

THE WILD GOOSE

Community of Aidan and Hilda, USA

Samhain 2020



Remembering the Rev. Dr. Ray Ball

The Rev Ray C. Ball served as the US Guardian for our Community before stepping down to take care of his wife Bridgette in 2019. He was Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Dallas, TX for almost three decades. He retired from St Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church in 2017 as assistant rector. As, his friend and colleague, Fr. Douglas Travis described Ray "He was friendly, joyful and generous and he had a heart for outcasts." He was a supporter and ally for the LGBTQ community

His education and participation in professional and religious organizations was exceptional and distinguished. In 1993 at St Petersburg he taught Russian Orthodox Spirituality and served as an instructor at The Anglican School of Theology at the University of Dallas in Irving, TX until 2005!

Father Ray had a deep interest in Celtic Christianity and in 1997 invited St Patrick's Celtic Church to make it home at the building of All Saints. I was pastor of that parish until the end of 1998. St Nicholas the Wonderworker was also located in All Saints' annex. Fr. Ray joined the Community of Aidan and Hilda in 2003 and became a Voyager in 2007

Raymond Carl Ball was born in Lubbock on 25 August 1952 and passed from this life on 18th of October 2020. May he rest in peace and rise in glory! He is survived by his wife Bridgette and two stepdaughters, Eryn and Caitlin Kelly

Remembrance by

Teresa Monica Cross



Special Thanks to Cynthia!

We offer deep thanks to Cynthia Helton who served as Editor of the Wild Goose. Her ministry of Communications has been vital in binding us together as a faith community despite our physical distance one from another. We wish her well as she steps back and enters a new segment of her journey and ministry.

We celebrate Samhain

Samhain is the festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter or the "darker half" of the year. Traditionally, it is celebrated from 31 October to 1 November, as the Celtic day began and ended at sunset. It is about halfway between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice.

It is a period of lying fallow allowing rest that results in the rebirth of life in abundance in the Spring.

We wait we eagerness for the call of the Goose leading us further along our life's journey to God.

An Introduction

Having taken Explorer vows in April, I had assumed that I would "sit in the back benches" for a while and get to know more about this Community and Aidan's Way. I then received an email from Paul John Martin saying that the beloved editor of Wild Goose, Cynthia Helton, was stepping back from the newsletter and help was needed.

After some careful thought and prayer I emailed Paul that I could help out in a pinch as I had edited diocesan newspapers in 3 dioceses.

Paul's reply came back thanking me for taking on Editorship of The Wild Goose. So I have proof that God's ways are different from my ways. The Creator is not the God of caution and half measures. Thus I am editing this newsletter for this dispersed community. But I will need the help of the Aidan & Hilda community to continue to make this newsletter a communications vehicle that gathers and bonds us in community.

Send articles and ideas for future issues to me at dbhill321@gmail.com. And we are off on our journey together...

Don Hill

A Dream That Spoke to Me

I rarely remember a dream; it's even more rare for one to make sense. So this dream last week stuck with me, and may be prophetic in a small way.

I was playing a game with some friends. In front of me was a game board. In my hand were several cards, including one of Abraham Lincoln (bonus point to anyone who can explain why Honest Abe!). My friends all knew the rules, and were playing happily. I didn't, and kept asking them how to play. "Oh, don't worry," they said cheerfully, "you'll pick it up as you go along." Well, I didn't 'pick it up.' So, I sat there, still confused as they played happily, and my turn kept coming and going.... When I woke, it came to me that this is how we treat newcomers to our Community. Nine people have taken Explorer vows in the US Community so far this year; another five are hoping to soon. How much practical, easily learned guidance do we give them in how to live as a part of this ground-breaking Community?

As Explorer Guide, this "aha!" moment reminded me to focus (for them and myself) on the three great ancient and future supports we have for journeying daily with God:

- An easily molded and easy to remember way of life.
- A soul friend to help us find bread for the journey and healing for the soul.
- A simple rhythm of life to keep us in God's rhythms, day by day and season by season.

Failure to really "make disciples" is not just a problem for our Community. It affects the church in the west as a whole. For reasons we have all heard time and again, fewer and fewer people are happy with church-as-we-have-known-it. Now because of COVID-19, most of us have had months without worship and fellowship face-to-face, and that has given a push to the decline. I suspect almost all of us know that the post-COVID church will look a lot different. Many are trying to find pointers for what Brian McLaren calls "The Great Spiritual Migration."

We in CA&H are daring to say with growing confidence that the Aidan Way, the practice of soul-friendship and a rhythm of life are gifts of God not just for ourselves; they are to be shared with the church as a whole.

Paul John Martin, Long Voyager

From David Cole's book "The Celtic Year" Liturgy for The Winter Season

Invocation:

Creator of the seasons, as the cold and dark of winter begin to surround us, we ask that you set in us the firmness of the roots of the trees. As they draw goodness from the earth to sustain them, may we draw on your goodness – the Ground of Being. Set in us the trust of hibernating creatures. As they sleep deeply and soundly, trusting that the sustenance they have within them will see them through the winter, may we trust that the sustenance you place in us is sufficient for us.

With the firmness of trees and trust of creatures, we look to you, Creator of life, to sustain us and keep us.

Intercession:

God of stillness, ruler over darkness, we pray for those places within our world which are in darkness in some way, whether through human action or natural means.

Lord, have mercy

God of stillness, ruler over darkness we pray for those places within our local community which are in darkness in some way whether through actions of local people or broader governmental decisions.

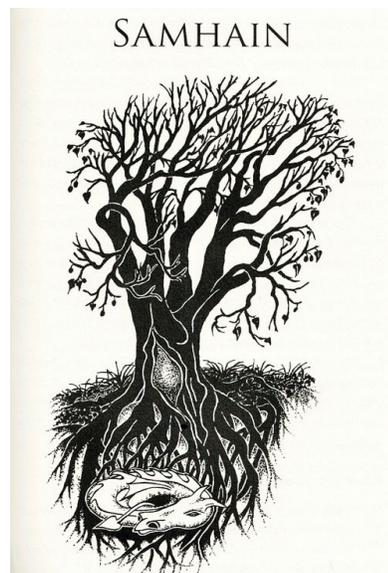
Christ, have mercy

God of stillness ruler over darkness, we pray for those places within your church which are in darkness in some way, whether through selfish hard heartedness or political decisions by hierarch.

Lord have mercy

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Train Ride in Wales

Effortless gliding along continuous track,
swaying on occasional curves.
Past churches of moss-eaten stone,
spires sea green with mold.

Heavy-fleeced sheep in need of a clip
graze in verdant fields encased by stone fences.
White and black cows, no two alike
ignore my passing by.

Slowing down, entering town,
a dark antiquated station.
Soot-laden brick with fragile, white flowers
whisper to me, I live here too.

I think of Mother Teresa, nun of Calcutta,
traveling through India.
God spoke to her on a train
looking out the window to those in need.

For her, no green, only filth, decay and dying.
Mothering woman saw Jesus in each one.
She struggled each day as we do,
yet followed Him to help the helpless

Emily Tipton Williams

PATIENCE!

Speaking on 'Sunday Morning' on CBS, a Mayo Clinic physician said that the opposite of Patience is not Impatience. It's anxiety, worry, stress, anger, sickness, even death. When we are impatient, it affects us not just emotionally, but physically. Since it is reckoned that, in a normal lifespan, we spend two years in line, stopped in traffic or on hold ("Your call is very important to us!"), we need to find a way not just to develop patience, but to make better use of that time.

When I married my wife, I had to move across town. My simple east side of Portland, OR, commute became a 25-mile crosstown trek. It got much easier when I realized I could use that time for prayer. I grew in patience, and arrived prepared in spirit for my business day.

How do you spend driving or 'in line' or 'on hold' time? Be creative. Deep contemplation may not be possible, but time open to God is. Take a verse with you from your last lectio divina time. Listen to an inspiring audiobook, or praiseful music. Run through your mental list of those you pray for daily. Lift the day to God, in words like "I bring to you, Lord, all that I am, all that I have, and all that I do this day. And I lift to you all those whom I shall meet this day, that I may see Christ in them, and they in me." It may not seem easy at first, but just be patient.

Paul John Martin, Long Voyager

Meet Two New Explorers

The Rev Norman Nierves, Taguig City, Manila, Philippines

Norman is part of a ten-member, semi-monastic community in an Orthodox tradition with Russian roots. This community lives and ministers in Taguig City a section of metro Manila.

Taguig City has both wealth and even greater poverty. Norman indicates that area has experienced a serious increase in substance use problems, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Norman leads a drug rehabilitation recovery program that was developed by his community, and has now been adopted by the government, and is in part supported financially by the government. They have recently started a second phase for transitional recovery. This is an aftercare program to assist individuals continuing with their recovery to start a new life. They recently welcomed into the program a 14-year-old with a history of petty crime and drug trafficking, following his 66 days of detention. After an initial evaluation the teen will have follow-up, recovery monitoring, assessments and family counseling.

Norman found the Community of Aidan & Hilda through the internet and communicated with Paul John Martin before taking his Explorer Vows in June. He has expressed his appreciation of finding "a Community with whom I could travel in a spiritual sense."

The Rev. Nancy Woodworth-Hill, Wheeling WV

A sabbatical encounter with Iona and Lindisfarne in 2017 sparked an interest in Celtic Spirituality for Nancy Woodworth-Hill, and in the parish where she was the Rector. They spent the next year in study of Celtic Spirituality, meeting Kenneth McIntosh, author of "Water From an Ancient Well", who introduced them to the Community of Aidan & Hilda.

Nancy was called to a new parish in Wheeling WV in December 2019. In April Nancy and her husband took their Explorer vows. She finished her training as a Spiritual Director through the Haden Institute in June 2020. It had occurred to her that the Anam Cara tradition might be adaptable for an on-line Spiritual Companionship group. As a result, she "gathered" a core group of people from 4 states and various parishes and denominations to meet via Zoom 2 or 3 times monthly for prayer, book discussion, and to companion one another on their spiritual journeys. The concept seems to be working well as connections are made and personal faith stories unfold and are shared.

According to Nancy "while the intentional communities created within the Celtic Christian tradition may not be wholly possible in contemporary American culture, it is possible to intentionally gather in small groups to journey together in deepening relationships with one another and with the Divine."

Renewing Vows on St Hilda's Day—Nov 17th

What is the likelihood of renewing your vows on St. Hilda's Day with one of our U.K. Guardians in the comfort of your own living room – especially when you reside in the United States? Perhaps much more likely in our meeting-via-Zoom age, but not so likely just a couple of years ago. In November 2018 our parish welcomed Graham Booth as a retreat leader, who spoke at the retreat on the value of keeping a Way of Life. During my sabbatical that summer our parishioners had studied *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster and discussed ways they could practice these disciplines in their daily lives. Graham's teaching and sharing reinforced their learnings and challenged us all to discern and intentionally adopt a Way of Life.

On the heels of this retreat Graham and I celebrated St. Hilda's Day together with a renewal of Voyager vows, praying together these words:

“May the Father's heart be ours.

May the Christ-like qualities of Aidan and Hilda be ours.

May the signs and wonders of the Spirit be ours.

In stillness or storm, may we be always vigilant, waiting, sharing, praising, blessing.

May we continue to sail forth across the ocean of God's world knowing both the frailty of our craft and the infinite riches of our God.”

(From “Annual Renewal of Voyager Promises to be made on 17th November, St. Hilda's Day”)

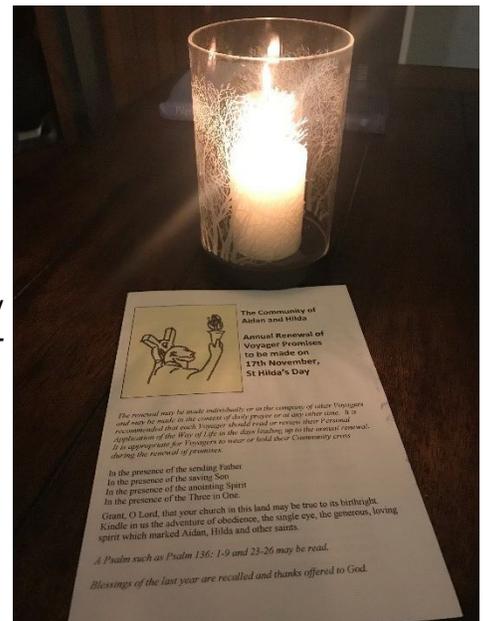
One rhythm of the calendar year that we observe as a Community is an annual review of our personal Way of Life with a soul friend. Such a review might lead us to make adjustments or adopt something new for one of the waymarks. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is nudging us to focus on a particular waymark in the next season. Ideally, we do this review at least once a year prior to St. Hilda's Day so that when we renew our vows, we also commit to following these revised practices for the next year. As Penny Warren often reminds us in her teaching and example, following a Way of Life is part of our response to God's encompassing love for us and all of creation. Our practices begin and end in Love.

Prior to renewal of vows with Graham that year, I sensed the Holy Spirit inviting me to be open to a new ministry that would radically change the direction of my life. Thus, I was called at that time to concentrate on the waymark “openness to the Spirit”, to follow the wind of the Spirit leading me to “wild, windy, or well-worn places.” At the conclusion of our renewal of vows Graham shared a song that he believed was for me at that time, “Beyond These Shores” by Iona (<https://youtu.be/-aD22Tsh5FA>). Neither of us could have imagined the journey of discernment in store that year and where the Spirit would eventually land me – coming ashore on Seabrook Island in South Carolina in a thin place called St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center, serving as Chaplain and Program Director, arriving just before the pandemic broke out.

As we approach our annual renewal of vows in November, I hear the Holy Spirit prompting me to embark on an in-depth study of the waymarks and to make the rhythm of daily prayer a priority. As a new chapter begins in my life, I have an opportunity to establish a monastic rhythm of daily prayer, pausing at times throughout the day to turn again to God.

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to shape a Way of Life for this new season?

The Rev. Dr. Sandi Kerner, Voyager



Cometh the Hour, Cometh . . . the Technology!

The Caim asked me to share about our new Online Groups.

Many of us in the Community of Aidan and Hilda have believed for years that this small, scattered Community has ancient riches that hold great value for the new forms of Church that are being birthed in this era of rapid change. As Church as-we-have-known-it collapses, but desire for authentic spirituality quickly increases, we believe that our model of a shared but flexible Way of life, accountability to a soul friend, and walking in God's natural rhythms has potential to enrich the lives of many, and transform how we 'do church.' In this year of fierce debate about national values, and a crippling virus that isolates us, that belief has only strengthened. Many are looking for a deeper and more whole life with more urgency than ever before.



We have long struggled with the isolation of our Way of Life. Some are blessed with an active regional fellowship of the Community, but many are not. Now Zoom provides us with a way to enjoy face-to-face contact, though admittedly virtual hugs are not the same as the real thing! As we master the technology, we are able to provide regular support and fellowship for our new members nationwide as never before. Is the rise of Zoom providential in this time of lockdown? I would say so.

In September 2019, we launched an Online Group, which meets monthly with 8-10 regular members. Next month, we launch a second group, composed of a new 2020 'class' of Explorers. Members stretch from Washington State to Georgia, and Arizona to Connecticut. We also welcome a Canadian member to our new group; we have agreed to work more closely with our Canadian members. In all, 10 have taken Explorer vows this year, with at least 5 more close to doing so. What do we do? After a brief check-in, we start with worship, usually drawn from Ray Simpson's "Liturgies from Lindisfarne." Then we examine one of our three

Principles or ten Waymarks. Then we do our book study, currently "Water from an

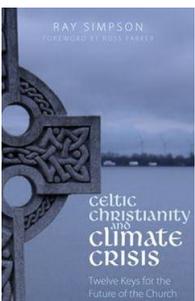
Ancient Well." We have been excited to welcome the author, Voyager Kenneth McIntosh, to some of our meetings. The miles between us seem to shrink as we grow closer over the months.

Do you want to join a group? Start a group? Just learn more? Please ask me,

Explorer Guide Paul Martin <voyager804@gmail.com>, or Caim member Emily

Williams <emilywilliams@aol.com>

We'll see you online.



Book Review: Celtic Christianity and Climate Crisis

Ray Simpson is known and loved worldwide as the Founding Guardian of the Community of Aidan and Hilda, especially in the UK. He has written over 30 books, and his teaching about our Way of Life and other topics can be found on YouTube and elsewhere. In the last two years, he has released <<http://waymarksoflife.com>>, which contains two years' worth of daily teaching in a conversational style on the monastic Principles and Waymarks that guide us, and which we in the US Community use as our standard formation material for new Explorers and Pilgrims.

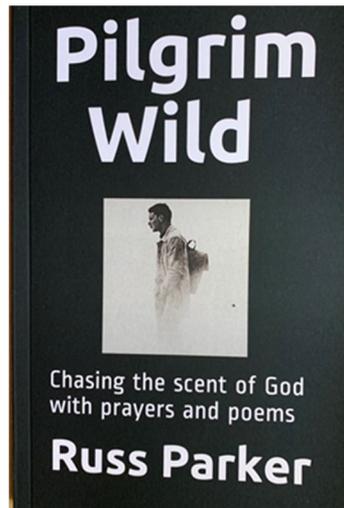
Ray's latest book, just published this fall, is "Celtic Christianity and Climate Crisis — Twelve Keys for the Future of the Church" (Sacristy Press, Durham, UK, 2020). It is his most important book for several years. First, though, a 'buyer beware:' the subtitle is a better guide to the heart of this book. Celtic Christian approach to climate change is the subject of only one of his twelve chapters.

In each chapter, Simpson addresses objections that scholars have made to aspects of Celtic Christian Spirituality. Where they have good points, he acknowledges we need to learn. Where he disagrees, he provides many clear arguments as to why. He then goes on to draw truly prophetic lessons for today. "Western culture is at a turning-point," he says. "Christendom forms of churches (churches organized according to the machinery and mindset of empire) are dying, but spirituality increases. Many who seek a fresh expression of church that has deep Christian roots ask: "Is there a Celtic model for modern churches?"

In conclusion, he names "twelve keys that can open doors in dark times, heal what is broken, and lay foundations for a new civilization of love." Read this book, ponder these 'keys,' and find your hope renewed.

Pilgrim Wild

Published by Amazon



During lockdown I have managed to complete a new anthology of prayers and poems and liturgies. It includes a new daily Office for three prayer moments of the day and also a 7-day Celtic Pilgrimage liturgy for Morning and Night Prayers. The latter is a distillation of liturgies I have been writing for pilgrimages to Celtic Holy Sites which I have been hosting for the last ten years.

As one of the co-Founders of the Community of Aidan and Hilda, Russ Parker has been involved in the development of the Community's Rule of Life. His particular contribution was writing on the subject of the Healing of the Land. He has also been writing various liturgies for over 25 years.

From the Rev. Ray Simpson, the Founding Guardian of The Community of Aiden & Hilda

Dear friends,

You might be interested to hear about my brand new book. It is so relevant to a post-Covid world that I thought you would not want to miss it!

Faced with the impending climate crisis and significant and irreparable damage being done to the earth, and climate campaigners who believe Christianity is not earth-friendly, this book offers a Christian spirituality of creation.

The book is called "Celtic Christianity and Climate Crisis" and is available to [order direct](#) from the publisher (Sacristy Press) or from my website www.raysimpson.org. It can also be downloaded as an e-book on [Kindle](#), [Kobo](#), [iTunes](#) and [Google Play](#).

