

# Sharing the Journey



A monthly newsletter from the Journeying team

January 2022

Dear Friends

We are in the New Year season of Epiphany... a time of light, hope and warmth. May it be that way for you, this year.

*Always remember that God is on your side!*



## 2022 pilgrim-holiday programme



A warm welcome to all, to our Journey programme 2022!

Set in beautiful locations with strong spiritual connections, each pilgrim journey provides a real away from it all experience – a time to refresh, a time to grow...

Here's a look at three:

### **ST DECLAN'S WAY PILGRIMAGE, IRELAND**

22nd May - 28th May

Walking 20-25km (12-15 miles) each day in the footsteps of St Declan, we'll encounter medieval fortress abbeys, distinctive Irish Round Towers, wild mountain passes, rich farmland, fairy-tale castles and holy wells.

### **BRECON BEACONS AND LLANGORS LAKE, WALES**

By Gentle Waters.

Friday 8th July - Monday 11th July 2022.

During this short break we will walk the shores and venture into the hills. Just 6 miles to the south-east of Brecon, our weekend base is a haven of peace amongst some of the most stunning scenery and historical landscapes in southern Britain...

## WAY OF ST DAVID PILGRIMAGE

24<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> July



For five consecutive days we will walk around 20km (13 miles) on what Lonely Planet describes as the finest coast path in the world...



And for details of all, please follow the link: <https://www.journeying.co.uk/journeys-2022>



### For one edition only, the return of *Where are we?*



The first person to correctly identify the location in this picture, wins a Journeying Bookmark and a mention in next month's newsletter! Please email your answer to: [info@journeying.co.uk](mailto:info@journeying.co.uk)

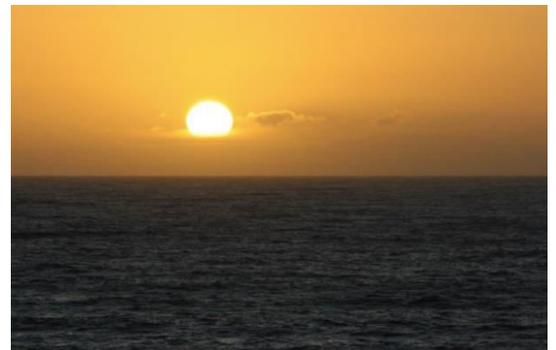


### The Way of Saints Aidan and David

#### A new pilgrimage route linking Ireland and Wales.

We are delighted to share news of this exciting venture between the British Pilgrimage Trust, Pilgrim Paths Ireland, Guided Pilgrimage and Journeying who have teamed up with the Ancient Connections project being run by Pembrokeshire and Wexford County Councils:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-59837381>



Sunset, midway across the Irish sea



## A Scottish Blessing for Burns Night, January 25th

*May the blessing of light be on you - light without and light within.*

*May the blessed sunlight shine on you like a great peat fire, so that stranger and friend may come and warm himself at it.*

*And may light shine out of the two eyes of you, like a candle set in the window of a house, bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.*

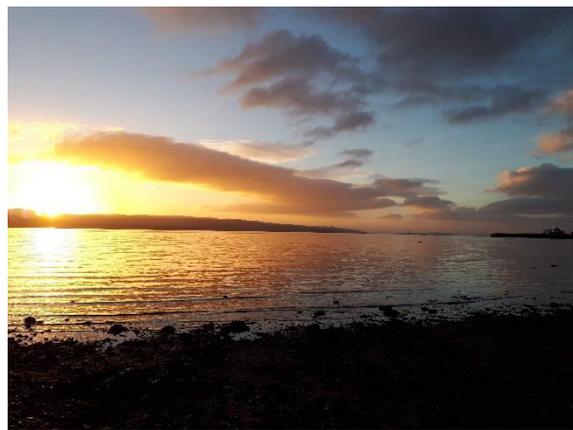
*And may the blessing of the rain be on you, may it beat upon your Spirit and wash it fair and clean, and leave there a shining pool where the blue of Heaven shines,*

*and sometimes a star.*

*And may the blessing of the earth be on you, soft under your feet as you pass along the roads, soft under you as you lie out on it, tired at the end of day; and may it rest easy over you when, at last, you lie out under it.*

*May it rest so lightly over you that your soul may be out from under it quickly; up and off and on its way to God.*

*And now may the Lord bless you, and bless you kindly. Amen.*



Sunset, South West Scotland



## A Walk in Faith

Sarah Burgess-Parker, a member of the Journeying friends' group, has recently published, *A Walk in Faith*.

The book depicts Sarah and husband Gordon's, pilgrimage across North Wales.

"Walking in Faith and for mental health wellbeing from Holywell, Flintshire to Aberdaron on the Llyn peninsular. A journey that shares our experiences, the people we met and the kindness we received. The wildlife and joy of being at one with nature. A time of prayer and togetherness, walking and sitting, side by side, sometimes talking, sometimes silent. Everyday pushing ourselves on, growing, learning and feeling God's love through all that we experienced."

A Walk in Faith is available from Blackwell's. Please follow the link:

<https://blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/product/A-Walk-in-Faith-by-Sarah-Burgess-Parker/9781839756597>

And to read Sarah's blog, this link: <https://lifeisapilgrimage399561076.wordpress.com/category/pilgrim-journeys/>



## 2022 Day Walk programme

Day walks are run in a spirit of pilgrimage and are a great way to enjoy some superb countryside and at the same time re-charge spiritual batteries. Walks are free and are dog-friendly.

To date the programme includes:

Llanthony Priory, Monmouthshire (Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April),

Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire (Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April).

Glastonbury, Somerset, during early summer, is also a distinct possibility.

Full details will appear in a later edition of the newsletter and over the coming weeks on the Day Walks page of the Journeying website: <https://www.journeying.co.uk/day-walks2>



## Founding a Forest Church



*First gathering. Tim Crahart, far right.*

During 2020, while church buildings were closed, we as a family found a closer connection to God through nature. We would walk through the woods, along the canal or river and explore new places in and around Risca, South Wales where we live. It took me quite a while to realise that this was something that others may also wish to take part in. After finding that Forest Churches were an actual thing, I decided to start one up in Risca once lockdown was eased.

The Forest Church gatherings involve walking, praying, reflecting, meditating, singing and reading scripture. It appeals to people like John Muir, who

once said, 'I'd rather be in the mountains thinking of God, than in church thinking about the mountains.' There are many different models of Forest Church but Bruce Stanley, who quite literally wrote the book on it, says that to genuinely be a Forest Church you must be doing something that couldn't be done in a building, you have to engage with your environment in some form or another.

In engaging with God in the great outdoors, we allow him to speak to us through his creation. Nature has been described by some as being the second book of God (I think it's the first), as it says in Romans 1:20 'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.'

I have based our gatherings around the seasonal cycle of the year, with our first Forest Church being around Midsummer Day. We have also celebrated the harvest, All Hallows or in the Welsh Nos Galan Gaea; Winter's Eve, and our most recent meeting was on Boxing Day, where we focused on Christmas and the recent Winter Solstice. By adhering to this approach, it means we meet roughly every six weeks.

Recognising and celebrating these festivals helps us to become grounded in our environment and to acknowledge the passing of time and the changing of the seasons. Although we meet in different places, we



*Talking by the Lagoon.*

do revisit them over the course of the year to see how things change. We see life in its fullness in the Summer, we see creation slowing down in the Autumn, sleeping through the Winter and new life bursting forth in the Spring.

I've been greatly encouraged by those attending the gatherings as well as by the interest and support shown by those who would like to attend if they were able to. We have had all ages attend, people from different Christian traditions and those with little or no experience of church.

For those who are interested, we have a Risca Forest Church Facebook page and there is also a general Forest Church page which provides details of different groups that meet in the UK and further afield. You can also buy Bruce Stanleys book, 'Forest Church: A Field Guide to Nature Connection for Groups and Individuals' which is essential reading if you're thinking of starting a Forest Church.

It's a joy to explore different ways of doing church and providing people with various ways to engage with God in diverse environments, whilst also learning more about the wonders of creation.

Tim Crahart.

*We look forward to once again welcoming Tim on one of our Day walks during 2022.*



### Friday Gathering

Each Friday at 10 p.m. (UK time) ... A time to pause and prayerfully hold in our thoughts all those connected with Journeying. We have no particular format and there's no linking over the airwaves. As *always, hope you can be with us.*



Be still and know that I am God  
Be still and know that I am  
Be still and know  
Be still  
Be

(St. Patrick - Based upon Psalm 46:10)

Have a wonder-full New Year!

Every Blessing,  
The *Journeying* Team.

You are welcome to share this Newsletter with anyone you think might be interested.

**If you would prefer not to receive news from *Journeying* please reply to this email and let us know**

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