
A WAY OF WALKING ON THE EDGE - A JOURNEY THROUGH CHANGE

Introduction

We walk with others. It's that simple really. We do not walk through our lives on our own. We may be lonely by design or circumstance yet our paths cross those of many others every day of our lives. Some days there are more people than we can cope with so our personal space is compressed and our minds numbed by the noise of others. Yet within hours we may be yearning for the sound of a single footstep. Even in our isolation we move within a landscape touched and shaped by people long since gone. There is a legacy within our spiritual geography, of paths laid down that lead us towards Jesus, who in case of confusion so helpfully called himself 'The Way'.

Chad is one who laid down a good pathway. A man who chose to follow the ever-gentle Christ with a quiet obedience through turbulent times. We will walk with Chad into the events of Easter, through the rugged landscape of the last few days of Christ's life and onwards into the bewildering dawn of the Resurrection. We will do this as a Community - Alone and Together - taking this Easter Resource written by Companions and Friends as a guide book inspired by Chad's life. The Chad Liturgy says 'You mark the way before me'. The Table of Contents will help you navigate your way through the material.



Chad Liturgy

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

**As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for You, O God.**

* In the name of the Father.

Amen.

* In the name of the Son.

Amen.

* In the name of the Spirit.

Amen.

Father, Son and Spirit.

Amen.

Father, Son and Spirit.

Amen.

Father, Son and Spirit.

Amen.

* Thanks to You,

O ever-gentle Christ,

for raising me freely

from the black and darkness of last night

into the kindly light of this day.

**You pour life into me,
giving me speech, sense, desire,
giving me thought and action.**

**My fame or repute will be
just as You allow:**

**You mark the way before me.
As I remember saints
who have journeyed before me,**

**Lord, teach me the way of their simplicity:
strength with humility,
at peace in the fear of God.
May I also go wherever I am led.**



Created by Mark McCormick
from Noun Project

All who wish to may read in turn.

* indicates a change of reader.

With a large group, split into two halves and read alternatively.

All say together the sections in **bold type**.

The sections in *bold italic* type should be said by each person
in turn (or the leader reads, then all repeat together).

**The keeping of Christ about me,
the guarding of God with me
to possess me, to protect me
from drowning and danger and loss,
the gospel of the God of grace
from brow of head
to sole of foot,
the gospel of Christ,
King of salvation,
be as a mantle to my body.
All I speak
be blessed to me, O God.
All I hear
be blessed to me, O God.
All I see
be blessed to me, O God.
All I sense
be blessed to me, O God.
All I taste
be blessed to me, O God.
Each step I take
be blessed to me, O God.
Peace between me and my God.
*Peace between me and my God.***

***May I tread the path to the gates of glory;
may I tread the path to the gates of glory.***

On your path, O my God,
and not my own,
be all my journeying.
Rule this heart of mine
that it be only Yours.

* We look for solitude.
In solitude we learn to grow and love,
to grow in love for God,
to grow in love for others.

* Christ's cross would I carry,
my own struggle forget.

* Christ's death would I ponder,
my own death remember.

* Christ's agony would I embrace,
my love to God make warmer.

* The love of Christ would I feel,
my own love waken.

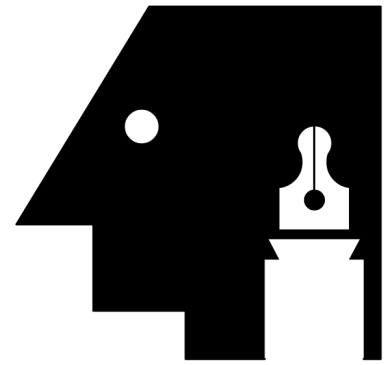
**Great God of wisdom,
Great God of mercy,
give me of Your fullness
and of Your guidance
at the turning
of each pass.**

**Great God of shielding,
Great God of surrounding,
give me of Your holiness
and of Your peace
in the fastening of my death;
give me Your surrounding,
and Your peace upon my death.**

**Peace between me and my God.
May I tread the path
to the gates of glory.
Rule this heart of mine
that it be only Yours.
God's path would I travel,
my own path refuse.
May I tread the path
to the gates of glory.**

Chad - A Biography

Chad was a willing pupil of Aidan and, like his master, preferred to walk, proclaiming the gospel wherever he went. He was one of four brothers all of whom made an impact on England during the Anglo-Saxon period. Chad was the youngest of the four all of whom were some of the first students in Aidan's school. Aidan also sent Chad to Ireland as part of his education.



Created by N.K.Narasimhan
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Bede tells us a great deal about Chad: he was an intellectual and devoted himself to study of the Scriptures. Despite his intellectual rigour he was not aloof. One of his closest friends was Owin, a man who, as Bede recounts, 'since he found himself less able to meditate on the Scriptures with profit, undertook a larger amount of manual labour'.

When his brother Cedd died he succeeded him as Abbot of Lastingham, North Yorkshire. There he was known for his gentleness and humility.

Chad was consecrated as a bishop but Archbishop Theodore later questioned the manner of his consecration. 'Chad replied with the greatest humility: "if you know that my consecration as bishop was irregular, I willingly resign the office; for I have never thought myself worthy of it. Although unworthy, I accepted it solely under obedience."' Theodore enabled him to stay in his office and appointed him Bishop of the Mercians.

He would likely have walked from Northumbria to his new seat at Lichfield; but Theodore ordered him to ride whenever he undertook a long journey. He was most reluctant to forego his walking (which he loved), but the Archbishop, 'who recognised his outstanding holiness and considered it more proper for him to ride, insisted on helping him to mount his horse'.

Within three years he was to succumb to the plague. One day, having witnessed a heavenly choir he summoned the brethren and said

"The welcome guest who has visited many of our brethren has come to me today, and has deigned to summon me out of this world. Therefore return to the church, and ask the brethren to commend my passing to our Lord in their prayers. And let each prepare for his own passing by vigils, prayers, and good deeds; for no man knows the hour of his death."

'Lord of the angels, fill us with the spirit of gentleness and humility, that with glad obedience we may accept the tasks which you call us to do. Show us how to be an example to others, and by your good works to bring You glory and praise; in Jesus' name. Amen.'

'Chad' by Aidan Hart

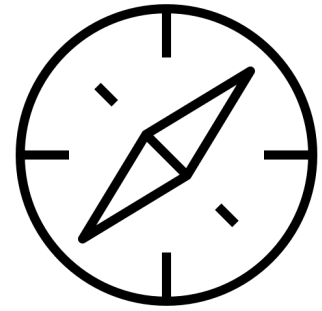
(SEE FRONT COVER) WWW.AIDANHART.CO



Bede and Eddius Stephanus are the two historians of the 8th century from whom our knowledge of Chad comes. They both gathered their source material from firsthand witnesses who knew Chad personally. This lifts the biographical nature of Chad's story from one of facts and figures to a narrative closer to a man of flesh and blood. The descriptions of Chad's character therefore carry an authenticity that differs from a glowing, saintly-spin cast upon his story many years after firsthand friends had died. This is a particular reason why we are delighted that Aidan Hart has given his permission to Northumbria Community to use the image of Chad for our Easter Resources. It was taken from his unfinished fresco of Chad commissioned by Shrewsbury School. The fresco was created by applying paint to wet lime plaster and as the lime set the image became bound to the wall. Because of the chemical reactions involved only certain pigments are suitable. Aidan

Hart's Chad was painted in earth colours, which seems more than appropriate for one who preferred walking upon the earth to riding above it. The image was later gilded. It is helpful to 'meet' Chad before he was renamed St Chad.

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Section 1: A Way of Walking.

It is a paradox that sometimes we seemingly have to start with an ending before we can attempt to begin. Chad's life and the liturgy we have in his name remind us of the challenge of transition and change, of ending before a new beginning. Chad was a disciple of Christ, shaped by being a disciple of Aidan. He knew many different changes in his life: bereavements, locations, seats and realms of influence, loss and gain. He knew what it was to be emptied, poured out through life's circumstances and in response to the needs of those around him. Chad also knew Life in all His fulness and was filled again with courage and hope.

We will walk with Chad through these last few days of Lent as we approach the feast of Easter. Just as in whatever way we have come to find ourselves empty we will walk with Christ through the last hours of His life as He empties himself. The disciples, those Jesus calls His friends and brothers, were emotionally poured out in shock, bewilderment, overwhelming grief and fear. They too were emptied that they might be filled.

This is a way of walking in step with Christ, the disciples, and with Chad. Our many beginnings are preceded by an end: an end of circumstances, of love, of life, of hope. We can find gratitude and thankfulness at the pivot points, at 'the turning of each pass'. These are signposted 'Grace'. So we begin and we trust the One who holds our lives in His hands.

Maundy Thursday:

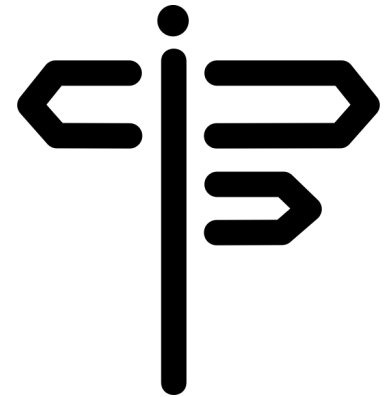
Jesus begins to empty himself as he prepares for the Passover meal with his disciples, his dear ones. He does this by taking a towel, wrapping it around himself. He pours water into a bowl and begins to wash his disciples' feet. As he does so he looks up at them, ever-gentle Christ. He begins to teach them. He explains what is happening as he serves them and what is about to happen, for there is to be an almost unimaginable change for all of them. He prepares himself for the coming ending as he does his best to show them, 'this is my body and it is given for you' and 'this is my blood' and he pours out the wine.

His followers are now confused. Was this not to be a great beginning? What was the triumphal entry for but a new start, the culmination of their hopes? They have had an illusion, one which Jesus has seen growing over their eyes like cataracts. They were ready but not for this. Their hopes are jarring with what Jesus is saying and doing. 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' but even if there is talk of betrayal and of disowning him? Their senses come into sharpened focus. There is still a scent of that anointing oil upon Him. Something about him and these symbols, something reminds them of the ritual of an end and not a beginning.



Chad had learnt Christ's humble way of servanthood through the mentoring of Aidan on Lindisfarne. Chad was just a young boy (maybe 10 years old) when he and his three older brothers were deposited on the island for safekeeping, in exile from their Celtic/

Northumbrian family, protected from threats upon their lives during an era of clan warfare. Death was too



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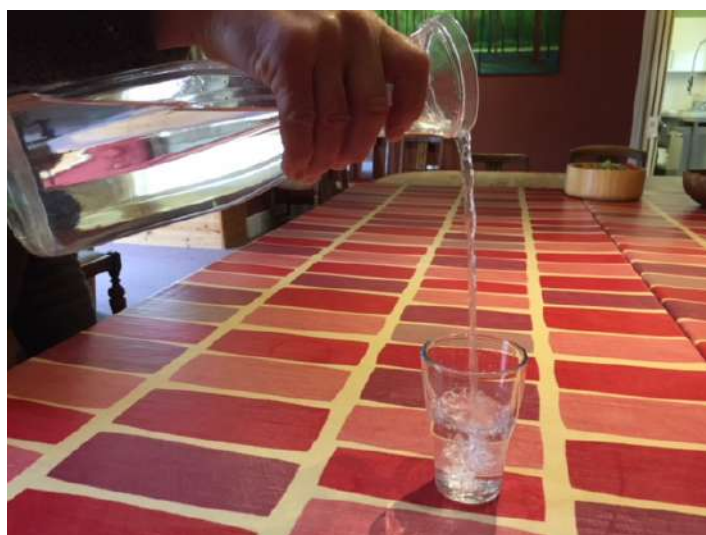
common a part of Chad's life. The plagues of his youth stalked the whole Anglo Saxon country bringing death to anyone and everyone, irrespective of status. As he walked alongside Aidan, Chad pulled the gentle mantle of Christ about himself. This was no Patrick's Breastplate. This was a garment of a servant like his master Aidan. He would walk not ride. He would favour the quiet company of twelve brothers as companions; he would live in the simple house not the rich mansion; he would serve next to a well, bringing healing and baptising people into the ever-gentle name of Christ. Chad knew what it was to be an outsider. He carried with him experiences of loss, which shaped him so he walked alongside the broken, the weary, the grievors and the dying. He found a way of walking, echoing Aidan and following Christ.

We are in seemingly equally tumultuous times where our borders are not only within our land or sea-locked islands but touch global and international frontiers. Current wars and provocations affect us because the needs of our neighbours demand a response just as the tensions of Chad's day and those of the disciples demanded their response. That will be costly. Personally we face being 'emptied out'. Here is the call to our 'olive grove', to go to our cell where we can honestly ask 'Take this cup from me ...not my will, but yours be done.'

Good Friday:

Jesus is slowly emptied out. He says very little. It is happening, this Ending. He is not resigned to it, rather he is determined. How else do we explain his restraint and obedience? He is led yet he remains master of himself. Once upon the cross he is so empty he thirsts. He is empty of all but love. It is he who lets go - 'It is finished'.

The disciples are reeling. Overwhelmed with grief they are empty of hope, empty of all but grief and fear. The women disciples stay, as long as they can bear. They have been empty before and Jesus came and filled them with peace and hope. Now they are exhausted. It is worse, so much worse than they had feared. They knew Jesus could change and transform even death into life ...yet it is here. The End. It has finished, for him and for them.



Chad experienced endings. We know that his brother Cedd died during a resurgence of the plague. It came at the worst of times for the indigenous church of Northumbria. Cedd died within months of the Synod at Whitby, the infamous ending of the Celtic Church. Chad appears to have been in Ireland at the time. He returned to the plague-ridden area of Lastingham and found his first task as abbot was to bury 30 of Cedd's community from Bradwell-on-Sea who had come to Lastingham to mourn Cedd's death. All 30 had contracted the plague. Death was, as Chad was to name it near to his own death, an 'amicable guest' an ever-present companion through life.

Within months came more changes and Chad was moving to York to take up another place for service. He was obedient to King Oswiu's insistence that Northumbria should have a bishop and he wanted Chad ordained. Chad had to walk through political mayhem both within and without the church. The seat at York had been allocated to an abbot called Wilfrid, but Wilfrid was enjoying extending the privileges of his rank following his ordination in France by staying for two years. Chad walked throughout Northumbria as their bishop. He criss-crossed the country with his companions. They could have ridden. It was very unorthodox for Chad to walk, as startling as if we walked everywhere barefoot today.

This period was followed by a great test for him. Theodore was appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury and began smoothing out the wrinkles left after the Synod of Whitby. It was pointed out to him that whilst Wilfrid had returned from France with correct credentials, Chad's ordination appeared to have been unorthodox. Expecting to have to forcibly remove Chad from York Theodore was surprised at Chad's humility in relinquishing his role, saying he had only gone as 'an act of obedience'. Chad embraced this ending and returned to his monastery in Lastingham, where his community resided. He went home.

We may have known what it is to be emptied in disappointment and shock. We may have known the exhaustion that comes at the end of a difficult chapter of our lives. A line is drawn. Something or someone has gone. It is finished. We live knowing that we too will end. We face our impermanence, our mortality.

The events for Christ and his disciples occurred on The Day of Preparation, the day before the Sabbath. That day was completed with Christ's burial. It was the end.

We too must consider what we are preparing for, not with a sense of pre-occupation and being focussed on the expectations of tomorrows. Neither being pulled back into reminiscences that rob us of today. 'We need, in love, to practice only this: letting each other go. For holding on comes easily, we do not need to learn it.' (Rilke) We need to practice letting go: out of love for ourselves we need to stop the excruciating pain of holding on to what has gone. It is finished.

Holy Saturday - Sabbath:

Jesus is dead. His body is an empty vessel. He is within a tomb. There is emptiness everywhere. The one who is the Resurrection and the Life is dead. He is now life less. Every cell in his body emptied of life. No sound. No sense. He had sought to prepare his friends for this. He had broken bread and poured out wine. He had shown them the full extent of his love.

The disciples are hollowed out by the horror of it all. Scattered and fearful, unable to respond other than to hold the Sabbath with its gift of rest. The Sabbath is the day on which God said 'It is Very Good'. It is a day of gratitude and thankfulness. Through the comfort of a pattern of worship, are Jesus' followers able to find those responses? Women and men tracing their way through beloved patterns and words retelling their story which was woven into the heart of God. The wisdom of rest. The empowerment of giving voice to thankfulness and gratitude.

Chad returned to Lastingham. He too needed rest, recovery, acceptance in the quiet and enfolding rhythm of prayer. Solitude, alongside the companionship of his friends. It was Chad's humility and obedience that fell as a mantle around him reminiscent of the towel wrapped around Jesus as he washed his disciples feet. Chad had poured out his service and was empty.

How do we process how we are to live in what has become a season of 'emptied out life'? We are given Sabbath, the space and courage for gratitude and thankfulness. There can come a pressing urgency to move on, to rush through the pain, to pick up and start anything anew. Jesus sought to prepare us, his friends for this. As the good shepherd who has led us through this valley of the shadow of death - the death of a loved one we now have to leave behind or of a dream or a hope - he will be faithful and lead us up a pathway on the other side and beyond. Here is the sabbath gift for us. Find what is good. Find and nurture thankfulness. Be comforted by the 'ever-gentle Christ.'

Easter Sunday

Jesus is empty. By the power of his Father's love Life rushes into him. He is resurrected. He is filled to overflowing. What has happened to every cell in his body? 'Don't hold onto me', it is all so new. 'This is my beloved Son whom I love' (Matthew 3:17).

Here He is, Life, Life in all His fullness!

Women and men, his disciples are filled to the point of being overwhelmed. They are afraid and shocked and astounded. Can you hear laughter that pivots on the edge of sobbing? Jesus walks with some his friends (almost comically unrecognisable to them) as they set out to return home to Emmaus. All their hopes were lost. All they knew and had been taught by Jesus was purely hypothetical prior to this point. He fills their eyes with a new perspective and understanding. Through companionship - the sharing of bread - food and hospitality and welcome Jesus fills them and they are sent to fill others with this joy and hope.

When an opportunity arose Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury sent Chad to the Border People, those who lived on the war torn edges of Northumbria. He was sent to Mercia, which literally means 'Frontier', where he became the first bishop of Lichfield. Chad continued his way of walking, on a level with every woman, man and child, a cadence and gait that acknowledged he was on a greater journey to the Gates of Glory. He took his companions and with 7 or 8 of them established a small place of prayer in Lichfield. It was next to a well, which still bubbles up even today. Here they baptised and quenched the thirst of those who had been emptied out. 'Those who drink the water I will give them will never thirst .. the water I will give them will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' (John 4:14)

Despite this offer of living water when all our hopes have been lost we may not want to have to hope again. With this honesty we are welcomed to walk alongside Jesus as he speaks with us, gently refreshing our hearts with courage. It is in living the questions that Life is given to us: To whom shall we go? How shall we live? How shall we sing the Lord's song on these borderlands, on this frontier, this new beginning?

With our brother Chad's wisdom, we pray that we might always be prepared for death and in that way may we know Life in all His fullness as we tread the path to the gates of glory.



The Crypt at Lastingham (Rob Brown 2008)

Section 2: Always Be Ready

The materials within this section have been written by Companions and Friends as they have sat with the Chad Liturgy. The ideas are gathered here as a springboard for you as you plan your own time to spend with Chad's story. There are ideas for use individually, within a group, a gathering or a family (see the key below) . Most ideas can be easily adapted from one format to another and there are some suggestions included.

Key:



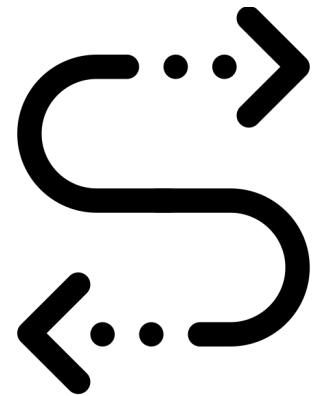
Individual



Small group or gathering



All-age/family



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Always be ready

A group reflection with suggested responses guiding us through all the themes of the Chad Liturgy



Be thirsty

My soul thirst for God, for the living God.
As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for You, O God.

Imagine a desert place with nothing around. Be still for a while. Your greatest need in a desert place is for a drink of water.

Be served

Thanks to You,
O ever-gentle Christ,
for raising me freely
from the black and darkness of last night
into the kindly light of this day.

Some go and bring in jugs of water.

Be filled

You pour life into me,
giving me speech, sense, desire,
giving me thought and action.

My fame or repute will be
just as you allow:
You mark the way before me.

Go and get a jug of water and fill each other's glass to the full, serving each other.

Be taught

As I remember saints
who have journeyed before me,
Lord, teach me the way of their simplicity:
strength with humility,
at peace in the fear of God.
May I also go wherever I am led.

Acknowledge each other almost like a toast, before drinking the water in the way we take communion.

Be clothed

The keeping of Christ about me,
the guarding of God with me
to possess me, to protect me
from drowning and danger and loss,
the gospel of the God of grace
from brow of head
to sole of foot,
the gospel of Christ,
King of salvation,
be as a mantle to my body.

Gather scarves and put them around each other as a mantle of Christ.

Be awakened

All I speak
be blessed to me, O God.
All I hear
be blessed to me, O God.
All I see
be blessed to me, O God.
All I sense
be blessed to me, O God.
All I taste
be blessed to me, O God.
Each step I take
be blessed to me, O God.

Go outside with the scarves still on and feel the elements, hear the birdsong..feel the wind...smell the air.

Be reconciled

Peace between me and my God.

Peace between me and my God.

Exchange scarves with each other saying "Peace between me and you and God"

Be led

May I tread the path to the gates of glory;
May I tread the path to the gates of glory;

On your path, O my God,
and not my own,
be all my journeying.
Rule this heart of mine
that it be only Yours.

We look for solitude.
In solitude we learn to grow and love,
to grow in love for God,
to grow in love for others.

Christ's cross would I carry,
my own struggle forget.
Christ's death would I ponder,
my own death remember.
Christ's agony would I embrace,
my love to God make warmer.
The love of Christ would I feel,
my own love waken.

All take the path together down to the chapel or return inside.

Be changed

Great God of wisdom,
Great God of mercy,
give me of Your fullness
and of your guidance
at the turning
of each pass.

Great God of shielding,
Great God of surrounding,
give me of Your holiness
and of Your peace
in the fastening of my death;
give me Your surrounding
and Your peace upon my death.

Peace between me and my God.
May I tread the path
to the gates of glory.

Rule this heart of mine
that it be only Yours.
God's path would I travel,
my own path refuse.
May I tread the path
to the gates of glory.

There in the chapel vow as much as you are able to each other for God's wisdom in your life. Give him those things in your life that cause you death. Not easy as we fight to live but if we are living on the edge of life it also means living on the edge of death in all your living.

Always ready to...

Always ready to

Be Thirsty - *My soul thirsts for God*

Idea 1: 

Put a glass jug of water and an empty glass on a table and contemplate.

A splitting headache and a mouth like sand, I rise into consciousness longing for that first sip, my body will not rest but is nagging me for the soothing simple solution that brings relief.

My soul too, aches for that relief, in silence, in words, in stillness, in actions, in God, in all the places he is.

Idea 2: 

What is my deepest longing? How long have I been yearning for this? There is an activity that helps us think about our desires in 'Landmarks: Exploration of Ignatian Spirituality' (Darton, Longman & Todd 1998) by Margaret Silf (pg 112-113). The activity involves drawing a tree, identifying our 'branch' and 'root' desires. This helps our thinking around our deeper longings.

Always ready to

Be Served - *Thanks to you ...for raising me*

Our yearning for God is the start of our willing service and yet the paradox of this yearning is that its source is because of God's movement towards us in love, God yearns for us. The consequences of yearning for God, for the pilgrim, is peace between themselves and God found in the life of journeying with Gods desires for their life paramount. Meeting God at every turn will in the end have shaped everything as our soul recognises the origins of its desire for God.

Idea 3: 

Isaiah 48: 6-7

"Now I am revealing new things to you
Things hidden and unknown to you
Created just now, this very moment.
Of these things you have heard nothing until now
So you cannot say, 'Oh yes, I knew this.'"

Sunrise is revelation and resurrection. It calls us to be prepared to see and embrace the newness, possibility and potential that is emerging in our lives, the way the world gradually opens up when the sun rises -not once and for all, but at every step along the journey.

What light is beginning to appear on your horizon? Where are you being called to embrace something new? Where are you being called to bring areas of your life into the light?

Respond by answering these questions and with prayer.



Mark 4:3-20: The Parable of the Sower

4³ "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

A reflection on The Parable of the Sower:

Every moment is alive with newness

Seeds are being scattered in your heart

Seeds of divine potential

That seek to take root in fertile ground.

In the landscape of your heart, where is the fertile soil where you are seeing new life blossom? Which fruits do you wish to share with others? Where are there seedlings that require more tending? Where are there thorns that need pruning?

Respond by answering these questions and with prayer.

Idea 2: 

A meditation - individual or led:

Imagine deep darkness... A place you do not know... You have no sense of where you are... Only the knowing of deep darkness around you... You cannot move forward or back... There is no light to guide you, no wall to hang onto... You alone can do nothing, the darkness is so deep.

If you can, place a mask over your eyes and earphones over your ears. Imagine yourself in the darkness for as long as you can bear.

Then imagine you can see a tiny light... A light that is getting brighter... Someone is coming towards you... Someone who knows the way out of the darkness... Someone who has all you need to bring you safely out of the darkness... Someone who has come to serve you...

Someone who is raising you up... bringing you out of the black darkness of last night... bringing you into the kindly light of this day.

Capture your response to this. This can be through conversation, through written word, or using art materials.

Idea 3: 

Thomas Merton is a saint whose honest words encourage us to persevere in the direction we are led, especially when we have no idea where we are going. As a community we treasure this prayer of his (which appears in Celtic Daily Prayer Book 2 as a meditation for Day 23):

My Lord God,
 I have no idea where I am going.
 I do not see the road ahead of me.
 I cannot know for certain where it will end.
 Nor do I really know myself,
 and the fact that I think that I am following Your will
 does not mean that I am actually doing so.
 But I believe that the desire to please You
 does in fact please You.
 And I hope that I have that desire
 in all that I am doing.
 And I know that if I do this,
 You will lead me by the right road
 although I may know nothing about it.
 Therefore will I trust You always,
 though I may seem to be lost
 and in the shadow of death,
 I will not fear, for You are ever with me,
 and will never leave me
 to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton

*Recall (and share) experiences and memories of an occasion when you were lost.
 Do you remember the days before satnav? Could you teach someone how to use a
 compass? What is it like to lead someone only to get both of you lost?*

Always ready to

Be Filled - *You pour life into me*

Idea 1: 

Cut a cake in to different sized pieces and hand them round individually on napkins to a group. (Recall a time when you knew you didn't have your fare share). Talk or reflect on your own about whether you feel happy that you had a small or large bit, are you grateful you had a bit of cake at all? Do you feel guilty that others have smaller bits?

Christ has made us all that we are and has given us all that we have. When we are tempted to squander it chasing earthly treasures...turn our eyes back to you, O Lord. When we are tempted to be dissatisfied with our filling or take it for granted... turn our eyes back to you, O Lord.

Idea 2:



Mary's Song in Luke 1: 47-55 It contains the beautiful line: 'He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. A dear friend and a novice in Community, Rosie Seddon once shared how this phrase had motivated her as throughout her career as a nutritionist, filling people with good things to nourish their bodies and so their souls.

Get those recipe books out and cook for someone or try a new delicious nutritional recipe for yourself. If you're meeting as a group ask people to bring their bespoke dish or put out ingredients for people to make their own 'creative' sandwiches for each other.

Consider doing something different for meals over Easter this year. Identify who is hungry in your area and who is trying to help meet their very real needs. Mother Theresa said, 'If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.' Visit a food bank, a drop in centre or a neighbour who may simply need to be filled with friendship for an hour.

Always ready to

Be Taught - *teach me the way of their simplicity*

Idea 1:



Chad and his brothers travelled lightly. They had God and a habit of prayer. What more do we need? Open my heart to be taught the way of simplicity. Give me courage to put down what I don't need - to give it to someone who does. The Friars of Bradford spend a day every month going through the stuff they have and giving away what they don't need. Maybe that would be a good practice for us to take up.

Idea 2:



The Humility of Chad. One definition of humility is to be teachable. In an article on Forbes.com, Alan Hall writes about the importance of teachability and humility in business, but stresses its importance in every endeavour, saying: "When I meet someone who is teachable they are self-effacing, they listen well, acknowledge their errors and fix them, continually seek more knowledge, and surround themselves with seasoned educators."

Being teachable alone and together:

Alone: The Clearing

Being teachable in the cells of our own hearts, alone with God. Having the courage to listen, even when it is met with silence.

Clearing, Martha Postlethwaite



Do not try to serve
the whole world
or do anything grandiose.

Instead, create
 a clearing
 in the dense forest
 of your life
 and wait there
 patiently,
 until the song
 that is yours alone to sing
 falls into your open cupped hands
 and you recognize and greet it.
 Only then will you know
 how to give yourself
 to the world
 so worthy of rescue.

What aspects of your 'dense forest' do you feel you need to let go of to 'create a clearing'? What might you need to cultivate more of?

Together: Footprints

One of the expressions of Chad's humility was that he walked barefoot. Footprints are unique, telling our own story and in our journeying, they also become waymarks, guiding and teaching those who follow.

Whose footprints have acted as waymarks on your spiritual journey when you have sought direction?

Draw around your foot and on this actual footprint record your ideas.

Always ready to

Be Clothed - *The keeping of Christ about me ...as a mantle*

Idea: 1



Try doing some dressing up - how does the costume you put on affects how you act?

Idea 2:



The keeping of Christ about me, the guarding of God with me
 to possess me, to protect me
 from drowning and danger and loss,
 the gospel of the God of grace
 from brow of head
 to sole of foot,
 the gospel of Christ,
 King of salvation,
 be as a mantle to my body.

Resources: Cloth, soft material, pashmina

Take some time to sit quietly after reading this part of the liturgy and bring to your mind where in your life you feel vulnerable and in need of protection. Which places in you are hurting? Where have you encountered something new and you don't know how to move forward? Imagine yourself being in Christ's company. Where are you, where is Christ? Are you sitting next to each other? Are you standing before Christ? Ask Christ to be your mantle and to enfold you. Then put around your body a cloth, soft material

or a pashmina. Let your body feel the material and lean into it. Speak to Christ of your need to be enfolded.

You can also do this with someone else. After a time in silence together, you can wrap the material/cloth around the other person, saying a prayer of blessing and encouragement for them.

Always ready to

Be Awakened - *All I speak ..hear ..see ..sense ..taste ..step*

Idea 1:



Creatively capture your senses today. Write a poem. Paint an image. Begin a gratitude journal.

Idea 2:



Resources: Poem by Rabindranath Tagore. A flower, either still closed, just about to bud or in bloom – any flower will do.

“No: it is not yours to open buds into blossoms.
 Shake the bud, strike it; it is beyond your power to make it blossom.
 Your touch soils it, you tear its petals to pieces and strew them in the dust.
 But no colours appear, and no perfume.
 Ah! it is not for you to open the bud into a blossom.
 He who can open the bud does it so simply.
 He gives it a glance, and the life-sap stirs through its veins.
 At his breath the flower spreads its wings and flutters in the wind.
 Colours flush out like heart-longings, the perfume betrays a sweet secret.
 He who can open the bud does it so simply.”

Rabindranath Tagore.

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

Anais Nin

Read the poem(s) a couple of times and sit with the flower you have chosen for this activity. As the poem expresses, we can't force the flower to open. God knows it is the same with our souls. God never forces or pushes us. He looks at us in love and waits. And waits. And woos us, entices us, gently. Never forces.

Sit with the flower for 10 minutes. What a miracle it is in some ways that a flower opens into blossom. The flower “knows” when the time is right and risks to expose itself.

See what happens inside you when you ponder on this. When have you

“opened up”? What did you need that you felt able to flower and bloom? What made it difficult?

Then ask yourself what happens in God when s/he looks at you.

Always ready to

Be Reconciled - *Peace between me and my God*

Idea 1: 

Peace is brought about by stopping and listening to the other's point of view and by building relationships. How are we stopping and listening to God? Build a 'Peace' Bridge - labelling the bricks/parts with the things we are using to build our relationship with our God.

Idea 2: 

Get an open top jug (one without a lid) and fill it with orange juice or squash.

Look at the jug and its contents as you consider:-

- How refreshing the contents would be to drink on a hot day.
- How much relief might be given to a weary traveller or someone lost without water if they came to you with an empty cup and you filled it with the contents.
- What would happen if you hoarded the contents and kept them for days or even weeks where the air could get at them.

Now close your eyes and when you open them imagine that the orange drink is actually liquid gold, the most valuable and rare commodity. In fact it isn't gold, it is forgiveness and peace that is poured out to us by God through His Son's sacrifice on the cross.

Consider how ready you are to take an empty cup to God and to be reconciled with him.

Also consider how willing you are to let Him fill that cup to overflowing.

Idea 3: 

Alternatively, in a family, or small group setting have three jugs (ideally see-through) and fill each one with orange juice or squash, and have at least two dozen cups or glasses. Have three volunteers, each one to carry one jug.

- Jug one - the person is to refuse to give any of the juice, they want it all for themselves.
- Jug two - the person is quite stingy, they've got a full jug but they are cautious about how much they will give out.
- Jug three - the person is happy to share what they have with whoever asks, they almost fill the cups to overflowing.

You also need one person to be 'God', This person either has a very large jug or a sign saying free forgiveness here. When the jugs are emptied they can soon be refilled!

Give 5 to 10 minutes for the other people to experience what it's like to hold an empty cup and ask for the cup to be filled and the different ways they feel depending on the response they get. Have time for discussion. Then swap roles. It is interesting to explore how people feel when roles are reversed.

Conclude with considering how God is always there, always waiting to fill our cup to overflowing as we are reconciled and at peace with Him again... and again.

Always ready to

Be Led - *May I tread the path ... on your path*

Idea 1:



Games - Play follow my leader, Simon Says, or May I?



If you have one, take your dog for a walk and consider the bond between a dog (or horse) and its owner. If there is a good relationship of trust, the animal will do almost anything for its owner!

Idea 2:



Gather some guide books, travel brochures and maps and a compass or two. Much like his brothers and friends from Lindisfarne Chad wandered in service. In his book 'The Mantle of Chad' (Tentmaker Press 2013) Robert Mountford restates 'In the spirit of Aidan, we must leave our Iona. In the spirit of Cedd and Chad, we must leave our Northumbria.' (pg 161). What is our emotional response to geographical change be that of actual location or of mindset? Use the maps and compass to talk about how we go begin to plan for a new journey. What changes are on our immediate horizon that we should begin preparing for? Are we excited? Are we fearful? Are we called?

Idea 3:



Take a walk without trying "to get anywhere" and allow your body 'to take you to new places'. Walk in a different direction from usual, take a different turn. How does that feel? What do you notice inside?



You could slightly change this experiment by asking a friend/family member to take you out for a silent walk, but without them letting you know where they will take you. Let them lead you. (Also see idea 4 below) You could also do this blindfolded around an indoor space.

What did we learn from our bodies' reactions – were we holding back or eagerly pressing into the walk. How does it feel to be led by someone else without knowing where you are heading? What happens inside you and what do you notice around you? How tight are you holding on to them?

What happens in your relationship with the person who is leading you? Are you tempted to speak and ask where they are going? Was it easy to trust, or difficult? If you have trust following someone here, what does it tell you about your trust of God, whom you don't see/feel/smell etc.? Can I leave behind those things that have become my security.

Idea 4:



Find a large open space for example an Arboretum, grounds of a country house/stately home, or municipal Park. Have a least one person with you, maximum three. The intention is that one of you will lead the others for a time and will then swap so the leader is led.

Have a Holding Stick that is held by the leader until they want to swap roles, the device is then offered to a new leader. Both/all people should be silent throughout, walking prayerfully - asking that the time, space and companionship might be blessed.

The leader goes a few paces in front, walking very slowly, allowing time for the follower(s) to take in sights, sounds and smells, perhaps also touching leaves, petals, bark etc. At every fork along the path, the leader prays for guidance as to which direction to take whilst the others continue to follow. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you and you may be astonished at the results!

Idea 5:



Resources: Song: Love is a winding road by Jason Upton (double click to listen on youtube)

Listen to the song. Which winding roads has Love taken you? Where are you now? Where have you come from? How does it feel to look forward? What are your fears? What were the blessings?

Talk to God about it!

Song: Edge of the world by Iona. (double click to listen on youtube)

*Mist that hangs like silk
Soaking in the rain
Trees that rise like ghosts
Bearing people's names
And a sea that takes me
Where I do not know
But I gladly go*

*Shrouded in the sweetest grass
I've ever known
This my earthly bed
My beloved home
But the voice that calls me
To the far away
I can only trust every word you say*

*And here I am
Out on the edge of the world
With You, With You*

*Shall I leave the print of my knees
Upon the sand
This my final prayer
In my native land*

*Shall I turn my face
Towards the shining sea
Taste the salt of tears
For those I have to leave*

Lyrics and music by Joanne Hogg, from the Iona albums 'Beyond These Shores' and 'Edge of the World Live in Europe'

Published by SGO Music, Copyright Open Sky Records www.iona.uk.com

When did the voice call you to go "where I do not know"? What was your response?

Going to the edges by Christine Strohmeier

Words won't draw me to the edges where the unspeakable begins
Only suffering and deep love will beckon me to loosen the grip on the known and
Daring to journey through the frightening shadows of my own heart

Going to the edges where I enter free fall into the abyss of endless, loving mystery
Is a terrifying undertaking
Where I must welcome strange sojourners and companions
Within and without
Questioning, shaking the ground on which I have walked before
Expanding my heart space beyond recognition
Plunging me in a wild stream of fire
What will become of me
Walking on the edges of myself
And life as I have known it

Read the poem. Which events in your life have moved you to the edges – to the edges of your own strength, of the convictions you held? When were you shaken, in your faith, in your trust in God's goodness? Who have you become because of those experiences? Where was God in it all? What helped and sustained you?

Write down what comes to mind and speak to God about it as honestly as you can.

Always ready to

Be Changed - *Great God of wisdom ... Your peace upon my death.*

Idea 1: 

Resources: A variety of seeds and/or bulbs (anything from sun flower to vegetable seeds or flower bulbs), maybe some grain, grapes, Flour, Bread, wine. A few small pots filled with soil. Any small flower.

John 12.23-25

'I believe that the mystery of the Cross is saying that *the* pattern of transformation, *the* pattern that connects, *the* life that God offers us is *always death transformed*. The only pattern is the pattern of death and resurrection. We learn to submit to it with trust, frankly, because Jesus did.

'St. Augustine called this metamorphosis, this transformative pattern that is in all things, the "Paschal Mystery". Catholics proclaim it as "the mystery of faith" at the centre of every Mass: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." Death and life are two sides of one coin, and you cannot have one without the other. It is the cycle of all life in the physical and biological universe.

'This is the perennial, eternal, constant transformative pattern. You cannot get away from it. It's like a spiral: each time you make the surrender, each time you trust the dying, your faith is led to a deeper level. The mystics and the great saints were those who had learned to trust and allow this pattern.

'I think this is Jesus' big message: that there is something essential that you only know by dying – to whom you think you are! You really don't know what life is until you know what death is.'

Excerpt from 'Dying, We Need It for Life' and 'The Spirituality of Imperfection' both transcribed talks from Richard Rohr on Transformation: Collected Talks: Volume One. © Franciscan Media. Used with permission.

Gateway to Silence: I lose my life to find Life.



Fullness can only come out of emptiness, and new life can only come out of a dying. Take the seeds, grain and the grapes and put them on one side of a table. Pour out some flour in the middle, and lay a cross in it (or mark it with your finger in the flour). You can maybe also put the small pots with soil around the cross. On the other side put bread, wine and the flowers.

- Take time to simply sit with this focal point, gazing on it. How does it speak to you of the physical cycle of life and death? What do you feel drawn to look at? What thoughts, memories and emotions do you notice within you?
- In your mind go through the journey of a grain: First, it is sown into the soil. It dies into the ground, surrounded by darkness, its shell being broken up. It then grows into a grain crop. After it is harvested, it can be milled for flour – being crushed once again. The flour, mixed with other ingredients and baked in heat, eventually is turned into bread. It then nourishes our bodies. The grain changes its appearance several times on this journey, yet it maintains its essential being and through its dying brings life, enables us to live. Where have you undergone this journey of transformation in your life? Where can you see the pattern of "Life is death transformed"?
- Take a bite of the bread, have a sip of the wine. As you do this, let come to your mind situations where others gave of themselves so that you could receive and have life. Remember Christ, who commanded us to eat his body and drink his blood so that we may have life. How can this "remembering" help you in those places in your life where you are experiencing a dying but can't see the new life yet?
- Where have you experienced loss? Invite God into those experiences. Speak to God about your fears and where you struggle to trust. Remember that Christ on the cross struggled, too.
- At the end of this time, you could sow the seeds into the pots. All you can do now is to water it appropriately, WAIT and TRUST the process. Let this speak to you whenever you water the pot.
- Who do you know is in a time of waiting and might need encouragement from you? How could you do this practically?

Music Resources

Some ideas for songs which people may know and like to use with this material:

- As the deer pants, Martin Nystrom
- May the mind of Christ my saviour, Kate B Wilkinson - lovely newer tune by Mark Peterson
- Jesus Christ is waiting, John Bell and Graham Maule
- Father hear the prayer we offer, Love Maria Willis
- When I needed a neighbour, Sydney Carter
- Don't let my love grow cold, Brian Doerkson
- Lord of all hopefulness, Jan Struther
- Brother, sister, Richard Gillard
- My prayer for you, J Fowler

Songs to listen to, both by Second Chapter of Acts:

- Going Home - longing for home
- Psalm 63 - thirsting for God

Chad's Tread:



Listen to Andy and Anna's recording of 'Chad's Tread' and the story that inspired it. Try and stamp along with them!

(You will find 'Chad's Tread' [here](#), along with written music and an audio file.)

'Chad's Tread' - a story and a song.

Chad was returning to Holy Island (Lindisfarne) bringing with him friends who were visiting for the first time. Soon after setting foot on these island the 'new comers' were introduced to some locals. These weren't just ordinary inhabitants though. They were people who had deep roots in the place and who sought to follow Christ by walking in the footsteps of others who had gone before them. They willingly shared their wisdom and rhythm of life with Chad's friends.

This Chad, Chad Hollowell was an American, visiting the UK in 2017 with colleagues from different countries serving United World Mission in leadership and spiritual formation. So the story goes that on a visit three years earlier when Andy and Anna Raine (did you recognise them from the description above?) met with Chad and others of his friends, Andy asked if he had heard of his namesake, Chad of the 7th century who grew into adulthood on Lindisfarne, disciplesd by Aidan. And Chad hadn't heard of Chad until then. He was just here to seek God, and to learn what he could about Celtic perspectives on spiritual formation. So, when Andy looked at the calendar and realising that on this particular day Chad would be bringing his three colleagues Ron, Nicole and Paul to the island, he asked Anna if she would sing for them. 'What shall I sing?' asked Anna. Andy hesitated. 'Well,' he said, 'ideally you'd be able to sing the recurring refrain from the Chad Liturgy.' 'Do I even know that?' Anna asked. 'We know the words, well enough, but of course they don't even have a tune - as yet...' So Anna spent time that day crafting words from the Chad liturgy into a melody, which she then taught Andy. They called it 'Chad's Tread' and sang it that day for Chad and his friends. It'll be recorded properly one day, but just so we can learn it they sang it onto the phone, and here it is:

<https://soundcloud.com/edward-pillar/chads-tread>

Thank you, Anna and Andy, and Chad, and Chad!

Chad's Tread

Anna Raine

A
May I tread the path to the gates of Glo - ry. May I

B
Peace be - tween me and my God.

4
A
tread the path to the gates of Glo - - ry. May I

B
Peace be - tween me and my God.

7
A
tread the path to the gates of Glo - ry, Glo - ry.

B
Peace be - tween me and my God, my God.

Always Be Ready - Dance - Individual or Group

You / mark the way before me.

Raise both arms straight in front (palms to back) / slowly lower to half way in front

As I remember saints who have journeyed before me,

Step to right, whilst R arm sweeps across body to lower left, up and over to right, repeat 2 or 3 times

Lord, / teach me the way of their simplicity:

R arm straight up / L hand to heart, out to front and spread left

Strength / with humility,

Fists clenched, arms at shoulder height / lower both and bow head or kneel

at peace in the fear of God.

cross arms over chest, L then R

May I also / go / wherever I am led.

Unfold arms and look up / R stamp forward / drop arms, steps to starting point, chest leading

All I speak / be blessed to me, O God.

Hands to mouth and out to front / bring hands to heart, rolling over each other

All I hear / be blessed to me, O God.

Hands to ears / bring hands to heart, rolling over each other

All I see / be blessed to me, O God.

Hands over eyes and open / bring hands to heart, rolling over each other

All I sense / be blessed to me, O God.

Hands (palms out) move out and up / bring hands to heart, rolling over each other

All I taste / be blessed to me, O God.

Hands sideways to mouth / bring hands down to heart, rolling over each other

Each step I take / be blessed to me, O God.

R step, L step, hands showing / bring hands up to heart, rolling over each other

Peace / between me / and my God.

Slowly bring hands in from side / meet in praying hands / slowly up and surge out until framing face of God

May I tread the path to the gates of glory.

Slowly take steps diagonally forwards / half turn to front, arms sweep up and over

Rule this heart of mine / that it be only Yours.

Cross from head to abdomen, shoulder to shoulder / hold heart between both hands, raise and open hands out to offer up

God's path would I travel, / my own path refuse.

Turn and stumble to back / put front hand behind, palm rejecting, head forward

May I tread the path to the gates of glory.

Quickly take steps diagonally forwards / half turn to front, arms sweep up and over

Music for the dance: This was written especially for this Easter by Ingrid Cumming. She suggests using Nendrum from Nick and Anita's CD (Heartcry: Haven) which fits well. Another possibility is Vivaldi's Four Seasons - second movement of Spring (Largo) or second movement of Winter (Largo). These are shorter but could possibly be played twice or one followed by the other.

Section 3: The Chad Challenge

Don't judge someone until you've walked a mile in their moccasins. Here are three ideas for you to help you walk around in other people's shoes for a while.

1) The Chad Challenge

These activities would be suitable - and fun- for adults and children to share together.



Within our families and our extended family relationships to help our children cope with change, to build resilience in them, the important factors are:

1. Strong relationships with parents/carers
2. Family routines/rituals
3. Enough space & time to mourn before moving on

Chad on his wanderings as a student learning from Aidan, seeking new mentors in Ireland and then mentoring others as he travelled with his small group of companions their pattern and rhythms of life would have continued. They were always moving on but retained:

1. Strong relationship with God and the community of each other.
2. Daily prayer
3. The importance of being Alone with God albeit in an internal prayer cell 'on the road'.

These things gave them inbuilt resilience, enabling them to cope with constant change. This was as much for Chad as for his disciples.

What marked out these particular monks was their tonsure and the way they travelled. Travelling this way was a social sign of low status. It was perplexing, annoying and embarrassing for others, especially if like Chad, you were keeping your feet on the ground despite having bishop status.

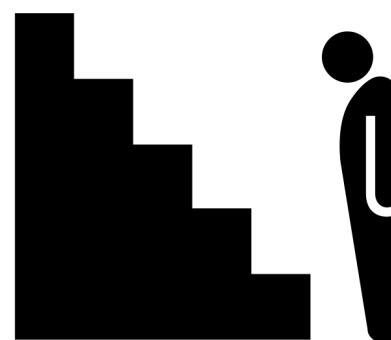
As we are honoured with positions of status, achievement or wealth, do we make an effort to keep our feet on the ground, to keep in touch with He who has called us to follow Him? We may be of wealth or status - most of us are - if we live in the western civilised world we are in the top 1% world's wealthiest. What marks us out as followers of Jesus? Actions speak louder than words. How then should we live? If Chad speaks to us about one thing, maybe it is this - what is the simplicity of our homes and how do we travel?

Challenge 1:

Cut your hair in the style of the Celtic and Northumbrian monks. ONLY JOKING!!!

Challenge 2:

Walk barefoot for a day! Or for an afternoon. Journal your experience. Do you get some funny looks / comments? What do you feel? How do you experience your day differently?



Created by Luis Prado
from Noun Project

Challenge 3:

Stand in another shoes. Maybe you have to walk awhile in their shoes. Maybe that is why Chad walked rather than riding on a horse - to help him empathise with the poor around him. Can we walk in another shoes? Try offering to swap places with a carer for a day, sit in an A&E department through a night, sit on your high street for a day. What do you see, say, hear or smell? What does God see? How does he move your heart?

Challenge 4:

Listen Andy and Anna's recording of 'Chad's Tread' and the story that inspired it. Try and stamp along with them!

(YOU WILL FIND 'CHAD'S TREAD' [HERE](#) ALONG WITH WRITTEN MUSIC AND AN AUDIO FILE.)

Challenge 5:

Are we up for stepping out, taking risks, walking with people on the edges, being intentionally vulnerable and open to change?

Play it out. Go to the park, spin on a roundabout and walk 20 paces in which ever direction you end up facing. Do you have to climb a fence or walk through a ditch! Try and do the monkey bars, thinking about the fact that you have to let go of something to move forward. Take the plunge on a zip wire - hold tight, it might be a bumpy ride!

Thinking about what we hang onto (sky hooks) or what holds us up (pillars) in life. What happens when our world wobbles? We can use drawing or pillars of stacking bricks or make a mobile to create sky hooks and then wobble the pillars or cut strings of the mobile as we talk about how that leaves us feeling.

Setting out on a journey with unknown destination - throw a toy parachute or paper aeroplane off a church tower or upstairs window and see where the wind takes it.

Experiencing change - ask a group of people to fold their arms and then pause until they have all done so and are waiting and then ask them to fold their arms the other way. It is hard doing the unfamiliar. Or try as a family, sit in different places round the meal table or choose a different seat in church Experience the unfamiliar perspective.

Collecting perspectives. One of the many benefits of a holiday is stepping out of your ordinary day-to-day routines and looking at your life from a different perspective. Journeying, transition and change in life gives a wonderful opportunity to gather other perspectives (only God knows all the perspectives, as he knows each one of us) but as we go through life we can increasingly see more through His eyes if we gather perspectives and change our seat from time to time. The Celtic Saints travelled much, gathering perspectives and coping with change by holding only a few things dear. Try gathering some perspectives of a group / people / place. Draw or photograph them from different sides, from low down or high up. If you are meeting as a group, why not start by sending everyone off to get a different picture of the meeting circle - is there a balcony, or an outside view or the view from the kitchen or under a chair?!

Extras:

Find a recipe for cheese straws ...but shape them with a cookie cutter (or cardboard template) into feet before baking. Then you can serve Cheesy Feet. Smelly, especially if you use Stilton, but tasty!

Have categories of things across a page with a total at the end.

In those categories you can have all sorts of things: girls names, boys names, fruit or veg, things in the sky, things in the sea, flowers, periodic table elements, a character from the bible, a celebrity, a name of a city, a country, etc etc.

Then have to pick a letter from the alphabet and go through those categories writing down all those things beginning with that letter and the first person to fill in all the categories shouts stop and everyone else has to stop. All go through them and if you have got the same answer as someone else you get 1 point and if you have picked something different from everybody else you get 2 points. Then put the points in the little section at the end.

Well, you could always use the letters from "Saint Chad" to do the categories.

Examples

Girls name- Carol

Boys name-Carl

Vegetable- carrot

Sky things - comet

Etc. etc.

Then do the same with H then A then D and then S, A, I, N, T.

2) Your feet - Who are your Border People?

Lucy Joy Jackson writes and applies her creativity to her experiences of moving to a new area with her husband Andrew.

These activities would suit a group of any age and with a little adaptation it would be a beautiful personal piece of creativity too.

One house. One street. One town.

Looking out of our window on the neighbourhood we now called home, newly married, full of enthusiasm, we felt a call to seek out those on the margins – the border people in our community. We didn't have to look far. Our little street was a microcosm of those on the edges of society.



Opposite, a family of asylum seekers from Afghanistan; fearful parents, wide-eyed children; having to adjust to a culture as strange and foreign as the language they found themselves needing to speak.

Next door to the Afghans were the brothers caught up in drug dealing. Endlessly hosting fleeting guests. Late night door knocks, screeching brakes, revving engines. Handshakes and exchanges.

To our left, the single mum, trying to provide the very best for her two children on a life of benefits.

To our right, the pensioner living alone, family far away, never any visitors, always ready for a chat on the doorstep.

And to the right again, the couple addicted to heroin and alcohol. Consumed by pain and brokenness; broken windows and black eyes. Their moments of clarity exchanged for the needle and a moment's escape.

These were our border people, pushed out to the edges.

Who are those around you that are on the borders?

Activity 1:

Who are the border people, the people on the margins that God's given you a special connection with?

Who are you choosing to do life alongside?

Is God revealing anyone else He'd like you to come alongside?

(verses here to dot around the room/different people to read out?)

Matthew 9 v 9 Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' [a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

James 1 v 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress

Deuteronomy 10 v 18-19 He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners

Galatians 5 v 14

14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

Reflect on the people that God is putting on your heart– take some time naming them on a heart or hand (a simple cut out heart or hand shape on paper for people to take away/or stick on a large piece of paper together?)

Activity 2:

Saint Chad positioned himself intentionally alongside the people God had called him to. And showed an outward expression of his heart towards the people he walked with by going barefoot.

How are we choosing to walk with those Jesus is calling us to?

St Chad walked barefoot in humility to God, vulnerability to God and to others and in connection to those around him.

Sometimes we need to do something physical that engages our whole selves in an expression of the overflow of what's in our hearts. And yet sometimes we need to do a physical action that engages our whole selves with what God is saying to us before we 'feel' it, as a response, an Amen to the call before we step into it.

Whether we know exactly what our call to those on the borders is, or we are still to find out, we are going to do a physical response, an Amen to the call of God, like Chad, we are going to take off our shoes. Stand in the paint in the middle of the fabric and walk a line outwards.

Let each step be a prayer, a walk of humility, a connection between Jesus and your heart in his call on your life to go out from the centre, from the well, to the borders. Let each step be an Amen to the 'barefoot' vulnerability Jesus is calling you to have with your border people.

(Idea is to have a large square of fabric on the floor- quite thick calico or canvas? Or a cotton sheet with plastic underneath. Size 3mx3m? or 4mx4m?

3 x Decorators trays full of paint near the centre, could be different colours? Bowls of warm soapy water and towels at the edges. Hopefully it is powerful and looks quite beautiful at the end?! A large prophetic visual of what we hope to be as a community alone and together, filling up and dispersing out)

3) Take 10 - How would you choose?

Chad, being willing to change and go upon God's call, needed to travel lightly. The Chad liturgy speaks of being taught the way of simplicity. Here is an experience of identification with refugees, and at the same time, a sense of what it is to choose simplicity.

For a group activity someone could read the story and directions (given in italics).

This is a story of having to leave the place where you have been settled for some time, to go to an unknown place or suffer certain death. Perhaps a people-smuggler has agreed to guide you out of your country on a safe, but risky route.

You are allowed to pack ten items, and the truck will arrive to pick you up in one hour.

Have people make a list of the 10 items they would take with them.

The truck comes and picks you up and then you travel by night, through back alleys, and dirt roads, finally leaving the city, and going into the country. You reach a check-point where the guards insist on being paid off by all the passengers in the truck.

You must choose one of your ten items to leave with the guard. Choose which one you will leave behind.

As you come near the border, the smuggler tells you that you must walk over the frontier to cross the border. You must carry your belongings, and you find that they are too heavy to carry while scrambling over very rough terrain.

You need your hands free to climb and use hand holds going over and down the other side of the ridge that forms the border. What will you leave behind?

You scramble up rocks and scree to the top of the ridge. It is dark, and the footholds are treacherous. You then descend a rope ladder on the other side of the ridge, and walk for an hour in the dark, silently so as not to be heard. You come to a river, where there is a boat, which will take you across to the other side. As you all get on the boat, it sinks deeper into the water, and it is evident that it will not carry you and all your luggage.

Everyone is called upon to leave one thing on the shore, to lighten the load. What will you leave behind?

The boat barely floats, and the river is high, the boat is difficult to steer, and those travelling with you are told to take the oars. It is dark, and cold, and the river is rough, and loud, with spray getting you wet. Just as you are within sight of the shore, the boat dives into a particularly deep eddy and begins to take on water - you all use whatever you have to bail, and finally, you spill over the side, and wade to dry land. It is cold, and you are wet. You huddle together for some hours waiting for the next mode of transport to arrive. Just as dawn breaks, a mule train comes along the path by the river. You are to load your belongings on the mules, and walk alongside them across country, avoiding the next check point. You are promised that you will be fed at the next stop. The collective weight of your belongings is too much for the half starved animals, and you are asked to leave behind something else to lighten the load.

After hours of walking, ducking into fields of corn to hide from passing soldiers, you come to a barn, where you are welcomed in, and invited to rest. You are given some thin soup and water, and urged to sleep. A bus will be coming to take you to safety from there. You sleep fitfully, concerned for others in your group

who are struggling to keep up, with the emotional toll of the journey, or just suffering from intense fatigue and resulting irritability.

The bus arrives late in the day and you file on, ready for the bumpy ride to the refugee camp you will call home for some time, until you are accepted into a hosting country somewhere. Before you arrive at the camp however, a band of bandits stops the bus, and at gun point, orders you to each buy your freedom by giving one of your treasured possessions.

Rattled, you carry on your journey - just before the bus arrives at the camp, the bus driver stops the bus, and tells you about his starving family, and how they are struggling to make ends meet. He will only be paid for this service to you, if you will give him something - what will you do? Will you give him something else from your possessions, if they are all you have?

Once in the camp, you find yourself assigned to a space, and provided with the barest necessities, perhaps a tent to cover you and your family - and the potential of one meal per day - you find there is an active black market happening in the camp in order to obtain more food. What would you give in order to have a little extra food for your child, or other family members?

Finally, you meet with a worker responsible for helping you obtain papers to travel to a new country for resettlement, and discover that you must pay for a visa. What do you have left that you can offer in exchange for money? What are you willing to do in order to obtain the visa?

Some Extra Resources:

Benjamin Zephaniah's poem 'We Refugees':

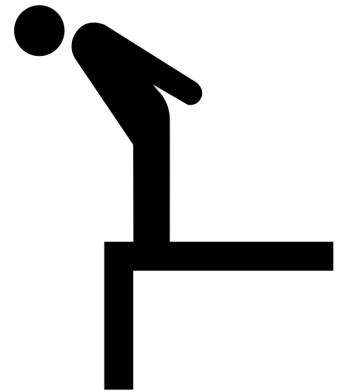
https://benjaminzephaniah.com/rhymin/we-refugees/?doing_wp_cron=1520077854.6364231109619140625000

Warsaw Shire reading her poem 'Home':

<https://youtu.be/nl9D92Xiygo>

Section 4: On the Edge

David Pott, Keith Judson, Ernie Whalley and Sarah Burton offer their stories of walking with others 'On the Edge'. David and Keith draw from their experiences of walking alongside people preparing for death and Ernie of walking with asylum seekers and refugees in Wakefield. Sarah is a writer and keen observer of how we interact with our surroundings and so hear God. Their stories give insight as to how we are changed as we walk with others in unfamiliar places.



Created by Luis Prado
from Noun Project

David Pott, a clear and compassionate guide, encourages us to heed Chad's call to always be ready for death, 'for death may call for us at any time'. David is companion in the Northumbria Community and wrote 'Journeying Home: Thoughts on Dying Well' for the community in 2007.

There are personal exercises and activities included which could be used in a group setting with some sensitive adaptation.

We read in the introduction to the Chad liturgy that he urged his followers to always be prepared for death, 'for death may call us at any time.' In the liturgy itself there are several reminders of death and the whole direction of it is along 'the path to the gates of glory.'

Our culture on the whole avoids speaking or thinking about death. Some have said that in the past, such as Victorian times, sex was the obscenity that people were embarrassed to talk about, but now it is death that is our obscenity. How often have you heard a sermon on the topic of death? Have you been prepared in any way for your own death?

We will explore this challenging subject by looking to start with at Chad's death and then considering some who have died more recently as examples for us to reflect on.

Chad's Death¹

The account of Chad's death occupies considerably more space in Bede's account than all the rest of Chad's ministry in Northumbria and Mercia together.

Bede tells us that Chad's servant and friend Owin was working outside the oratory at Lichfield. Inside, Chad studied alone because the other monks were at worship in the church. Suddenly Owin heard the sound of joyful singing, coming from heaven, at first to the south-east, but gradually coming closer until it filled the roof of the oratory itself. Then there was silence for half an hour, followed by the same singing going back the way it had come. Owin at first did nothing, but about an hour later Chad called him in and told him to fetch the seven brothers from the church. Chad gave his final address to the brothers, urging them to keep the monastic discipline they had learnt. Only after this did he tell them that he knew his own death was near, speaking of

¹ some of this section is adapted from wikipedia

death as "that friendly guest who is used to visiting the brethren". He asked them to pray, then blessed and dismissed them. The brothers left, sad and downcast.

Owin returned a little later and saw Chad privately. He asked about the singing. Chad told him that he must keep it to himself for the time being: angels had come to call him to his heavenly reward, and in seven days they would return to fetch him. So it was that Chad weakened and died after seven days – on 2 March, which remains his feast day. Bede writes that: "he had always looked forward to this day – or rather his mind had always been on the Day of the Lord".

St Chad was probably only about 38 when he died. He had encouraged his followers to be ready for death and he led by example when he died a good death.

The Death of Our Loved Ones

I had the good fortune to learn much from the good deaths both my parents died and after my mother's death, I wrote down some of the reasons this was so:

- Mum was so much at peace with everyone. There were no 'skeletons in the cupboard', no unresolved issues. I think that guilt often compounds the grieving process and this is usually because of unresolved issues.
- Mum did not cling on to life. She was ready to go home. So many people are not ready to die and when that is the case, you feel more pain for them.
- Similarly we were not clinging on to her and saying 'Please don't leave us.' We released her and that was important both for her and for us.
- Our unity in Christ was not severed by death. This means that though she parted from us physically, we do not feel she is far from us. I think this is a very fundamental issue, because grasping this reduces the sense of personal loss which is for many at the heart of grief.
- The passage that my brother Tim read at the funeral includes those words 'Do not grieve as those who have no hope.' The realities of faith are what sustain us. Surely grief is more pronounced for those who have no hope or an uncertain hope. The certain hope of resurrection is a glorious thing of unsurpassable comfort and joy.
- I believe that thinking about our own death and the death of our loved ones beforehand is a healthy thing. If it was done frequently and in a morbid fashion, it could be damaging, but I am glad that I imagined my mother's death and thought about how I would react. This was a good death and it involved thoughtful preparation. A Biblical basis for this is Psalm 90:12 'Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.' or Psalm 39:4 'Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.'
- Another way of understanding Psalm 39:4 is that it is about asking God to show us what is the ultimate purpose of our lives. If a person's life has made little sense and has lacked purpose, you feel so sad – there is more cause for grief. My mother fulfilled the purpose for which she came to this earth and that is a cause of great contentment for me. I am also reminded of the way the Celtic saints are remembered on the anniversary of their death, not of their birth,

because that is the real cause for celebration – the completion of a life lived to God’s glory that has ended well! So I would rather remember July 27th than her birthday on October 16th!

In the Community, we have recently experienced the death of a very precious person, Lorna Fisher. Her Service of Thanksgiving at the Salvation Army was a deeply moving experience for all of us fortunate enough to be there and surely it would be good to remember our wonderful St Lorna on the anniversary of the day she passed through the gates of glory - December 30th 2017.

Here is a poem of keening for St Columba, by Blind Dallan Forgaill, Chief Poet of Ireland that certainly fits for people like Lorna and my parents:

*This is not a little story, this is not the story of fools.
 Good their deaths: they went to God: angels met them.
 They knew the way they were going.
 Healers of hearts, satisfiers of guests
 Shelters for the strangers, their soul’s light,
 Perfect sages who believed Christ.
 Nor went any from this world who more steadfastly bore the cross.
 IT IS HIGH THEIR DEATHS WERE...*

Our Own Death - our personal response

Suggestion 1:

“My own death remember.” This perhaps seems a strange phrase to us, because we usually think of remembering what has happened to us in the past. This phrase is an encouragement for us at times to step out of time- boundedness and and reflect on our life and death as if it had already taken place.

Chad, like many other Celtic saints, was given notice that he was going to die. Imagine that like Chad, you have been given notice that you are going to die in a week’s time.

Explore your feelings about this.

- Who are the people you most want to see?
- What do you want to say to them?
- Are there any things you want to sort out?
- What are your feelings towards God about this situation?

After spending some time with this reflection, ask if any of the things that have come to light need action from you now rather than later. Spend some further time giving thanks to God for your life and commit yourself afresh to traveling on along God’s path to the gates of glory.

(Another possible exercise here could be writing your own obituary.)

Suggestion 2:

Here is the Irish prayer that inspired some of the Chad liturgy:

*Bright King of Friday and Father Almighty,
Make a roof for me by night and guard me by day.
If you are to bring me along the path
I have never been before,
Make it a pathway for me to the life of glory.*

1. Think about the phrase 'bright King of Friday.' What does it convey to you as you reflect on Christ's passion?
2. Reflect on the images of the roof and the guard and relate them to anything you might be anxious about in your life at this time.

None of us have been on the path that begins with the next second after you read this!

Suggestion 3:

A Biblical Meditation on Psalm 49

This is not a very well known Psalm and it is unlikely that you have heard a sermon on it because it is about death. St Chad, like the other monks of his time would have known it and meditated on it as they learnt and recited all the Psalms by heart! Here are a few ideas to help you follow in Chad's footsteps as you read and meditate on this psalm...

- Note that this is a psalm for absolutely everyone in the world, so that includes you and me! This psalm is not so much about praise or prayer, it is more of a teaching psalm and rather similar to the book of Proverbs. Set your heart to expect to gain wisdom and understanding through this psalm.
- This is still very much a psalm, so would have been teaching conveyed through music. If you find it helpful to meditate on this psalm in this way, here are two modern versions
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dxr6pl2yCv0>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAy6_zvwCiQ
- Much of the psalm is about the utter futility of living for wealth, status and fame in the light of the certainty of death. In the context of the consumer society in which we live, what responses and attitudes does the psalmist encourage us to have to guard us against following the crowd?
- The phrase in verse 14 "death will be their shepherd" is a very vivid one. Imagine that picture in your mind and then compare it with the very different images conveyed by Psalm 23 and John 10:1-17.
- The very similar verses 12 and 20 are conclusions drawn from the previous sections. Is this the final word for us? What difference do scriptures like John 3:16 and 2 Peter 3:9 make?
- Verse 15 is the reason that this psalm has been called "the high-water mark of Old Testament faith in a future life." (Alexander Maclaren) Take time meditating on the phrase "He will take me

to Himself” by repeating the phrase and stressing one word each time, so starting with “**He** will take me to Himself” and finishing with “He will take me to **Himself**.”

Keith Judson is a companion in the Northumbria Community and works as a chaplain at two hospices in Worcestershire, ever-gentle as he accompanies women and men facing life-limiting illness. He has gathered these resources from his creativity and experiences. They are offered in two themes, ‘Find Your Song’ and ‘Peace Be With You’. These may be valuable treasures as you accompany others on their last journey.

(See also the Rites of Passage section in CDP Book 1 for prayers for those walking in the shadow of death and with bereavement and grief.)

Meditation 1: Find your song

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted’ and ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’. Matthew 5: 3-10 and John 20: 24-29

Frederick Buechner writes:

Listen to your life.
See it for the fathomless mystery that it is.
In the boredom and pain of it
no less than in the excitement and gladness:
touch, taste, smell your way
to the holy and hidden heart of it
because in the last analysis
all moments are key moments,
and life itself is grace.

Frederick Buechner

Meditation for Day 21 in Celtic Daily Prayer Book Two

Inspired by the monastic ideal of living fully in the present, with no regret about the past or fear of the future Keith wrote this song: ‘Say no more’ which you can find here <https://youtu.be/s-0Rj6PTmrg>

Say no more for now
In the time allowed
No need to wonder how
We’ll meet again
Hold my hand once more
That’s what hands are for
When your heart is sore
And filled with pain

(Chorus)

May you live with no regret
At yesterday’s mistakes and sorrow
Nor be afraid of what tomorrow brings
May love hold you through today
Banish fears the night throws at you
I pray you’ll find your song and that you’ll sing

That you'll sing

Hear the music play
 See the light of day
 Though it's dark and may
 Be silent here
 Taste the love we share
 Touch and know I care
 Breathe the morning air
 So fresh and clear

I don't have answers to your questions
 To the why and when and where
 For the aching and the longing
 Just my promise to be there

From the album 'Find Your Song'. All sale proceeds for Primrose Hospice, Bromsgrove. See <http://www.keithjudson.co.uk> for more details.

This mindfulness-style meditation could be used individually or in a small group. Alternatively take the principles of stillness whilst listening again to Keith's song, 'Say No More'.

Sit comfortably but maintain an upright, dignified posture.

Have your feet flat on the floor with your legs uncrossed.

Place your hands in your lap, open with palms upward.

1. Take a deep breath and release it. Say to yourself: "I am alive!" (Repeat)
2. Take another deep breath, hold it for a moment and release it slowly. Say to yourself: "I am living here and now!" (Repeat)
3. Take a third deep breath, hold it for a moment and release it slowly. Say to yourself: "I'm grateful for the gift of life!" (Repeat)

Now simply focus your attention on your breathing, just as it is, not trying to control it in any way but bringing your awareness to the breath as it enters and leaves your body.

In your mind's eye, see yourself in the place (e.g. room) you are seated – safe, quiet, with friends. It's good to be here! (Other people, other lives, touched here and now, in these moments by the life you have been given – just as your life is touched by theirs.)

Bring your awareness once again to your breathing.

In your mind's eye, see yourself within the larger space (e.g. workplace, community) – going about your work, the conversations, actions and interactions. It's good to be here! (Other people, other lives, touched here today by the life you have been given – just as your life is touched by theirs.)

Bring your awareness once again to your breathing.

Repeat steps 1-3 above once each and allow some moments of quiet before opening your eyes and moving on.

Meditation 2: Peace be with you

Denise Inge was a dear friend of Keith's. Here are some of her own insights as she approached death.

Author, academic and adventurer, Denise Inge had crossed the Sahara, charmed snakes in Marrakech and cycled the Adirondack mountains before embarking on her final, interior journey.

Disturbed by an exploration of the crypt under her house, Denise decide to face her fears by visiting four famous charnel houses in Europe. Her reflections were more or less complete when diagnosed with an inoperable sarcoma in 2013.

Shortly before she died, Denise wrote: “The cancer has not made life more precious – that would make it seem like something fragile to lock away in the cupboard. No, it has made it more delicious.”

Denise died on Easter Day 2014 and the following quotation from her book, published posthumously, was read at her funeral in Worcester Cathedral.

‘I do not know how much more time I have to live my questions out, but I am glad I started asking them even before the cancer came for, although they cannot be rushed, these are the questions that must not be avoided. This is true whether or not you have been diagnosed with a frightening disease. The questions these charnel houses asked of me stir me to life-enriching responses. Are the broken parts of your deep self being healed? Get rid of the bitternesses. Mend the bridges. Seek and receive forgiveness. Let yourself be loved. Have you found a lasting hope? Anchor yourself in the eternal and abiding (for me this is God). Feed yourself something stronger than optimism. You are in a constant state of growth and transition, so let change transform you. What are the things for which you will be remembered? Cut the crap in your life. Do the things that matter. Find and exercise your gifts. Are you on a path of true humility? Submit to a truth that is bigger than yourself. Become part of it. Let it be your story. What I have been surprised to discover, as these questions chase and wash over me, is that preparing to live and preparing to die are in the end the same thing.’

Denise Inge, *A Tour of Bones*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

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Our Answers:

As we find our own responses to Denise’s questions read these words of Jesus again: ‘Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also’ Matthew 6: 19-21, 25-27, 33 and John 20: 19-21

Dawna Markova reminds us:

I will not die an unlived life,
 I will not live in fear
 of falling or catching fire.
 I choose to inhabit my days,
 to allow my living to open me,
 to make me less afraid,
 more accessible,
 to loosen my heart
 until it becomes a wing,
 a torch, a promise.

Dawna Markova

Meditation for Day 18 in Celtic Daily Prayer Book Two

Originally recorded on the album 'Listen to the peace' (1978), here is the song 'Peace be with you' by Adrian Snell. (The final verse is also used as a blessing on his best-known work 'The Passion' (1980)):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGb5NniVFdw>

Turning the rags and the bones of life
 Lifting each piece to the cold dawn light
 Under the dust found the final word
 "Peace be with you"

Here as the light slowly turns to gold
 Here as I wait the peace unfolds
 Here at the end of all hope the word speaks
 "Peace be with you"

All my store had fallen to rust and to thieves
 Nothing remained I could save
 At the end of self I found a new world
 Complete in Jesus the Lord

He said "Life so full I give to you
 As the Father sends me so I send you
 Spread my light throughout all life
 "Peace be with you"

For more of Adrian's music see: <https://www.adrian-snell.com>

Ernie Whalley is one of our Community Visitors². We contacted Ernie to ask him about the opportunities he has to serve in his locality. We are grateful for the way the stories he shared resonate with Chad's call to the Borderlands, to Mercia. Join us in praying for Ernie and those who serve alongside him.

"At New North Road Baptist Church in Huddersfield, where I am a member, we have the Reach project for asylum seekers and refugees- a weekly drop in for support, hot drinks and hot meal with the teaching of English. We get about 30 to 40 folk coming each week with many challenging stories. It is open to all, from any faith or none. Some come on Sundays - indeed about a quarter of the congregation are refugees and asylum seekers. It does feel like a border land. Indeed many have struggled to get here from terrible war torn situations and have crossed many borders to arrive here. We seek to welcome them in the name of Christ. We write to the courts and, when we get to know them, we will accompany them to court and speak up for them. At the moment we have a lot of friends from Iran, who would face persecution and possible death if they returned as evangelical Christians.

"It does feel on the borders - people on the streets are becoming more hostile because of the current atmosphere*. We have to dig deep because these folk will often move on if they are granted leave to remain. We are trying to make worship services more inclusive for those with little English.

"We have in our local Council - Kirklees - a multi agency group for asylum seekers and refugees with participants from council, health, housing, education , the Job Centre Plus and the various voluntary groups. I chair this. We tackle issues in a coordinated way eg mental health, poor housing, accessing benefits, law and order etc.

"I am also part of the transitional group to set up the Blackley Centre - a place for Peace, Mediation, and inter faith - on the edge of Huddersfield. This is also a borderland activity on the border of Huddersfield."

* (The church is 8 miles from where Jo Cox MP was murdered in June 2016.)

² Community Visitors represent the wider wisdom of the Church and journey with us to advise, celebrate and lament. As 'critical friends' they seek to be a mirror to the Community's life and thereby to both affirm and question as seems helpful.

Ernie's heart:

Where's God for those on the margins? There is a Border Force to get into our countries and then there are many invisible borders within our countries of which most of us are oblivious: language barriers, employment restrictions, housing policies and procedures, physical and mental healthcare access, isolation, prejudice . As well as responding personally, Ernie's heart is to enable others to walk those borderlands with actions that say 'We, in the name of Christ, are welcoming you'.

Ernie's heart for the disadvantaged is also his prayer:

To walk with those trapped on the invisible borderlands within our countries. To walk with men like Dalir (not his real name, this pseudonym means 'Brave') an Iranian asylum seeker, who experiences elation one week, at finally being granted leave to remain in the UK although he is yet to face the high risk of subsequently falling into depression because he will now effectively be homeless again waiting to be allocated housing by the council.

To take up the issues of housing policy and the need for prompter provision of English Language lessons so that those granted leave to remain are already equipped and ready for employment immediately.

To be an effective go-between, a mediator, a bridge-builder. To challenge the myths in our society within the hostile atmosphere of our political discussions

To see individuals flourish, grow and thrive as human beings.

To give sanctuary and advice that might keep them safe and 'streetwise' in the face of antagonism and hostility.

To help nurture a local church family which remains open and welcoming to all in the name of Christ: 'We are here to welcome all on behalf of Christ's worldwide church.'

Desire paths - Sarah Burton

We couldn't wait to walk out into the recent snow and experience how it had changed the landscape rendering it unfamiliar. The absence of planes and cars filled the air with a silence that remained soft and deep, even when punctuated with bird song and the slow crunch of boot meeting the snow's resistance. The snow pulled on leg muscles, cold pinched the cheeks and pricked exposed fingers. The water flowed in streams that had found a new voice under snow and ice and footprints were already leaving trails exposing the passing of animals and humans. Many footprints followed the well-worn public paths across the fields and through the woods but some took off from these paths and explored other possibilities moving through thickets or trees. The landscape has been shaped by farming, forestry, industry and housing wherever we live. It has also been shaped by feet, paw and hoof, sometimes by intent, sometimes by accident, sometimes by the curiosity of exploration. Landscape gardeners use this tendency to shape our environment by creating desire paths in our public, and private, spaces. These desire paths often equate to paths, borders and arranged planting that are used to guide our sight and feet to where they, the gardener, want to lead us. Some landscape gardeners will also take into account that, no matter where they try to guide us, some of us will walk across the grass, for example, cutting off corners to get to somewhere quicker, or wander up to a bush or flower to enjoy its perfume or texture. These meanderings are the desire lines that create other possibilities, they are not necessarily always the quickest route. Where will our curiosity lead? Perhaps a dead end or maybe an exciting adventure. They may need to take into account hills, landmarks and water so they'll curve and twist. In the hands of a skilled landscape gardener nothing is wasted.



The physical walk we undertake can become something else, in God's company we see the world through God's eyes, not just humanity's. When following a deer track or an elusive perfume we can enter into God's playfulness and discover that the desire line of our heart doesn't have to be the quickest way. When following God, if our soul's desire is to be drawn towards the loving heart of God, experience shares with us that there is no quick route, no short cuts. Our soul takes into account the variables and enjoys the meandering. We may stumble across a patch of silence that transfixes us with its unexpected presence. In the gift of the moment we may want to pocket the silence and take it away with us but if we decide to take a risk the silence may enfold us and take us in. If we dare, like Chad, to walk barefoot across the landscape around us, we may discover that as the skin of our feet connect with the skin of the earth, with nothing in-between but the sensation of the connection, so our soul desires to be equally intimate with God, unencumbered, wrapped up in God's embrace, like bare feet in dew laden grass.

As the physical landscape is marked by the passing of feet so our soul's landscape is marked by the paths it has trod whether they end up at a destination or not. The discontinuities become part of the experience. They may be about letting go, experiences offering respite, explanations or there may be no answer at all, a mystery, perhaps no apparent purpose. Sometimes we feel our way, sometimes try the same thing again and again, each time learning something new, getting to know our landscape, understanding it better, letting it in, letting it lead us further each time, getting a feel for what God is asking of us, inviting us, encouraging us to be. Perhaps we can have the pleasure of discovering that, in the long run, nothing is wasted in God's economy.

Maybe a labyrinth is a good physical representation of the landscape being shaped to enable us to explore the desire lines of our heart. If we imagine that the unimaginable depths of God are at the centre of the

labyrinth and that our soul's desire is to follow the path that leads there, then it doesn't matter how many times we come up against a dead end, whether we draw closer and then find the path leading us further away. It doesn't matter because our soul's desire remains the same at every twist and turn of the labyrinth and then, maybe surprisingly, maybe suddenly, we find ourselves there, in the heart of the immeasurable love of who God is. All the twists and turns, false starts, discontinuities, dead ends have shaped us, into the



image of God desired for us, just as much as the open paths, clear horizons, activity of life and silent communion. Sometimes as we have tread these paths of the labyrinth we are joined by others, maybe fortified by their presence. They may walk alongside, ahead or behind. Their path may appear parallel for a while on the other side of the line, they may even meet us coming in the opposite direction. Not always will our presence be restful to each other, sometimes we jar with one another, struggle to see God's imprint in the other. Yet perhaps in the final reflection we will see that every turn in the end will have shaped everything. Nothing will have been wasted and no encounter will have been inconsequential. Somehow in desiring, and accepting God's love as a gift to us, we offer ourselves back in return and marvel at how God takes the gift of ourselves and makes more of it than we can ever hope for. Perhaps even taking those events and circumstances of life that cause us upheaval and shock, in the midst of which we see no opening, and yet make something of them that we can-not foresee but only

desire. Somehow finding in the hardest, and unlikeliest, of circumstances fresh shoots of growth. On reaching the centre of the labyrinth we are reminded of our deep encounters with the love of God. We may desperately want to remain in the moment of that experience but we know we are drawn to step back to where God calls us. Touched by the depths of God's love for us we move back into the labyrinth, and life and its journey, are never the same again. At every twist and turn God has been with us and shaped us. Our experience becomes the memory, that assures us, that at every future twist and turn this will be the same again. Even at the moment of our death.

On your path, O my God,

And not my own,

Be all my journeying.

Rule this heart of mine

That it be only Yours.

Alone, together, our souls' path and desire.

SARAH BURTON

Section 5: Places and Pilgrimage

There is value in understanding the geography, the landscape that historical and spiritual events took place in. The terrain that Chad walked through and that we pass through will have similarities and stark differences. This section has resources and ideas to help you explore your environment. They can be done on your own or in a group.



Created by Drishya
from Noun Project

Holy Wells:

Chad intentionally lived by a well in Stowe. Through Chad's little foundation for Christ people found refreshment, healing and new beginnings through baptisms. Are there places of similar significance in your locality?

A Meditation by the Well

(ADAPTED FROM AN EXERCISE WRITTEN BY DANIEL SIKINGER)



This is an opportunity to meditate on the well around which Chad gathered his community when he arrived in Lichfield. It may be used on pilgrimage to Chad's Well and other sources of water that have significance for your local area.

Alternatively imagine your life as a well, a 'spring of water': Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (Jn 4:13-14)

Either work through every section or take one pertinent question from each.

Source - *The heart of the Well*

What has influenced you?

Who became a companion or mentor in a phase of your life?

What are your inner desires?

What gives you life and energy?

Boundaries - *The edges of the Well*

What is the sphere of your influence? Where do you hold responsibilities?

What are the paradoxes and polarities in your life? How do you keep the tension and hold them together?

Outflow - *The outpouring from the Well*



What is it that God wants to do through you in the world?

How can you, in your life circumstances, be a blessing to others?

What is your right seat and your fitting task? What holds you back to take it?

Specific Places:



The Chad Liturgy was written with change and transition in mind. Sometimes it helps to be in a different location to think through significant turning points in our lives. We gain a new perspective. A retreat can help, as can a treat. Chad travelled out from Lindisfarne, via Ireland to Lastingham, then York, and eventually to Stowe and Lichfield. He criss-crossed the country. Take a literal or virtual journey to one of these places.

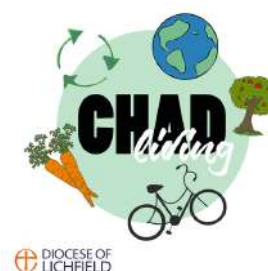
Companionship in pilgrimage:



The Community of St Chad: Chad walked barefoot as an equal with his companions, a small group of 7 or 8 monks. The Community of St Chad is an expression of modern-day monasticism. It has a geographically dispersed membership and members are united by commitment to a shared spiritual lifestyle reflected in their prayers and reinforced by Spiritual Companion Groups. It was launched in 2012. One of their Co-Leaders Philip Swan is known to our Community having worked alongside him in Lickey, South Birmingham on two occasions when Northumbria Community was invited to provide teams for parish weekends. Philip now serves as Director of World Mission for the Diocese.

For more info see: https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/community_st_chad/

The Lichfield Diocese is well aware of the heritage they hold through the inspiration of Chad. For 2018 they are sharing a series called CHAD Living: Choices, Habits, Actions and Decisions which explores what it means to follow Christ in the footsteps of Chad in our modern world: <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/news/2018/01/08/chad-living-following-christ/> For Lent 2018 a home-grown resource has been released called 'Steps In Discipleship'. It is a rich resource and would complement these materials should you wish to study more of Chad's life and how we may live out our discipleship as we follow Christ. Here is a link for that: https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/2018_lent_booklet/



These two short videos capture the spirit of that companionship:

The St Chad's Pilgrimage:

This intentionally ecumenical pilgrimage was between St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham and Lichfield Cathedral, marking the 500th year of the Reformation. It took place on 23 September 2017 and was organised by Robert Mountford, author of 'The Mantle of Chad' and friend of David Pott. Among those walking together in the name of Christ were the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, the Anglican

Bishop of Birmingham, the Anglican Bishop of Lichfield and Salvation Army Divisional leaders. Robert almost loses as few of them on route!

<https://youtu.be/B0JLafzHJl>

Walking the Two Saints Way - Season of Welcome:

David Pott and other pilgrims join Bishop Michael as he walks the Two Saints Way as part of a Season of Welcome, following Bishop Michael's appointment to the Diocese of Lichfield. This video features tough interview questions from children at a stop-off to a primary school. It also shows the pilgrims arrival at St Chad's Well. Cracking to see some of the fruit of David's gifts.

For more information about The Two Saints Way:

<http://twosaintsaway.org.uk>

https://youtu.be/M_3LFyXmWGY



Section 5: Renewal of Vows

We have been examining the life of Saint Chad, so perhaps it seems strange to begin with a story about Saint Brigid?

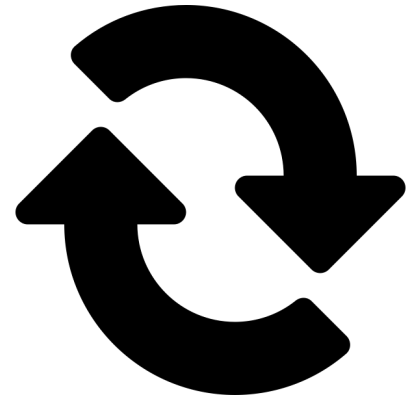
When Brigid was just a young girl, looking after her father's sheep, a man named Nindid the Scholar came rushing past where she was sitting.

'Why are you in such a hurry?' she asked.

'There is no time to waste', he said, 'you see, the gates of the kingdom of Heaven are open now, and I don't know how long they will stay that way.'

Nindid had given her a word for her life, and she made certain she was ready for Heaven, then lived that life with deep peace and great energy, embracing it with arms wide open.

When many years had passed, and it was almost Brigid's time to die, suddenly Nindid arrived, having hurried all the way from Rome, at the prompting of the Spirit. He broke bread, and shared it with her, and was the friend for her passing.



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Peace between me and my God.

May I tread the path to the gates of glory!

- * I live in a world of turmoil and all kinds of vulnerability,
- * of cruelty and injustice,
- * with storms and disruption,
- * with struggles for power,

and displacement of many people.

- * In a time of suffering and vulnerability,

help me to be AVAILABLE.

- * Whenever circumstances change,

meaning my plans must change (again!)

- * teach me not to harden my heart.

Help me to be intentionally VULNERABLE.

- * Teach me not to be preoccupied or too busy.
- * Let me embrace interruptions, and be simply AVAILABLE.
- * Help me to listen to those You send me to, people I've never met, and people I meet every day.
- * Help me to listen deeply, from the heart, and know their story.
- * Help me not to assume that I already know what's going on.

Help me to see past outward appearances.

Keep me VULNERABLE and TEACHABLE.

Give me the insights I need.

Let me listen for Your heart-beat,

- * and be one with You.

Teach me to live as someone prepared to die,

- * with my heart already in tune with Heaven.

Help me to be good news

wherever You send me.

All who wish to may read in turn.

* indicates a change of reader.

With a large group, split into two halves and read alternatively.

All say together the sections in bold type.

* Let there be peace between me and my God.

I don't have the same ready answers I once had.

Teach me to ask the right questions.

**The people You send me to
are not in the same place, either.**

Please, re-direct me.

**Whatever else may change,
together we say YES to availability,
together we say YES to intentional vulnerability.**

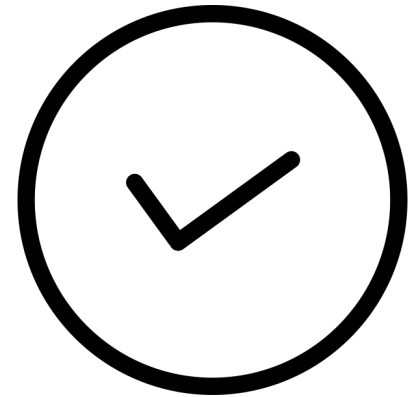
This is our life and vow,

* help us, God!

Amen.

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Created by Nitish tyagi
from Noun Project

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The Chad Liturgy: Celtic Daily Prayer Book 1 The Journey Begins (pg.286-290)

Biography of Chad: Maurice Johnson, Jonathan Tillin.

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Poem 'Clearing' by Martha Postlethwaite

Song: Edge of the World: Lyrics and music by Joanne Hogg, from the Iona albums 'Beyond These Shores' and 'Edge of the World Live in Europe'

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Excerpt from 'Dying, We Need It for Life' and 'The Spirituality of Imperfection' both transcribed talks from Richard Rohr on Transformation: Collected Talks: Volume One. © Franciscan Media. Used with permission.

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Denise Inge, A Tour of Bones. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

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Section 5:

Daniel Sikinger

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Bibliography

Recommended Reading: 'The Mantle of Chad' by Robert Mountford, Tentmaker Press, Staffordshire, 2013.

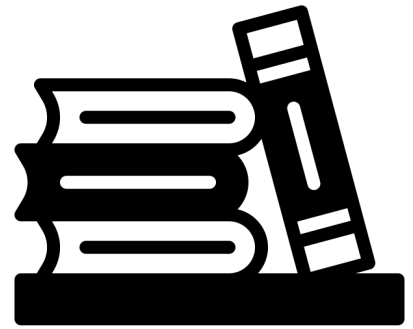
Celtic Daily Prayer (CDP) Cross-references:

CDP Book 1 - Aidan readings, 22-23 March

CDP Book 2 - Colman readings, 18, 20 February

CDP Book 2 - Eata readings, Intro., 16-18 September.

St Chad's godly death: The Bishop of Lichfield, Rt Rev Dr Michael Ipgrave, recounts the story of Chad's last days: <https://youtu.be/93ADfOCY0os>



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