



2022: Pilgrimage at the Margins

Restoring dignity, agency and power: organising a Pilgrimage at the Margins where you are

A year of listening to and celebrating forgotten places and forgotten people

In 2022, to support community renewal as we start to move beyond the impacts of Covid-19, and to celebrate Church Action on Poverty's 40th anniversary, we invite people to spend time listening to and amplifying the truths revealed by people and communities on the margins of British society, sharing their vision of the kind of future they want to see for themselves and the neighbourhoods, and standing in solidarity with them in speaking truth to power about the wider changes that are needed to help bring this about.

The Pilgrimage at the Margins aims to reimagine what 'Pilgrimage' means in 2022. For most people, pilgrimage is associated with remote, rural, ancient or 'thin' places like Iona or Lindisfarne. Whilst these very much have their place, they do not help with the task of discovering holiness, transformation or encountering God in more modern, urban, everyday environments.

During the year we will be organising around 10 Pilgrimages in different locations across the UK, each hosted by a local partner church or community organisation. Details of these events are available www.church-poverty.org.uk/40years/pilgrimage

Could you organise a Pilgrimage at the Margins where you are?

Alongside the 10 'national' Pilgrimages, we invite any group to undertake their own Pilgrimage at the Margins. Could you organise a small event to spend a couple of hours, an afternoon or a whole day in a 'forgotten place' in your own area, engaging in deep listening to each other, conversation and sharing of stories, and reflecting personally and in small groups together?

If we journey with forgotten or economically marginalised communities, can they become sites of pilgrimage, encounter, hope and transformation in 2022?

**One step at a time
We journey onwards with God.
This is pilgrimage.**

Nick Waterfield, Church Action on Poverty in Sheffield

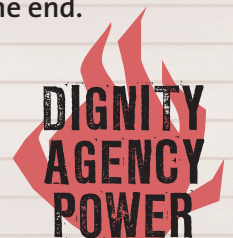


Building dignity, agency and power: 40th anniversary appeal

To mark Church Action on Poverty's 40th anniversary, we have launched a fundraising appeal. We aim to raise £40,000 during the year to help build a more powerful movement, through which local people and communities struggling against poverty can reclaim their dignity, agency and power together.

Your event could contribute to that stronger movement. If you can, please invite people to donate to the appeal during your event, or at the end.

If you would like a supply of leaflets and Gift Aid envelopes to help people donate, please call our office on 0161 872 9294.



Practical ideas for organising your own Pilgrimage at the Margins

Where to hold your Pilgrimage

The location would be for you to choose – in any area there likely to be places which might be considered to be ‘forgotten’ or marginalised (think of the local council estate, or part of the town that few ‘outsiders’ chose to visit). However, many of these can also experience stigma, or are frequently ‘looked down on’ by people from more affluent areas. A strong recommendation would therefore be to talk to and partner with local people or an organisation who live in or who have very strong relationships with the local community. There should be a strong sense of being invited into people’s own space, rather than turning up uninvited.

Planning the Pilgrimage

There are no hard and fast rules for a Pilgrimage! The event could take anything from a couple of hours to a whole day, and for anything from 5 to 25 people (anything bigger would turn it into a conference rather than a Pilgrimage, and potentially be too intrusive to the local community). Again, a strong recommendation is to be guided by people locally, as to what would feel appropriate for them.

Who to invite

It’s up to you! You might want to invite members of your own and other local churches, other faith or civic leaders. What is important is that anyone invited understands the invitation is to spend time with the community, listening both 1-2-1 and in group conversations and reflecting together with people on their stories, truths, dreams and aspirations – it is not to come in to try and solve people’s problems.

Sharing stories, hopes, dreams and aspirations

The ethos of the Pilgrimage should always be based on a sense of equality, deep listening, and affirming of people’s stories, hopes, dreams and aspirations for themselves, their communities and wider society. This could lead into starting to explore the question ‘What can we do together to help bring these dreams into reality?’, but always from an ethos of partnership and being led by what local people want for themselves.

STOP: Stop believing we know the answers to other people's needs.

LOOK: Find out what others are doing to challenge injustice and join in.

LISTEN: Connect to people and listen to the voices and wisdom of our communities.

LEARN: Be willing to be taught by others, recognising the gifts within a community.

Eunice Attwood, Church at the Margins Officer, Methodist Church

What will happen on the day?

Unlocking and affirming creativity

Pilgrimages can include space for quiet reflection – but there are many ways of bringing creativity into the process, and encouraging people to try out different things. These might include:

- **Emmaus walk:** Invite people to go on a short 10–15-minute walk in pairs (or to find a quiet corner to have a conversation if they're not able to walk) with someone they don't know, to informally share something of each others' stories together.
- **Laying down burdens:** A time or space where people are invited to place pebbles or stones onto a pile (cairn), where each stone represents a 'burden' that they wish to lay down. They could do this silently, or be invited to briefly share what it is they want to unburden themselves of.
- **Sources of hope:** A time or space for people to share what it is that offers them hope or inspiration. This could include the opportunity to share biblical quotes or stories, other aspects of their faith, or people they have known – either verbally, in writing or in other creative ways (paint, crayons, etc).
- **Dreams for the future:** A creative space for people to write or draw their dreams on pieces of paper cut out in the shape of leaves, which they could then hang from a branch (or similar) to create a 'tree of dreams'. Again, this could be done as an individual activity, or where people are invited to share their dreams as they write them or hang them on the tree.
- Depending on how many people and how long your event is, you could have some or all of these as a series of activities that everyone is invited to participate in, or as a set of **'stations'** in different corners of the venue (or outside if the weather is good), and invite people to move from station to station either every 20–30 minutes, or simply as they feel moved to do.
- You may wish to start or conclude with some form of opening or closing worship, but again, it will be important to be attentive and sensitive to who is hosting and participating in your

Pilgrimage, so that the event is as inclusive as possible.

We have included overleaf a possible format for a day Pilgrimage (10am – 3pm). You are welcome to use or adapt this as you wish!



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Get in touch!

If you are thinking about or planning to hold your own Pilgrimage event, please get in touch! We'd love to know what you are doing, to offer any help or answer any questions you might have – though we definitely can't promise to come along to all the events that will be happening this year...

Felicity Guite
 Pilgrimage on the Margins facilitator
felicity@church-poverty.org.uk



Potential format for a day event

Time	Content	Notes
10:00am	Arrivals, refreshments	Start time can be flexible to suit local circumstances (e.g. if participants are travelling greater distances, a later start time).
10:30am	Welcome and opening reflection or worship	Welcome from host partner. We can provide prayers and content for opening worship, but be creative! There are many alternative formats, including non-religious reflections if considered more appropriate to the context and participants.
10:45am	Sharing stories	This could potentially be an opportunity for the host partner to share their own story, or for one or two people from the host community to share their stories – by way of grounding the Pilgrimage in the lived experience, stories and local context.
11:00am	Bringing our own stories	Participants sharing their own stories and personal journeys, in a respectful and listening space with each other in small groups of 4–5 people.
11:30am	Coffee/comfort break	
11:45am	Pilgrim stations: 1	3–4 options (stations) which participants will be able to choose from, with each repeated so that participants can participate in three stations during the day.
	Station 1: Journeying together	Opportunity to journey together in pairs, to walk and talk (or simply sit and talk) with one other person for 15–20 minutes as a deeper listening and encounter with each others' stories.
	Station 2: Laying down burdens	Opportunity to reflect on the burdens participants bring with them, spending time reflecting in silence, writing, drawing, or sharing in small groups of 2–3 then 'laying down' stones along with any drawings/writing to form a cairn together.
	Station 3: Sources of hope	Opportunity to reflect on where we derive our hope from, spending time sharing stories in 2–3s, or again drawing, writing, or potentially reading from the Bible, poetry or other sources.
	Station 4: Dreams for the future	Opportunity to share hopes and dreams for the future of ourselves and our communities, in 2–3s or by writing on shaped pieces of paper (leaves?), which could then be tied to a 'tree of hope' (i.e. large twig).
12:30pm	Lunch	
1:15pm	Pilgrim stations: 2	Same options repeated to enable participants to choose a second station
2:00pm	Pilgrim stations: 3	Same options repeated to enable participants to choose a third station
2:45pm	Short closing reflection or worship	Host/facilitator to lead a closing reflection, including a reflective talk, drawing on some of the stories, themes and materials generated during the day, plus short reflection or worship using some materials to mark Church Action on Poverty's 40th anniversary, and an invitation to contribute to the anniversary fundraising appeal (www.church-poverty.org.uk/40years)
3:00pm	Close	