

EVENTS

April-June 2024

Arranged by many centres and organisations across the UK. Compiled by **Living Spirituality Connections**

www.livingspirit.org.uk

Event not included in our Jan-March listing:

Wed 27 March 7-9pm. Easter Online Retreat with Anna Robinson.

<https://www.livelightdwelldeep.org>

2 hours of quiet meditation and reflection to contemplate Easter, for spiritual nomads, sojourners and seekers. Pause, notice, reflect and respond to the season in this LGBTQ affirming and inclusive contemplative online space.

Take some time for yourself, to slow down, still the body and the mind and listen to the longings of your soul. Reflect on your connection to the season of Easter, what it has meant to you and what it means now. Contemplate the Divine Mystery, Loving Presence, Ground of all Being, Love, God (substitute your preferred name here). Be guided in meditation, contemplative practices, ancient and new.

April

Wed 3 April Images of God. Near Perth. <https://www.biieldatblackruthven.org.uk/>

The Bible speaks of God with a wonderful diversity of images but, for many of us, our vocabulary is quite limited. Having a deep well of images to draw upon matters because it helps open our awareness to ways in which God might be speaking to us; deepens how we can come into relationship with God; and helps us avoid limiting God to our cultural assumptions which might exclude others. Why not join us for the day as we begin to experience the joy that comes from opening to the diverse ways God seeks to come into relationship with us?

Wed 3 – Sun 7 April Nomadland: Living Missionally in a Constantly Shifting Culture. Led by **Luke Cawley**. Devon. <https://leeabbeydevon.org.uk/>

Our culture seems to be in constant state of flux and evolution, and it's easy to feel like we're running several steps behind in our attempts to engage people around us

with the story and message of Jesus. During our week together we'll explore the challenges and opportunities of our present moment, and some of the ways we can respond — both as individuals, and as communities; in word and in action. We'll begin developing a plan for recalibrating our own lives so that we can continue to partner effectively with God in his mission to the people and places around us.

Tues 9 April. Sacred Chanting Music Retreat. Lancs. www.whalleyabbey.org

A day of profound peace and self-reflection through the transformative power of Sacred Chanting Music. Immerse yourself in the age-old traditions of Gregorian chant. These chants are often used as a form of prayer, meditation, worship, or spiritual practice, and are believed to have the power to evoke feelings of peace, transcendence, and connection to the divine.

Fri 12 April 4-6 online. Animist Christianity: Tending Your Wild Heart with Our Beloved Plant Kin. Led by **Lindsay Sudeikis**. <https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar/>

We will contemplate and connect with our beloved plant kin, as Jesus, Mary, and so many saints have done for centuries.

Fri 12 April 10-4 Desert Experience. Led by Revd **Aubin de Gruchy**. Cornwall. <https://epiphanyhouse.co.uk>

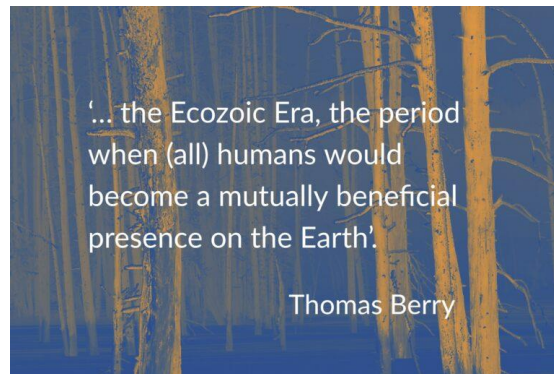
Take time to quietly explore the possibilities of life and faith in the desert. The devastation of fire leading to new life in the South African fynbos. Discover flourishing new life when the rain falls in the Namaqualand. Celebrate the refreshing joy of streams in the desert. With reflective music composed by Oliver Jones.

Sat 13 April 10.30 - 4. Beholding Divine Beauty. **Laurence Freeman** will talk about this year's theme for the World Community for Christian Meditation. London and online. <https://meditatiocentrelondon.org/>

The theology of creativity is the theology of the Holy Spirit. Beauty is a name for God. We will explore Beauty, Goodness and the Act of Creation in all senses, including art, theology and social justice. As we struggle with ecological as well as political and economic emergencies, a deeper understanding of beauty, goodness, and creativity may release both the joy and wisdom we need to stay centred and draw on the most life-giving and positive powers of our shared humanity.

Sunday 14 April 6 – 7.15 pm. Changing Our Minds in conversation with **Sandy Bigtree, Mohawk Nation, and Prof Philip P Arnold**. Booking and Zoom link from:

<https://www.sjp.org.uk/earth-justice/changing-our-minds/>



Sandy Bigtree, Bear Clan, is a citizen of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne. She is a founding board member of the Indigenous Values Initiative which fosters collaborative educational work between the academic community and the Haudenosaunee to promote the message of peace that was brought to Onondaga Lake thousands of years ago. Sandy is a multi-media performance artist, and the Sandy Bigtree Band was well known throughout the 1970s.

Prof Philip P. Arnold is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Syracuse University, and a core faculty member of Native American and Indigenous Studies. He was the Founding Director of the 'Skä·noñh – 'Great Law of Peace Center', which repurposes the site that formerly celebrated the Jesuits coming to Onondaga Nation Territory. He is the President of the Indigenous Values Initiative which educates the general public about the indigenous values of the Haudenosaunee.

This event is part of a series called **Changing our Minds**, put on by the Earth Justice Project at St James's Church Piccadilly.

Mon 15 - Fri 19 April Earth Matters: Bodily Being. Led by **Carla Grosch-Miller**. Devon.

<https://www.sheldonretreat.com>

In this time of ecological crisis, our bodily being - interdependent with other creatures and creation – gives us tools to survive and thrive, meeting the challenges of the day. Drawing on neuroscience, scripture, poetry and music, we will explore bodily being in sessions including: Here we are, Breath, Grief, Gratitude, Wonder.

This is a silent retreat with addresses and it will culminate in a Service of Holy Communion.

Carla Grosch-Miller is a practical theologian and poet, writing and lecturing on trauma and on the integration of sexuality and spirituality. She was ordained in the United Church of Christ (US) and has served churches in the US and the UK through the United Reformed Church. Her books include *Psalms redux: Poems and prayers*, *Lifelines: Wrestling the Word*, *Gathering up Grace* and *Trauma and Pastoral Care: A ministry handbook*.

Wed 17 April 10 - 3. Start of Felting Connections series during April and May with **Linda Courage**. St Bede's Pastoral Centre, York. Run in collaboration with **Living Spirituality Connections**. <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/whats-on/felt-making-as-a-spiritual-practice/>



Over these four workshop sessions you are invited to explore felt making as a spiritual practice. Slow down and spend time making a felt in the beautiful new art space at St Bede's, exploring and reflecting on the process.

Each session will begin with a catch up time and a heart centred meditation. You will be encouraged to journal within and between sessions. All felting materials will be provided but you will need a waterproof bag and towels so that you can take home your felt with you between sessions. Drying your felt at home using heat will enhance its making

17/04 Exploring felt making processes & making personal connections

24/04 Setting out to make a substantial felt of your own

01/05 Looking for beauty in your work & enhancing with stitch & symbols

08/05 Observing & cooperating with your felt & celebrating its meaning



Linda is a contemplative expressive artist. She has facilitated creative workshops to help people connect with themselves for many years. She is Arts and Spirituality coordinator for Living Spirituality Connections and a member of the Abbey of the Arts.

For further details or to book a place contact Fiona Hill at fiona@stbedes.org.uk

Thurs 18 April 7 - 9.45 pm. Online. Start of **Faith Shift/Deconstruction Group** with **Anna Robinson**. <https://www.livelihoodwelldeep.org/faith-shift/faith-shift/deconstruction-group-aeb5l>

The group consists of 8 people sharing their journeys and stories over 6 zoom sessions online. It runs over a three month period of bi-weekly (some weekly) sessions.

Going through a shift in faith, a deconstruction, a re-examining and re imaging of a held belief system, can be painful, scary, disorientating and often isolation. You may have left a church or still be in a church, all are welcome. Everyone's experience is different and valid and sharing our experiences can be helpful and freeing and we can feel less alone in the unravelling process.

The benefit of such a small group is everyone gets plenty of time to share and listen to one another's journeys. Although this is not a therapy group, we believe it has the potential to be therapeutic as we meet and share in a held, inclusive and accepting space. It allows for time to process your own thoughts and feelings and draw wisdom from your own journey as well as from others in the group.

Group dates: 18/04, 02/05, 16/05, 23/05, 06/06, 13/06 and reunion date: 05/09.
Look at the website for costs.

Thurs 18 April 10-4. Where Are You God? – Retreat Day. Led by **Steph Nada**. Surrey.
<https://www.stcolumbashouse.org.uk/>

A day retreat for anyone who has struggled to reconcile their Christian faith with the reality of the world's dark places. Through a thoughtful blend of guided reflections, worship, space and creativity, we will seek to draw near to God, together. This retreat day is suitable for all.

Fri 19 - Sun 21 April. Finding God in the Garden. North East Wales.
<https://www.beunos.com>

In the Bible spiritual growth is likened to the natural development processes of plants, and the part played by gardeners, whether human or divine. Through working, praying and reflecting in St. Beuno's beautiful grounds and gardens, this retreat will explore how we might cooperate with the movement of the Spirit within our lives. Jesus, the teller of parables, invites us to hold the mystery of creation in mind and heart, like seed in the hand of a sower. 'Look', he says. 'See what happens if you are grounded in God's good soil. Behold the wonder of who you are and what you might become.'

Fri 19 – Mon 22 April Ecological Homecoming: Nature Connection Retreat. Led by **Kim Harrison and Jack Durtnall.** Lake District. <https://glenthorne.org>

A restorative retreat deepening our connection with creation and our place within it. Core routines based on the '8 shields' model cultivate an embodied sense of ecological homecoming. Feeling more supported by the web of life, we can step forth into our climate/social justice witness. An opportunity to pause and simply BE. Coming into presence and slowing down is a radical act in our fast-paced world countering the 'urgency culture' within climate/social justice movements, which often leads to burnout. Regular nature connection practices alongside like-minded Friends can support and rejuvenate us. We will be mostly outdoors, so please bring appropriate clothing. Kim is an art therapist, an Eco therapist, forest school teacher and nature-based mindfulness guide; she has over 13 years of experience of direct-action campaigning and political lobbying. Jack is a musician and trained nature connection facilitator; he has been actively involved in deep nature connection since 2016. In Partnership with <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

Anyone aged 18-35 can book a Woodbrooke course for half the listed price.

Fri 19 - Sun 21 April. A time to dance - embracing every season of life. Led by **Alison MacTier.** Surrey. <https://www.christian-retreat.org>

A weekend to explore and celebrate the changing seasons of our lives within the context of the natural world around us. We reflect on scripture, poetry, image and guided meditations.

Fri 19 - to Sun 21 April. Beyond the view. Led by **John Fleetwood.** N. Yorks. <https://scargillmovement.org/>

An exploration of how to connect with God through nature. The real world is more interesting and mysterious than we might ever have imagined, and we are rooted in this mystery. The aim is to explore this mystery through rich experience and reflection, leading to a purposeful response in how we live our lives. We will consider beauty, awe, wonder, deep time, wilderness, liminal space, belonging and rhythms, spending some time outside to experience nature, and also inside, to reflect on this experience and to consider images that illustrate spiritual learnings from nature.

John Fleetwood is the author of '*Beyond The View*', a founder of <https://www.mountainpilgrims.org.uk>, and a keen photographer, mountaineer and long-distance walker.

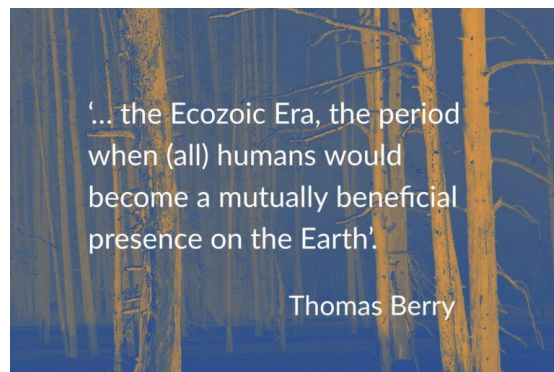
Sat 20 April 10 - 4. Uniting Heaven and Earth with Celtic Harper **Julie Darling**. York.
<https://www.stbedes.org.uk>

A day of reflection with Celtic harp, poetry and prayer.

Sat 20 April 10.30 - 12.30 online. **'Exploring spirituality today'** with **Diarmuid O'Murchu**. A Cana Conscious Conversation. There are break-out groups for sharing and discussion after each talk. <https://www.cana.org.uk/>

Please email Bill at admin@cana.org.uk if you would like to participate.

Sunday 21 April 6 - 7.15 pm. In conversation with **Dr Lyla June Johnston**, Diné Nation. **Indigenous sciences of sustainability: ancient native food systems and their lessons for the future**. The last in the series put on by St James's Church Piccadilly called *Changing our Minds. Learning to be Ecozoic*. <https://www.sjp.org.uk/earth-justice/changing-our-minds/>



Dr Lyla June Johnston (aka Lyla June) is an Indigenous musician, scholar, and community organizer of Diné (Navajo), Tsétsêhéstâhese (Cheyenne) and European lineages. Her messages focus on Indigenous rights, supporting youth, traditional land stewardship practices and healing inter-generational cultural trauma. Her doctoral research focused on the ways in which pre-colonial Indigenous Nations shaped large regions of Turtle Island (aka the Americas) to produce abundant food systems for humans and non-humans.

Wed 24 April 2 - 5 on Zoom. **Rituals in a Time of Ecological Crisis** course. Led by **Cláudio Carvalhaes**, Professor of Worship at Union Theological Seminary and activist.
www.sarum.ac.uk

Becoming Green People and Earth Communities

How can Christians respond to this overwhelming time using rituals as forms of enacting mourning, resistance and liberation? We will explore life under the notion of the

Anthropocene, a geological era defined by the devastating effects of human activity on the climate and environment and learn how to establish rituals of relation with the land around us.

We will consider three movements as we seek to address the ecological crises we are facing: Inventory, Metamorphoses, and Emergenc(i)es. We will combine analysis and practices that put together our past, present and future. The goal is to find ways to become green people and earth communities.

Wed 24 - Fri 26 April. Celtic Spirituality: The Journey of the Heart. Led by Dr **Peter Ruxton**. Near Oxford. <https://www.rcc.ac.uk/celtic-spirituality-journey-heart>

Celtic Spirituality has undergone a significant revival in recent times – many lives have been touched and changed by this renaissance. The purpose of this retreat is to look back at the original spirituality and historical context of the Celtic Saints - what evidence do we have and who actually were they? Within the context of Biblical teaching, what was their spirituality? How can we benefit from their spiritual vigour and richness in our modern-day faith journeys?

The outer journey of the Celtic peregrini was driven by the inner journey in their hearts. What do the Celtic Saints have to teach us about this inner journey? What practical steps do they recommend for our spiritual journeys today?

Wed 24 - Fri 26 April. Self-care for Eco Souls. Led by **Laura Deacon**. Near Bath. <https://www.ammerdown.org/>

How do we take care of ourselves and each other in the current climate emergency? A Springtime residential course, collaboratively led and focused on self-care and creative expression. This course is for anyone passionate about the current climate crisis and will offer a shared experiential learning environment through workshops, speakers, creative activity, mindfulness, and meditation in the natural surroundings of Ammerdown.

This course is focused on how we care for ourselves and each other in our personal and community work towards climate justice, whilst living in a Climate Emergency. The residential will suit anyone who enjoys self-expression through nature centred poetry, reflection, storytelling, and art and for those who would like to find their voice in the landscape of environmental and social justice issues.

Fri 26 - Mon 29 April. Be still and know that I am God': Exploring Mindfulness, Psychology and the Christian life. North East Wales. <https://www.beunos.com/> *_continued.....*

This weekend will explore the human condition through your own life story, in the context of the Gospel story and the Christian spiritual life, using mindfulness skills and contemplative Christian prayer. A past participant said: 'This was one of the most profound experiences I have had. Something moved in me and changed me for the better'.

Steve Noone is a recently retired clinical psychologist who has used mindfulness skills extensively in his practice and teaching.

Liz Lord is a tutor on the MSt in Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) at the University of Oxford. Formally an assistant head teacher and worked in education, at all levels for over 20 years and before that, a management accountant working for AstraZeneca.

Fr Roger Dawson SJ is a Jesuit priest, previous director of St Beuno's and trained as a clinical psychologist.

Sat 27 April 10 - 4. Becoming Whom We Behold – Praying with Julian of Norwich. Led by **Fr Bruce Batstone**. Surrey. <https://www.christian-retreat.org>

A day reflecting on the Divine Love revealed to the Lady Julian which has much to show us about darkness and suffering, the beauty of creation, and God's-mother-like love.

27 April – 3 May. Wildlife Week. Led by **David Coleman**. Scotland. www.iona.org.uk
Draw on the resources of community living and faith to activate or sustain your activism in response to catastrophic climate change and ecological breakdown.

Mon 29 Apr – Fri 3 May The Call of the Wild, The Feel of the Holy. Led by **Russ Parker and Michael Mitton**, who have been leading pilgrimages in Ireland, the British Isles and Assisi for over twelve years. Devon. <https://leeabbeydevon.org.uk>

This week participants will be going on a pilgrimage using the landscape of the Lee Abbey Estate and Valley of Rocks as they visit the themes of shoreline, forest, waters and high places. There will be opportunities for pilgrims to receive God's blessings in relation to these vibrant themes. There will be also teaching, silent reflection, conversation and encounter, all wonderfully rooted in a rhythm of worship.

May

Sat 11 May 'Love was our Lord's meaning' – a reflective exploration of God's love for

us, from the perspectives of Julian of Norwich and Ignatius of Loyola. A quiet day with **Sheelagh Daly**. London. <https://sisters-of-st-andrew.com>

Mon 13 May 11.30 - 3. The Cloud of Unknowing. Led by **Donna Worthington**. Lostock Hall, Lancs.

Explore this incredible mystical text written in the 14th C, a profound guide on prayer. For bookings, please contact the Parish office on 01772 335387 or Email – office@saintgerards.org.uk

Thurs 16 - Sun 19 May. Resilient Spirit. A retreat with **Kiran Young Wimberly** - musician, resilience trainer and American Presbyterian minister based at the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland. West Dorset. <https://www.othonawestdorset.org.uk>

A retreat to draw on wellsprings of hope when life and work seem overwhelming.

What keeps our spirits resilient, even in times of upheaval? The past few years have challenged us, and we have also found resilience within ourselves. This retreat offers space for reflection and sharing as we explore together what helps us build resilience in our daily lives - what lifts our spirits? What brings us balance? What offers us hope?

Through the spacious rhythm of retreat, we learn more about what gives us life, energy, and wellbeing, so that we can return to our full lives restored and renewed.

Fri 17 - Sun 19 May Jesus breathed on them and said "receive the Holy Spirit." Led by **Fr Chris Thomas**. County Durham. <https://minsteracres.org/>

In this Pentecost retreat we will reflect on the role of the Holy Spirit in John's Gospel and pray for the release of the Spirit in our lives, that we may learn how to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God.

Sat 18 May 10 - 4. Kindfulness: A day on the importance of Self Compassion. Led by **David Cole**. Romsey. <https://www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk>

The kindness concept weaves together teachings from Christianity, Buddhism, and Western Psychology. Kindfulness is the intentional practice of mindful compassion and loving kindness, central aspects of Buddhism, and likewise, the Christian tradition. It is a generous

orientation of our hearts toward other people in 'agape' love, irrespective of their actions or attitudes. Compassion begins with ourselves and leads naturally towards compassion towards others. We need to gain a greater sense of self compassion before we can become a more kindful person, pouring loving kindness out into the world in a life of action, through compassionate outreach and orientation. Come to this day to discover practices to help increase your sense and understanding of kindness for yourself and others

Sun 19th May 2.30pm. Living Spirituality Connections Midlands Group will be discussing **Richard Holloway's** book *Looking in the Distance: The Human Search for Meaning*.

The book celebrates the possibilities that life affords whilst examining how doubts and fears too often paralyse people, especially as they get older. It is a highly personal and meditative work that will inspire whoever reads it, helping us to better understand the different ways in which the human search for wholeness and healing can be approached.

For details of the location and further details email Anne Gardner:

a.gardner@me.com

Mon 20– Fri 24 May Exploring God's Nature with Rachel Oates. Devon.

<https://leeabbeydevon.org.uk>

From stunning coastal views to fragile spring flowers, babbling brooks to crashing waves, God's fingerprints are all over the Lee Abbey estate. Join us as we seek to draw near to God, exploring and engaging with the wonders of creation. We will spend time outside each day, responding individually and together by engaging in art, craft, song, photography, dance and poetry. Please bring suitable outdoor footwear (wellies recommended!) and clothing. Please also let us know when booking of any mobility issues you have as this will help us to make activities accessible for you.

Rachel Oates is happiest when spending time with God in creation and creativity and loves to help people connect with God through the wonder of his world. She is a volunteer speaker for Hopeswood, the new working name for the Woodlands House of Prayer, a Christian charity rooted in prayer, committed to helping those in need of rest and restoration find new strength and hope through reconnecting with God, each other and nature.

Tues 21 - Thurs 23 May Celtic Retreat: In the footsteps of Celtic holy women of North Wales. Led by **Julie Hopkins**. North West Wales. <https://www.noddfa.org.uk>

Fri 24 - Sun 26 May What Does Love Require of Us? Led by **David and Rosemary Brown**. Lake District. <https://glenthorne.org> *continued...*

We will explore how we can be open to love and how to use our gifts in loving service to the world. 'Love requires us to show our light, to help the frightened and weak. To use our gifts to heal the world and let our lives truly speak'. In the words of the Epistle of Britain Yearly Meeting 2023. 'We seek intentional change, led by the spirit, to help our community as we move into uncertain futures that dance before us'. David and Rosemary Brown have been leading workshops for Quakers around the country for several years and are active in their local and area meeting. David's book '**What Does Love Require of Us?**' has been published by the Kindlers.

27 - 30 May Start of **The Soul of Leadership** course, running over 4 weekends till January 2026. Leaders: **Margie Buchanan-Smith and Margaret Benefiel**. Near Bath. www.ammerdown.org

Soul of Leadership is an inspiring and enriching 18-month programme for anyone in a leadership role who wishes to deepen their inner resources to lead with long-term effectiveness and integrity. Leaders today face particularly difficult challenges. The commitment to inspire others while also increasing productivity and balancing the needs of their organisation can leave leaders feeling depleted. Long hours and countless demands often result in a deep need for renewal.

This programme is for anyone facing difficult leadership challenges, and for those who are looking for a fresh approach to leadership amidst longer working hours and increasing demands.

The other dates are: 13-16 January 2025, 2-5 June 2025, 12-15 January 2026. Please email admin@ammerdown.org for more information.

Fri 31 May - Sun 2 June. Men's Spirituality Retreat. Rule of Life Spirituality - A Weekend Pilgrimage for Men. Led by **Urs Mattmann, Revd Clay Roundtree and Mike Hall**. N. Yorks. <http://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk>

Over the course of the weekend, we will explore together the spirituality and the value of creating a flexible and life giving rule of life, drawing inspiration from Christians who have engaged in this over the centuries. To do this we will be looking at life as a pilgrimage with Christ, drawing insights from psychology, theology, and personal experience. This weekend for men is open to spiritual seekers and Christian disciples alike, those who are exploring faith or struggle to make sense of it all. The weekend will include short talks, time for reflection and discussion, guided meditations, a communion service and time to relax.

June

Sat 1 – Fri 7 June Grounding our lives in God and creation. The call to live into the “hereness”. Led by Dr Mark S Burrows and Rev Ute Molitor. Scotland.

www.iona.org.uk

Mon 3 – Thurs 6 June. A Table in the Wilderness. Led by Anna Robinson

Cornwall. <https://www.livelightdwelldeep.org>

This retreat is for nomads, sojourners and spiritual seekers who are faith shifting, deconstructing, re- thinking or re-imaging. Those who want to practice or be introduced to some ancient contemplative tools, to slow down and connect to nature and spend time of sharing around a table of good food with others on the journey.

Tues 4 June 10 - 3. Held in God's Gaze: Julian of Norwich and the Renewel of Hope.

Lancs. <https://www.whalleyabbey.org/>

Thurs 6 & 13 June. Praying and responding to the 12 Mysteries, paintings by

Michael Cook. Near Perth. <https://www.bieldatblackruthven.org.uk>

Looking at the images created by Michael Cook of the 12 unnamed characters in the gospels e.g. the woman at the well, the Syrophoenician woman and spending time with one of them in private prayer and reflection.

Fri 7 June 4 - 6 pm. Online. Stretching of the Heart: A Celtic Mini-Retreat on St.

Columba with Christine Valters Paintner, Simon de Voil, and Kenneth Steven.

<https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar>

St. Columba (or Columcille as he is known in Ireland) is most famous for founding several monastic communities, including on Iona, an island that continues to be a vibrant pilgrimage destination. Join us two days before his feast day to reflect on the Celtic call to pilgrimage, which includes leaving behind what is known and loved and the grief that evokes, for the promise of new adventures. We will dwell in that liminal space of in-between, where we contemplate what shores we need to push off from and the ways the currents of love are drawing us onward.

Through teaching, meditation, poetry, and music, we will weave together an experience of walking the threshold of our own lives through the guidance of St.

Columba's wisdom for us.

Fri - Sun 7-9 June Introduction to silence. County Durham.

<https://www.brancepethcastle.org.uk/>

A beginner's guide to working with silence, as a doorway into individually guided retreats.

Fri - Sun 7-9 June Pools of Grace. The gift and call of contemplative church. Led by Rev Dr **Sarah Bachelard**. World Community of Christian Meditation. County Durham. Held at Minsteracres Retreat Centre. Booking:

https://wccm.uk/events/pools-of-grace-the-gift-and-call-of-contemplative-church/?mc_cid=99b1b4046b

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
From W.B. Yeats, The Second Coming

W.B. Yeats prophetic words speak to the sense of accelerating anxiety and dislocation that many feel in our world today. We long to find a centre that holds; one that offers not only sanctuary but resistance to the 'blood-dimmed tide' that threatens to overwhelm. We long for communities that nurture and seed different possibilities for being, pools of grace from which gifts may allow for all. What might such communities look and feel like? How might they truly engage the needs of our time?

The 2024 UK National Gathering of the World Community for Christian Meditation explores these questions with a particular focus on the gift and call of contemplative Christian communities, or contemplative church. The Gathering will be oriented to practice. Those exploring the possibilities of initiating and enabling contemplative forms of church and community may find it of particular relevance. Everyone is welcome.

Main Speaker: Rev. Dr. **Sarah Bachelard** is the founder and leader of Benedictus Contemplative Church, based in Canberra, Australia. For the past 13 years, Benedictus has been exploring what it means to be a contemplative worshipping community engaged with the needs of our world.

Sat 8 June. Divine Nature – The Seasons with **David Cole** (Brother Cassian). Surrey. <https://www.stcolumbashouse.org.uk>

One of 4 individual seasonal days discovering how to encounter and engage with the Divine in and through the natural world. Taking examples and teachings from scripture and from Christians throughout the ages, as well as the four seasons as they change around us in the same place.

David Cole (Brother Cassian). After coming out of a full time Church Minister role, Brother Cassian endeavours to present the Christian faith from different perspectives for spiritual seekers who may not feel comfortable in or with traditional or mainstream church, and to promote a life of peace and compassion.

Sat 8 June 9.30 - 4. The Samaritan Woman at the Well Icon Quiet Day led by Rev **Narinder Tegally**. Near Bath. www.ammerdown.org

Sat 8 June 10 - 4. Glimpses of Holiness: Praying with Icons. Led by **Chris Ellis**. Near Sheffield. <https://www.whirlowspiritualitycentre.org>

A guided quiet day with an introduction to the meaning and value of icons in aiding prayer. There will be plenty of time for personal reflection and prayer, together with an exploration of what holiness might look like.

Monday 10 – Fri 14 June On a journey with the Northern Saints. County Durham. <https://minsteracres.org>

Spend a week at Minsteracres following in the footsteps of the Northern Saints such as Aidan, Cuthbert, Oswald, Hilde and Bede. Find out about their spirituality and motivation, early Celtic spirituality and visit the iconic places where they lived out their faith.

14-16 June Solas Festival. Perthshire. <https://www.solasfestival.co.uk/>

Each year Solas Festival creates a temporary community, gathering together a diverse mix of folk for a relaxed weekend where all can thrive and have a ball. In recent years we have welcomed performers from Ghana, Palestine and Canada, Syrian refugees from Glasgow, music from Nashville, and we have sung, danced, yoga-ed and explored the woods.

Challenging - being unafraid to confront the myriad of issues – whether social, political,

theological or cultural – which make up the whole person and the whole human condition. In recent years we have explored the legacies of slavery, asked what it means to be post-Christian, heard migrants' stories and travellers' songs, and explored the experiences of trans and queer artists through poetry and dance.

Sat 15 June 10 - 4. A quiet day with Evelyn Underhill. Led by **Val Thompson**. Essex.

<https://www.retreathousepleshey.com/>

At the core of Evelyn Underhill was her commitment to God and her determination to help others approach God and have a personal relationship with him. Come and find out more about her life and work and how we can make this relevant for us today.

Sat 15 June 10.30 - 4. In person and online. **Shouting, Cancelling, Signalling: Christ and the Anxieties of Speech.** With Rev Dr **Sarah Bachelard** from the Benedictus Community in Canberra, Australia. Location: London. <https://meditatiocentrelondon.org>

We live in a time when speaking on a whole range of issues seems profoundly fraught. In some contexts, flagrant untruth and hate are asserted seemingly without consequence or effective critique. Elsewhere speech is scrutinised minutely for traces of 'cancellable' thought or attitude. The possibility of dialogue, questioning and honest disagreement seems often unattainable, so sensitised are we to certain verbal cues and so charged is our political atmosphere.

Can the Christ who broke down the 'dividing wall' between Jew and Gentile redeem our (un)civil discourse? How might contemplative practice make possible different forms of exchange and allow us to inhabit our words anew? This talk is part of the Contemporary Anxiety Series.

Sat 15 June. 'Celtic Wisdom' – a Quiet Day based on the experience of a pilgrimage to Skellig Michael. With **Kathleen O'Sullivan**. London. <https://sisters-of-st-andrew.com/>

Mon 17 - Fri 21 June Big Burning Questions. Led by **Tim Hull**. N. Yorks.

<https://scargillmovement.org>

Is there any reason for Faith? Has Science replaced God? When there is so much suffering can we believe in a God of love? Can miracles happen? Rev Dr Tim Hull (author of *Faith and Modern thought*) leads you through these big burning questions, drawing on the videos he has produced. This week will involve a stimulating mixture of expert input and informal discussion. No previous academic knowledge of these questions required. **Tim**

Hull is director of the St John's Timeline Theological Videos project and has taught theology for many years.

Fri 21 June. Daring to Talk about Grief. Leader: **Shirley Skrenty**. Sussex.

<https://www.penhurst.org.uk>

A space for you to connect with your grief in a supportive environment. The day includes input about common themes of the grieving process; opportunities to speak about your own experience in a small and safe group and some quiet time for reflection.

Wed 26 June 10 – 1 on Zoom. God is not a White Man: Race, gender and the imago Dei course. Led by **Chine McDonald**. <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

What does it mean when God is presented as male? What does it mean when – from our internal assumptions to our shared cultural imaginings – God is presented as white? These questions will be explored during the course, drawing on personal experience of being a Black woman in the white-majority space that is the UK church – a church that is being abandoned by Black women no longer able to grin and bear its casual racism, colonialist narratives and lack of urgency on issues of racial justice. This course will explore theological concepts of the imago Dei through the lens of womanist and liberation theology.

Chine McDonald is a writer, broadcaster and author of *God Is Not a White Man: And Other Revelations*.

Fri 28 June 10 - 4 Finding the Language of Grace – Rediscovering Transcendence with **Abbot Christopher Jamison OSB**. The Retreats Association Summer event. Online only. **Rev Graham Sparkes** will join us in a day of talks, discussion and prayerful reflections.

<https://www.retreats.org.uk/summer-event-2024>

Sat 29 June Spiritual Ecology Conference. London. <https://stethelburgas.org/events/>

Join us for a 1-day conference exploring the links between spirituality, ecology and peacemaking. With **René August, Dekila Chungyalpa, Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee** and more. An event in our Faith and Moral Courage series.

ADVANCE NOTICES

Mon 15 - Wed 17 July. Finding the Sacred in the 21st Century: New Ways of Looking at Spirituality. Modern Church conference. Herts.

<https://modernchurch.org.uk/events/finding-the-sacred-in-the-21st-century-new-ways-of-looking-at-spirituality>



We live in a world where the ‘old ways’ of being religious (inherited from Christendom and western culture more generally) work only for an ever-shrinking minority of people. For the majority, they are no longer engaging, comprehensible or attractive.

Yet there is an explosion of spirituality and spiritual practices all around us, if we know where to look. As Christians, we often don’t, and fail to apprehend or attend to the fertile opportunities to engage with and understand ‘alternative’ manifestations of meaning-making, God-talk and embodied spiritual practices that are at play in our world. What can we learn if we open ourselves to dialogue with those outside religion; paying attention to what they are doing to connect with deep life themes traditionally interpreted through faith? And what can we offer back from our own Christian traditions? What do we make of it? How do we feel about it? How does it challenge us? How can we distinguish healthy spiritualities from toxic ones? Can we create a shared language and common ground?

Wed 4 - Fri 6 September. Coming to our Senses. ‘The Word made flesh is here made word again’ (Edwin Muir, The Incarnate One). A focus on embodiment, a continuing challenge for churches, and worldwide. **The Free to Believe 2024 Residential Conference.**

Speakers: **Kathy Galloway and Victoria Turner.** Herts. <http://www.freetobelieve.org.uk>

The background is an attack by Edwin Muir on the austerity and bleakness of Calvinism. In ‘The Incarnate One,’ Muir writes: “The Word made flesh is here made word again, /A word made word in flourish and arrogant crook. /See there King Calvin with his iron pen, /And

God three angry letters in a book”; and the mystery of the incarnation becomes “an ideological instrument”. By contrast, Muir wants to see God not simply in spoken word but in beauty, music and in the sacraments.

Kathy Galloway offers her more radical take on the challenge. "We are embodied, whole persons, and the human body is to be cherished, not starved, beaten and killed, because it is holy. ... We are co-creators-we can create nothing out of nothing, but only in relationship and exchange with the earth.