



# WAY OF LIFE

STAY ♦ SHARE ♦ SERVE

## EXAMPLES PACK

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*Includes:*

*Church of the Ascension, Ealing (London),  
Nazareth Community (London), St Peter's Bourne (London),  
Community of St Aidan and Hilda (International),  
Northumbria Community (International)*



— DIOCESE OF —  
**LONDON**



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# THE PARISH OF THE ASCENSION, EALING

*Connecting More Deeply with God and Life*



CHURCH OF THE  
**ASCENSION**  
HANGER HILL • EALING

*The Church of the Ascension, Hanger Hill (with St Mary's West Twyford) is a diverse and eclectic parish in West London.*

## ◆ Context

The Ascension and St Mary's are a combined parish, amalgamated in the 1980s but separated by the A40 arterial road. Over half of the Ascension congregation live outside the Parish. Creating a sense of community outside of Sundays is a constant challenge. The incumbent, Revd Simon Reed, is also one of the three Guardians who oversee the Community of Aidan and Hilda, an interdenominational and international dispersed new monastic community. For over ten years, Simon has been encouraging church members to follow a Way of Life adapted from the Community to deepen their discipleship and foster a deeper sense of community.

## ◆ Calling

The church's mission statement is 'to be a Christian community helping people connect more deeply with God and connect God with the whole of life.' There are three emphases: praying, welcoming, and growing. This aim is a functional definition of Paul's definition of Christian ministry in Colossians 1:28-29, to 'present everyone mature in Christ.'

## ◆ Postures - who are we becoming?

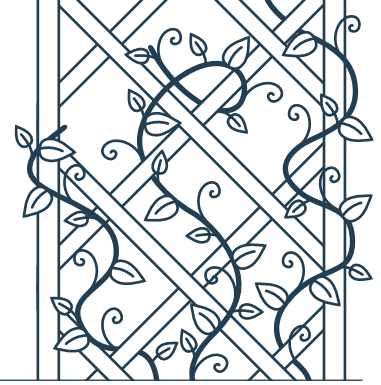
The heart of discipleship is to become imitators of Jesus. This is a lifelong journey. To journey well we do not travel aimlessly, alone, or without stopping. We therefore need a Way of Life as a map, a Soul Friend as a companion, and a rhythm of prayer to refresh us.

The Way of Life is derived from that of the Community of Aidan and Hilda.



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## THE ASCENSION, EALING



It has three life-giving principles, Simplicity, Purity, and Obedience (a modernisation of traditional monastic vows) and ten Waymarks:

1. Be a Life-Long Learner;
2. Journey with a Soul Friend;
3. Keep a Rhythm of Prayer, Work and Re-creation;
4. Live as Simply as Possible;
5. Celebrate and Care for Creation;
6. Heal Whatever is Broken;
7. Be Open to the Holy Spirit and Listen;
8. Pray for Good to Overcome Evil;
9. Pursue Unity;
10. Share Jesus and Justice.

### ◆ Patterns & Practices

There is regular teaching about the the three core practices of Way of Life, Soul Friendship, and Prayer Rhythms, and members of the congregation are invited to begin exploring. Simon and two others are available to meet with individuals as a Soul Friend, normally every two months. During this time, personal applications of the Way of Life are worked out. Individual prayer rhythms are encouraged and resourced. Daily Prayer is available via the website on weekdays. There is a monthly online Prayer Evening, and an annual 24 hours of prayer. The Ten Waymarks are worked out in the teaching and activities of the Parish, which include an Eco group and a Community Café.

*Read more online:*

[ascensionealing.org/2022/02/10/our-way-of-life/](https://ascensionealing.org/2022/02/10/our-way-of-life/)



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# NAZARETH COMMUNITY

*The City is My Monastery*



*"The Nazareth Way of Life is an encouraging support that invites me to try again if I fall short, accepts me as I am but gently realigns and reorientates me so that my life can continue to be intentionally focused on a pathway towards God."*

Emma Bresslaw, Member of the Nazareth Community

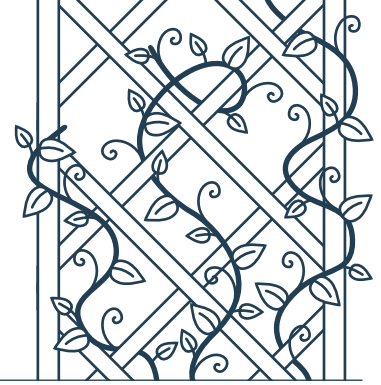
*Based at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London. Dispersed community which includes a Companion strand for those outside London (meeting online).*

## ◆ Context

Rev Richard Carter swapped a life of simplicity as a member of an Anglican religious order in the Solomon Islands for parish ministry at St Martin-in-the-Fields, amid the bustle of London's Trafalgar Square. In March 2018, he founded its Nazareth Community, whose members gather from everyday life to seek God in contemplation and to learn to live generously.

## ◆ Calling

The Nazareth Community is an experiment in being with God, with one's neighbour and with oneself in the centre of London. The community offers a structure and a framework to grow in prayer and compassionate discipleship. It is a dispersed community that joins together through a shared Way of Life. Those who make their promises come from many different walks of life, including those who have known homelessness and those who are refugees. Each new member of the community receives a small Lampedusa Cross. Each cross was



made on the island of Lampedusa from the wreckage of migrant boats washed ashore and is a sign of resurrection born in the pain and the hope of the cross. The Nazareth Community is rooted in, but not exclusive to, the congregation of St Martin's.

### ◆ Postures - who are we becoming?

- *Silence: to behold.* The community is born through and nourished by contemplative prayer. Times of prayerful silence become like a rhythm to everything else; it is the soil from which everything else grows.
- *Service: to accept.* As the silent prayer of the community increases and finds a rhythm, so will the generosity and compassionate attentiveness of those taking part increase.
- *Sacrament: to gather.* Members are encouraged to attend Eucharist regularly. The community's weekly Eucharist is welcome to everyone with no sense of exclusiveness.
- *Scripture: to inspire.* Members are encouraged to find regular times to read scripture with an open, generous, listening heart.
- *Sharing: to enrich.* Members set aside protected time for monthly sharing and reflection together, growing deeper in prayer and fellowship.

- *Sabbath: to restore.* Each member of the community is encouraged to find and discover a pattern of Sabbath Time. It could be a day a week or a period of time which brings refreshment, relaxation and rest.
- *Staying: to live.* This is about creating a way of life which is balanced and sustainable. Not like a new year's resolution that lasts a few weeks, but much more like a rhythm of life.

The aim of all of these is not to be a burden, but to be freeing.

### ◆ Patterns & Practices

The communal Patterns include three weekly hours of Silent Prayer, a weekly informal Eucharist and a weekly Lectio group. This same pattern of silence, eucharist, sharing is offered on a Saturday morning each month. A weekly Contemplative Prayer Walk is live-streamed on Saturday mornings. Practices include contemplative prayer, silence, lectio divina, eucharist, art and music.

*Read more about this community in 'The City is my Monastery', Richard Carter (Canterbury Press Norwich, 2019).*



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## ST PETER'S BOURNE

*Pursuing God, Justice and Mission Together*

**St Peter's  
Bourne**

*"In the shared Way of Life at St Peter's Bourne I've been led to pursue God in a deeper way by pursuing loving my neighbour, and enjoying his presence in the ordinary."*

Gabriel, Resident at St Peter's Bourne

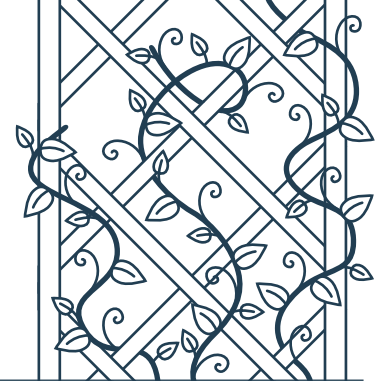
*St Peter's Bourne is a residential community in Oakleigh Park, Barnet made up of 13 adults and 5 children of diverse age and ethnicity living in a led community. Most of the residents have regular working lives in London. There is a wider community of companions and friends who regularly join for prayer times.*

### ◆ Context

In the early 2000s, St Peter's Bourne needed to raise income to renew the fabric of its building. People from local churches moved into the house and over time, a community grew and the idea of creating a more intentional community formed. In 2021, a new community gathered in response to a shared Way of Life: "To Pursue God, Justice and Mission Together".

### ◆ Calling

St Peter's Bourne aims to be a hub in North London for prayer & worship, meaningful social action and mission. More than a Christian house-share, it is an intentional community committed to a shared Way of Life. Pursuing God means to have a heart that is yielded and without reservation choosing Him, fostering a passion for prayer and worship. For a community member who is working 9-5 the outward expression of that will be different to one who is not employed. Those in the community are members of churches from different denominations, with different ways of prayer (e.g. silence, tongues, painting and crafts, singing, enjoying the garden, etc.).



### ◆ Postures - who are we becoming?

#### Pursuing God:

- Hosting the presence of God – A praying community, inviting the presence of God into lives.
- Worship – Gathering together to meet with God through worship whenever possible.
- House of Prayer – Developing a rhythm of prayer for North London; interceding for its churches, geography and society.
- Place of Retreat – Hosting church groups and individuals retreating together for the day to plan, pray and hear God.

#### Pursuing Justice:

- Engaging with prison leavers – Welcoming them into the community to disciple and provide support.
- Community projects - Training and investment in coffee producing communities overseas.
- Refugee support - Inviting those from Ukraine into the community.
- Discipleship – Living together as a way to discover aspects where people can grow in love.

#### Pursuing Mission:

- Pioneering and church planting - Hosting teams and praying for this work in the wider area.

- Supporting local churches – Leading mission events both locally and more widely.

#### Together:

- Holistic – The community does not want to be an inwardly focused prayer community, but a community that through its rhythms of prayer is empowered to challenge injustice and live a missional lifestyle.
- The community eats together regularly, spends time developing friendships and challenges each other to be closer to God. The aim is to have fun while journeying together!

### ◆ Patterns & Practices

The community meets to pray and share food weekly. There is a shared Thursday morning breakfast before the children go to school and a weekly dinner and worship night. There is a monthly OPEN event, inviting others from North London to join for worship and prayer. In the Summer, a longer event and BBQ is hosted in a marquee.

*Read more online:*

[www.stpetersbourne.com](http://www.stpetersbourne.com)



## WAY OF LIFE | EXAMPLE SHEET

# COMMUNITY OF AIDAN AND HILDA

*Journeying with God, inspired by the Celtic Saints*

*The Community of Aidan and Hilda (CA&H) is a dispersed, international and ecumenical community with main branches in the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia, Norway, and South Africa. In the UK, the Community owns houses for retreat and a prayer room on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne in Northumbria.*



The Community's presence on Holy Island connects with its importance as the 'cradle place' of the Celtic mission in England and a centre of pilgrimage, but the life of the Community is expressed

wherever its members are across the world.

### ◆ Context

CA&H started in the UK and the USA in 1994 during a resurgence of interest in the vibrant Celtic Christian spirituality of the first millennium. Founding Guardian Ray Simpson, who had previously explored forms of new monastic living while leading the innovative Bowthorpe Community Church in East Anglia, followed a call to move to Holy Island while developing the vision of 'a world-wide people who journey with God, reconnecting with the Spirit and the Scriptures, the saints and the streets, the seasons and the soil, through a Way of Life, a rhythm of prayer, and a network of Soul Friends.'

### ◆ Calling

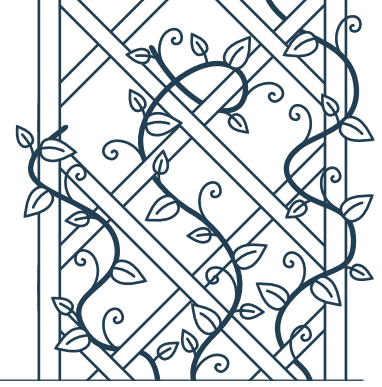
An important part of the Community's original calling is to be 'contemplatives in the marketplace.' CA&H welcomes people of all backgrounds and countries who wish to be wholly available to the Holy Trinity and to the way of Jesus as revealed to us in the Bible. Its vision is to live a holistic Christian spirituality for today, to be a renewed people who journey with God, to develop resources for emerging and existing churches, and to heal broken people and fragmented communities. Members follow a Way of Life, with a Soul Friend, based on a rhythm of prayer and study, simplicity, care for creation, and mission, seeking to weave together the separated





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# AIDAN AND HILDA



strands of Christianity. The work of the Community is the work of each member. Unity with other members is rooted in the knowledge that all follow the Community's Way of Life and that this reflects their deepest calling. Expressions of the Community should also be indigenous in each country and faith community.

### ◆ **Postures - who are we becoming?**

At the heart of the Way of Life is a reshaped version of the three traditional monastic vows, expressed as Simplicity, Purity, and Obedience, understood as life-giving principles, not rules, to help to love God and all creation wholeheartedly. The Way of Life consists of ten Waymarks:

1. Life Long Learning;
2. Spiritual Journey;
3. Rhythm of Prayer, Work and Recreation;
4. Praying For God's Will in God's World;
5. Simple Lifestyle;
6. Care For Creation;
7. Healing Fragmented People and Communities;
8. Openness to God's Spirit;
9. Unity;
10. Mission.

### ◆ **Patterns & Practices**

Membership of the Community begins as an Explorer. For a minimum period of one year, Explorers work out their personal application of the Way of Life and begin meeting every few months with a Soul Friend (anam chara) who will share their journey with God. After this period of discernment they then become Voyagers (vowed members of the Community), a commitment which is renewed annually on St Hilda's Day (17th November). After seven years it is possible to take life vows. Some Voyagers also choose to live a more traditionally monastic lifestyle. Voyagers commit to follow the Way of Life, have a daily rhythm of prayer, meet regularly with their Soul Friend and make an annual retreat. They are also strongly encouraged to join a local CA&H group, and to attend one of the Community's two annual gatherings. They are presented with a wooden Celtic cross to wear, carry, or display.

*Read more online:*

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



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# NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY

*Intentionally Available, Intentionally Vulnerable*



*The Northumbria Community is a dispersed, worldwide, network Christian community, committed to a new way for living. The community's 'mother house', Nether Springs, is located near Felton in Northumbria.*

## ◆ Context

The community emerged in the late 1980s as John & Linda Skinner, Andy Raine, and others explored questions like "who is it that you seek?", 'how then shall we live?' and 'how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' Inspiration came from the Celtic saints of Northumbria and Ireland and the Desert Fathers and Mothers. The name, Northumbria Community, was officially adopted in 1994.

## ◆ Calling

The Community describes itself as a dispersed network of people from different backgrounds, streams and edges of the Christian faith, united in a desire to embrace and express an ongoing exploration into a new way for living as Christians, through a new monasticism, that offers hope in our changed and changing culture.

## ◆ Postures - who are we becoming?

The emphasis upon the cell (the contemplative place of prayer and being alone before God) and the image of the coracle (with its emphasis upon the missional, going out and engaging and serving the world) are central. The Way of Life consists of just two postures: Availability (to God and to other people) and Vulnerability (being teachable, speaking out, and living openly to share the life of God).

## ◆ Patterns & Practices

Companions of the community commit to follow the Way of Life individually but also to meet where possible with other members in community groups to support one another. They are also encouraged to participate in community teams which come together to carry out various kinds of missional activities to serve the renewal of the church and serving the kingdom of God in the world. It is also possible to relate to the community as a Friend, and Friends are also involved in the community teams.

*Read more online:*

[www.northumbriacommunity.org](http://www.northumbriacommunity.org)