

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. (Psalm 24:1-2)

Julie Stamford's Camino to COP26 (5/9/21 to 30/10/21)

I believe we are in a Climate Crisis and this emergency demands action. Our country was going to host COP26, the world climate conference that all the worlds' leaders attend, and this seemed to be a vital meeting as the science was indicating that NOW is our last chance to stop the destruction of our beautiful planet. I am part of Christian Climate Action (CCA), who are part of Extinction Rebellion, in order to tell people about the importance of the state of our Planet and how to influence our politicians to make a difference.

In January CCA began to plan a walk from London to Glasgow to show our commitment to influence the politicians to do SOMETHING. This grew into a pilgrimage, a Camino, and places along the route were identified and churches were contacted for accommodation and support. A huge amount of organisation was undertaken.

I offered to join them with my campervan as a support vehicle. I loaded the van up with mobile loudspeakers, flags and craft items that would be needed in Glasgow.

On September 5th we met at St James church in Piccadilly, for our official send off, walked to Parliament Square where we met more pilgrims.

So who are we? We had a core of about 10 people who were going to walk all the way for 55 days! We were joined by day walkers and families and supporters each day, one day we had 72 walking! We are part of a group called Faithbridge, which included Christians, Jews, quite a few Buddhists, other deeply spiritual people, and some of no faith, but a deep commitment to the state of the Earth. We ranged in ages from 18 – 76, from all over the country and had not met before, but we were linked by our joint commitment to our love of the Earth and a conviction to do something to save it.

The purpose of the walk was to spread information about the conference and the importance of the Climate Crisis, so we carried flags, gave out leaflets and then most evenings we gave a presentation to the local community. We had a lot of media coverage from the local press and TV, including the BBC who filmed us on several occasions. We had many articles in newspapers, even the Church Times! We were looked after by local churches and communities who not only offered a floor, but sometimes they put us up in their houses, let us come and have showers, and did our washing for us! The support was amazing! But it was not always like that and with Covid still raging we had some difficult cancellations and left with nowhere to stay till the very last moment, or in very small unheated halls. But we survived, God was looking after us.

The walking was challenging, exhausting. We walked between 6 and 15 miles each day, 10 being the average. In all I walked 400 of the total 527 miles and am very proud of that. It was very physically and spiritually challenging, and I called on God's help many times. I really felt the strength of all the prayers that so many were offering for us all the time – thank you everyone. It would not have been such a safe and successful pilgrimage without the blessing and presence of God's power.



So, we walked into Glasgow on October 30th from Blantyre, joining with other pilgrims from Europe to an amazing welcome in the park. Then we walked into the centre of Glasgow with thousands of other activists, quite an occasion. Then what?

It was difficult, we all had different places to stay, I was in a campsite some distance out of Glasgow. The delegates were hidden away in 2 main areas in outer Glasgow, the Green and Blue Zones, which we had no access to! So, what could we do – PRAY.

We had an Earth Vigil everyday which started with an all-night vigil on the 31st to pray for the arriving delegates, and continued everyday throughout the conference, both physically in Glasgow and on zoom with

all our supporters. We prayed under bridges, at the entrance to the Zones, in train stations, streets etc!!! I'm a great believer in Prayer and we did have some comments from the delegates going in or out of the zones that they appreciated our presence.

A very important part of our witness was the Coat of Hopes. This was designed to carry up to 500 patches which had been sewn by the people in the communities we travelled through, with their hopes and prayers for the outcome of COP26 sewn in. It started in New Haven in September with a few patches and has grown as we have travelled and worn it every day.



Every morning in Glasgow we walked the Coat of Hopes from the main square to the entrance to the Blue Zone and sang our song, prayed and offered the coat to be worn by the delegates – and a lot did, and many were moved to tears. We spoke to John Terry, US ambassador, and Caroline Lucas MP wore it. I believe we enabled God's spirit to work.

In the first week we had booked a space in the theatre in the Green Zone to perform a play reflecting our Camino, called Walk the Walk, and you can see it on You Tube, it was powerful.

So was it all worth it? YES.

Did we make a difference? YES.

How do we know? We never will, the final agreements did not go as far as we had hoped for, but they are at least a commitment towards saving the planet. We cannot know what God has planned, we can only trust that He is in charge, and we do our bit towards this by being His hands and feet in this world, and continue to pray.

Find out more: www.coatofhopes.uk or www.caminotocop.com

Search YouTube for "Walk the Talk to Talk the Walk" After 500 miles and 55 days on the road.

January Services and Events

We're sorry if you're feeling that we've been here before, but we must warn you that all these events are subject to change or cancellation so long as the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is out there.

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| Sunday 2 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Sunday 9 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Monday 10 | 19.30 | Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room |
| Friday 14 | 19.00 | Men's Group Curry Night |
| Saturday 15 | 10.00 | Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall |
| Sunday 16 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion and Children's Groups
(including Theresa's Induction as Vicar) |
| Wednesday 19 | 20.00 | PCC meeting in the Cuddington Hall |
| Thursday 20 | 14.30 | Afternoon Group in the Cuddington Hall |
| Sunday 23 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Tuesday 25 | 14.30 | Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room |
| Sunday 30 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome