

EVENTS

April - June 2025

Arranged by many centres and organisations across the UK. Compiled by **Living Spirituality Connections**
www.livingspirit.org.uk

April

Tues 1 - Sat 5 April Finding Flow Retreat with **Anna Robinson and Isabelle Roberts**.
Cornwall. <https://www.livelightdwelldeep.org>

Time, space and creativity to process changing faith and shifting perspectives to bring about more freedom and flow. Engage in creative artist workshops, guided meditations, times of quiet solitude in the Cornish landscape and quality connection with others. For those on the journey of life and faith shifting - re-imagining, evolving, unravelling, expanding, deconstructing, grieving... Discover and explore your own creativity. Bring your own tools, skills or interests, whether through writing, poetry, storytelling, journalling, drawing, painting, music, movement or something else... A gentle and non-threatening place to revive the soul.

Wed 2 April 10 - 4. Spiritual Experiences. A Quiet Day to consider spiritual experiences, led by the Revd Canon **Rosemary Drew**. Essex. <https://www.retreathousepleshey.com/>

The Bible has many stories of individuals having spiritual experiences, as have others down the centuries. The theologian Karl Rahner wrote that "The Christian of the future will be a mystic or he or she will not exist at all, if by mysticism, we mean ... a genuine experience of God emerging at the very heart of our existence." The day will explore this theme and its meaning for us. **Rosemary** runs a Quiet Garden at her home which includes quiet days, meditation and the ministry of healing. She is an active member of the Churches Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies and has just contributed a chapter to a new book on "*Talking about Spiritual Experience*".

Thurs 3 April 7.30 – 8.30 pm. Deep Abiding Prayer practice group on Zoom. Led by **Petra Griffiths**. A **Living Spirituality Connections** event.

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 (2nd Thursday in January), 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

Fri 4 April 6.30 pm Voices from Silence. First Friday of the month on Zoom.

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

Personal stories of engaging in silence by practitioners from the Global Majority Heritage (GMH) community,* which will grow into a collection of Voices from Silence. Although people from the GMH may have a spiritual practice of silence, authors in these communities tend to write more about silencing than silence-based prayer.

Even Dr Barbara A. Holmes (1943-2024), the well-known contemplative Black theologian and author of *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church* couldn't suggest anyone from these communities who writes at length about silence! Perhaps this is because a quarter of the way into the new millennium the lives and stories of many in these communities are sidelined; their voices are silenced.

This new series is a way to bring wisdom about silence from the GMH community into the conversations and resources that Seeds of Silence offers on its website. To get the Zoom link for each session go to: <https://www.seedsofsilence.org.uk/voices-from-silence-request.html>

* Refers to people whose backgrounds are from non-Western, non-White ethnic and cultural groups. Reflecting that the majority of the world's population comes from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, it challenges the traditional framing of racial and ethnic 'minorities' by emphasizing that these populations are, in fact, the global majority.

5 April 4.30 - 6 pm. The Flame of Love: Rumi's Love Poetry. Performance with Lennie Charles. London. <https://meditatiocentrelondon.org/>

One of the great treasures of Persian literature is the 13th century Sufi poet and mystic Maulana Jallaludin Rumi. Rumi's poems express the central idea of Sufism that the human soul is in exile from its maker and longing to return. His wisdoms are universal, across time, place and cultures, Rumi's poems articulate what it feels like to be alive they help us understand our own search for love and the ecstatic in the coil of daily life. Rumi's love poetry beautifully express the transformative power of love and its ability to dissolve boundaries and unite souls. Through his poetry, we learn to transcend our material existence and move toward joy and inner peace inner peace toward our core desire – love.

'Through Love all that is bitter will be sweet, Through Love all that is copper will be gold, Through Love all dregs will become wine, through Love all pain will turn to medicine. Rumi Mitra Zadno – Sung Verses in Farsi, Hamedi Hashemi – Farsi Narrator, Jumana Moon – English Narrator, Rez Kabir – English Narrator, Ajoy Datta – Whirling

Dervish. Live Music: Adam Quorn – Oud, Paul Cheneour – Flutes, Lennie Charles – Percussion & strings.

Sat 5 - Sat 12 April Iona Pilgrimage with John Philip Newell and Ali Newell.

Scotland. <https://www.earthandsoul.org/events/iona-pilgrimage>

A pilgrimage week of reflection, spiritual practice, and community life.

12 - 20 April Fully Human – Holy Week Retreat Led by **Laurence Freeman** and team.

Bonnevaux Retreat Centre, France. <https://bonnevauxwccm.org/>

The deeper mysteries of human experience can be discovered by sharing with others in a combination – sacred and playful – of ritual and storytelling. Come in person and participate in this year's Holy Week cycle which extends from the Palm Sunday procession to witnessing sunrise on Easter morning. Grounded in the rhythm of the community's daily meditation, we take a further step each day into the life of the story of the last days of Jesus and his transformation of death and failure into resurrection and fullness of life. We follow the moving details of the timeless narrative while remaining rooted in the now by sharing in the daily life, prayer and work of the Bonnevaux community. Taking the time for this journey into the sacredness of your life will open new vistas of faith by discovering the familiar in strikingly fresh ways.

This event takes place at Bonnevaux and offers an opportunity to discover the rich cultural and historical French and European heritage of the 12th-century Abbaye de Bonnevaux, as well as to explore the varied and natural beauty of the land which we cultivate as a model of ecological responsibility.

This retreat is both for the beginning and ongoing meditators. There will be four periods of meditation a day to accommodate your level of practice. Mornings will be in silence through breakfast and lunch, with the afternoon opening to times of rest and solitude and a convivial dinner where you can get to know your neighbour.

There is also an online version of the above retreat from 14 – 20 April.

Mon 14 – Sun 20 April. Holy Week with the Launde Abbey Community.

Leicestershire.

<https://www.laundeabbey.org.uk/event/holyweek2025/>

Mon 14 Apr 7.30 pm - 9 pm. Women Mystics: Teresa of Avila course. Female Theologians through Christian History. On Zoom. <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) is one of the most productive and plain-spoken teachers of the Christian mystical tradition. Her concern that all Christians engage a continually deepening relationship with God, allowing God's self-revelation and invitation to intimacy to unfold in us over the course of a lifetime led her to write multiple treatises on prayer, culminating in *The Interior Castle* (1577). We will explore the first four of seven stages in the mystical life as outlined in *The Interior Castle*, allowing Teresa's insights to speak to us across time and space.

The webinar leader **Gillian Ahlgren** is the author of several books, including *Enkindling Love: The Legacy of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross*, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle: A Reader's Companion*, and *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*.

17 - 21 April. Holy Week and Easter Retreat 'Life in all its Fullness'. Led by the Holy Rood Community. N. Yorks. <https://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk/>

Space to breathe, time to pray, food to enjoy.

17 - 20 April. Mary Jo Radcliffe will be celebrating a **Cosmic Zoom Holy Week** from Maundy Thursday - Easter Sunday. All are welcome. If you are interested and would like further information her email is maryjoradcliffe@icloud.com.

Fri 18 April 4-6 pm on Zoom. Ripened (S)aging: A Good Friday Invitation for Exploration of Grief, Loss & Mortality in Our Wisdom Years. With **Melissa Layer**. <https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar/>

Calling upon the gifts of poetry, journaling, and visio divina reflections we will break open death and resurrection as invitations to personal meaning-making and transformation in our eldering journeys.

25 - 27 April. Liquid Faith led by **Ian Bradley**. North East Wales. <https://www.gladstoneslibrary.org/>

Water plays a central role in Christianity and in all the world's religions – it has often been taken as a metaphor for faith – flowing and yet still, yielding and yet in full spate. Ian Bradley leads a weekend which asks what message the booming interest

in wild swimming might have for the churches, and explores holy wells, sacred watery sites and spas in Wales and elsewhere. 'Watery' images and metaphors in the Bible, in poems and in theological texts will be shared and discussed, as will examples of liturgical innovations making use of water.

The weekend will include a visit to Holywell, a unique and evocative place of pilgrimage based around an early medieval holy well.

Ian Bradley is Emeritus Professor of Cultural and Spiritual History in the University of St Andrews and well known as a preacher, retreat leader, writer and broadcaster.

Book on 01244 532 350 or email enquiries@gladlib.org

Sat 26 April 10 - 1. How do we hold a deeper peace? On Zoom. With **Donna Worthington**. <https://www.christianretreats.live/online-retreats>

How do we hold a deeper peace, when faced with difficult situations? Our key text to explore will be St Paul's letter to the Philippians which is full of realism, hope, wisdom and insightful strategies.

Sat 26 April 2 - 4.30. Faith in Captivity: the power of art in adversity with Revd Dr **Stephanie Burette**. London <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/whats-on/faith-in-captivity-power-of-art-in-adversity>

'I think if one is a committed Christian, in the environment in which we lived here [Changi], if Christianity means anything to you at all, this is the time when it becomes real. That is my experience. To work on the murals was a religious experience for me. An experience that I had never known before and to some extent that I had never known again.' The words of British painter Stanley Warren (1917-1992), reflecting on his experience as a Prisoner of War in Changi during World War II, may strike a chord in our time. In St Luke's Chapel, built by POWs in Changi, Singapore, he painted a series of five murals, from Jesus' birth to the Ascension, holding onto his faith in the midst of extreme circumstances.

Does faith reveal its actual value in the most challenging circumstances? What did Warren mean by having a 'religious experience' while painting the murals? Was the art he (and others) created in the camp a medium to convey Christian hope, an end in itself, or something else? How can Christian faith through art help see not only beauty but also the humanity of those we could reduce to being 'enemies' and help find common ground?

Continued...

Join us as we contemplate the paintings and wrestle with the questions they inspire.

The Revd Dr **Stephanie Burette** is Chaplain at both Lady Margaret Hall and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Her research specialises in the works of British artists in the first half of the twentieth century, mostly in wartime.

Sun 27 April 9.45 am. Eco Contemplative Liturgy in the garden at St James's Church Piccadilly, and on Zoom. Readings, prayers and contemplative time. Non-denominational. Takes place on the fourth Sunday of each month. For the Zoom link and liturgy sheet email Petra at: ecochurch@sjp.org.uk

29 April 9:30 am - 12:30 pm Celebrating Extraordinary Ordinary Time course. With **Tom Clammer**. Liturgical, theological and pastoral opportunities. On Zoom. <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

We can be tempted to view the liturgical year as two great “high seasons” centred around Christmas and Easter, with some rather non-descript and potentially boring periods in between, where there is no particular emphasis, and where there is even the risk of things appearing to be dull or mundane. The decision by the Church of England in the year 2002 badge these periods as “Ordinary Time” has possibly not helped the situation!

In this online morning seminar we will have the opportunity to explore Ordinary Time in a little more detail, and to reclaim this period of the church year as containing its own wonderful dignity and joy, and being pregnant with liturgical, pastoral and theological opportunities. We will remind ourselves exactly how Ordinary Time works, and note the distinctive nature of the two periods: the first short period in the spring, and the much longer time through the summer and autumn. We will explore the myriad theological and scriptural themes that these times present us with as leaders of worship, preachers, ministers and Christians at worship.

Ordinary Time comes with a set of distinctive feasts and festivals of an agricultural or rural nature, as well as the ‘fixed’ feasts of various holy men and women, and those will be explored, but we will also look at the much wider opportunities to use this season in a variety of flexible and creative ways.

Tom Clammer OC is a spiritual director and a Brother of the Anglican Order of Cistercians, and has been living under that Rule for the last five years, which has excited him to encourage every Christian to consider forming their own Rule of Life. In June 2024 he was appointed as Novice Master.

29 April - 4 May Resilient Spirit 6–Day Retreat. Northern Ireland.

<https://www.corrymeela.org/>

What keeps our spirits resilient, even in times of stress and challenge? This retreat offers space for reflection and sharing, music and silence, as we explore what helps us build resilience in our daily lives. Through workshops on wellness skills, reflective practice, and poetry, set within the spacious rhythms of retreat, we learn more about what gives us life, energy, joy, and hope. This retreat is open to people of a variety of religious or spiritual backgrounds.

Led by the Rev. **Kiran Young Wimberly** (www.kiranyoungwimberly.com/about)

To book your place, contact eric@progressivepilgrimage.com

Learn more about the retreat at

<https://progressivepilgrimage.wetravel.com/trips/resilient-spirit-retreat-in-ireland-with-kiran-young-wimberly-progressive-pilgrimage-05727566>

30 April 6.30 - 9 pm. Toasting Future Humanity with the Cup of Love with **Murshida Amat Un Nur**. London. <https://meditatiocentrelondon.org/>

Join us for a prayerful evening exploring the motif of the cup from ancient Persian lore to Christian sacred symbology & Sufi metaphor. Please note that we are offering this talk in person at the Centre. We will record the talk to make it available afterwards, but the evening is not suitable for online participation. Please email meditatio@wccm.org to receive the recording.

May

Fri 2 - Mon 5 May An Invitation to join A Table in the Wilderness. Led by **Anna Robinson and Isabelle Roberts**. Cornwall. <https://www.livelightdwelldeep.org/in-p>

“A wonderful, nourishing, nurturing space to come as you are, explore life, spirituality and faith in an open ended hospitable way. To bring yourself, your experiences, your doubts into a safe space” Caroline

This retreat will be a time to:

- Slow down and take a breath in beautiful rural Cornwall.
- Connect and share with others on the faith shift journey. *Continued...*

- Be guided in meditation, contemplation and reflection.
- Connect with your soul and the season.
- Connect with the Divine within you and around you.
- Practice some ancient tools and practices to support your spiritual life.
- Enjoy good food and conversation around the table.
- Bring your faith, doubts, questions and hopes.

Fri 2 May 4 - 5.30 pm Online. Cultivating Seeds of Liberation – Prayer Cycle Launch and 20th anniversary celebration! With **Christine Valters Paintner, Betsey Beckman, Cassidhe Hart, Claudia Love Mair, Jo-ed Tome, Melinda Thomas, Richard Bruxvoort Collingan, Simon de Voil, Soyinka Rahim, and Te Martin.**

<https://abbeyofthearts.com>

Join Abbey of the Arts as we celebrate the start of our 20th year of supporting monks and artists in transformative living! Come together in community to help us honor all we have created and all that is yet to come. We will be launching our brand new prayer cycle of morning and evening prayer on the theme of Cultivating Seeds of Liberation. Daily themes include: Love, Vision, Hope, Justice, Peace, Joy, and Beauty.

This free event will weave prayer, music, and poetry together. Join in the joy!

Sat 3 May 10.30 - 12.30. On Zoom. **June Boyce-Tilman** speaking on **Hildegard of Bingen & Community church involving earth elements and other practices.** This is a CANA Conscious Conversation. <https://www.cana.org.uk/>
Please email Bill at admin@cana.org.uk if you would like to participate.

Mon 5 May - Thurs 8 May. In-Between Times Led by **Emily Owen.** Leicestershire.
<https://www.laundeabbey.org.uk/>

Why not choose to deliberately take some time out from the pressures of daily life, and join us as we gently and devotionally make time in the in-between, and discover more about how God meets us there.

9 - 11 May People of Faith, People of Doubt. Northern Ireland. Residential Open Event. <https://www.corrymeela.org/>

Continued...

Corrymeela is hosting an open event where we can be honest about our faith and our doubt and seek wisdom with each other. Many in our society grew up identifying easily as Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican, etc. – but fewer feel at home in our churches or our denominations. Many from various backgrounds, religious or nonreligious, wrestle with questions of faith and doubt and seek a life nourished by spirituality and challenged by love.

Join us as People of Faith and People of Doubt to explore these issues and learn from each other's experiences. People of all faiths and backgrounds are welcome. A programme will be designed in advance – but altered to accommodate the questions and needs of those who gather. We will hold opt-in worship and times of reflection together. We will use Christian texts to start conversations – but not to end them.

Facilitated by **Alex Wimberly** (Leader of Corrymeela) and members of the Community.

To book and for more information email annemariamcdonnell@corrymeela.org

Fri 9 - Fri 16 May Llŷn Peninsula with the Poetry of R.S. Thomas.

<https://www.journeying.co.uk/>

The Llŷn Peninsula in North Wales is an area of outstanding natural beauty. There is almost 100 miles of coastline, made up of sweeping bays and cliffs. There are wide open spaces and spectacular vistas. The soul-stirring scenery of this tethered island with a distinct Welsh identity has a crackle of Celtic mysticism.

We will experience cliff top walks, beach strolls and wildlife spotting in abundance. We will take a boat trip to Bardsey Island for seal spotting and solitude. R.S. Thomas wrote in his poem 'Pilgrimages' that Bardsey is 'an island there is no going to but in a small boat, the way the saints went'.

Tues 13 May 10-4. Spring Reflective day In the Company of Trees. N. Yorks.

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

As part of the Quiet Garden Movement, spend a day in the company of trees learning about their meaning and mythology and resting in their wisdom and peace. Rachel, one of our volunteer gardeners and Helen, one of our chaplains, will be offering creative insights, crafts, poems and prayers. Our large garden offers a quiet, gentle healing space which includes a labyrinth, orchard, goats and a walled garden with a pond. Indoor spaces include a chapel that is centred in the garden, and a large art room.

Sat 17 May 10.30 - 4. On Spiritual Friendships. Anam Cara, Thomas Merton, and Pursuing Relationships That Enlighten Our Lives with Sophronia Scott. London.
<https://meditatiocentrelondon.org/>

Though Thomas Merton craved the solitude of a hermitage and the silence in which “God shines there and is immediately found,” his mysticism and writing life were deeply fed and influenced by special friendships that he developed both in person and through a prolific correspondence that connected him to writers and spiritual thinkers all over the world.

Sophronia will discuss how we can find and nurture similar bonds today to the great benefit of our lives and work. Please join us to spend the day looking at this beautiful topic together, along with fellow meditators and seekers. **Sophronia** is a novelist, essayist, and leading contemplative thinker whose book *The Seeker and the Monk: Everyday Conversations with Thomas Merton* won the 2021 Thomas Merton “Louie” Award from the International Thomas Merton Society.

Mon 19 May 1 – 4 pm. Spiritual Exercises for the 21st Century course. On Zoom.
<https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

This course opens up the transformative impact of Ignatius Loyola’s Spiritual Exercises. By reviewing Ignatius’s insights into the life of the spirit and exploring the movements of each of the Four Weeks of the Exercises, we will derive new practical approaches to the Exercises for our complex world today.

Dr. Gillian Ahlgren is Professor Emerita of Theology at Xavier University (Cincinnati) and a specialist in the Christian mystical tradition. Her particular focus is on the trajectories of spiritual growth in various Christian mystics and the practical, pastoral insights we can derive from their texts. She emphasises the transformative dimensions of the mystical life and works with marginalized groups to empower people in post-traumatic identity re-formation.

Tues 20 May 6.30 - 8. Truth, faith and politics in a post-truth world: exploring Bonhoeffer today. With Rev Dr **Rowan Williams**. London.
<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/whats-on/truth-faith-and-politics-in-post-truth-world-exploring-bonhoeffer-today>

In the final months of his imprisonment in Flossenbürg concentration camp in 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer looked beyond the walls of his cell—and beyond the walls of the Church itself—considering a way to speak of God that was not confined to religious insider language. What does that vision mean for us today?

Join us as Rowan Williams reflects upon how the Church can remain truthful in a post-truth world; how it can resist the urge to defend itself at every turn, and instead become a community that welcomes the unexpected. In a time of uncertainty, what does it mean to live with courage, integrity, and radical hospitality?

Rowan Williams is a poet and theologian, and was the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury.

Tues 27 May 10.30 - 4. Journey into the unknown. St Brendan's Journey. With **Donna Worthington**. Lancs. <https://www.christianretreats.live/>

In the 5th century, the brilliant Celtic seafarers Saint Brendan and his companions, set sail into the unknown of the Atlantic, compelled by the Spirit to seek the Island of the Promised Land...This incredible Christian journey offers a wonderful imaginative and mythic space in which to do our inner, creative soul-work.

For bookings contact Bookings Secretary: 01524 732684 hyningbookings@yahoo.co.uk

27 - 30 May 11 - 2. Soul of Leadership Residential. Grounded in Spirit: contemplative leadership for the 21st Century. Near Bath.
<https://www.ammerdown.org/>

The first residential considers the structures and processes of 21st-century decision-making (both individual and corporate) and explores how discernment practices can be integrated into decision-making. Insights from the fields of spirituality, management, and leadership studies will be combined to examine decision-making and discernment in various settings.

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.

For an application form and a tuition assistance form, if required, please email admin@ammerdown.org

June

Mon 2 June 10:00 - 4. Quiet Day: 'How then should we pray?' Leicestershire.

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

In her poem 'Sometimes', Mary Oliver provides "Instructions for Living a Life". These are: Pay Attention. Be astonished. Tell about it. This Quiet day will be led by Revd David Harknett, one of our College of Chaplains here at Launde Abbey.

Wed 4 - Fri 6 June The Uncontrolling Love of God. Northamptonshire.

This conference explores ideas offered by open and relational Christian theologies, including process theology. Host: The Centre for Open and Relational Theologies and the Progressive Christianity Network Britain.

Website: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-uncontrolling-love-of-god-tickets-1142708214029>

Join us to discuss ideas that will change the way you think about the divine. Based around a series of set piece dialogues, this conference will open up avenues of theological thought that challenge the mainstream consensus that 'God' is all powerful and fundamentally 'in control'. Drawing on work from scholars and practitioners from various parts of the Christian tradition, we will question these certainties and explore other ways of understanding the nature of God. Although there is a new-found interest in this sort of theology, the roots of it go back a long way, together we will look at the way that the insights that this thinking is based on have developed over time - just as we ask whether God, too, is in the constant process of change.

This conference will challenge your beliefs, and might just change your life.

Thurs 5 June 7.30 - 9.30 Living in Liminal Space. Course Leader: **Margaret Benefiel.**

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

Liminal space is the space between the old and the new, when the old has disintegrated and the new has not yet come. We humans tend toward wanting to return to the old or rush to the new, profoundly uncomfortable in the liminal space. Yet the liminal space provides the holding environment for gestation. Waiting in the liminal space provides room for creativity and growth. This talk will explore how to live in liminal space, and the risks and rewards of this. **Margaret Benefiel**, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Shalem Institute, co-leads Ammerdown's "Soul of Leadership" programme. She has authored or co-edited seven books. Her life has afforded many opportunities for living in liminal space.

6 - 8 June. Seeing Deeply and Differently: A Creative and Spiritual Retreat course. With **Claire Reed**. Salisbury. <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

You will be invited to enrich and expand your spiritual life by experiencing creative ways of seeing deeply and differently, inspired by approaches from artists and designers past and present. These ideas will be explored through drawing and collage techniques, allowing time for personal reflection, and culminating in an experimental book-form.

“By default, we are a creative and innovative species” enthuses cognitive neuroscientist, Moshe Bar, but these “awesome capabilities” are squeezed out by “everyday mental junk”. This makes it difficult to take time to look carefully at the world around us and easy to miss the unexpected encounters, insights and connections that might enrich our lives and those of others. Yet many great spiritual writers talk about paying attention and seeing as central to the spiritual life, and some consider it a form of prayer. Art, too, is essentially concerned with paying attention; as Sir Grayson Perry reminds us, the fundamental job of an artist is ‘to notice things’. Throughout history, this potential has been used in art as a means of exploring and expressing the spiritual, enabling us to see more deeply and engage differently with the world, others, and ourselves.

Through creative workshops with short introductory talks, this retreat will create space to explore a range of ways of seeing deeply and differently inspired by approaches from artists and designers past and present. Using various drawing and collage techniques, you will explore letterforms, perspective and framing devices, mark-making, and colour concepts which will then be made into an experimental book-form. There will also be time for personal reflection, and weather-permitting, one of the workshops will be held in Cathedral Close.

So, come along and explore your ‘awesome capabilities’ in ways which can enrich and expand your spiritual life.

Claire Reed is an artist, researcher, and creative mentor who works in a range of media using the interplay of word and image to explore issues of belief, belonging and identity.

6 June and 14 - 15 June. Festival exploring the interconnections between ecology, spirituality and peacemaking. London. <https://www.stethelburgas.org/spiritual-ecology-festival>

Join us for a deep dive into spiritual ecology, where we’ll be exploring a rich diversity of cultural, spiritual, and political perspectives. With talks, workshops, film screenings, live music, contemplative spaces, and large-scale community action—this event is designed to bring people together to explore the interconnected challenges of climate crisis, polarisation, and our relationship with land.

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What is Spiritual Ecology?

Whether you belong to a faith tradition or are an atheist, there will be something here for you. Spiritual ecology, or deep ecology, is a broad field that embraces academia, culture, faith and science. It springs from the premise that creation is interconnected and sacred. Recent scientific discoveries about interspecies communication (the mycelial networks that link forest plants), animal cultures (elephants who grieve their kin), and the mind-boggling mysteries of quantum physics (so full of inexplicable intimacies and entanglements) - point to a natural world alive with mystery and depths of intelligence we've only begun to explore.

Whether you call this mystery God, nature, science or beauty, will depend on the lens that's most natural to you. This festival invites people across all faiths and none to gather on the common ground of our belonging to creation, and to face the challenges of our age from this place.

Questions We're Interested to Explore

How can spiritual ecology help us design pragmatic solutions that place care for land at the heart? Where issues of climate and conflict intersect, how can spiritual ecology point a way forward? What can we learn from listening to diverse faith, spiritual and non-religious perspectives, about how to live in harmony with creation? What does a faith-led response to climate issues look like in practice? What can we learn from recent scientific discoveries about interspecies collaboration and communication? How can we root faith-led responses in practical action? Can spiritual ecology offer a 'common ground' for inter-religious encounter, even with and in spite of current painful divisions in the interfaith space? What are the challenges in bringing together urban and rural perspectives on faith, land and identity? This festival aims to give pragmatic tools for navigating the challenges of our time; inspiration for how to forge communities that can withstand differences; modes of being and seeing that restore deep kinship with Earth; and much more.

More About the format of the Festival

The festival format means there will be events running concurrently throughout the venue. You can map your own course through the programme - attending probing talks and dialogues on theology, interfaith, and conflict, or moving from workshop to workshop, listening to music and participating in practical sessions - or a bit of both! There will also be plenty of opportunities to hear music, eat delicious food, and meet interesting people. Do join us!

The Planting Pilgrimage

Join us on Friday 6th June as we begin our walk towards the festival with an Overnight Planting Pilgrimage, creating a ring of sacred trees around central London. Setting out from St Ethelburga's we'll journey a 12-mile circle of the city, weaving together faith and ecological sites on a magical night walk. We'll be hosted by hidden

community gardens and diverse places of worship, planting trees by moonlight and sharing food, song, music, prayer and ceremony. Join us as we come together in prayer to set our intention for the festival.

10 - 15 June. The Still Point of the Turning World: Finding Rest Amidst Suffering. Yoga, Philosophy & Meditation Retreat with **Rebecca Stephens**. Bonnevaux Retreat Centre France.

<https://bonnevauxwccm.org/>

How can Meister Eckhart help us in life's 'Why Me?' moments? We will explore the principles of Eckhart's theological and philosophical outlook in daily lectures and group discussions, personal reflection and journaling. Meister Eckhart forms the foundation of Ursula Fleming's pioneering work in pain relief based on a doctrine of acceptance and self-grounding. Through focus on breath and letting-go it enabled even those experiencing insupportable pain to reduce their suffering. The Fleming Method has much in common with restorative practices such as Yin Yoga and we will work through simple floor-based exercises suitable for all bodies and levels of experience (with chair-based variations for those unable to lie) in daily guided sessions. Above all, we will seek to find stillness – to hold space at 'the centre of the tornado' – a place of peace amongst the world's turmoil by immersing ourselves in the daily rhythm of meditation. As we learn to let go of each moment and accept each new moment in all its objective reality, we will find ourselves able to change our reaction to seemingly intractable circumstances, and surrender into the (literal and metaphorical) ground.

Dr **Rebecca Stephens** is a scholar and a teacher in her daily life. Chair of The Eckhart Society, Rebecca is a regular speaker at the Society's annual conference, co-organises and presents Eckhartian One Day Events in York and Cambridge.

Fri 13 June 4-6 pm. On Zoom. Brother Lawrence, Friar of Love, and His Transforming Presence Practice with **Carmen Acevedo Butcher**.

<https://abbeyofthearts.com/>

"Work gently and in love with God. Do all actions without being rash or rushed. What can please God more than if we leave all created things many times during the day to withdraw and rest in Love present within?" –Brother Lawrence

Love, as Brother Lawrence discovered, comes from an everyday friendship with God. After a mystical experience as a teenager, he experienced many painful, devastating twists and turns in his life. Then during a dark night of the soul, he learned how to have brief, ongoing conversations with Love. These brought him deep joy during his days spent flipping omelettes, peeling potatoes, and mending his brothers' sandals.

His deep calm and his wise, compassionate responses to life's hardships make this

Discalced Carmelite friar a down-to-earth teacher of the practice of the presence prayer. He developed this simple returning to Love during years of severe anxiety. His experiences inspire us to look for and follow the grain in our own wood, as Howard Thurman wrote. Brother Lawrence's conversations with Love brought him "unspeakable joy" and a new way of seeing that is beyond a rigid this-or-that perspective. How can we make this joyful presence prayer a part of our own lives? How do we fit presence into our busy days?

We will consider these questions through close readings, chanting, guided meditation, and journaling from writing prompts, exploring ways to bring the down-to-earth practice of the presence into our ordinary days. Recognizing that so many of the issues of Brother Lawrence's time mirror our own, we will also discuss how the friar's work helps us live in touch with Love's wisdom, moment-by-moment, cultivating self-compassion, compassion for others, and peace within ourselves during the very real stresses of our world.

14 June. 10 - 4. A Quiet Day with Evelyn Underhill's words of light and hope amidst fragile times. With **Robyn Wrigley-Carr**. Essex.

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

We live in a fragile world, with wars, COVID and climate change. Underhill's words written during World War II provide us with light and hope amidst this darkness. As World War II struck, Underhill was revising her retreat talks on the Lord's Prayer (Abba) for publication in 1940. Then during World War II (until her death in June 1941), Underhill wrote words of support, inspiration and challenge to her Prayer Group (quaintly named the "Theological Kindergarten"). In these letters and in Abba, we hear Underhill's voice of courageous encouragement.

This Quiet Day we will ponder and reflect upon Underhill's thoughts concerning the Lord's Prayer and her final letters crafted during wartime. These writings usher us gently into hope, providing nurture and refreshment to steady us in these uncertain times. Amidst the challenges that surround us, Underhill invites us to attend to the invisible Reality underlying all we can see and touch. Perhaps this Quiet Day is a time for us all to enter the "Theological Kindergarten," so we can hear Underhill's invitation to a renewal of the Spirit in ourselves and the whole Church, to "kindle our cold hearts and light up our dark minds,' showing us God's Will for the future and enabling us to do our part" ("Letters to the Prayer Group," Eastertide, 1941).

Robyn Wrigley-Carr is Associate Professor in Spirituality and Spiritual Care at the University of Divinity in Australia. Robyn is the author of *The Spiritual Formation of Evelyn Underhill (2020)*, *Music of Eternity: Meditations for Advent with Evelyn Underhill* and she edited Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book.

13 - 15 June. Pentecost Retreat. 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 the Gospel and pray for the gifts of the Spirit to flourish in our lives, that we may learn how to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God. There will be times of input, times of silence and times of prayer and praise to help us open ourselves more fully to God.

16 -19 June. Retreat Association Conference Creative Encounters – Exploring Imaginative Paths to God. Derbyshire. <https://www.retreats.org.uk/conference-2025>

Our 2025 Retreat Conference offers us the chance to explore ways in which the imagination can deepen and renew our faith. In particular, we will look at just some of the creative arts – including poetry, literature, painting, textiles, music and film – and the depth they can bring to our faith and spirituality.

We all need the renewal of our imaginations. We all need creative encounters that will give life to our spirits. We look forward to exploring this life-giving journey together!

Tuesday 17 to Friday 20 June. Free to Believe Reading Party. Holy Anarchy: Dismantling Domination, Embodying Community, Loving Strangeness. With **Graham Adams**. Manchester. <https://www.freetobelieve.org.uk/conferences.html>

Holy Anarchy is a different way of thinking about the kingdom of God. It particularly aims to disrupt systems of Empire which dominate us, often unnoticed – both in society and in our own religious beliefs and practice. It involves a different approach to God's power, as 'awesome weakness', and to the role of the Church, as 'awkward body of Christ'. It speaks to these times of tension and uncertainty, offering hope – but not necessarily hope as we know it. And it can shape worship in which we look to this alternative horizon, humbly but audaciously. It is an adventure – come and join the journey!

Graham Adams is the Tutor in Mission Studies, World Christianity, and Religious Diversity at Northern College within the Luther King Centre – with a particular interest in how questions of Empire affect each of the three parts of his teaching role. Before that, he was minister of a Congregational church in Manchester. Ecumenically, Graham has participated in several events and theological consultations organised by the Council for World Mission, and is a member of CTBI's

Inter Faith Theological Advisory Group. Graham also organises the college's annual worship conference, being interested in how worship and mission affect each other, and is a hymnwriter.

Wed 18 - Thurs 19 June. Putting your hands into the fire - re-imagining our stories through secular songs to re-imagine faith for a secular world. Led by Revd Canon **Ivor Moody**, author of *Six More Songs* which came out last year, and *Songs for the Soul*. Essex. <https://www.retreathousepleshey.com/>

Through looking at the stories and experiences of some of the characters in the songs, and the composers and singers who performed them, the songs might re-awaken in new ways our own 'stories', and through them how we might re-discover new and rich resources for the promulgation of the Gospel and the living of our Christian lives.

Fri-Sat 20-21 June 4- 6 pm. On Zoom. **Journey to Joy with Christine Valters Paintner and Te Martin.** Includes one two hour session each day. <https://abbeyofthearts.com/>

Joy can often seem far away in a world so full of heartbreak and violence. Have you ever felt like your joy has been stolen? Do life and world events make you struggle to find a deep-rooted contentment? It's time to take a journey to joy!

Journey to Joy, a fairy tale written by Christine Valters Paintner, is about a woman at midlife who goes on an adventure to reclaim her joy and the joy of her community. Along the way she encounters a Medicine Woman, a dragon, a canine companion, and a Wise One. The protagonist is sent on four initiations which correspond to the four seasons of the year and the four elements of wind, fire, water, and earth. She goes in search of her song, her power, her wholeness, and her ancestral wisdom.

Join us over the summer solstice for an online retreat. Together we will explore the four initiations, where you will be invited to your own experience of them through storytelling, guided meditations, and creative exploration.

Christine will be joined by the delightful **Te Martin**, whose gift of song will help us to enter the fairy tale realm with open-hearted wonder and delight! The book version of the story, complete with magical, full-color illustrations by artist **Domenique Serftonein**, will be available to order soon.

24 - 29 June. Fully Alive – A Contemplative Experience of Health and Healing

A Meditatio retreat – seminar exploring a contemplative approach to living the true meaning of health and healing with **Dr Barry White, Laurence Freeman, Therese Conroy, Giovanni Felicioni**. Bonnevaux Retreat Centre, France.

<https://bonnevauxwccm.org/>

This retreat-seminar will help us discover the true meaning of integrated health and understand the mysteries of the body and mind as a self- healing system. We will explore how this can be felt even more strongly in times of sickness when we may feel the weight of our own mortality. A contemplative approach assures that all levels of awareness are heightened allowing us to see more clearly and deeply. With gentle power, meditation enhances this awakening helping us to experience life in all its fullness.

Participants will be helped to create a personal contemplative approach to sleep, nutrition, posture, movement and emotional wellbeing, all of which will be based around a daily practice of meditation with the Bonnevaux community. Each day we will join with the Bonnevaux community in their rhythm of meditation times. This daily rhythm will integrate talks, discussion and practice across the following areas:

Meditation (adapted for beginners and regular practitioners)

Yoga (inclusive of beginners and those with limited movement)

Lectio (rediscovering the art of reading wisdom texts)

Lifestyle Health: each day we take a contemplative focus on one of the key pillars of healthy living: Sleep, Food, Movement and Cognitive/Emotional balance

1-to-1 discussion with the teachers.

We warmly invite you to this retreat experience to share and learn a contemplative approach to health and healing which you can apply in all aspects of your life. This retreat is both for the novice and more experienced and ongoing meditator. Several periods of meditation a day will be offered to accommodate your level of practice. Breakfast is in silence and there will be times of rest and solitude as well as conviviality with new friends.

26 June 10 am - 1 pm. Leadership, Imagination and Innovation course. On Zoom. With **Paul Bradbury**. <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

Organisations have invariably been based on predictable, linear understandings of change and agency. Leadership is therefore often about knowledge, authority and making the right decisions. New understandings of organisations, drawing on the field of complex adaptive systems, open up very different ways of conceptualising leadership.

Continued...

This half-day course will explore this thinking practically and theologically. We will explore in particular how such thinking reimagines leadership as a means of creating the right kind of environment for creativity, imagination and innovation within the ministry and mission of the church.

Paul Bradbury is a freelance tutor, researcher and author. He is an ordained pioneer minister in the Church of England, based in Poole, Dorset. He founded and for 16 years led Poole Missional Communities which now plays host to a number of fresh expressions of church and pioneer mission initiatives. He is an associate tutor with Sarum College, CMS & RCC Cuddesdon. He is currently studying for a DTh with the University of Roehampton exploring the connections between emergence and the ecclesiology of pioneers. He has published two books reflecting on his experience as a pioneer, most recently '*Home By Another Route*'. His latest book is '*In the Fullness of Time*'.

Advance Notices

Sun 13 - Sat 19 July. Journeying to Iona and Mull, Scotland.

<https://www.journeying.co.uk/>

Mull is a rugged, majestic Hebridean island with truly beautiful scenery and fantastic wildlife. It is a natural stepping stone to Iona, a cradle of Christianity in Britain dating from Columba's arrival in 563. We shall take time to explore both islands during our stay in comfortable farm cottages on Mull.