

## EVENTS

### July – September 2024

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

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

### July

**Mon 1 - Fri 5 July. The Wonder of Stories.** With **Donna Worthington**. Yorks.

<https://scargillmovement.org>

Exploring how stories can be guides to deeper self-awareness, freedom and wholeness that God offers us... From Christian perspectives, we will explore the famous tales of Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella. And then: As the gong is sounded, an ancient Emperor of Japan appears, his eyes held by what he has just read about the exquisite song of the Nightingale... Sit back, relax and enjoy the performance... We will seek to enter another world and mine the treasures of this old story through storytelling and simple, inclusive theatre techniques. We will discuss questions that can emerge from the story e.g. what do we really need to be happy and have peace of mind? An opportunity to let the imagination run wild and let Hans Christian Andersen's wonderful tale of 'The Nightingale' take you where it will!

**Donna** has MAs in Theatre Directing, Writing and TV Production She has led creative workshops with all ages and on various themes, including exploring the Gospels through theatre and movement. She also explores dream-prayer and how to pray through movement.

**Thurs 4 July 7.30 – 8.30 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 different spiritual themes as well as practising the Prayer. For further information and the Zoom link email Petra at [petragriffiths@livingspirit.org.uk](mailto:petragriffiths@livingspirit.org.uk)

**Thurs 4 - Sat 6 July. Malvern Festival of Biblical Literature.**

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

The festival will be a study and celebration of the Bible in literature (for example, a

seminar on the use of the story of Job in literature from Charles Dickens to Muriel Spark) and of the Bible as literature (for example, a lecture on the literary techniques used in the story of David and Bathsheba). As well as the seminars, there will be music and poetry. This is a festival for theist and nontheist, the religiously certain, the religiously unsure and those who are not religious at all.

**Fri 5 – Sun 7 July. The Bradwell Pilgrimage and Gathering.** Essex.

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

An opportunity for Christians of all denominations to come together to share pilgrimage, worship, food and fun. We are expecting a diverse group of participants from Essex, East London and beyond. Othona Bradwell seeks to support this local event centred on the historic chapel of St Peter-on-the-wall and to show people how Othona works as a community. Do come along and be part of this exciting event.

For more details, see the Bradwell Festival website -

<http://bradwellpilgrimage.co.uk/>

**Sat 6 July 11.30 – 3. The Fire, the Well and the Cloak.** Explore the spirituality of the wonderful **Saint Brigid** and her compelling symbolism. Led by **Donna Worthington**. <https://www.christianretreats.live/downloads>. At Lostock Hall Lancs. For bookings, please contact the Parish office on 01772 335387 Email [office@saintgerards.org.uk](mailto:office@saintgerards.org.uk) This event is also offered on 23 July near Carnforth Lancs, and online on Fri 12 July 11-2.

**Sat 6 July 10 - 4. Returning to Centre: Mysticism of the East and the Spirituality of the West.** Hants. <https://www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk>

A young Oxford student tutored by C.S. Lewis came to be known as the Benedictine priest and monk Bede Griffiths (1906–93). Bede is best known for his pioneering work in Southern India, bringing together the Christian and Hindu contemplative traditions, teaching how humanity can survive the modern social, economic, ecological and faith crises and emerge into ‘a new earth and a new heaven’. The late Cardinal Basil Hume described Bede as a ‘mystic in touch with absolute beauty and love’. Bede was clear that an experience of God known in the Hindu Vedas as ‘advaita’ is an experience of love in which two become one without losing their distinct identities, a Beatitude and blessing upon the pure in heart, who live the beatific vision. (Matthew 5:8), Beatitude from Latin (beatus) means blissful. The one who is blissful is blessed and seeks after Christ mindedness (1 Corinthians 2:16).

**Sun 7 July 6.30 pm. Soulspace** is a time for sacred reflection, open to people of all faiths or none. Stirling. <https://www.stirlingmethodistchurch.org.uk/events/100-soulspace2>

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 TRANSFORMATION. We meet for a shared meal (bring some food with you!) and then commence our sharing, listening and responding on the theme 7.15-8.15pm.

Please use this contact link: <https://www.stirlingmethodistchurch.org.uk/contact-us>

**Mon 8 - Wed 10 July. The Search for Wisdom.** Course Leader: **Sue Glanville.**  
Near Bath. [www.ammerdown.org](http://www.ammerdown.org)

What is wisdom? Do you long for wisdom? I think that I have been searching for it all my life. On this course we will delve into stories, scriptures and poems that help us to answer this perennial question. 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.

**Tues 9 July 10 – 4. Finding a Way.** Led by **Jill Mowbray.** Essex.  
<https://www.retreathousepleshey.com/>

This day retreat is for anyone lay or ordained who is anticipating or living through a significant life event (which could include retirement, separation or divorce, children leaving home, health or job changes). There will be short talks with time for people to journal, reflect and pray on their own, some time for interaction and sharing, all held within simple short acts of worship.

**Tues 9 July. 6.30 - 8 pm. Contemplative practice.** London.  
<https://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. Free of charge.

**Fri 10 July 10-4. Tides of life.** Led by **Rev Canon Jane Vaughan-Wilson.** Cornwall.

<https://epiphanyhouse.co.uk/> Booking: [bookings@epiphanyhouse.co.uk](mailto:bookings@epiphanyhouse.co.uk)

Together we will create a contemplative space to explore the ebbs and flows of our life experience. We will use poetry, prayer and images. Art materials will be available but please bring your own if you would like to.

**Fri 10 July 3-6. About the Desert Wisdom for the City** course. On Zoom. Led by **Fr Jarel Robinson-Brown.** <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

Solitude and contemplation are often overlooked aspects of Christian spiritual practice, yet they are part of the ancient roots of Christianity. For centuries people have sought and found God in the silence and isolation of the desert, particularly in Egypt where the famous sayings of the desert mothers and fathers originate. This course is an opportunity to explore this spiritual landscape and to explore ways in which the thought and practice of our elders in the faith can benefit and enrich our lives and spiritual practice in the world today.

We will look at ways in which we can incorporate patterns and structures into our modern lives to resist unhealthy patterns of living, and how these spiritual practices can help us in relationship with one another and the living environment around us.

**Sunday 14 July 2.30 pm. Living Spirituality Connections Midlands Group** meeting in Solihull. Reading Margaret Silf's book *Sacred Spaces. Stations On A Celtic Way.*

There are many books that explore actual, physical, sacred space and pilgrimage sites. This is a different kind of book. It introduces seven traditional 'sacred spaces' but then leads readers into a deeper reflection on what such 'sacred space' means in our own lives and experience. The various sacred spaces explored are: the Celtic Cross; the infinite knot; hilltops; wells and springs; causeways and bridges; thresholds and burial grounds; and boundaries. In each chapter, the author introduces a 'sacred space' as the main theme and then illustrates this by associating it with a particular stage of life and a particular sacramental experience. The ideas are then brought together by means of a scripture story.

For information and to book email Anne Gardner [a.gardner@me.com](mailto:a.gardner@me.com).

**Mon 15 - Thurs 18 July. Mindfulness Retreat** led by **Nicola Smith.** Leicestershire.

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

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Nicola Smith explores the foundations of mindfulness, as taught in secular mindfulness courses, and helps us discover how these can support our prayer life, attentiveness and stillness.

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

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



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

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

**Mon 15 - Sat 20 July. Nurturing Hope 2024 Summer Learning Journey.** Corrymeela Ballycastle, Northern Ireland. <https://www.corrymeela.org/events>

‘Nurturing Hope’ is an extensive five–book learning resource, written by Derick Wilson, Duncan Morrow, J. Jean Horstman and Dong Jin Kim, being published by the Corrymeela Press. It will be available shortly as an open source resource. The ‘Learning Journey’ is for

those seeking to create spaces through which people who are divided can “experience the intimacy of our honest differences”. The ‘Nurturing Hope’ resource grows out of the experience of people in Northern Ireland, and the wider world, who chose to hope in times of darkness. They chose to find a way forward that included standing together with those who had been scapegoated. It draws on Corrymeela members’ decades of experience and was developed with learning partners in South Korea and the USA.

Please email [shonabell@corrymeela.org](mailto:shonabell@corrymeela.org) to order your copy of the Nurturing Hope resource.

**Thurs 15 & Thurs 22 August 7-8.30 pm.** On Zoom. **An Infinite Ocean of Light: Awakening the Creative Spirit.** Led by **Diana Luther Powell.** <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

How do you react to George Fox’s vivid image of ‘an infinite ocean of light’? Prompted by our experience of this well-loved phrase, we will look at creative actions within ourselves: touched by words and imagery, we may find a new and surprising response.

**Thurs 8 - Thurs 15 August 7 - 8.30 pm.** On Zoom. **My Soul Looks Back and Wonders: An Introduction to Black Liberation Theology.** Led by **Xavier Johnson.** <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk>

Learn about Black Theology through the work of influential Black liberation theologian James Cone. We’ll discover how he redefined the work of theology, accompanied by Anthony Reddie’s recent book *Introducing James H. Cone: A Personal Exploration*.

**Fri 19 - Sun 21 July. Love's Urgent Longings.** Led by **Gillian Coxhead.** County Durham. <https://minsteracres.org>

A weekend with St. John of the Cross, exploring his famous poem The Dark Night. The weekend will include talks introducing Saint John of the Cross, the poem and commentary. We will draw on the Carmelite, contemplative tradition as we enter into the mystery of what it means to be drawn by ‘loves urgent longings’ along the path of transformation into the fullness of life and freedom that God desires for each and every one of us!

**Fri 19 - Sun 21 July. Praying with our full humanity.** Led by: **Nicola Mason.** Surrey. [www.christian-retreat.org](http://www.christian-retreat.org)

God created us human and chose in the incarnation to share our humanity, yet many of us seem to feel or act as if being the particular human we are - in all our unvarnished reality -

hinders us from sharing in God's life, or from being the holy people we long to be. We can be dogged by a sense that we need to improve and tempted to bring only selected parts of ourselves to prayer. This weekend, in company with saints and writers past and present, we will look at how we can learn to pray with all of our humanity, and discover that every part of ourselves and our experience is holy ground, and the place of our encounter with God.

**Sat 20 July 1.30 - 4. Soul Stitching.** Near Sheffield.

<https://www.whirlowspiritualitycentre.org>

We will be exploring the theme of light and dark, with a short introduction inspired by the 'Stations of Lament' exhibition by Louise Carr held at Whirlow during Lent.

Join us for an afternoon of slow hand stitching; a practice that's about the journey, not the destination, where imperfections are celebrated, and where creativity may blossom in the unhurried pace of needlework. All materials will be provided, but you are invited to bring your own sewing kit should you wish. Open to all sewing abilities! Tagged slow stitching, light and dark, creativity, contemplative creativity

**Tues 23 July 7.30 – 9.30 online. "To See a World in a Grain of Sand".** Led by **Diane Tolomeo.** <https://wccm.org/events/>

The beauty and goodness of creation can sometimes be forgotten in our daily lives, but the art of poetry can assist us in keeping that awareness alive. This talk will suggest some ways we can learn to look outside of ourselves to participate in a larger creative imagination.

**Wednesday 24th July 2024 11 – 4. Opening Symposium: About the Changing Understandings of Church** course exploring Organisational Ecclesiology. Salisbury. [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

The use of the language and practices associated with management remain controversial in the church. This series of seminars will tackle the issues and explore the potential of a positive, theologically-shaped engagement between ecclesiology and organisation theory and practice, especially for the church in a period of change.

Is current church practice trapped by an ever-suffocating grip of managerialism? Are current ecclesiological understandings sufficient for understanding the complex life of the church? How should leaders draw upon management and organisational leadership insights to support their varied roles in the life of the church? What type

of practical theological approach might better serve our changing understanding of 'organisational ecclesiology'?

This seminar series seeks to address these and other questions stemming from the complex tasks of leadership in the contemporary church and aims to create a new space for the professional development of senior leaders in church contexts. So, we ask participants to bring their questions to the table to help develop perspectives on organisational ecclesiology and help shape their practice.

It begins with a day on theological foundations, highlighting 'tensions' and 'possibilities'. This is followed by four online seminars with expert speakers from the fields of organisational and leadership studies.

Some participants will be theologians. Some will be professionals working in the church. We hope that our reflections help develop a better interdisciplinary understanding of organisational ecclesiology to serve people in their roles. Additional coaching support is also available for those for whom this would be helpful.

Details from [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

**Thurs 25 July 7.30 - 10.** Online. **Embodied Wisdom and Intelligence.**

<https://wccm.org/events/>

In this round table dialogue, Prof **Guy Claxton**, expert in cognitive science along with **Phyllida Anamaire**, Irish writer and poet, and **Giselle Genillard**, trauma worker and midwife will explore Embodied Intelligence and the practical implications of a new integrated intelligence.

**Sun 28 July 9.45 – 10.15.** **Eco contemplative liturgy** on Zoom and in the garden at St James's Church Piccadilly. This is a non-denominational liturgy of readings and prayers, in which half the time is spent in contemplation of the garden, or of a green space near you. Monthly on the fourth Sunday in the month. For details and the Zoom link email Petra at: [ecochurch@sjp.org.uk](mailto:ecochurch@sjp.org.uk)

**Mon 29 July - Fri 2 August.** **Refilling Whilst We Pour Out. Staying Sustainable In Service.** Leader: **Hilary Murdoch.** Sussex. [www.penhurst.org.uk](http://www.penhurst.org.uk)

Do you sometimes feel like you are pouring out of an empty cup? This is an opportunity to refuel and refresh. The retreat is for people who work in Christian



charities, missions, ministries or churches and also those in caring professions and roles such as medics, teachers, social workers and parents - people who spend their lives pouring out to others and sometimes forget to look after themselves.

The retreat will be a mix of brief and interactive input sessions and plenty of individual reflection time, where each person can find space in a summer house or comfy chair to think and journal. There will be the opportunity for optional one-to-one time with the retreat leader.

We will look at biblical perspectives on rest, including imaginative meditations on a few gospel stories, reflect on why rest and refuelling is necessary to our sustainability in ministry and what drives our resistance to it. We will also have practical and interactive sessions on how we refuel and the boundaries that are needed to do so.

## August

**Tues 13 - Fri 16 August 2024. Thomas Jay Oord. Faith Deconstruction.**

The American theologian Thomas Jay Oord will be speaking at a few different events, on the challenging topic of faith deconstruction. Host: Progressive Christianity Network Britain. Free but donations welcomed. <https://www.pcnbritain.org.uk/events/detail/thomas-jay-oord>

Each session will offer a hopeful and hope-filled vision of Christianity that doesn't rely on the traditional toxic traits of a violent and domineering deity. Dr Oord is a philosophical theologian and the author of a variety of popular books including 'The Uncontrolling Love of God' and 'God After Deconstruction'. He advocates an 'open and relational' approach to Christianity which says that the God who is love experiences what we experience, feels our pain and sadness, and is not able to control our actions. Expect answers for your questions, and questions for your answers as together we explore Christianity beyond deconstruction.

Tuesday 13th August: St Mark's Church, Sheffield.

Wednesday 14th August: TBC.

Thursday 15th August: Oasis Church, Hull.

Friday 16th August: York St John's University.

**Thurs 15 August 4-6 pm on Zoom. Calling on the Sacred Feminine for Times of Unravelling with Christine Valters Paintner and Nóirín Ní Riain**

<https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar/calling-on-the-sacred-feminine-for-times-of-unravelling/>

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Join us on the Feast of the Assumption which celebrates Mother Mary's final journey into the fullness of the divine. Mary has many names and titles and we will focus our time on her as Mother of the Keen, Untier of Knots, and Queen of Heaven. In the Irish tradition, Mary is known as the mother of the keen, the great cry of lament which expresses our deepest losses. Mary knew suffering intimately and journeys with us as we grieve for the violence and destruction we witness all around us, and for our own places of wounding.

In a time of great unravelling of systems and fear which knots up our hearts and hopes, how might Mary help us to bring ease to places that feel knotted and confusing. In the softening and loosening of our knotted places we are freed to find deeper clarity and guidance. Our retreat will be soon after Lughnasa, the Celtic feast of the Harvest, when we are invited to reflect on our lives and gather in the wisdom and seeds of new possibilities for the future. Mary as Queen of Heaven invites us to step into our own sovereignty, to honor the gifts and power we each carry in service to the world.

Through music, poetry, meditation, and teaching we will honor the sacred feminine as she moves through our bodies and our lives.

**Sat 17 - Fri 23 August. Care for Creation.** Iona. <https://iona.org.uk/visit-and-stay/iona-abbey-centre/2024-programme/>

Do you need to sharpen your vision of a world transformed? Are you longing to connect with others who care for Creation? Take time on Iona to lift your spirits in late summer. Discover how you can act more justly for people and planet.

**Mon 19 August 4-6.** Online. Start of **Writing as a Spiritual Practice:** A 28-Day Creative Journey with **Christine Valters Paintner**. Forum Facilitators Amber Andreasen and Melissa Layer. The course runs from August 19 – September 13, 2024.

<https://abbeyofthearts.com/calendar/writing-as-a-spiritual-practice/>

Would you be nourished by a 28-day commitment to writing as a spiritual practice? Do you long for some guidance and structure to get you into a sacred rhythm? This 4-week program begins with a 2-hour online retreat led by Christine who will guide you through different exercises to help you yield to the process of writing as a journey of discovery, rather than holding too tightly to the end product. In this way words become maps and help us to encounter new parts of ourselves, our calling, and our relationship to

the divine. We will engage in both free writing and poetry writing, and all are welcome regardless of level of experience. This is a generative program, we are not here to edit our work, but to show up for the Creative Source when we slow down and listen to what is erupting in the silence. In addition to the writing exercises Christine will include lectio divina, silence, reading of poems, and gentle movement invitations to shift your energy and focus.

**22 August 10 - 4.30. Embodying Joy.** Near Perth. Led by Valerie Allen.

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

In the Bible, the Greek word for “joy” is related to the Greek word for “grace”. It is a grace given to us by God, even in challenging times, because joy is not based on circumstances. In our Christian faith, joy can be understood as a deep-seated sense of contentment in what God has done and what God is doing. You will be invited to notice joy and to try some gentle embodied practices and movement that can help awaken joy. There will be opportunities for guided meditation, personal reflection and group sharing.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

**Thurs 22 – Sun 25 August. Greenbelt Festival 2024,** Near Kettering.

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

Join us this summer for a weekend of music, comedy, craft, theatre, dance, food, spirituality, talks, provocation and more. We think there’s a spark that kindles the time we spend together at Greenbelt, and we call it God. (You might call it the gin talking; that’s fine too.)

**What is Greenbelt?** We’re somewhere artistry meets activism, the secular meets the spiritual, politics meets positivity. We’re somewhere to come together once a year, where we’re just as likely to dream up a better world as we are to dance and debate, to pray and to party (ideally all of those things at the same time).

**Fri 30 Aug – Wed 4 September. Greenspirit 5 Day Retreat** At Cae Mabon, Snowdonia.

[www.caemabon.co.uk](http://www.caemabon.co.uk)

Reconnect with your body and unwind in nature, walk with friends, breathe fresh air, listen to birdsong, wander in shady oak woods and wild swim in a glistening lake whenever you feel like it, to say nothing of sharing delicious vegan and vegetarian food, songs and stories round the fire and a hot tub beside the rushing stream.

For full details and to book go to: <https://www.greenspirit.org.uk/snowdonia-retreat-2024/>

## September

**Sep 1st 2024 - Mar 31st 2025, all day. Lifelines: planting hedgerows with reverence and connection.** <https://stethelburgas.org/event/lifelines-planting-hedgerows-with-reverence-and-connection/>

Are you part of a faith or community group that cares about the environment? Would you like to spend a weekend planting hedgerows on a beautiful farm? Lifelines connects faith and non-faith groups from all traditions with farmers, helping to plant a network of hedgerows and wildlife corridors across the country.

For more information **contact** Tarot Couzyn on [tarot@stethelburgas.org](mailto:tarot@stethelburgas.org)

**Mon 2 – Thurs 5 September. The Cup of Our Life.** Led by **Richard and Storm Hann** Sussex. [www.penhurst.org.uk](http://www.penhurst.org.uk)

Using themes and daily practices from Joyce Rupp`s book, we invite you to focus on spiritual awareness and growth through the imagery of ordinary cups that are used in everyday life. This well known book has accompanied a wide range of people on their spiritual journeying and the retreat will be of benefit to those seeking to revitalise and enrich their experience of the Divine. We hope that the retreat is a cup of blessing filled to the brim for all who come with open minds and hearts.

**Wed 4 - Fri 6 September. Coming to our Senses. ‘The Word made flesh is here made word again’ (Edwin Muir, The Incarnate One).** A focus on embodiment, a continuing challenge for churches, and worldwide. **The Free to Believe 2024 Residential Conference.** Speakers: **Kathy Galloway and Victoria Turner.** Herts. <http://www.freetobelieve.org.uk>

The background is an attack by Edwin Muir on the austerity and bleakness of Calvinism. In 'The Incarnate One,' Muir writes: “The Word made flesh is here made word again, /A word made word in flourish and arrogant crook. /See there King Calvin with his iron pen, /And God three angry letters in a book”; and the mystery of the incarnation becomes “an ideological instrument”. By contrast, Muir wants to see God not simply in spoken word but in beauty, music and in the sacraments.

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

**Fri 6 - Sun 8 September. Praying with the Natural World: Whirlow Autumn Retreat.** <https://www.whirlowspiritualitycentre.org/>

Join us at the beautiful Parcevall Hall in North Yorkshire for this silent retreat.

**Fri 6 - Sun 8 September. How to read the Bible and still be a Christian.** Led by Dave Tomlinson. Near Bath. [www.ammerdown.org](http://www.ammerdown.org)

This retreat will explore if and how the Bible can be reconciled with the values, attitudes and understandings that shape the modern world. Drawing on sources in contemporary culture (songs, music videos, films, poetry, stories etc) and approaches to interpreting texts from both Christian and Jewish traditions, it will look at questions such as: Is it still worth bothering with the Bible? How do we reconcile the God of the Old Testament with Jesus? Why does the Bible contain so much violence? Is St Paul sexist and homophobic – or misunderstood? Why do the gospels sometimes sound anti-Semitic?

Sessions will be interactive, based around multi-media presentations Q&A and group work – in a playful, fun atmosphere. Come willing to question, debate and receive fresh insight. Non-Christians very welcome!

**Mon 9 – Thurs 12 Sept. Inspiration and Imagination: Creative Expressions of the Spiritual Life (2024) course** exploring the relationship between Christian theology, spirituality and art. Salisbury. [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

The four-day module is ideal for anyone wishing to deepen their understanding of the place of art, imagination and creativity in the Christian tradition from historical, cultural, and theological perspectives. Participants will be encouraged to develop their own aesthetic and spiritual awareness alongside the possibilities for developing their own creative practice. This module will also enable students to critically engage with the place of art in Christian worship and the life of the Church.

The 2022 course featured the following:

- \* a guided tour of Salisbury Cathedral with the Revd Anna Macham, Canon Precentor, to look at how the building is used in the liturgy currently and historically;
- \* sessions on mysticism and art;

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- \* sessions on heavy metal music, theology and spiritual practice (with Dr Charlotte Naylor Davis)
- \* screening of Complete Surrender, a documentary by Dr Louise Nelstrop;
- \* seminar on Art and Faith: A Theology of Making by Makoto Fujimura;
- \* sessions on six women artists from four centuries of Western art;
- \* sessions on heaven and hell as imagined by Dante and James Joyce.

This is a postgraduate course open to 'auditors' e.g. those attending the course who are not enrolled for academic credit. Joining this course is an opportunity to have a study break in the beautiful Salisbury Cathedral Close, where residential participants enjoy full board, access to the library and to the pattern of liturgy at Salisbury Cathedral.

**Wed 11 September 6.30 - 9.** Online. **Journeying on a Leaf.** A Retreat on the inspirational Christian **Saint Ia...**Led by **Donna Worthington.**

<https://christianretreats.live/>

The Irish Saint Ia, at a young age, literally missed the boat when her companions left Ireland, heading for Cornwall. Fearing crossing the sea alone, she prayed and saw a small leaf floating on the water. She watched it and it grew larger and larger. She trusted God, the leaf became her coracle and carried her across the ocean. Ia's story will be the creative ground from which to draw from in order to deepen your own spirituality. Using Ignatian guided imaginative prayer, you will explore the journey of surrender, solitude, the leafy coracle and the wild elemental ocean, wind and sky. Her incredible odyssey across the sea will also offer beautiful material for your own creative writing. We will explore this beautiful journey in the reflective space of this retreat.

**Fri 13 – Sun 15 September. The Embodied Contemplative.** Led by **Tery Doyle.**

County Durham. <https://minsteracres.org>

The Embodied Contemplative Retreat will explore finding inner stillness and peace through the practice of both Christian Meditation and gentle Tai Chi movement and breath work. It is suitable for all ages and abilities. Come with a Beginner's Mind.

**Sat 14 September. Tell me more... Storytelling as spiritual.** Led by **Steve Gurr**

Sussex. [www.penhurst.org.uk](http://www.penhurst.org.uk)

In our being alongside others we often give space for people's personal stories to be

told and heard. The act of telling these stories, and our careful attention to them, is often the context for a person's `knocking on the door` of the deeper questions of meaning and purpose, spirituality and faith. How might attentive listening and sensitive curiosity unlock these doors? How can we work in a more spiritually informed way to enable those we accompany to discover truth around meaning and purpose?

**Sat 14 September. Spiritual Ecology Workshop Carousel.** With **Lyla June Johnston, Angharad Wynn, Justine Huxley.** London. <https://stethelburgas.org>

A day of participatory workshops on Spiritual Ecology. 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.

**Sat 14 September 10 - 4. Autumn:** One of a series on **Divine Nature: The Seasons.** Led by **David Cole.** Surrey. <https://www.stcolumbashouse.org.uk>

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

**Sat 14 September 10.30 – 12.30** on Zoom. **Spiritual Roots in Stormy Times.** With **Alan Heeks.** <https://www.cana.org.uk/> To book email [admin@cana.org.uk](mailto:admin@cana.org.uk)

**Mon 16 - Wed 18 September. Seeing the world and ourselves differently – Franciscan insights for the planetary crisis** with **Brother Samuel SSF.** Worcestershire. <https://www.hollandhouse.org/>

**Tues 17 September 10 – 4. Outdoor Worship in Times of Climate and Nature Crisis course.** Led by **Cate Williams and Jo Neary.** Salisbury. [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

This course will explore the practice of worshipping outdoors, and how it might fit within parish/benefice life. We will consider why this is something we might do as Christians, how it connects with people in our community who are concerned about the environmental crises, and how it helps us to engage in environmental good practice as we grow in love for God's creation. We will be outdoors at times whatever the weather, so bring your waterproofs!

Session 1: This will explore nature connection in the Christian tradition, looking both at nature connection in wider society and at what the bible has to say about our connection with non-human creation.

Session 2: We will look at different forms of outdoor worship, with a particular focus on Forest Church and engagement with the Agricultural year, exploring creative ways of celebrating Plough Sunday, Rogation, Lammass and Harvest.

Session 3: We will spend some time in an act of outdoor worship, as well as taking some time to explore the practicalities of leading worship in this way.

Session 4: The final session will look at how outdoor worship might connect with other aspects of a church's mission and ministry.

**Thurs 19 September 7.30 – 10 pm. Online. Heart Wisdom and Intelligence.**

<https://wccm.org/events/>

In this round table dialogue, Prof **Scherto Gill**, Founding Director of Global Humanity for Peace Institute (University of Wales Trinity St David) along with Dr **Anne Baring**, MA Oxon, PhD in Wisdom Studies (Ubiquity University) and **Andrew Harvey**, internationally renowned religious scholar and writer will explore Heart Intelligence and the practical implications of a new integrated intelligence.

**Thurs 19 September 10 - 4. Autumn Quiet Garden Day.** Letting nature nurture us through climate change. With **Helen Warwick and Mike Hall**. N. Yorks.

<http://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk/events.html>

**Thurs 19 September 6.30 – 8pm. On Zoom. How Can We Respond to the Israel-Palestine Conflict?** With **Tanya Hubbard**. <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk>

The conflict in Israel-Palestine is heart-breaking and we can feel utterly overwhelmed by it. What can we usefully do in response to this terrible situation? In this session, we will hear from speakers involved in responding to the conflict in different ways. What are they doing? What are the challenges they face? What- from their perspective- can Quakers do to support humanitarian efforts or efforts to strengthen the possibility of peace? This session will involve hearing from the speakers and an opportunity for question and answer with them. Speakers' names will be shared in the coming months.



**Mon 23 - Thurs 26 September. Labyrinth Retreat** led by **Jim Bailey**. Leicestershire.

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

Discover the fascinating history of labyrinths as sacred spaces, their shapes, symbolism, and spirituality. Learn how to create and use temporary pop-up labyrinths, make and draw finger labyrinths, and explore their mental and physical health benefits.

**Mon 23 - Fri 27 September.** With **Phil Stone & Andreas Andersson**. Yorks.

<https://scargillmovement.org>

Is it not our longing to see God's kingdom on earth as in heaven! In this week we will explore what that might look like. Prayer is relationship; a way of being in the world defined by presence, love and grace. And the prayer Jesus taught His disciples is not a half bad way of helping us lean into that stance. Using that prayer as framework we will explore prayer itself, the kingdom of God, forgiveness, hospitality and much more. Art, poetry and music will help guide us, alongside the riches of the bible and our own stories.

**Phil** is director at Scargill. **Andreas** is a pastor & musician who was previously chaplain at Scargill.

**Monday 23 September - Monday 28 October. 6 - 7.30 pm.** On Zoom. **Paths Towards Transformative Justice.** With **Nishma Jethwa**.

<https://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 understand 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.

The course will use a reading and discussion circle format to enable participants to explore and unpack topics from an intersectional and critical lens. Reading material will be shared on Moodle, and participants will meet with the course leader and other speakers with lived experience of these issues to explore what they have read in a live session every week.

**Tues 24 - Sun 29 Sept. Flesh, Truth, Sacred Body: Exploring Dance and Movement as a Spiritual Journey.** Led by **Ida Mara Freire**. Bonnevaux, France.

A 5-day journey designed to explore the profound connection between the body, movement, dance, the creative process, and self-awareness.

**Wed 25 September 10 - 4.30. A line made by Walking.** Near Perth.

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

This retreat explores the work of artist Richard Long, who links the material world with the spiritual realm by reconstructing time and place. We will be experimenting with ways to reconnect one's inner truth and find deeper meaning.

**Sat 28 September. Stations of the Universe.** Led by **Sister Regula**. South East London. <https://sisters-of-st-andrew.com/>

A day of prayer and reflection in the Season of Creation.

**Sat 28 September 10- 4. The Gospel of Thomas: A Day of Reflection.** Romsey.

Hants. <https://www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk/wellbeing-and-spirituality/>

What are the sayings of Jesus discovered in the Egyptian desert in 1945? The Gospel of Thomas, by Thomas the Apostle, is one of fifty-two ancient texts discovered at Nag Hammadi, in a tall sealed jar. Thomas' Gospel resonates deeply with the parables in the traditional Gospels and sits within the contemplative tradition. According to Thomas heaven is not a future reality, it can be found here on earth by seeking the essential goodness of our own humanity. Indeed, by seeking unity within ourselves we are able to work together to create a unified world. According to tradition, St Thomas established the Church in India. It is therefore not surprising to find the Gospel of Thomas has become a guide to spiritual practice for those seeking common ground and engage in interreligious dialogue and teaching. There are quiet times through the day to walk, reflect, read, pray and create.

**Sat 28 September 10-4. Seeing as a child – Spirituality of Storytelling.** Led by: **Anne Booth**. Surrey. [www.christianretreat.org](http://www.christianretreat.org)

Jesus tells us to be like children, but what does this mean? Anne Booth, author of books for both children and adults, explores how story telling can help us in our own spiritual journey, and how looking at our life's narrative through a child's eyes can

help us draw closer to Jesus, the teller of parables. This day will use stories as a jumping off place for meditation and prayer.

**Mon 30 September 10 – 4. About the A Question of Calling – A Reflective Day for Women course.** Led by **Magdalen Smith**. Salisbury. [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

This is a reflective and creative day drawing upon input from the course leader, images and poetry, and person-centred questions to make connections between life and faith. We will explore how we inhabit the 'callings' to the different parts of our lives as women and how these interconnect with a vocation to leadership in the church.

**Session 1: Calling to Locate**

Explore our experience of moving and locating as we remember the special places in our lives, and how the experience of travelling can enable us to build a sense of being a pilgrim as we move through life.

**Session 2: Calling to be Loved**

Explore the power we have to love, through our friendships and family relationships, our own need to be loved and how this enables a desire to love a diversity of people.

**Session 3: Calling to Embody**

Recalibrating how we view the world, being at peace within our physical bodies, and how this calls us into a place of deep acceptance, a subject which affects women in particular.

**Session 4: Calling to Reverence**

Each session will begin by sharing reflections from Magdalen Smith's recent book *Reverence: A Priest's Life of Holiness and Humanity* to use as a blueprint/tool to reflect on the lives and vocations of participants. The day will help those participating to discern where God might be calling them now and into the future in terms of who they are already but also who they might become.