



Living Spirituality Connections

Resources for deeper living

Newsletter Winter 2023

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At a time when both sides are convinced "there is no partner for peace," we have found otherwise. The Roots Project.



Why We Meet

Despite living so close to each other, Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank exist in almost complete separation, and both sides have little knowledge of each other's lives or humanity. Stereotypes are generally reinforced by exposure to only the aggression of the other; whether through media or personal experience of violence and trauma. Through our projects and workshops, we create trust and partnership — the societal foundations upon which future political agreements can be built.

Our story begins in 2014 at a meeting between students of Rabbi Menachem Froman, of blessed memory, and members of the politically-prominent Abu Awwad family. This grew into a series of encounters between Palestinians and Israelis: meetings between families, a women's group, workshops, and a joint response to violence.

Sensing the transformative power of this work, we committed to a long-term project and called it Roots. We are a unique network of local Palestinians and Israelis who have come to see each other as the partners we both need to make changes to end our conflict. Based on a mutual recognition of each People's connection to the Land, we are developing understanding and solidarity despite our ideological differences.

Roots is a place where local peoples can take responsibility. Our work is aimed at challenging the assumptions our communities hold about each other, building trust and creating a new discourse around the conflict in our respective societies. This is a grassroots and local model for making change — from the bottom up.

To read more about the vision and work of Roots, go to:
<https://livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ROOTS.pdf>

Website: <https://www.friendsofroots.net/>

Donation link: <https://www.friendsofroots.net/donate>

Pope Francis calling for urgent climate action: *Laudate Deum* and COP28

On October 4th, the Vatican released an apostolic letter from Pope Francis: **Laudate Deum** (“Praise God”) with the subtitle “To all people of good will on the climate crisis.” Intended as an update to his June 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, he states that ‘Irresponsible’ Western Lifestyles Push the World to ‘the Breaking Point’ on Climate and calls for urgent action on the climate challenges and reflects on failures of earlier UN climate meetings. Pope Francis will travel to Dubai to attend the Climate Summit. This environmental exhortation is a follow-up to his groundbreaking 2015 *Laudato Si'*. He explains the new title by saying “‘Praise God’ is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God’s place, they become their own worst enemies.”

The Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology have compiled *Laudate Deum* resources <https://fore.yale.edu/Laudato-Si%E2%80%99/Laudate-Deum> including a podcast by Mary Evelyn Tucker, who is taking forward the pioneering work of Thomas Berry. John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker will be participating in a pre-conference summit in Abu Dhabi on November 6-7, which will highlight the ethical dimensions of climate change in its effect on people and the planet. Sponsored by the United Nations Environmental Programme, it is titled “Confluence of Conscience: Uniting Faith Leaders for Planetary Resurgence.”

Empowering Change: Petition to sign before the UN Climate Summit in December, urging urgent action: <https://laudatosimovement.org/cop28/>

The full text of *Laudate Deum* is here:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html

For further resources relating to *Laudate Deum*, go to: <https://fore.yale.edu/Laudato-Si%E2%80%99/Laudate-Deum>

And <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/laudato-si-encyclical>

Podcasts:

[Pope Francis’ *Laudate Deum*: Uniting Faith and Science in a Call to Climate Action](#)

Climate Now podcast with Mary Evelyn Tucker

October 24, 2023

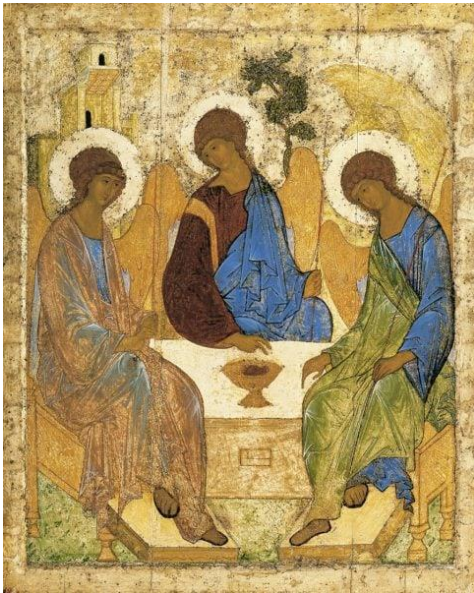
[New Climate Writings from Pope Francis](#)

Living on Earth podcast with Christiana Zenner

October 13, 2023

A mysterious and much needed offering from the Christian tradition by Lucy Winkett

For me, in a society that has as one of its mantras, “I’m spiritual but not religious”, the image of God in Trinity, which is paradoxical, contemplative, mysterious, beyond description, is honestly thrilling – and is a hugely relevant mysterious and much needed offering from the Christian tradition about what God is like and what human life can be like to a Twittery world both on and offline.



Andrei Rublev's Trinity

Rublev's ikon (left) shows three rather androgenous figures, with a Eucharistic image at the centre. They are deferring to one another, gazing contemplatively and as the viewer, you are drawn into the contemplative circle that you create. Following their gaze, you find yourself moving from one figure to the other in a dynamic involvement. It is impossible when contemplating this image not to feel invited.

And I use the word invited advisedly; no one is preaching at you, no one is trying to persuade you, no one is attempting to coopt you or coerce you, demand your attention or get you to do something. The invitation is freely offered, the space is there for you, the table is set; and you are utterly free to join or to walk away. The invitation is to join this dynamic love, to add your love to theirs, to find your home in this place in this presence. And as your eyes move from one figure to the other, as soon as you look at your beloved, you are drawn through this gaze, to gaze at the one the beloved loves and to know this beloved newly loving. There is a compelling dynamism at the heart of this contemplative stillness; God is the verb, the space between the figures as much as the figures themselves. And the Trinity is therefore expressing an eternal, and for many, an irresistible invitation to live; hearts open, at the mercy of the beloved and asked too, to love the one the beloved loves.

Lucy Winkett is Rector of St James's Piccadilly www.sjp.org.uk

To read Lucy's further comments on the Biblical view of hospitality and how that plays out in our own lives today, go to:

https://livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/A_mysterious_offering_by_Lucy_Winkett.pdf

Exploring Spirit Season at St John's Waterloo

by Georgia Ashwell

Exploring Spirit at St John's Waterloo has been our season of worship, events, and arts to engage in three categories, Nourishing Spirit, Spirit of Creation and Spirit of Justice.



Within our Nourishing Spirit strand, we held weekly Breathe events on Monday evenings that have included silence, poetry, music, chants and meditation to give space for our spiritual lives to be nourished. Our meditation began with the invitation to slow down in order to “give our souls time to catch up with our bodies”. And this is what the Nourishing Spirit side of this season has focused on so far.

The invitation in the Psalms is as needed today as it was when first spoken,

“Be still,
and know
that I am God.”
(Psalm 46:10)

Sometimes we need to be still to nourish our spiritual selves, and our Breathe event gave space for this. But this is not the only way to nourish the spiritual.

Our season began with a quiet day on Saturday 7th October, led by Nicola Smedley, who encouraged us all to explore our own rule or rhythm or life.

Nicola writes,

The invitation was this: to press the pause button on our busyness and to spend a day listening to how God might be calling us to Grow Well, and then imagine a Rhythm or Rule of Life that might support us to be firmly rooted in Christ.

We considered how God wants us to flourish in the whole of our lives- so a Rhythm of Life might focus on significant relationships, health and wellbeing, how to use my resources of time, energy and giftedness as well as my money. And we recognised a

call to balance and simplicity in our lives to counter the pressures of today's living and the greater needs of our planet.

On Advent Sunday, 3rd December we bring our Rhythms/ Rules and commit them to God.

Nourishing Spirit is not the only part of this Exploring Spirit Season, we have also been exploring Spirit of Justice and Spirit of Creation.

In collaboration with Faith for the Climate, there have been a number of films shown throughout October engaging with issues of racial and climate justice.

Giles writes,



Can I Live, the film, was amazing – marking Black History Month with a passionate call for action from Fehinti Balogun, in the same week we had a reconstruction of Martin Luther King's Christmas Sermon – it's really bringing together the Spirit of Justice and the Spirit of Creation.

With guest preacher Sharon Moughtin, from Eco Church Lambeth, we celebrated Harvest, with the invitation to cultivate a thankful Spirit, giving thanks for the beauty of this world. The following week, Sustainability Sunday, we engaged with the Spirit of God – animating all creation – breathing life into all life. The creating and re-creating Spirit, who gives us hope where the climate disaster brings fear.

To bring these strands together has been essential for me. The Spirit of God is not only that which is personal to me and my own nourishing, but that which gives life and nourishment to this world.

To seek justice and life for people and planet is to work *with* the loving, nourishing and creating Spirit of God. To believe that we do not do this on our own, is my hope for all created life in this beautiful world.

If this intrigues you, find out more about St John's Waterloo at stjohnswaterloo.org

Rev **Georgia Ashwell** is Curate at St John's Waterloo.

New ways of being church:

Not everyone finds God in a building but many people feel a spiritual connection in the forest, by the water, or under the stars

The Salal&Cedar community



The Salal&Cedar worshipping community <https://salalandcedar.com> worships at different outdoor locations in the lower mainland near Vancouver, usually parks or trails, sometimes contested places like the provincial court house or a pipeline construction site. During the pandemic we have added gatherings by zoom.

We meet outside and help people deepen their spiritual lives and grow their love of creation. We have only had to cancel worship once when a wind-storm blew a tree down in front of one of our cars. We are often surprised by how often the skies clear on a rainy day.

Salal is a tough persistent evergreen bush with large tough leaves and a string of purple berries that grows in the understory of the forest near the coast.

You don't have to be an Anglican to participate. Salal&Cedar has a half-time Anglican priest and a volunteer deacon and is associated with the Diocese of New Westminster (Vancouver in Canada). While some of our members are Anglicans, we also have a fair number of Baptists, rogue Catholics and others. You don't have to be a Christian to join the worship. We are a Christian church, our worship includes readings from the bible, paying attention to the Holy in nature and we share communion, the sacramental meal of bread and wine but if you are comfortable with that, we are glad to have you. If that all seems a bit much, then our contemplative walks might suit you better.

We meet on Saturdays and on the 2nd Saturday we join the Quaker-inspired meeting at the Kwekwecnewtxw Watch House on Burnaby Mountain. In place of sermons we spend time

listening in silence to the word of God in creation and gather items for our altar. We also celebrate quarter days and cross quarters, usually in person with an extended celebration including food. Salal&Cedar celebrates the solstices, equinoxes and the four days at the mid-points in between (Candlemas, May Day, Lammas, and All Souls) these holy days of the Celtic calendar mark key times in the northern European agricultural year, correspond to the church calendar and help us attend to the rhythm of the changing seasons.

In our educational program we love to learn together through bible studies, book groups, retreats, and skill-shares. We can also bring these programs to other churches or organizations. You don't have to be an activist in order to join. Salal&Cedar members have a shared vocation for ecological justice and we want to support folks who care about climate justice to take the next steps that are right for them. For some of us this means we attend rallies and direct actions or participate in lobbying or court support together, you are always welcome to join us but you don't have to.

What does Watershed Discipleship mean?

Watersheds are natural water drainage basins which divide up bioregions. Metaphorically we refer to this time as a "watershed moment" in terms of climate crisis. Watershed Discipleship means asking, "What does it mean to be a follower of the Jesus Way here at this time, with the land, water, creatures, and people of this particular place?"

What do we mean by Mutual Aid and Solidarity? Economic justice is important to us. On a small relational level we redistribute a portion of the money (12-17%) we raise each year to folks who need support (funeral expenses or childcare fees) and organizations that do some of the work that we wish we could (housing Indigenous land defenders, run a free pantry).

What do we mean by decolonizing?

Anglican church exists here on Coast Salish territory because of British colonialism. Most of our members' families came here from elsewhere in the world to settle. We talk about these facts, and contemplate what it means for our community to be in right relation to the land and the people who were here first. We start our services by acknowledging that we meet on unceded territories and ask each other how we will live differently because of this. We try to follow Indigenous leadership in protecting land, water and show up when Indigenous people ask us to. We pay attention to how climate justice and racial justice are connected.

What's all this about pronouns and access needs?

When we meet we invite participants to share their name, pronouns, and any access needs that will help them to participate fully (seating, scent-free, large print). We do this each

time we gather, even if we all know each other because all of these are things that can and do change.

People ask how we do so much amazing stuff. We love and believe in what we do. Community members volunteer a lot of time, and we train and empower lay people for leadership roles but this work is not free and we appreciate financial support from folks who value this model of church.

Get our weekly update with prayer concerns, education opportunities and worship schedule. E-mail salalandcedar@vancouver.anglican.ca for the times and locations of upcoming events or check upcoming events on this website: <http://salalandcedar.com/>

Felting as a spiritual practice by **Linda Courage**



For the last thirty years I've been facilitating expressive art workshops in one form of another to help people experience how potent the creative process can be in connecting us with ourselves and our lives.

In recent years, Living Spirituality Connections, in association with St Bede's Pastoral Centre in York, UK, have used online zoom meetings to extend and deepen this experience. Groups have worked through Abbey of the Arts (<https://www.abbeyofthearts.com>) publications over a six month period and this has given us a rich and safe space to experience and explore transformative contemplative practices.

Even more recently I've been moving through the threshold of 'retirement'. For me it is a process rather than an event. A process that is turning out to be different than I had planned. Earlier this year an artist friend at an open studio event asked me about showing my own work. His question stayed with me; I hadn't made any of my own work for some

time and I was weary. I pressed pause on my tidy plans for retirement...

Recognising I hadn't made my own work for some time had me gathering all my resources together and making a felt just for me from all my very best and precious fibres; oh so soft mohair, glossy silks, with linens and curly wools. It has been a happy time of remembering and re-learning, uncovering and amazement; a conversation into the unknown that will only reveal itself during the process.

This has been a great reminder of how felt making can refresh, restore, accompany and open me. I liken the process to how life can often be. We might arrange things beautifully and then life puts us through the wringer. The work of letting go of how we imagined life, and seeing beauty from how things are is a process that takes time...sometimes decades or a lifetime.

The photographs show a few stages in the lengthy process of preparing, gathering, choosing, placing, holding, drenching, rolling, tumbling, drying, stripping, dissecting, revealing, seeing, imagining, transforming, decorating, appreciating, commissioning, using, sharing.



Invitation

If you'd like to make your own felt in a group setting over a period of days in the beautiful new art space in the basement of St Bede's Pastoral Centre in York, (<https://www.stbedes.org.uk>) accessed by stairs.

I will be facilitating a 4 day series after Easter next year called '**Felting Connections**'. The dates and timings are 10am until 3pm on 17/4, 24/4, 1/5 and 8/5. Each day will begin with a catch up and a heart centred meditation and there will be time to journal and gently share thoughts about the process.

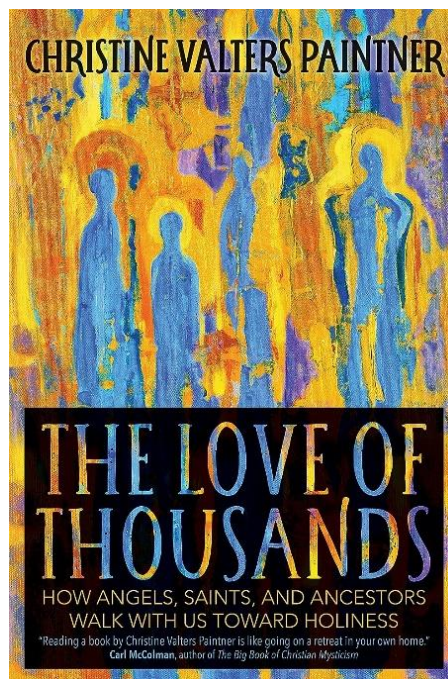
All felting materials will be provided. People will need to bring a journal/notebook, and large towel and plastic bag to take home their wet felting to dry between sessions.

Pricing details will be available soon. Booking will be through <https://www.stbedes.org.uk/> or by phoning 01904 464900. If you have any questions about the series before choosing to register, please email me at Linda.courage60@gmail.com

Linda is relishing retirement from a varied career in nursing and science. She has used and facilitated expressive arts workshops for half her lifetime. She is a member of the Holy Disorder of Dancing Monks in The Abbey of the Arts, and a lifetime friend of St Bedes Pastoral Centre in York. She is glad to be a member of the Working and Discernment Group of Living Spirituality Connections where she coordinates our arts and spirituality work and has helped curate a number of art galleries on our website.

***The Love of Thousands: How Angels, Saints, and Ancestors Walk with Us Toward Holiness* by Christine Valters Paintner**

Is it possible that angels, saints, and even our departed ancestors support and inspire us throughout our lives? How can we connect with them in a real way? Christine Valters Paintner, popular spiritual writer and abbess of the online Abbey of the Arts, says these sacred beings are paving the way for our journey toward God's love, even as we pass through a world rife with struggle, discord, and violence. In *The Love of Thousands*, she helps us open up our spiritual imagination to encounter our heavenly helpers, allowing us to become everyday mystics.



Christine describes saints, angels, and our ancestors as sacred beings who surround us like concentric circles, watching over us with compassion and offering us spiritual guidance throughout our lives. In *The Love of Thousands*, she guides us to see the ways these beings

support us, from the care of our guardian angels, to the wisdom of the mystics, to the witness of our loved ones who have crossed the threshold to the light of God's presence.

Christine's gentle guidance reveals that we can be inspired and sustained when we are open and attentive in exploring our connections to these holy companions walking alongside us. Transformed by the encounter, we can grow into the kinds of ancestors—part of the Communion of Saints—who offer spiritual support and wisdom to others in turn.

Throughout *The Love of Thousands*, we are led to explore and better understand the teachings from scripture and tradition about the four archangels, the protection offered by our guardian angels, and what it might look like to wrestle with angels as Jacob did in the Old Testament;

- * the witness of the saints and mystics, with an exploration of how we are all called to be mystics;
- * the tradition of relics and the practice of pilgrimage;
- * the presence of our ancestors, inviting us first to claim the blessings of our family heritage and then to embrace grief and explore healing the wounds of our lineage.

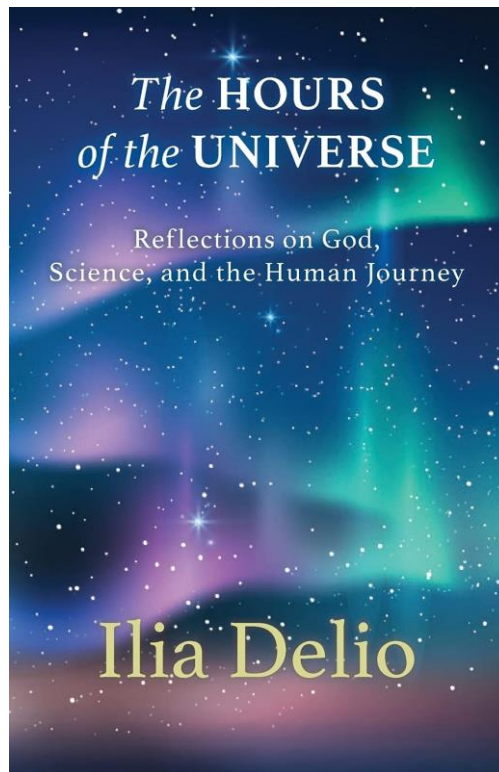
Each chapter includes a reflection, practice, meditation, and creative exercise that will help cultivate an ongoing relationship with angels, saints, and our ancestors. Paintner also suggests various ways to engage with this book to reflect more deeply on the spiritual content, such as reading it over the course of a year or with others as a form of spiritual pilgrimage.

Christine Valters Paintner is a poet, mystic and hermit, who is Abbess of the virtual Abbey of the Arts <https://abbeyofthearts.com/>

Linda Courage writes about *The Hours of the Universe.*
Reflections on God, Science, and the Human Journey
by **Ilia Delio**

I wonder if you have come across this book... I hadn't until it was loaned to me only a month ago. I've enjoyed the wisdom and perspective it shares. It isn't what might be called an easy or light read, but I do think it is a book that speaks to these turbulent days - a book for our time, our now and the planets future, with or without us. I've looked forward to what each reading might bring to me, usually managing just one essay and letting the often new language, ideas and insights find space in me.

The book is a collection of essays arranged under the titles normally used to name daily prayer times in the monastic tradition, viz Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terc, Sext, None, Vespers



and Compline. (In the context of daily prayers, the named hours of the day have different energies, purposes and requirements).

Ilia has applied the hours to the whole time of creation of the universe - past, present and future. She begins the day in the darkness (Matins, also called Vigils) and looks back at big ideas and insights from science and philosophers and religious thinkers, drawing heavily on the concept of evolution as the God force in the development of the universe that we are a product and a part of. Much later in her book she is perfectly at ease with technology being part of evolution and raising consciousness, exploring these alongside the problem of our disconnection from nature.

The book is rich and this article is limited in what it can bring, but here are a few things that touched me on the way. In one Matins (night) essay, Teilhard de Chardin is presented as 'A Big Thinker for a Big Universe', and his thoughts about evolution, incarnation, and love echo throughout the book. In another essay, Ilia invites reimagining our understanding of faith and begins a thread about consciousness and the need for it to expand if we are to survive as a species;

'We constantly pray to God to make order of our chaotic lives, but what if God is the very source of our chaos?' page 9

'God thrives in between the known and the unknown, between uncertainty and hope, stretching forth into the world as our souls expand with new levels of consciousness.' page 11

Prime (sunrise), contains essays with a number of emphases, including caring for our common home (Laudato Si), an important focus for this part of the day. Ilia shares Teilhard's thoughts about our need for 'A religion of the Earth', rather than what he sees as traditional Christianity focussing on Heaven.

'No longer is it simply a religion of individual and of heaven, but a religion of mankind and of the earth - that is what we are looking for at this moment, as the oxygen without which we cannot breathe'. Teilhard de Chardin. Pages 65-66

Terce (middle of the morning) is opened with the first line of a poem,

'Was Jesus of Nazareth God?', page 101

and proceeds to explore ideas about 'The Cosmic Christ', 'Christ ,the Future', 'The Rainbow of Pride', and 'Race and Axial Consciousness'. Each essay covers broad terrain, often starting from unexpected positions, and weaves ideas, explains terms, and poses challenges that invite further thought.

N.B. I've used 'Music of Silence' - A sacred journey through the hours of the day' by David Stendl-Rast and Sharon Lebell, to name where in the day the hours fall.

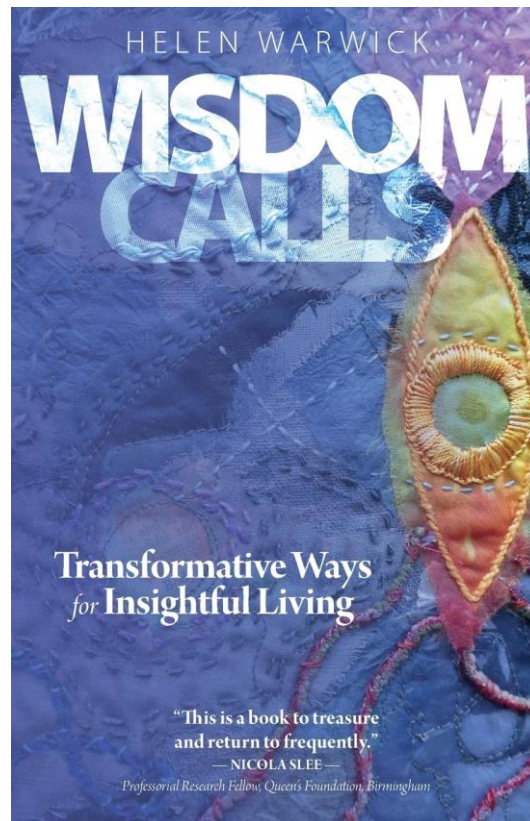
Ilia Delio OSF, PhD is a Franciscan Sister of Washington, DC and American theologian specializing in the area of science and religion, with interests in evolution, physics and neuroscience and the import of these for theology. Ilia is founder of the Center for Christogenesis <https://christogenesis.org/>.

Linda Courage: see the article *Felting as a Spiritual Practice* above.

Wisdom Calls. Transformative Ways for Insightful Living by Helen Warwick.

Wisdom's call resounds within us, connecting us to a way of knowing that guides us through the diversities and transitions of our lives. This innate presence, central to our existence, is recognised in all ancient cultures and faiths, yet often disregarded in our busy world. Through practical and creative ways we are encouraged to open to deeper insights into our everyday lives. Wisdom shows a way of healing, love, and care for ourselves and the earth. This poetic movement draws us into community and belonging.

Helen's perspective, living in a therapeutic and educational community, highlights personal



experiences of Wisdom's emerging in myriad ways – through stories, poems and earthy prayerfulness – giving the book a uniqueness and supportive ideas for readers.

Helen Warwick is a Chaplain, Spiritual Director and Creative Therapist within the Community of Holy Rood House, Centre for Health and Pastoral Care, where she accompanies individuals and groups and runs a variety of events. Her writing evolves from her background in health, psychology, counselling, spiritual accompaniment and creativity.

Would you like to be a volunteer editor for Magnet magazine?

Magnet is a professionally produced resource magazine produced by a team of volunteer editors. Each issue seeks to nurture Christian faith in thoughtful, challenging ways, encouraging, enabling and equipping people of all Christian traditions.

A Magnet editor's role includes everything from sourcing ideas, commissioning writers, reading and editing articles, choosing images and liaising with the design team to bring everything together. It brings challenge and fun as the team takes an issue from ideas to the final printed issue. And of course, it's extremely rewarding to hold the finished product in your hand. There is a certain commitment involved, but we share the work of publishing three issues a year across the team, and there is lots of flexibility. You can see a sample issue of magnet at www.ourmagnet.co.uk/articles

If you're interested in finding out more, contact Heather Smith (also a subscriber to Living Spirituality Connections) at heather.smith@hymnsam.co.uk

