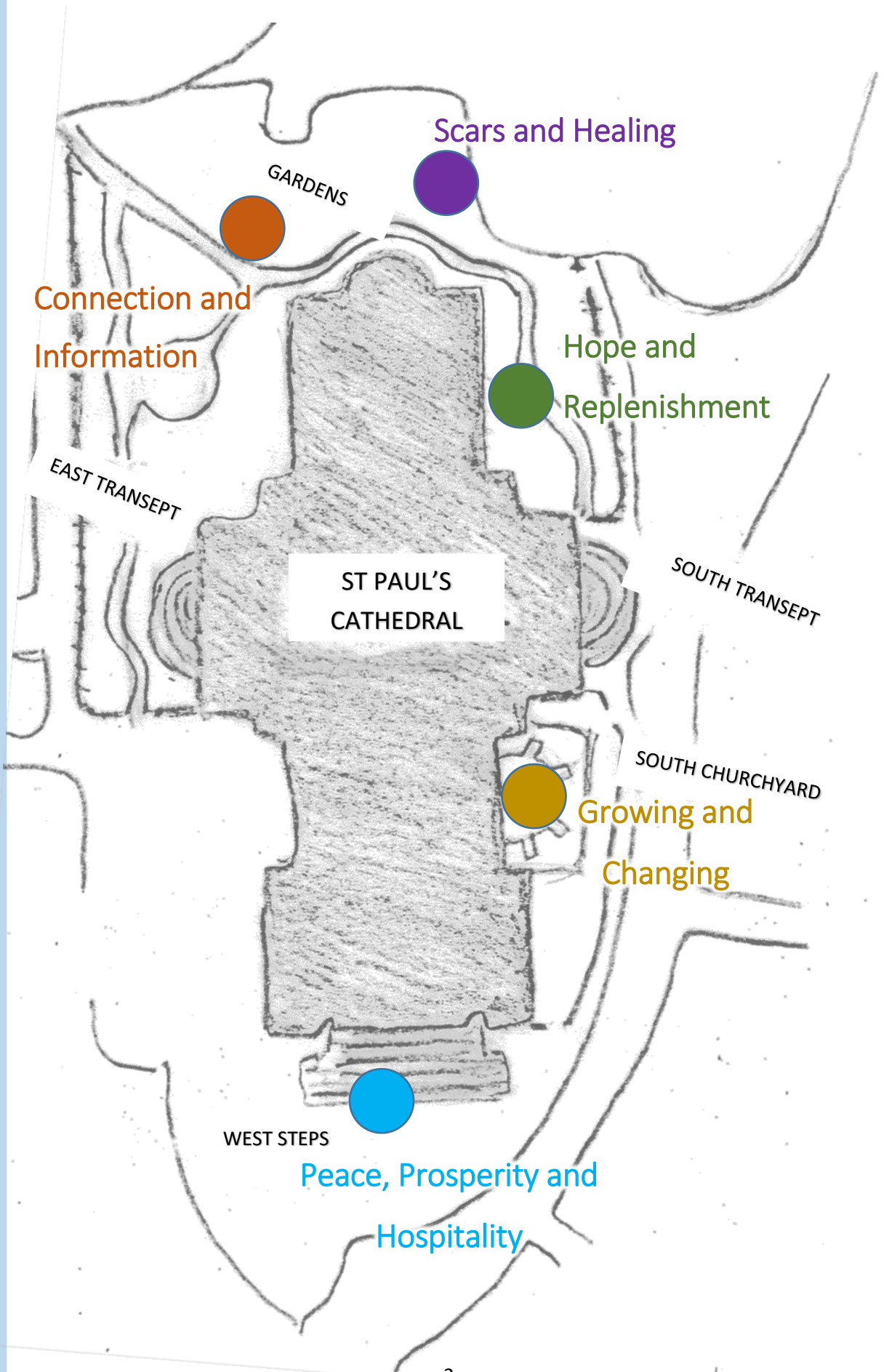
We'd like to invite you to take some time out of your day, to notice things you can see, hear, touch and smell around you. Our trail has five short reflections which can be done in any order. Each invites you to take notice of what surrounds St Paul's Cathedral and to reflect on themes and questions to do with wellbeing.

You might want to do all the reflections in one go or you might want to dip into one or two. Each takes a few minutes. If you'd like to learn more about wellbeing, there are some links at the end of the document to places where you can access more information and support.

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Map



Peace, Prosperity and Hospitality

St Paul's West Steps sit at a busy intersection with hundreds of people passing by every day. Noticing detail can help us ground ourselves and feel a moment of peace.

Take a moment to look at what's around you. Notice people passing by, the traffic and the buildings. Think of all the layers of buildings and lives that make up a city.

What can you see? How does it make you feel to notice these things?

Look up at the Cathedral. Can you see the gold ornaments on top of the towers?

They are pineapples.

In the 17th Century, when St Paul's was built, pineapples had to be imported from South America. They were incredibly expensive and rare. Pineapples would be the centrepiece at dinner parties and were often not even eaten but only viewed and revered. Some people would even rent a pineapple for an evening or display them outside their doors to welcome guests.

Pineapples became a symbol of peace, prosperity, and hospitality.

What object would symbolise peace, prosperity, and hospitality for you? It might be a particular item or something more abstract like a colour or a shape.

Take some time to visualise this image in your mind and take some deep, steady breaths. How does this make you feel?

Did you know that St Dunstan's Chapel is available for anyone who wants to come into the Cathedral to sit quietly, reflect and pray without paying to come in as a tourist? For up-to-date opening times please check the St Paul's Cathedral [website](#).

Growing and Changing

On the floor in the [South Churchyard](#) we can see the footprint and map of the old St Paul's Cathedral which was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666.

Take some time to slowly [walk](#) around the outline of the old cathedral.

[Notice](#) the steps you are taking and the feeling of your feet being in touch with the ground. [Listen](#) to the sounds around you.

The Virtual Paul's Cross Project made an acoustic model of how the space around the Cathedral would have sounded in Medieval times. Tap [here](#) to listen.

[What do you notice that's different about the soundscape of the past to the soundscape of today? What do you notice that's similar?](#)

St Paul's Cathedral has gone through many changes. The first church building on this site in 604AD looked more like a house than a cathedral. In the Medieval period, St Paul's was used as a thoroughfare and marketplace. In the 18th Century, People used the cathedral as a meeting place and even walked their dogs inside. St Paul's has been and continues to be a place for the people of London and it has adapted to suit the city's needs over time.

[Change](#) is something that happens inside all of us as we grow and learn. Sometimes [change](#) can be challenging but it can also be a sign we are [learning and adapting](#) to things around us. [Changing](#) can make us [better equipped to deal with the world](#).

[Can you think about a time of personal change and the things you learnt from it? How did it make you who you are today?](#)

You can learn more about the history of St Paul's Cathedral and how it has changed over time [here](#).

Hope and Replenishment

The **South Side Garden** offers a brief escape from the city and can be a good place for taking moments of **quiet** and **reflection**.

Take some time to **stand or sit or walk around** in the garden. **Take some deep breaths**, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

What can you see and hear? What can you smell? Maybe you notice the sounds of bells and birds or the smell of plants and earth.

Gardens give us a place to **notice and connect** with nature. They give us a space to become **nourished** and **replenished**.

Look up at St Paul's. Can you see the carvings in the stonework?

The carvings of fruit, plants and shells remind us of nature's power to replenish us. In the hard surfaces of the city, we can find still moments of the softness of nature. The stonework carries reminders of nature's cycle of life. In winter and through difficult times they can give us hope for the future.

Sometimes we can find it hard to find **hope** within ourselves and we need to look to the world around us. **Special objects and replenishing surroundings** can give us a grounding to start thinking hopefully about our lives and the future.

Can you think of an object or a place that helps you feel rejuvenated and hopeful? Take some time to picture this in your mind and focus on how it makes you feel.

St Paul's became a symbol of hope for the people of London during the Second World War. You can read a story about this [here](#).

Scars and Healing

St Paul's Cathedral has stood here for hundreds of years. From afar the building looks white and pristine but in the stonework of the building in the [East End Garden](#), you can see some of the effects of what St Paul's has been through.

Find the blemishes in the stonework

What do they feel like to touch? What do they make you think of?

These marks were made by flying shrapnel from high-explosive bombs which fell through the North and East roof of the Cathedral and onto the surrounding areas during the London Blitz in 1940 and 1941.

In his poem, *From the Log Book*, Keith Jarrett describes St Paul's as carrying 'whispers of scars'

We all carry [whispers of scars](#), emotional and physical. The [scars](#) on St Paul's remind us that none of us are perfect and our [scars](#) testify to our [strength](#) and our [body's capacity to heal and recover](#).

If you feel comfortable to, take a moment to think about the scars you have and what stories they tell about your strength and resilience.

To learn more about Keith Jarrett's poem and to see a video of *Where the Light Falls*, an installation of light, poetry and history, tap [here](#).

Connection and Information

On the floor in the **North East Garden** is a monument: St Paul's Cross.

From the 13th Century until the Great Fire in 1666, St Paul's Cross stood in the middle of a busy assembly place and square. Sermons began to be preached here and people came from all around London to meet and hear news.

Take some time to **walk** around the monument and **notice** how busy or quiet the garden is around you today.

Try to imagine what it might have felt like when this was a busy, noisy place, full of people talking and exchanging information.

St Paul's Cross was once a point of **connection** for Londoners, just as it is really important for most people today to **connect with others** and **keep up to date** with what's going on. Sometimes it's important to take some time to reflect on the information we interact with so we can **cultivate our own voice** and **practise thinking for ourselves**.

Every one of us has a unique **worldview** which is influenced by our **experiences, beliefs** and **values**. Our **worldview** can affect how we respond to different ideas and issues.

Take a moment to think about the last time you read or heard a piece of news. How did you react to it? What does your reaction tell you about your core beliefs and values =?

Emily Downe's animation, *Nobody Stands Nowhere* explains the concept of worldviews in more detail. To watch the video, tap [here](#).

Further Information and Support

"It's alright to
ask for help"

SAMARITANS

116 123

If you're ever in distress, feeling suicidal or just need someone to talk to, you can call the Samaritans for free on **116 123** at any time of day or night, 365 days of the year. Further information can be found on the Samaritans website [here](#).



If you're under 18 and would like to speak to someone about how you are feeling you can call Childline on **0800 1111**. An online chat and other recourses can be found on their website [here](#).



For more information on Wellbeing and how to practise good self-care, check out Mind's 5 Ways to Wellbeing toolkit [here](#).



If you would like to speak to someone about something that is worrying you, a priest is always available. Please ask a member of staff as you come into the Cathedral.