



As a deer longs for flowing streams,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God....  
By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,  
and at night his song is with me,  
a prayer to the God of my life.

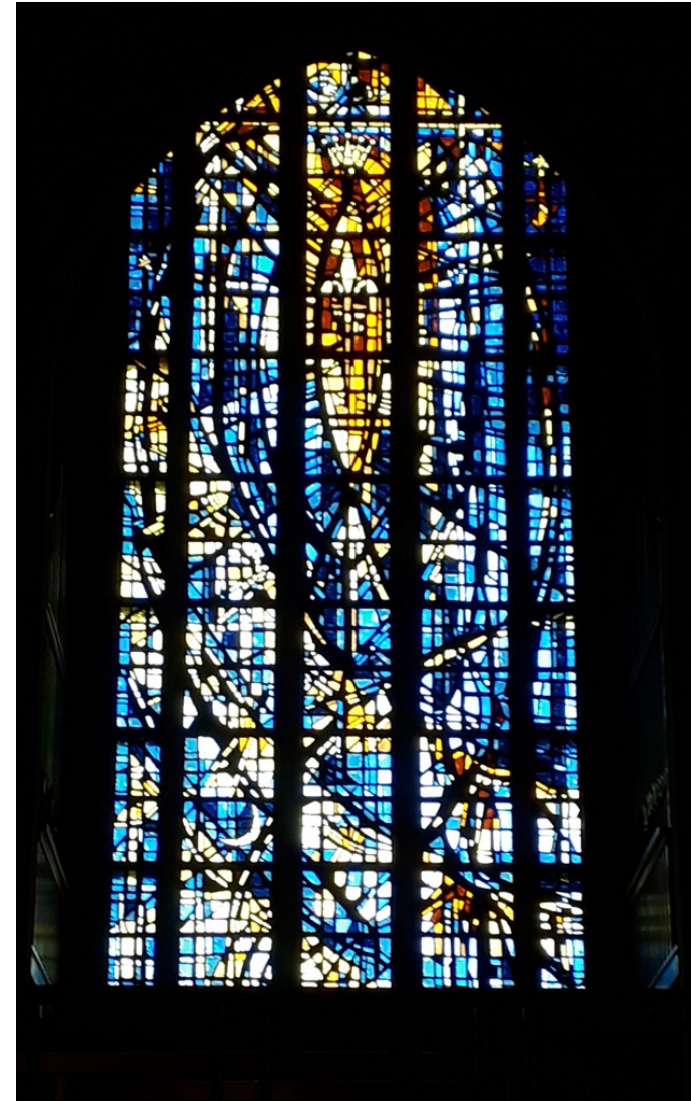
*Psalms 42:1-2, 8*

Please send any items for the November newsletter to [newsletter@reflectretreats.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@reflectretreats.co.uk) by 1st November. Thank you.

**Reflect**  
Methodist Spirituality and Retreats

**Reflect**  
Methodist Spirituality and Retreats

Newsletter  
*June– July*  
2023



## Letter from the Chair

June 2023

# Reflect

Methodist Spirituality and Retreats

Dear Reflect members

Thanks – new things – and goodbye.

Thank you very much for your continued support for the work of Reflect. Despite the Covid pandemic and spiralling costs due to inflation, our retreats continue to be well supported and very ably led by a wide variety of leaders. In these difficult times it is more important than ever to provide people with the time and space to think, reflect and pray.

Our online quiet mornings, begun in lockdown have become a vital part of our work. We are happy to say that new names are appearing on our list of participants each time, alongside the 'regulars'. In addition,

Reflect has been able to offer an online 'Take Time Together' course offering and extended time for meditation on the gospels.

The Executive Committee met in-person this May for the first time since 2019! After an extended committee meeting, we shared in a silent retreat together at St Katharine's Foundation in London for the rest of the weekend.

One of the decisions we made was to rename Reflect and add retreats to the title, so that it might describe our activities more fully. We are now Reflect – Methodist Spirituality and Retreats. This will enable members of the public searching for a retreat to pick up the name of Reflect more easily.

Northern Retreat 17th – 19th October 2023

Whalley Abbey



## Praying Without Words

The Revd Joy Adams

former Chaplain at Whirlow Spirituality Centre, Sheffield

For many there is a strong desire to cultivate an inner life of prayer, it has always formed an essential part of the Christian tradition. Many also long for silence and stillness. Where does this desire, this longing originate? How might it be fulfilled? A retreat provides a good opportunity to explore and experience 'praying without words', bearing in mind there are no experts, just explorers.

We shall explore the way of 'praying without words' as taught and practiced in the Hebrew Scriptures (OT), by Jesus and the early church (NT), through the early century mystics to the present day. Whether this is your usual practice, or you are just venturing on this path of discovery, this retreat could be for you.

This is not a totally silent retreat; however, space and time will be offered to enter into, and experience prayer of silence, and we shall respect each other's space as appropriate.

Cost: £255. For more details please contact Revd Sandie Exley-Watts on 01484 880451 or [sandie@exleywatts.me.uk](mailto:sandie@exleywatts.me.uk)

# Reflect

Methodist Spirituality and Retreats

## REFLECT QUIET MORNING (via Zoom)

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September or Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023



## EXPLORING LIFE WITH HILDEGARD OF BINGEN (FEAST DAY: 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER)

Encounter this 12<sup>th</sup> Century mystic and visionary who has gained in popularity with her creativity and insights, including *viriditas* – the greening power of God. How does she speak to us today?

9.30am – Welcome, Prayer & Introduction to Hildegard

10.00am – Session 1: Creative God

11.00am – Session 2: Creative Flourishing

12 noon – Conclusion & Closing Prayer

To end by 12.15pm

This online Quiet morning will be led by Judith Jessop  
– Methodist minister and Chair-Elect of Reflect

*If you would like to attend please email Lynne Tonge : [2tonges317@gmail.com](mailto:2tonges317@gmail.com)  
stating which date you would like to book*

There is no charge for this event but donations (suggestion £10)  
may be made by bank transfer to support the work of REFLECT  
(Reflect Bank Details: Lloyds Bank, Sort Code 30 96 18, Account no. 02833113  
please quote 'Quiet Day' as a reference for your payment – Thank you!)

Our Annual General meeting will be held by Zoom on 28<sup>th</sup> October from 10.30am to 12 noon. All members are warmly welcomed. The Zoom link is

Topic: Reflect AGM

Time: Oct 28, 2023 10:00 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96185790999>

Meeting ID: 961 8579 0999

At the AGM, I will be stepping down as Chair of Reflect after 7 very rewarding years in the role. The AGM will be invited to vote in Rev Judith Jessop as my successor.

With thanks and best wishes

**Gill**

If you want to find out any more about Reflect events, do visit the website [www.reflectretreats.co.uk](http://www.reflectretreats.co.uk)

*Our grateful thanks to Gill for all that she has done for Reflect over the last seven years. We offer our prayers for you as you step down, and pray God's blessing on you as you move into whatever God has prepared for you.*

*And we offer our prayers also for Judith as she prepares to take on this role and grow the work of Reflect in the years to come.*



## *Wells in the Wilderness*

Over the weekend of 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> March 2023, I attended a Methodist Local Preachers' Retreat focussed around the theme of *Wells in the Wilderness*, in the beautiful surroundings of Whalley Abbey. The Retreat was organised with great efficiency by Gill Dascombe, and was led by Barbara Easton, who inspired us with her deep biblical knowledge and down-to-earth spirituality.

It was my first experience of a residential Retreat, and although initially I was unsure as to what to expect of the weekend, from the moment I arrived at the Abbey, with its excellent ensuite accommodation, I felt a sense of deep peace. We were 'in silence' for the majority of the time, an experience I found liberating as time 'stood still' and one could simply 'be' in God's presence.

Morning and evening prayers framed our days in the serenity and intimacy of the chapel, and our time together concluded with a beautiful Love Feast on the Sunday morning.

Barbara Easton guided our reflections, moving from Jesus meeting us 'where we are', looking at his encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4, through various 'well encounters' to the healing of the man by the pool at Bethesda in John 5. She concluded our reflections with Martyn Joseph's words *Turn me tender again, through union with you*, stressing that Jesus meets us 'where we are', inviting each one of us into a deep, committed relationship with him.

It was my first time on a residential retreat – God willing, it won't be my last!

**Andrew Barratt**

## Values

In the same spirit in which Spiritual Direction is conducted, we will endeavour to:

- be a 'common table' through dialogue and hospitality
- be led by the Spirit, in prayer and discernment
- be theologically reflective
- act with wisdom and humility
- be exploratory and collaborative
- be responsive and gracious
- be inclusive and ecumenical
- be appropriately professional and not professionalised
- promote equality and respect for all
- maintain openness and transparency
- build things organically, being both adventurous and realistic
- use simple communicative processes

Lord, your voice is heard in the rolling thunder  
and in the humming of the bees.

Help us to tune in to your song  
emanating from the depths of the earth.

Silence our inner chatter  
so that we might hear you  
and be ready to sing in harmony  
with you and all creation.



# Spiritual Direction

## Forum UK [www.sdforum.uk](http://www.sdforum.uk)

The Forum sub-groups are getting underway:

- The '**Support and Resource spiritual directors group**' is actively exploring setting up a Facebook group where members of the forum can interact, discuss, share, seek support and wisdom.
- The '**Advocate and encourage the creative development of this ministry within the church and in a changing world group**' is looking at a series of online events to explore 'creative development questions'.

There will be a consultation in the autumn with those involved in enabling local or regional networks of spiritual directors to explore the developing of a mutually supportive relationship.

The Forum committee are getting close to putting in an application to the Charities Commission to establish the forum as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. At the last meeting thanks were expressed to Chris Chapman for all his contribution to the Forum on the Committee, as he steps down. The committee now consists of Co-Chairs Julie Dunstan & Nick Helm, together with Ruth Holgate, Alison MacTier, Susanne Carlsson, Catherine Williams and Audrey Hamilton.

At that meeting too, time was spent praying with the Values part of the Vision statement:



## *Thie dy Vea*

There are numerous tales from the different Celtic nations that tell similar stories: Christian monks and followers of Christ cast off from their safe havens, sometimes through choice, sometimes through force of circumstance. The common theme centres around trusting themselves and their boats to the winds and the tides and to the God who directs both.

Those themes of trust and risk have been very real for us here on the Isle of Man where we have established *Thie dy Vea*, a new retreat house. The name means 'House of Life' in Manx Gaelic. Our intention, in common with other retreat houses, is to offer a place of welcome and hospitality, a place of stillness and the possibility of encounters with God. But we offer this on an island that is unique in so many ways, and that is what makes us different.



Situated in the middle of the Irish Sea, the Island is a beautiful place known for world-famous TT bike races, tail-less cats and the traditional three-legs symbol found on our national flag. Just 33 miles long by 13 miles at its widest point, it offers sandy beaches, heather-clad moorland, wild hills, steep rocky cliffs and fertile fields. It's a place that in summer is graced by still, blue days and in winter is hit by the full force of south-westerly gales.

Evidence of Christian faith can be found in the Island's internationally important collection of Celtic and Viking carved crosses, some dating from as early as the late fifth century. The landscape is dotted with the remains of keeills. These ancient chapels built of stone and turf go back to around the ninth century. Now little more than low walls of stone, they bear silent testimony to a faith rooted deep in the Island's culture and landscape.

It was in 2019 that this journey of setting up a Retreat House began in earnest. After many years of people longing, hoping and praying, news emerged of a suitable house that might become available. A committed team saw the project take shape and we welcomed our first residential guests in June 2022.



Through this period we have been reminded time and again of risk, adventure and the God who provides; that discipleship is not about knowing the outcome before we start! David Adam has written:

*'Life is meant to be an adventure. A relationship with God will extend our vision, our sensitivity and indeed our whole life. Whenever life gets static or dull God calls us out to risk and be renewed.'*

We've jumped into this boat, so to speak, and set out on a journey with an uncertain outcome. There have been costs for those closely involved in this project, and those costs have come in various forms. We've found ourselves doing jobs that take us way outside of our comfort zones, experienced loss of identity, known frustrations over delays, made financial sacrifices. We have lost count of the nights when we've lost sleep!

But along the way we have known blessings. The frustrating covid-related delays worked to our advantage. They allowed time and space for the gathering of a team of staff and volunteers who share the vision of a residential house and are committed to making it happen. There is a growing sense of community as we work, learn and grow together. Encouragements have taken many forms.

We're still in our infancy, but looking back on this risk-laden journey of four years we suspect that we're sailing on the right tack. What's more, we're looking forward to discovering the things that God yet has in store for us.

**David Shirtliff**

*David Shirtliff is a Methodist Presbyterian and Warden of Thie dy Vea Retreat House. This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in the Retreats Handbook 2023. To find out more about Thie dy Vea go to [www.retreathouse.im](http://www.retreathouse.im)*

