

# EVENTS

## October - December 2024

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

[www.livingspirit.org.uk](http://www.livingspirit.org.uk)

### October

**Thurs 3 October 7.30 - 8.30 pm. On Zoom. Deep Abiding Prayer group** led by **Petra Griffiths**. Deep Abiding Prayer is a healing prayer of the heart and of the Spirit. Its sources are in the Bible and in the Christian Contemplative tradition. The meetings on the first Thursday in the month explore spiritual themes as well as practising the Prayer. For further information and the Zoom link go to: <https://www.livingspirit.org.uk/events/> or email Petra at [petragriffiths@livingspirit.org.uk](mailto:petragriffiths@livingspirit.org.uk)

**Fri 4 October 4 - 6pm online. Francis & Clare and the Sacred Art of Friendship.** Led by **Christine Valters Paintner and Simon de Voil**.  
<https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar/>

Join us on the Feast of St. Francis for an exploration of Francis and one of his first followers, St. Clare. Through song, teaching, meditation, and sharing we will listen together for how Francis and Clare might inspire the soul friendships of our own lives.

**Saturdays, 5 October - 2 November, 11 - 1. Fully Human Fully Alive.** Led by Father **Malachy Keegan**. London. <https://www.londonjesuitcentre.org/whats-on/courses>

Do you desire to be a joyful, peaceful, fully alive human being? Bringing together the ancient wisdom of the Christian tradition with the insights of modern psychology, this course will develop and deepen an awareness of the loving presence of God at the heart of your lived experience.

If we separate faith/spirituality from our human development, the result is a fractured, divided and confused human heart and mind. Built on an integrated view of how we can live our lives, this course will seek to bring together the spiritual and

developmental aspects of ourselves into a wholeness, where love, joy and peace in God are found, and where they overflow into safe, loving and healing relationships with others.

We will consider specific challenges to our well-being, like shame, anxiety, self-worth, addictions, depression and other mental health issues. Our struggles can lead to healing and to wonderful new life. Advance preparation is needed before course sessions.

**Sun 6 October 1 - 2pm. A Manifesto for Hope.** Speaker: **Steve Chalke**. London. Free and unticketed. <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/explore-christian-life-and-faith>

Steve Chalke has worked on the front line of changing young people's lives for the better for four decades. From his hard-won experience he has distilled practical principles for developing joined-up, effective and community-empowering work that transforms real lives using our greatest asset: local people. He will lay out his principles for transformative action, and how we can all play a vital part in that.

The **Rev Steve Chalke** MBE is a Baptist Minister and the Oasis Founder, leading the Oasis movement since 1985. His latest book is ***A Manifesto for Hope: Ten principles*** for transforming the lives of children and young people.

**Mondays 7 October - 11 November online. 6 - 7.30. Paths Towards Transformative Justice.** Led by **Nishma Jethwa**. <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

How do existing systems of justice replicate patterns of oppression? What alternatives can we envisage? This course will unpack the topic of transformative justice with a view to understanding abolitionist frameworks of justice and accountability. We will seek to unpack our understandings of conflict, harm and abuse, with a view to explore various frameworks for navigating towards justice and accountability in a UK context. We will focus on engaging with writings and materials on topics such as abolition, transformative justice, community accountability, restorative justice and alternatives to carceral and prison systems for addressing harm and violence.

**Tues 8 - Thurs 10 October. All creation is gifted with the ecstasy of God's light.** A Journey with Hildegard of Bingen. Led by Revd **Brigid Main**. Essex. [www.retreathousepleshey.com](http://www.retreathousepleshey.com)

Poet, musician, visionary, healer and fearless campaigner. Come and discover what

she might have to say to us today. This retreat is an opportunity to ponder and slow down. Space to explore Hildegard's visions of the Cosmic Christ, greening the earth, the interconnectedness of all things. Through her visions, music and words we re-learn precious truths about our God, our faith and the world we live in. We will be uplifted by her music and meditate on her words on creation in the peace of Pleshey. There will be space for individual reflection, times of silence and times of sharing. "thousand-year-old wisdom for the 21st century".

**Tuesday 8 - Thursday 10 October. The Search for Wisdom.** Led by Sue Glanville.

Near Bath. <https://www.ammerdown.org/>

On this course we will delve into stories, scriptures and poems that help us to answer the perennial question What is Wisdom? We will discuss our ideas and share our experiences. We will spend some time in silent and walking meditation. We hope to finish the course wiser than when we began, or with the realisation that we are but paddlers dipping our toes into a vast sea! Please feel free to bring a reading or insight to share.

**Fri 11 October.** Online. **10 - 11am.** Start of **Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul** with **Siobhan Burke.** Most sessions are 10 - 11.30 am. Run by <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/>

This book is about reawakening to what we know in the depths of our being, that the earth is sacred and that this sacredness is at the heart of every human being and life-form. To awaken again to this deep knowing is to be transformed in the ways we choose to live and relate and act.

A Reflective study series on John Philip Newell's book: ***Sacred Earth Sacred Soul – A Celtic Guide to Listening to our Souls and Saving the World.*** This course will offer a guided structure for individual reflection and group sharing to help expand, deepen and embed the core content of the book. You will need your own copy of the book.

There are 3 terms, with dates on Friday mornings. For times and dates go to: <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/whats-on/sacred-earth-sacred-soul/>

**Siobhan Burke** is a Spirituality Team Member at St Bede's, working in spiritual formation.

**Sat 12 October 10 - 4. The Life Journey Map Workshop** Led by Elizabeth Elliott.  
Sussex. <https://worth.co.uk/> *continued...*

Elizabeth coaches and leads those with a desire to go deeper into clearer, more fulfilling and purpose-filled life. She has a heart for embracing life's joys and brokenness and with over 20 years' experience enables others to seek a richer lifestyle. Elizabeth enables others to discover life's unique purpose that we all have. Living through depression, she has discovered hidden treasures which led her into a life changing adventure. With her husband, Robert, 'Treasures of Darkness' was birthed in 2023.

This workshop retreat offers time and space for a 'stop, look and listen day' .....  
Providing a tool for seekers on life's journey with a fresh look at life so far.....  
including:

Making use of trials and setbacks.....;

Opportunities to re-look at our life's events and see them in new ways;

Blessings of living from gratitude.

You will receive:

Fresh perspectives on where life has taken you so far;

Encouragement to see how life events grow together;

Transforming our view of our live events into something that makes real differences and opens up the future. All materials are provided.

**Sun 13 October 2.30pm. Living Spirituality Connections Midlands local group** meeting. Solihull. More information from the Coordinator, Anne Gardner: email [a.gardner@me.com](mailto:a.gardner@me.com)

**Sun 13 October. 3 - 5.30 pm. Online. Hope as a Practice. Led by Simonne Wood.**  
<http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

What does it mean to 'practise hope'? Can hope be more powerful than simple optimism? How do we maintain hope when things seem to be getting worse rather than better? Join this workshop to explore the concept and process of 'active hope'. This workshop will draw upon the book **Active Hope** by Joanna Macy and Christopher Johnstone. The session is designed to give you a short but meaningful experience of the active hope process in a safe and supportive group. It will also provide guidance for developing your own, more extensive, practice of hope which you can use in your everyday life, either by yourself or with others.

**17 - 18 October Courageous Spaciousness: a residential retreat with Grace Owen.**  
London. <https://www.rfsk.org.uk/events>

When God invites us into an unknown place it takes courage to step away from the familiar

busyness and demands of everyday life. Come and join this residential retreat where we will reflect creatively on four areas of our lives: soul, body, companions, voice. Step into the spaciousness and discover what this divine invitation reveals and yields for you, and us.

**Grace Owen** is a Spiritual Director, Retreat Facilitator and Life Writer. Grace is a companion to those who desire to mature in their relationship with God and enable the greater flourishing of people and planet through accelerating social justice impact.

**17 October and 14 November. Writing as Spiritual Practice.** Near Perth.

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

This is a two- day retreat with writing time in-between.

“When we are connected to the writing process we learn to think more deeply and intensely. We learn to contemplate and reflect more thoroughly. Writing becomes a searchlight on our world...” Michael Lewin.

Participants will explore creative writing as a means of reflecting on their personal and spiritual life experiences. A series of writing exercises and prompts will encourage you to produce your own written reflections. There will be times of sharing what we have written, reading our creative expressions aloud to each other, so as you can get to know your voice, and find your rhythm.

**Fri 18 Oct - Sun 20 Oct Emptiness Dancing: A Meditation Retreat** led by **Briji Waterfield** Surrey. <https://www.christian-retreat.org/our-programme>



From stillness to movement, from silence to song - a weekend to explore how we can live contemplatively as we navigate the pressures of daily life, remaining present and centered in the core of our being. Meditation, contemplative practices and space for group reflection will be included. The weekend will be suitable for those who have an established practice of Christian meditation. Spiritual direction will also be offered.

**Fri 18 - Sun 20 October. From Composting to Co-Creation.** GreenSpirit Annual Gathering. Staffs. <https://www.greenspirit.org.uk/annual-gathering-2024>

We live in a world of beauty and joy, but also in turbulent times with suffering among humans and in all of nature. Green spirituality reminds us that creation and transformation are part of the journey and that we can unfold into every moment: how can we co-create with nature? **Alan Heeks** – the speaker – will guide us through a process to help us explore this, in Shallowford House’s gardens if weather permits. He will draw on his new book *“Natural Happiness: Use Organic Gardening Skills to Cultivate Yourself.”*

**Sat 19 October. 11.30 - 3. The Woman who Anointed Jesus.** Led by **Donna Worthington**. Lancs. <https://christianretreats.live/>

Imagine a woman walking through the streets to Jesus... She wants to do a brave thing for him before he dies. She carries a bowl of exquisite, expensive perfume in her hands... And Jesus’ responses: ‘She has done a beautiful thing to me’. ‘What she has done will be told in memory of her.’ We will explore this incredible Gospel text through drama, reflection, discussion, prayer etc.

For bookings, please contact the Parish office in Lowstock Hall: 01772 335387 OR Email [office@saintgerards.org.uk](mailto:office@saintgerards.org.uk)

**Sat 19 October 10-4. Teresa of Avila, Rumi and Thomas Merton.** Led by **Fr. Antony Gatt**. Hants. [www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk](http://www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk)

I hope you will be able to join me in this short exploration of our souls’ Divine Romance with God. This ‘unfolding’ will be explored in the light of the mystical experiences, and writings, of Teresa of Avila (and companions) and Mevlana Rumi. Eastern and Western mysticism may use different spiritual language, but as Merton so poignantly demonstrates, they vibrate with the same passionate experience of God. We shall also explore the ways in which Western and Eastern music resonate these transports of love.

As St Teresa of Avila says: “Christ has no body now on earth but yours.” Rumi sums it up very well: “Love is the house of God and you are living in that house.”

**Sat 19 October. 5-7 pm.** Online. **Gifts of the Underworld Journey of Descent** with **Christine Valters Paintner**. <https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar/>

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This retreat will be a time of teaching, reflection, creative expression, and meditation. We will consider mythic images of Inanna from Sumerian myth and Persephone from Greek myth, alongside Our Lady of the Underworld and the Christian mystical path of the dark night of the soul. Together we will reclaim holy darkness and learn to embrace journeys of descent in service of the new life that arises from this fertile ground. Hosted by Spirituality & Practice.

**Sat 19 October 2 - 4.30 pm. Body Prayer Capacitar Wellness Taster.** Near Perth.

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

The practices help transform stress and pain deriving from illness, violence, and the stresses of daily life and open the individual up towards greater wholeness and wellbeing. As individuals get in touch with their own source of healing and wisdom they can help others.

**Sun 20 October 6.30pm Soulspace.** Stirling, Scotland.

<https://stirlingmethodistchurch.org.uk/events/100-soulspace2>

Soulspace is a time for sacred reflection, open to people of all faiths or none. Each month there is a different theme and participants are invited to bring the music, poetry, short prose, art, short videos that have inspired you. This month's theme is SHAPE.

We meet at 6.30pm for a shared meal (bring some food with you!) and then commence our sharing, listening and responding on the theme 7.15-8.15pm. If you are interested please use the Contact Us page of the above website.

**Mon 21 October. Inner and Outer Dimensions of Peacework.** Workshop Carousel.

London. <https://www.stethelburgas.org/>

A day of participatory workshops on the inner and outer dimensions of peace making. With ***Solutions Not Sides***, and ***Dialogue for Peaceful Change***, alongside **St Ethelburga's staff team**. Loop through a 'carousel' of four distinct workshops, each exploring a unique facet of the theme. This is an event in our Faith and Moral Courage series. Further information from: 020 8064 1635.

**Mon 21 October 7 - 9pm.** Online. **The Sea, Theology and Spirituality: The Sea in the Bible** course. [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

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**Rebecca Watson** will explore how the sea is portrayed and understood in the Bible. The first of a series. The other two sessions are:

**Mon 11 November 7-9pm. Online. A Marine Spirituality: To be Nourished by the Sea.** – Led by **Susie Templeton**.

**Mon 2 December 7 - 9 pm. Online. The Sea, Theology and Spirituality – The Sea, Ecological Crisis and Mission course.**

**Wed 23 October. 10-5. Gardening the soul in Autumn with Deb Arrowsmith.** Oxon. This course explores what the autumn season teaches us about our spiritual journey, hosted in the beautiful and newly replanted gardens of Charney Manor [www.charneymanor.com](http://www.charneymanor.com)

**Wednesdays 23 October - 27 November. 2.30 - 4 online. Deepening Our Faith Through Loss, Ageing and Facing Death.** Led by **Rosemary Field and Annique Seddon.**  
<http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

How do we experience the Spirit – God, the divine – in our ageing? The six weekly sessions will provide a gentle opportunity for deep sharing about matters that may be close to our heart but can often be hard to talk about. How can our experience of ageing and loss, and the prospect of death, free us to live a life that is more Spirit-led, loving, joyful and productive?

**Wed 23 October 10 - 1. Hope** – An Online Retreat course. Led by **Dr Susanna Snyder.** [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

“Hope has holes in its pockets.” So writes poet Rosemerry Wahtold Trommer.

In the face of ecological devastation, war, the cost of living and mental health crises, and ever increasing gaps between rich and poor, hope can feel hard to come by for many of us in the twenty-first century. We will reflect on what hope means and how we can hope well in our own lives, and in our churches and communities. As well as exploration of some images of hope and key theological ideas, including the horizon of our hope and the role of action and community in hope, there will be space for prayer and creative expression.

This short retreat will offer a moment to pause, and an opportunity for refreshment and renewal.



**Fri 25 – Sun 27 October. The Hidden Life Of Trees.** Leader: **Brigid Main.** Sussex.  
[www.penhurst.org.uk](http://www.penhurst.org.uk)

Researchers see and hear trees communicating, helping and supporting each other via root systems and fungi. How can the trees help us deepen our prayer life and our own support systems? Come and spend a weekend in the beauty of autumn at Penhurst, discovering together how we can experience some of the underlying connectedness of all things in God`s creation and being open to God`s wild hospitality.

**25 - 27 October. Wisdom Calls' Retreat. Wisdom of the Earth.** With **Helen Warwick and Revd Jeanette Peirson.** N. Yorks. <https://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk/>

The ancient, hidden way of Wisdom is highlighted through this weekend, exploring our deep inner connection to Holy Wisdom and listening for her voice. Many ancient cultures and faiths connect to Holy Wisdom and her many aspects. Wisdom is not about knowing more, but about knowing more deeply, and we will use our large garden and spacious art room to help us explore our senses and open to Wisdom in creative ways. We live in a difficult world, especially with the challenging climate crises, and this weekend will help us to listen to Wisdom`s call through nature and the earth, and connect to justice, love and unity with the earth. This will be an informal weekend with space for resting, discussion, enjoying our spaces, alongside nourishing home-cooked food.

**Sat 26 October 10 - 4. Enabling a better relationship with God.** Led by **Merinda D'Aprano.** Surrey. <https://www.christian-retreat.org/our-programme/>

How understanding your unconscious bias can free you to find a richer, more authentic faith. This day offers a reflective space to explore our unconscious bias and how this can impact our relationship with God. Over four sessions, we will explore questions such as: What is unconscious bias? How does it create our shadow side? Why is faith so controversial? What are we going to let go of? Where might we go from here? All sharing is entirely voluntary.

**Sun 27 October 9.45 – 10.15 am. Eco Contemplative Liturgy** in person in London and on Zoom.

Taking place on the fourth Sunday in each month in the garden at St James`s Piccadilly, we take time to ground ourselves in our body, to hear some readings and prayers, and to have a contemplative time in the garden, or in a green space where we are. Further information and Zoom link from Petra at [ecochurch@sjp.org.uk](mailto:ecochurch@sjp.org.uk)

**Sun 27 October 10-4. Discovering the Original Christ Teachings.** Stroud Glos, and  
**Wed 30 October 10-4** St David's Pembs. Hosted by CANA and the Emissaries of the  
Divine Light. <https://www.cana.org.uk/calendar/>

Many in our world today have lost touch with the real and vital spiritual dimension to life. So often, our spirituality gets covered over by religious doctrine and belief without accessing the heart and soul of a genuine connection. Increasingly, younger generations are giving up on finding a spiritual answer to the issues they confront, and the complex and often urgent issues that we all face become ever more difficult to resolve. Sometimes, you have to access the true origin of your culture to move forward creatively into your future. Never has that been more true than now. Jesus of Nazareth brought a profound encounter with a mystical reality that is within all people. But somehow the opportunity to share in that encounter has become obscured in our culture over centuries. That is why we are devoting this seminar to discovering what has become hidden—the original message brought by Jesus.

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**Mon 28th October. A Tender Heart** – Day Retreat led by **Alison Paris**.

Worcestershire.

<https://hollandhouse.org/>

During this day together, I would like to invite you to join me in exploring what it might mean to be tender hearted. What is a tender heart? Who are we to be tended hearted to, and how? And how does this tenderness connect with qualities of compassion, kindness and sometimes forgiveness?

We will re- encounter some aspects of the tenderness of Jesus's heart, and we will have access to resources from the poetry of Mary Oliver, John Bell, Seamus Heaney and Eleanor Nesbitt, to help us think about our own experiences. We'll also encounter some gentle embodied movements supporting tenderness to ourselves and others. Most importantly, we will have time to wander outside (weather permitting!) and inside – a chance to reflect on how encountering our own tenderness of heart might inform the way we want to live and be.

**Alison** is a volunteer counsellor and spiritual care team volunteer in a hospice.

## November

**Fri 1 November 3 - 5. Online. Honouring the Love of Thousands at Samhain with Christine Valters Paintner, Simon de Voil, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, and Nóirín Ní Riain.**

<https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar/>

Join us on the feast of All Saints and the Celtic feast of Samhain to pause together and honour our beloved ancestors and all the wise and well ones who have passed through the veil. Through ritual, song, teaching, meditation, and sharing we will weave a container together to hold our prayers and longings and receive the gifts the saints and ancestors have to offer us for the season ahead.

**Fri 1 – Sun 3 November. Men's Spirituality Retreat. Travelling Light, Learning to Let Go and Trusting God. With Revd Adrian Datta, Urs Mattmann and Mike Hall.**

N. Yorks. <https://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk/>

In this year's Men's Spirituality retreat we look at what luggage we have in life as men, that hinders us in freedom, growth and service, and what it can mean to let go so we can travel lighter. In this process we learn to trust God. This retreat will include short talks, time for reflection, discussion, worship, meditation and time to relax.

Urs will offer guided imagination exercises and visualisations, Mike is here with massage options. For the first time we will have Adrian as co-facilitator who will share his rich gifts as priest and therapist.

**Sat 2 November 10.30 - 4. Speaking the Silent Word: Lessons in Emptying Ourselves. A Day with Meister Eckhart and the Zen Masters. Led by Dr Rebecca Stephens.**

London. <https://meditatiocentrelondon.org>

Within the Western Christian tradition we find an important strand of thought, whose origins stretch back to neo-Platonic theologians: apophaticism. This 'negative theology' invites us always to 'unsay' and 'speak away': to move through and eventually beyond all language, holding eloquence of little value when it comes to expressing anything of reality itself. This is most true of attempts to talk or think about the divine and eternal. One of the greatest apophatic spiritual teachers is medieval German mystic Meister Eckhart. Eckhart's teachings remain as vital and rich today as when first delivered and contain much to challenge the meditator. Encountering his writings we may be struck by a strong resemblance to Zen Buddhism and indeed the Meister has been claimed as a 'spiritual ancestor' by the great Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh. Eckhart's writings impress on his audience the vital importance of aligning ourselves spiritually so as to find 'Abgeschiedenheit' and 'Gelassenheit', non-

attachment and releasement. He encourages us to move away from all the things and concepts of the world and to live 'without a Why' – comparable to Zen's 'mushotoku' (goal-lessness) – entering into that silent and eternal presence in God that Zen calls 'hishiryo' (beyond-thought).

**Tues 5 November 10 - 1.** Online. **Ecological Crisis, Trauma and Theology** course. Led by Dr **Tim Middleton**. [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

Recent work in Christian trauma theology has offered profound insights into the nature of human suffering and appropriate theological responses. But what about the nonhuman? What about the suffering of the natural world? Can other species, or even the planet itself, be said to be capable of experiencing trauma? What might it mean to view climate change and mass extinction as traumatic events for creation?

In this short course, we will think theologically about the possibility of ecological trauma. Drawing on the methods and approaches of several leading trauma theologians, we will examine how we might mourn, lament, accompany, and bear witness to the trauma of the Earth. This is an approach to ecotheology that is acutely aware of the severity and scale of current ecological suffering, and resolutely refuses naive or simplistic solutions, but still holds fast to the possibility of hope.

**Dr Tim Middleton** is a Tutorial Fellow in Theology at Regent's Park College, Oxford, where he also directs the Centre for Baptist Studies.

**Sat 9 November 10-12.** Online. **Orienting to Joy**. Led by **Susan Groves**. <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

How is your joy and creativity doing this year? How do we orient to joy – even on a daily basis? Is it possible? How can we support each other in this? Join this gathering to explore the ways that we can cultivate joy in all aspects of our lives. Perhaps joy is a gift, a grace, as well as something to be cultivated? How could we put ourselves in the way of joy? Can we be involved in justice and peace-making in a way that contributes to joy – in ourselves and others?

We will gather together fairly experimentally. We'll include an open space where you will be invited to present any thoughts, images and practices related to this theme. Do include particular texts or parts of poems if you'd like to. We will include in our considerations: the body, creativity and the practice of social justice.

**Mon 11 - Fri 15 November. Exploring Celtic Christianity** – St Hild, St Ia, St Brigid. Led by **Donna Worthington**. N. Yorks. <https://christianretreats.live/>

This retreat focuses on 3 inspirational women from Celtic Christianity: Saint Brigid of Kildare, St Hild of Whitby and St Ia of Cornwall. We will explore the intriguing symbolism of Saint Brigid's fire and cloak. St Hild's banishment of harmful snakes will offer us a space to face our fears. St Ia's wonderful ocean journey in a leaf-coracle will help us to creatively explore a journey of surrender, solitude and the wild elemental sea, wind and sky... Our time of retreat will include a rhythm of prayer, retreat sessions, spiritual reflection, time to be creative and relax. The retreat is an opportunity to explore Christian spirituality in a creative and prayerful way.

**Tues 12 November 6.30 - 8 pm. Contemplative practice – Inter Faith Week.**  
London. <https://www.stethelburgas.org/>

Join us to share contemplative silence in community. An in-person monthly event at St Ethelburga's. We warmly invite people of all faiths and none. A chance to be refreshed by the restorative power of shared silence, community, and our peace garden.

**12 - 13 November. Darkness to Light.** Northern Ireland.  
<https://www.corrymeela.org/events>

As we move into the darkest part of the year, we can take comfort in the knowledge that the light will always return. This overnight retreat offers a pause for respite, restoration, and refreshment before the busy Advent/Christmas season begins. In this retreat, we will build a community of support with one another and we reflect on the cycles of darkness and light in our lives.

**12 - 14 November. Life before Death: The Psychology of Flourishing.** Led by **Roger Dawson**. North East Wales. <https://www.pathwaystogod.org/org/st-beunos/>

Too often in spirituality we have only been concerned with life after death. Recent research in psychology has focused on flourishing and what makes life worth living. Psychology of flourishing proposes that we need to do well along five dimensions: positive emotions; positive relationships; engagement; meaning; and accomplishment. All of this is underpinned by character.

During this workshop retreat Roger Dawson, a spiritual director and clinical psychologist, will introduce and explain this approach to flourishing as life before death with examples

and practical exercises, and will make the link with our faith and Ignatian spirituality. We shall also look at applying this as a psychology for dealing with tough times.

This event will not be in silence, but there will be opportunities for silence, prayer and reflection.

**Thurs 14 - Sun 17 November. MBTI® Understanding your Spiritual Journey.** Led by **Elizabeth Sayers and Shirley Jackson.** Dorset. [www.othonawestdorset.org.uk](http://www.othonawestdorset.org.uk)

“What feeds my soul – and why is it different for others?” Explore your own spiritual needs and discover new meaning in your life. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator – the MBTI® – based on the work of Carl Jung, is a powerful tool for understanding different personality types. It has been called the “Compass of the Soul”. Understanding the MBTI® will help support your spiritual discovery and enrich your own spiritual path,

In times of uncertainty and change in all aspects of life we can too easily lose our sense of meaning and purpose. How many of us find ourselves in a spiritual place where our religious practices no longer meet our needs? Do we find it hard to feel understood or to understand others when our spiritual preferences differ? In an interfaith world, whether we hold religious beliefs or not, we need a common language for mutual understanding and respect.

**Fri 15 - Sun 17 November. Attending to True Self in Turbulent Times.** Led by **Barbara Reid and Will Johnson.** At Ammerdown, Near Bath. Arranged by <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

Feeling unsettled in our turbulent world? This weekend retreat offers nourishing and guided space to deepen your connection to true self, re-establish a greater sense of inner integrity and discover what truly wants to flow through you. This Circle of Trust® retreat provides spacious time to follow your own thread, alongside others in a supportive community of fellow enquirers. You will have opportunities for solo reflection and journaling, deep listening in small groups and sharing in the larger circle. We will use images, poetry, prose, music and time in the more-than-human world, to deepen our conversation and connection with true self and true nature.

**Sat 16 November 10 to 3.30. Thomas Berry: Dreamer of the Earth.** Led by **Paul Golightly.** York. <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/>

A day to get to know Thomas Berry CP (1914-2009) and his massive contribution to

Creation Centred Spirituality for the 21st Century. We learn of and pray with some of his key writings including 'The New Story of the Universe', 'All creation as a Communion of Subjects' and 'The Great Work and the future of Humanity'. Paul has read and re-read Thomas Berry for over 20 years and has been endlessly inspired and awed by the breadth of his vision and scholarship for who we are and how we might be on the earth. If you know him well or not at all, feel free to come and share in this day.

**Paul Golightly** is Director of St Bede's and an ordained Methodist Minister who is committed to offering a myriad of ways into the divine life and love, within all we do, at St Bede's and as national co-ordinator for the Capacitar Wellness network.

**19 – 24 November. The Marriage of Wisdom and Prophecy.** Led by **Brother Martin.** France. <https://bonnevauxwccm.org/>

Each tradition has its unique blend between the prophetic and the wisdom. Religion can be divided into two categories: the wisdom traditions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, and the prophetic traditions, such as Jewish, Christianity, Islam and Bahaim. However, each tradition has its unique blend between the prophetic and the wisdom. Br Martin, the spiritual successor of Bede Griffiths, will explore these interactions in the light of the contemporary hunger for wisdom and meaning.

**Tuesdays 19 Nov - 17 December 10-11am or 7-8pm online. Advent Bible Study.** Leader: **Rupert Kaye.** <https://www.ammerdown.org/>

Join us for a five-week Advent Bible study about hope, peace, joy and love. Together, we will consider how the birth of Jesus is about God's commitment to justice that rolls down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

**Thurs 21 – Fri 22 November. Finding Stillness Residential Retreat.** London. <https://www.rfsk.org.uk/events>

"Be still and know."

This retreat is about helping you to more habitually find a place of calm within you that enables you to be less reactive and more aware of your choices in life. For small groups of up to 8 people and facilitated by 2 experienced coaches, it will give you the opportunity to find real space in your life, to reconnect to what really matters to you and equip you with simple everyday practices that help you strengthen and maintain an inner peace and stillness in the face of whatever life throws at you.

**Fri 22 - Tues 26 November. Margaret Silf: Discovering your wisdom years.** Scotland  
<https://coachhousekilmuir.org/249/Programme-2024>

Our later years challenge us to learn the art of slowing down, letting go and facing our own mortality, but they also surprise us with joy as our perspective changes. We glimpse more clearly the possibilities that the longer view reveals. We discover unexpected gifts that winter brings. Just as we feel we are winding down, we find ourselves called to wake up and embrace the most fulfilling challenge of all – to mature inwardly into our wisdom years. Join us to explore and celebrate the promise at the heart of your own wisdom years.

**Sat 23 November. 10 - 12.30 Online. Wisdom on the Way: Christianity Expanding into Universal Spirituality...** with Revd **Don MacGregor**

The world is rapidly changing. How do we move Christianity into the 21st century when so much of its doctrine is still heavily influenced by the medieval mentality? During our morning together, Revd Don MacGregor will draw upon insights from emerging scientific perspectives together with wisdom from the world's spiritual traditions to reach towards a re-imagining of God and the Christ that is meaningful and helpful for today. The session will include our usual opportunities for contemplation, alongside a chance to listen to Don and then share in small group breakout room discussions. It will also include chances for Q&A.

**Sat 23 November 6 - 7.30 pm. *The Great Search* Book Launch.** Join us and author **John Philip Newell** to celebrate the launch of his latest book. London.

<https://meditatiocentreondon.org>

*The Great Search. Turning to Earth And Soul in the Quest for Healing and Home* explores the wisdom of nine prophetic teachers from the past who presciently addressed the search for deeper meaning and a truer relationship with Earth and one another by increasing numbers today living in religious exile from their inherited traditions of faith. There is a longing to ground spiritual wisdom in experience, and a conviction that the light of God shines in the body of Earth and deep within us all. You can learn more about JP Newell's book here:

<https://www.ionabooks.com/product/the-great-search/>

JP will talk to us about his book and we will enjoy light refreshments together afterwards.

**Sat 23 - Mon 25 November. Liberal Theology.** Led by **Ian Bradley**. North East Wales.  
<http://www.gladstoneslibrary.org/> *continued...*



Liberal theology is not much in vogue now. Some believe it has been squeezed out between conservative evangelicalism and equally conservative Catholicism within the churches and to have given way to indifference and unbelief in the wider community. This weekend course explores its origins, its distinguishing characteristics and its relevance at a time when it seems in danger of disappearing.

**Ian Bradley** is Emeritus Professor of Cultural and Spiritual History at St Andrews University and still active as a Church of Scotland minister.

**Sun 24 November 4.30 pm. Liquid Faith: Heeding the wild swimmers.** Lecture by **Ian Bradley**. North East Wales. <http://www.gladstoneslibrary.org/>

We appear to be witnessing a spiritual revolution, in which traditional authoritarian, institutional religion as represented by churches is giving way to spirituality based on personal fulfilment and experience. One of the most striking aspects of this phenomenon is the way that many people now express their 'religion' as communing with nature.

One of the most dramatic sources of this growing natural spirituality is water, that simplest, most ubiquitous and yet also most precious element that covers over 70% of the earth's surface. Wild swimming has taken off in a spectacular way over the last decade or so. 7.5 million people in the UK now venture into rivers, lakes, lidos and the sea, considerably more than double the number of regular churchgoers which stands at under three million. Wild swimmers describe being cleansed, renewed, and healed. They often go further in identifying what might be better described as spiritual rather than physical or psychological benefits: finding a sense of being part of something much bigger than themselves, and release from grief and bereavement by letting their tears of grief mingle with the salt water.

These are exactly the kinds of words that one might expect to hear from those attending religious worship or going to church. Yet the overwhelming evidence from surveys is that for the diminishing band who do attend them, church services induce negative reactions of boredom, disappointment and frustration. Are wild swimmers articulating deep spiritual and religious truths more clearly than churches and religious leaders? In this provocative lecture, Ian Bradley argues that they are and outlines a new 'liquid faith'.

**Sun 24 November. 2.30 pm. Living Spirituality Connections Midlands local group meeting.** Solihull. More information from the Coordinator, Anne Gardner: email [a.gardner@me.com](mailto:a.gardner@me.com)

**Mon 25 November 10-12. Start of Minor Prophets: Major messages.** Led by Sr Patricia CJ. York <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/>

As well as the 'major' prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel – there are 12 'minor' prophets in the Old Testament. They have that name not because their message is less important, but because they are much shorter books. In these four weeks we shall be looking at the six prophets who wrote before the Babylonian Exile. 25 November – Amos. 2 December – Hosea. 9 December – Micah. 16 December – Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk.

**Sr Patricia CJ** is a member of the York Congregation of Jesus community with a particular interest in scripture studies.

**Mon 25 - Thurs 28 November. Western Christian Mysticism** course. Led by Dr Michael Hahn and Guest Tutors. Salisbury. <http://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

A deep-dive into some of the key movements and writers in the Western Christian Mystical traditions. This course will look at the development of mysticism in the history of Christianity, focusing on the Western church and will examine scholarship around mysticism as well as a range of primary texts written by and about mystics. We will include the early developments and foundations of Christian mysticism before looking at a range of movements in medieval mysticism (the Franciscans, English mystics, and the mystics of northern Europe), before examining mysticism in the Reformations and modern and post-modern mysticism.

**Tues 26 November 9.45 - 3.30. But how can this be? Exploring the mystery of the humanness of God.** Led by Steph Nadarajah. Surrey. [www.stcolumbushouse.org.uk](http://www.stcolumbushouse.org.uk)

An Advent Quiet Day Exploring the mystery of the humanness of God, through a thoughtful blend of guided reflections, worship, space...

**Thursday 28 November 7 - 9 pm online. Advent Retreat with Anna Robinson.** <https://www.livelihoodwelldeep.org/> See also 30 November.

Anna is passionate about growing, learning, awakening and making meaningful connections for a better world. She loves to write, host and curate spaces that enable deeper connection: with ourselves; with the earth; with others; with the Divine Mystery/God/Loving Presence/Source. To learn to live and love more consciously, kindly and bravely in a changing landscape.

**Fri 29 Nov - Sun 1 Dec. Advent Retreat.** Led by Sr **Sheila McNamara**. County Durham. <https://minsteracres.org/>

Our Advent Retreat, will help us discern the idea of waiting on the Lord. As we begin to prepare for the feast of Christmas, we challenge ourselves to use this time to reflect on our spiritual readiness for the gift of Christmas.

**Saturday 30 November 9 - 11 am online. Advent Retreat with Anna Robinson.** <https://www.livelihoodwelldeep.org/online-retreats> for details see 28 November.

**30 November 10.15 - 4. Unmaking Mary: The myth of divine motherhood.** Led by **Chine McDonald**. London <https://www.rfsk.org.uk/events>

For 2,000 years, the Virgin Mary has been depicted throughout art, literature and culture as symbolising the perfect mother: chaste, beautiful, meek, mild and white. These supposed virtues and symbols have shaped not just Christianity but wider popular culture; and have contributed to harmful views about motherhood and what it is to be a woman. This retreat will offer a time for reflection on the impacts of these tropes on us, and attempt to create a space to exhale; freeing ourselves from the burden of perfection.

**Chine** is Director of Theos, the religion and society think tank. She was previously Head of Public Engagement at Christian Aid and spent two decades working in journalism, media and communications across faith, media and international development.

**Sat 30 November 9.45 - 4.30. Journey into Healing Workshop.** Near Perth. <http://www.bieldatblackruthven.org.uk>

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring:  
I'll only stop to rake leaves away  
(and wait to watch the water clear, I may):  
I shan't be gone long. – You come too.

In just a few lines Robert Frost has captured the essence of a Journey into Healing workshop. Participants are invited to visit the spring in their lives; to gather leaves that may have accumulated; to find some means to remove the blockage; and to do it together in a group setting. We will invite you to do your work and come together to finish it.

**Sat 30 November 2-6 online. Poetry Reading As Spiritual Practice.** Led by Tracey Martin.  
<http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

Poetry can expand our awareness of the visible and the invisible. This gentle retreat will give participants the opportunity to spend time alone and together with a number of poems from a variety of traditions. We will explore how the poems speak to our spiritual lives, our relationship with other humans and the more than human world. We will both read and listen to a variety of poems with the time split between shared reflection and time away from the screen to read and reflect. Time on screen will be no more than 45 minutes at one time.

**Sat 30 Nov, 2pm-4pm. Online. Revelations of the Aramaic Jesus with Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz.** <https://www.cana.org.uk/>

The renowned Aramaic scholar Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz will guide us through some of his discoveries in studying the language Jesus spoke before its translation into Greek. Book a place by email to Bill at [admin@cana.org](mailto:admin@cana.org)

## December

**Mon 2 – Thurs 5 December. Advent - for adults only.** Led by John Bell. Near Bath.  
<https://www.ammerdown.org/>

The season of Advent is often taken over with rehearsals of children's choirs, preparation for children's nativity plays, the purchasing of presents for the children or grandchildren. Amidst this annual obsession, we tend to lose sight of the fact that with the exception of two fetuses who are eventually born to Elizabeth and Mary, most of the Advent and Christmas narratives involve older people, some extremely old, and some rather techy. Through reflections, some songs and perhaps a film, we will prepare as adults for an event which is meant to involve us.

**Mon 2 - Thurs 5 December. Rooted and Grounded: Going Deeper Into Spiritual Practice.** A retreat hosted jointly by Renovaré Britain & Ireland and the Launde Abbey community. Leicestershire. [www.laundeabbey.org.uk](http://www.laundeabbey.org.uk).

The team for this retreat is the **Revd Roy Searle, Bishop Alan Abernathy, the Revd Alison Myers, and the Revd Chris Webb.**

Paul shared with the Ephesians his yearning “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith as you are being rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3.17). Do

you want to develop those same deeper spiritual roots? Would you like to be able to cultivate a listening heart? Do you long to be transformed to become more like Christ? Rooted and Grounded is a retreat for those who want to tap into the rich wisdom and experience of the various Christian spiritual traditions: contemplative and charismatic, catholic and evangelical, political and personal. We'll take time to find rest and refreshment in prayer, worship, silence and rest. And we'll explore a wide range of spiritual practices you can take away with you to deepen your life of faith. You might want to be more resilient in the face of exhausting demands. You might be looking for a deeper foundation for your ministry. You might be wrestling with the question: how do I live a flourishing life? If so, this retreat is for you.

And for those who want to go further still, we hope to follow this retreat with regular gatherings (at the Abbey or on Zoom) to support one another as we develop our spiritual practice. This is a pilot project for us, so we don't know exactly what shape this will take ... come and pioneer it with us!

**6 - 7 December Waiting, watching, awakening - Advent Retreat with Christopher Chapman.** London. <https://www.rfsk.org.uk/>

The Christian year begins not with the great feasts of Christmas, Easter or Pentecost but with waiting. Advent is in many ways a stark season - a time to be in touch with our deepest desires and needs. It is a season of longing directed towards Christ, revealed as God-with-us, Emmanuel. Advent is a season of waiting, but in hope and in expectation.

**Christopher Chapman** is an experienced retreat leader and spiritual director.

**Fri 6 Dec - Sun 8 Dec. Advent Retreat: Welcoming the Word.** Led by **Audrey Hamilton.** Surrey. <https://www.christian-retreat.org/our-programme>

Join us for a time of silence and stillness as we embrace this holy season. With times of input and guided reflection, together with ample space for personal prayer, we will open our hearts to the loving kindness of God and all that God wishes to give.

**6 - 8 December. Gratefulness. Acknowledging the gifts that sustain us with Alex Wildwood.** Oxon. [www.charneymanor.com](http://www.charneymanor.com)

Charney's annual winter retreat is a chance to slow down, be aware of the changing seasons and focus on gratitude for life's 'givens'.

**Sat 7 December. 10 - 4. Darkness into Light: Finding Hope in the Christmas Story.**

Led by **The Breathing Space team**. Hants. [www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk](http://www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk)

‘Christmas makes sense only if you know the experience of darkness – the experience of not knowing what is going on, not knowing your way, not seeing life for what it is...Then the turn toward light has a real impact. The more you know the dark, the more you will appreciate the light.’ (Thomas Moore).

Come to this day to explore how Advent brings the light of God into our midst. ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.’ (John 1:5). Yet, we must learn to not incline too quickly toward the light, lest we bypass the greatest gifts that Advent offers. Darkness is found in Creation, in the Womb at the beginning of the Incarnation and during our own prayer and meditation. ‘I will give you the treasures of darkness, God says in Isaiah 45:3. For it is the Christ who was born on a dark night in a cave who is the Christ who seeks to be born in us this day, the darkness is where incarnation begins.

There will be sessions using creative resources to help participants to explore darkness into Light.

**Sat 7 December. 11.30 - 3. Time to Reflect.** Explore the beautiful space of Advent.

Lancs. Led by **Donna Worthington**. <https://christianretreats.live/>

For bookings, please contact the Parish office: 01772 335387 or Email [office@saintgerards.org.uk](mailto:office@saintgerards.org.uk)

**6 - 9 December. Preparation for Christmas Retreat.** North East Wales.

<https://www.pathwaystogod.org/org/st-beunos/>

A time of peace and prayer to prepare spiritually for Christmas. There will be a daily presentation to help you in your prayer and opportunities for creative work.

There will be a daily Eucharist, as well as the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation or to speak with a member of the team. The retreat will mostly be held in silence.

**Saturday 21 December 9 - 11am and 7 - 9 pm.** Online. **Winter Solstice Retreat** with **Anna Robinson**. <https://www.livelightdwelldeep.org/online-retreats> for details see 28 November.

**Monday 23 - to Saturday 28 December. Celebrate Christmas 2024** at the Friary, Hilfield Dorset. <https://www.hilfieldfriary.org.uk/programme/>

Join our Friary Family where we await the birth of the Christ Child. Suggested donation £280 to include food and accommodation. Please let Suzi know if you have any dietary requirements. For more information and booking please contact Suzi at Hilfield on 01300 341741 or email [hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk)

**Mon 23 - Fri 27 December. Community Christmas.** Come and enjoy Christmas in the Othona Community. Essex. <https://www.othonaessex.org.uk/>

Come and spend a few tranquil days in the Essex countryside over Christmas. Back to basics, away from the shops, the TV and all the hype. Enjoy good home cooking, log fires, friendly company and Christmas games. We will join our friends in Bradwell village for Midnight worship on Christmas Eve. Relax and unwind, walk on the beach and gaze at the night sky. Of course there will be the usual chores (duties) such as washing up or preparing vegetables that will need to be done. We find that this is quite good fun as a group and helps to break the ice and build community.

**Mon 23 - Fri 27 December. Christmas in Community.** Dorset. [www.othonawestdorset.org.uk](http://www.othonawestdorset.org.uk)

All ages gather for a Christmas with less 'stuff' but more heart. Christmas at Othona is always rather special, with less of the things you want less of (television, bingeing, bickering, maybe loneliness?) and more of a spirit of peace and goodwill within a temporary 'family' that isn't your own but where you have a real contribution to make. Everyone can get involved in decorating the house, helping prepare food, plan games or whatever. Feasting, presents, prayers – all are in the mix, but none to excess.

Equally suited to families, couples or individuals.

**Mon 23 – Fri 27 December. Christmas Houseparty.** With Revd **Sue Hammersley** and the Holy Rood House Community. N. Yorks. <https://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk/>

**Mon 23 - Fri 27 Dec. Christmas House Party.** Near Bath. <https://www.ammerdown.org/>

As soon as you walk in and see our sparkling Christmas tree you'll feel right at home, and the festivities can begin! Relax in comfort and enjoy our famous Ammerdown

hospitality, delicious yuletide food, great company and beautiful surroundings, fun Christmas entertainment. Daily prayers and ecumenical Christmas services. All activities are optional.

**Tues 24 December. Christmas Eve online Vigil with Laurence Freeman.** 10 pm French time. Free event. <https://wccm.org/events/christmas-eve-2024/>

We await the gift of Jesus' birth and reflect on the mysteries of the Incarnation. Christmas is a time of gift-giving. A gift is not just a cheap novelty, but something that brings newness, renewing our relationships and changing our way of being. If we can learn to freely give and accept a gift, we can enter into a new kind of relationship. The newness of the birth of Jesus is God's incarnational gift to us, a gift we learn to accept through the practice of meditation.

**Wed 25 December 12pm** online French time. **Christmas Day Contemplative Eucharist.** Led by Laurence Freeman. <https://wccm.org/events/christmas-day-2024/>

**Tues 31 December 4.30 - 6. The Turn of the Year.** Near Sheffield. <https://www.whirlowspiritualitycentre.org/>

Join us for a time of reflection and fellowship as we mark the turn of the year. We will prayerfully reflect on 2024 and look forward with hope to the coming year. There will be space and quiet for reflection, music and poetry to prompt our thoughts and some refreshments at the close. We will start our time together at 4:30 with an opportunity to enjoy refreshments and fellowship, before moving into a guided time of reflection.

## Advance Notices

**Trauma Healing and Transformation. Capacitar Training weekends: 2025.** York. <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/>

**Capacitar Training weekends: 2025.** <https://www.capacitaruk.org/england.html>

Module 1: January 18-19th St Bede's York Blossom St 10- 4.30 p.m. each day

Module 2: Online March 15-16th and March 29th (10-1 p.m. each day)

Module 3: May 24-25th St Bede's with Pat Cane

Module 4: 2024 July 19-20th 10-1 p.m. (Online)

Part 2: September 13th Final day together- St Bede's York 10-4 p.m.



Email: Paul at [capacitaralbion@outlook.com](mailto:capacitaralbion@outlook.com) for application form.