



The Church of Scotland
World Mission Council

Together We Walk



A European themed Pilgrimage in your Church

Pilgrimages are journeys put in God's hands. Historically pilgrimages would be to traditional sites of significance in the Church. The idea of journeying together, walking with God and finding God in our conversations and reflections as we walk together is important.

This is an outline of a pilgrimage around your church building, for members of your church or guests of all ages. During the pilgrimage we can listen to readings from the Bible, reflections from others, say prayers, sing hymns, reflect and have conversations.

Here are some suggestions for a pilgrimage around your church building, related to our history and heritage with our partner churches in Europe. Please feel free to develop and amend the material as appropriate for your group. For each situation there will be a bible reading, a reflection, a prayer, a song and an activity. It is not necessary to use all at each station.

We take up our theme for the year 'Together We Walk' for our pilgrimage.

Station: Gathering and Introduction:

“The Road to Emmaus”

Bible Reading: Luke 23: 13-16 and 30-32

Reflection: The Church of Scotland’s World Mission Council has a focus this year on Europe. The church has not only agreed to meeting with other churches in Europe, but we have an ongoing desire to walk together in the company of Christ. We do so because we need one another; we walk together because we believe that such mission in unity is what the gospel demands of us.

During our pilgrimage (walk together) we are going to hear about some of the work of the churches in Europe and use this as a means of reflecting on our own situation and our mission as a church here in our local community.

Let us spend a few moments reflecting on:

- Who we walk with as a church day by day and week by week. Let us think of a person by name and hold them in our thoughts and prayers. (*silence for a short time*) People could also be invited to say the names aloud.
- Let us also think about who we are not walking with day by day and week by week in our communities. Let us again think of someone in particular (we may not even know their names) and hold him or her in our thoughts and prayers. (*silence for a short time*) People could also be invited to say the names aloud.

Prayer:

God of love,

May you embrace us as we encounter others

And may our embraces speak of Christ’s living love and His Spirit’s concern for the world, Amen.

Song:

Verse 1 of ‘Loving God, you see us here’ written by Lief Nahnfeldt (Sweden) CH4: 271

Move to the door of the church and gather in the vestibule.

Station: Welcoming Others (door or vestibule)

Bible Reading: Acts 28: 1-2

Reflection:

The last chapter of Acts of the Apostles tells us that Paul and 275 others were shipwrecked off an island that they did not recognise. They ran the ship ashore so that everyone, the officers, Paul and the prisoners could swim ashore or use driftwood to enable them to reach the beach safely. On arrival they learnt that the island was called Malta and the natives were very friendly and provided for their needs.

Malta today is an island that receives around 16,000 refugees annually, mostly arriving in unsafe boats from the northern coast of Africa. The Church of Scotland in Malta, St Andrew's Church, is a place of safety and welcome for these refugees, providing shelter and language classes. A micro-credit scheme has also been developed to help refugees become self-sufficient and earn a living in their new land.

In our churches today we are often challenged to welcome visitors, but seldom on the scale experienced by the church in Malta. Find someone you do not know well, shake hands with them, exchanges names if you do not know each other and share your experience of welcome in this church – it may be from a few weeks or months, or even years ago. Who welcomed you? How were you made to feel welcome? What encouraged you to return?

Prayer:

Loving God, you challenge us to welcome others in your name,
not knowing who we will meet, what demands will be placed upon us or what joys and blessings they will bring.

Help us to always be an open community,
welcoming others in Your name,
Amen

Song:

Verse 1 of Be still my soul, CH4:691

Move to the Sanctuary.

Station: Worship (the Sanctuary)

Bible Reading: Luke 19: 37-40

Reflection:

In this bible passage Jesus tells the Pharisees that if the large crowd of his disciples cannot praise him, then the stones themselves will start shouting. This is a metaphor for not being able to contain God's praise and if one group is silenced, praise will be heard elsewhere. Sometimes there is the impression that our praise is confined to a building and not experienced in the wider community.

Some years ago the Church of Scotland published a report 'Church Without Walls' and is now helping congregations to engage meaningfully with their communities, share the Christian story with confidence, and respond creatively to shifting cultural trends.

Our partner church in Sweden is the Uniting Church in Sweden which is a recently formed denomination made up of the Mission Covenant Church in Sweden (Reformed), the Methodist Church in Sweden, the Swedish Baptist Church and the Salvation Army. In creating a common structure, ministry and mission, one of its key influences came from the 'Church Without Walls' process of the Church of Scotland.

Prayer

Challenging God, in this Sanctuary we are happy to meet regularly to praise your Name and worship you.

Let us not keep our praise of you confined to this place, but take it outside these walls to be shared with those we meet every day in many different circumstances.

Let us be a Church within these walls and also a Church without walls as we take your love, care and compassion out to those who need it most.

Amen

Song: CH4: 65 Jubilate Everybody

Move to the Communion Table

Station: A Shared Meal (Communion Table)

Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 12; 23-25

Reflection:

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians shares Jesus' teaching that followers of Christ should share bread and wine as a symbol of being part of the body of Christ.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion, and the mystery contained within it, is an essential part of our life as Christians. However, the practice and regularity of participating in Holy Communion varies greatly throughout the world-wide Church and even within the Presbyterian tradition. The Reformation (1517), led by Martin Luther, Jean Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, was a time when the practices and understanding of Holy Communion were challenged, but this did not result in one understanding for all of the believers of the Reformed Tradition.

There was, however, an earlier reformer, Jan Hus who was based in Prague, now in the Czech Republic. Jan Hus lived from 1369-1415 and he was a Czech priest, philosopher and reformer at Charles University in Prague. He introduced communion of bread *and* wine for all people when this had normally reserved for priests. The significance of this is reflected in the chalice being the emblem of the reformed churches and the 600th anniversary will be celebrated this year in the Czech Republic. Jan Hus was burned at the stake for heresy against the Roman Catholic Church and is a key figure in the Czech Church today.

The Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren is one of our partner churches.

Let us stand in silence for a moment to remember the Reformers, people who took bold and brave stances against what was happening in the Church, and the mystery of the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Prayer

Lord, we thank you for people of courage, people who will stand up for what they believe to be right, irrespective of the consequences.

We thank you for the people who have influenced and shaped our faith over the years, and have often suffered much along the way.

Help us to be people of courage, standing up for what our faith, through Jesus Christ. Amen

Song: CH4: 782 Lord of life, we come to you. CH4: 795 Take, oh, take me as I am.

Move to the baptismal font.

Station: A New Life (baptismal font)

Bible Reading: Mark 1: 9-11

Reflection:

Jesus was baptised by John at the beginning of his ministry. In Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospels all acknowledge that when Jesus is baptised the voice of God is heard saying 'This is my son in whom I am well pleased'. In John's Gospel, John pronounces that the Holy Spirit will come down on Jesus and he announces that he is the Son of God.

Jesus is baptised just before he starts his ministry. Baptism for us is the recognition of a new life in Christ, when we turn from our sins and proclaim God's love.

In our partner church in Greece, the Greek Evangelical Church, it very much sees its role as taking God's love to people who are rejected in society. They are a very small church with around 5,000 members, 35 congregations and 18 clergy in a country with a population of 10 million where 95% are claimed by the Orthodox Church.

The Greek Evangelical Church is explicitly evangelical, seeking to challenge the 'Greek mentality' and understand the call of Jesus for a change of life for people. Many churches outreach to the marginalised and young. There is youth outreach and a number of congregations have organised ministries which go out in the night to befriend sex workers and offer a listening ear and friendly word, often the only they hear. The GEK also runs a Detox Centre where men go for about a year, out of their own volition, to seek to get free of drugs in an explicitly Christian, and professional, environment; they attend prayers every morning and worship on Sunday.

Prayer:

Lord, we pray for all who have been baptised at this font over the years.

May Your spirit flow through them so that they can show Your love to all, particularly those on the margins of our society.

May this Church too be a witness to Your vision of how we should live together.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Song: CH4 335 'Out of the flowing river'

Move to the organ or piano

Station: Singing our Faith (the organ or piano)

Bible Reading: Psalm 33: 1-5

Reflection:

The World Mission Council this year is focusing on Europe, hence the focus of our pilgrimage, and the Church of Scotland's historic roots in wider European Christianity is emphasised. The aim is to help us all to open our eyes and remember we are part of a journeying church within the whole continent of Europe, and reminds us of how we have so fully and richly engaged in the life of this continent for centuries. We share a common journey and along with our partner churches we are interpreting our faith for the age in which we live. Through our partnerships we are reflecting on how our common European threads can help us to discover new ways in which we can share together in the fruits of the gospel.

Action:

Ask those gathered to talk to another person, sharing if they have travelled to Europe or met someone from a European country. What similarities did they notice and what differences were apparent?

Prayer:

Lord, when we talk about our neighbours we often think of those that are very close to us or those that are very far away and forget those who are in the middle.

We pray for ourselves and all our partner churches in Europe as we seek to walk together, hand in hand, sharing our faith journeys and seeking to live out our faith in a meaningful way in societies that are becoming more and more secular.

Let us share our journeys with one another and give thanks for our shared history and heritage.
Amen

We have a lot to celebrate as the people of God and many of our hymns have are set to music composed by European composers.

Songs: CH4 157 Sing of the Lord's Goodness, CH4: 175 Praise, I will praise you Lord (a verse can be sung in French)