

Guided Meditation Walk

Holy Week 2024

A SELF-GUIDED PRAYER WALK FOR HOLY WEEK 2024

Pilgrimage and Walking, Noticing and appreciating

This week, we invite you to take an intentional, meditative walk around the community of Charlton with your heart, your mind and all your senses open to seeing and experiencing more than what we normally notice. This guide combines, directions, things to reflect on and pray for. Some places will feel familiar, others less so but try and notice things you don't normally see or see things a different way, this guide will hopefully help with that.

In devising this walk, we are conscious that many in our community face difficult challenges in their lives. The cost-of-living crisis brings worries for many people and the long term mental and physical impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic continue to be felt. Wars and conflicts overseas have brought people to our community seeking refuge, as well as leaving us all with a sense of unrest and unease.

At Easter we celebrate the Good News of Jesus' resurrection from death, but we wish to avoid any suggestion that this means all the difficulties of life will melt away. Most likely, they will not. Rather, we wish to encourage a willingness to hold those difficulties as we patiently wait upon God's kingdom. Perhaps it is through the pain of those difficulties that we can better see how and where Christ brings light into the world.

The map is a guide only, as are the suggestions for prayer below. Feel free to adapt them as you feel appropriate. Rely on your own words and thoughts, and do not worry that God might not understand what you're thinking or trying to say. God will. Leave space for simply being silent with God.

Important: You can walk alone if comfortable with that, or in pairs or as a small group. However you go, please do take care as you cross roads etc and be aware of your general safety. We do not recommend this walk in the dark.

Length/Time: The whole walk is about 4km from start to finish which would take about an hour at normal walking pace.

Charlton Mini Pilgrimage

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1kUKwaopW6xibfuXHh3JTLYVAGHnK5Go&usp=sharing>

Start at Charlton Station.

PAUSE: As you stand on the bridge take a moment to reflect how you arrived in Charlton the first time, by car, by train, on foot? Who were you with?

REFLECT: People arrive here in all sorts of ways, in recent years many have arrived in Charlton escaping persecution.

PRAY: You might like to prayerfully mention places in the world you know are torn apart by conflict right now and/or thank God for all the people that call Charlton home.

WALK: from here head south and turn left down Floyd Road, following the road around to the left and then right, past the mural and The Valley football stadium. Continue East on Floyd Road, past Harvey Gardens and turn left on to Charlton Lane, down past the Royal Oak Pub, pausing on the corner of Charlton Lane and Pound Park Road

PAUSE: Standing on the corner in front of the shop and looking towards the level crossing, Trinity court is the red block of flats cornering the Woolwich road. On this corner there was once a large church that was condemned in the 1970s. In some ways it is sad that the building is no longer there but the site is now home to many people.

REFLECT: Buildings don't die but they don't last forever and that's ok. Lots of things don't. Take a moment to think about some things that have come to an end or might be coming to an end and be thankful for them

PRAY: You might like to use this prayer

*God, thank you for the things that I have loved and appreciated but are no more.
Thank you for the things that are coming to an end now. Help me to let them go and embrace what is new. Amen*

WALK: from here walk south-east down Pound Park Road until you get to the railings that are an entrance to Maryon Park. Follow the path up, bearing left until you get to Gilbert's Pit, you should see a view across London

PAUSE: There was a Romano-British settlement on Cox's Mount, the summit of Gilbert's Pit, between the first and fifth centuries. The area was part of the ancient Hanging Wood. In the late eighteenth century it was worked for sand for almost 100 years, and it was named after one of the managers, Mr E. Gilbert. This location featured in a famous film in the 1960s called Blow-up

REFLECT: As you look across London consider the fact that almost 9 million people live in this city, and you are one of almost 8 billion people. The world is vast, the cities, the oceans, the skies and beyond that space... We are so small, not insignificant but small. Perhaps take a moment to think about things that feel big right now and set them in the context of the much bigger world we are a part of

PRAY: You might like to use this prayer

God, I am small and the universe is vast and yet, you know me, you hear me and you love me. Amen

WALK: From here walk through the park towards Woodland Terrace and turn left down to St Thomas Church

PAUSE: Enter the churchyard of St Thomas and walk around back to the Garden of Reflection. Recently reopened after a huge effort from local volunteers.

REFLECT: Notice the newness that surrounds you, flowers, buds, greenery. Where do you need to experience the new?

PRAY: In a moment of quiet, say in your head or out loud, some things where you hope to see new life budding. It might be things in your own life, in the lives of others or in the wider world.

WALK: Walk back up the hill (NW) and down Thorntree road, passing the Maryon Wilson park and primary school. At the roundabout at the top, cross the road and head down Fairfield Grove pausing opposite the surgery.

PAUSE: This is the site of another of Charlton's former churches. St Paul's was bombed during WW2 and stood where the red-bricked flats to the right of the health centre stand. The Fairfield surgery is a vital place for the health and wellbeing of our community

REFLECT: Think about your own health, what are you grateful for? What do you want to bring before God?

Think also about the places in the world today being torn apart by war.

PRAY: There is an ancient Greek prayer that Christians have used for centuries, often used when we see things that we don't understand or can't put into words our despair or frustration. You might like to use it here:

It is pronounced "KEER-ee-ay il-AY-iss-on"

Kyrie eléison

Lord, have mercy

Christe eléison

Christ, have mercy

Kyrie eléison

Lord, have mercy

WALK: From here, continue up Fairfield Grove and turn right into the village, continue to St Luke's church, you can get around the East end of the church into the garden behind.

PAUSE: The garden is almost hidden, away from the shops, away from daily life.

REFLECT: What practices, habits and places do you have to 'retreat' from daily life to? Where do you go regularly to stay 'you' or when it gets too much

PRAY: You might like to use this prayer

Lord, help me to find rest, help me to recover, help me to find the energy I need to face the challenges of daily life. Amen

WALK: From here head back out to The Village and safely cross, passing the greengrocers and other local shops, past the summer house with its new art installation. Continue along Charlton Road turning right down Victoria way.

PAUSE: As you are walking down the hill, notice that on one side we have the so called Charlton Mansions, and on the other side the flats of Harold Gibbons Court. Notice the contrast and inequality.

REFLECT: Take a moment to thank God for the shelter of your own home no matter how big or small and to think of those who have no home.

PRAY:

WALK: Continue down Victoria way, turn right onto Priolo Road then left on to Swallowfield Road, to where it meets with Sundorne Road

PAUSE: St Richard's is a vital community facility, hung onto by the church in the knowledge that one day it could be that again and it is becoming that again. We have a vision to see it become a cultural and community hub as well as the home of it's own new congregation.

REFLECT: Sometimes things lie dormant for a while before coming back to life. What gift, idea or thing has been dormant in your life that might need to be resurrected?

You have finished your walk. We hope you noticed some things that might be new to you. We hope you saw or heard or considered some things that you needed to. We hope you saw both death and life, sadness and hope and the promise of a new beginning.

CLOSING:

At Easter, we remember that Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us. He did this to show God's love for ALL creation, ALL humanity, EVERYONE in Charlton and beyond.

Jesus, the Light of the World.

Where have you seen that light on your prayer walk today?

AFTER THE WALK:

Take note of your thoughts and feelings. If inclined, write them down or share them with someone. Return to these thoughts and feelings from time to time, quietly in the presence of God.

Finally... we invite you to join us to mark Holy Week and celebrate Easter. For information on how you can do that this week visit:

<https://strichardscharlton.co.uk/easter-2024>