

Methodist Church in Scotland & Shetland

A one-day walking pilgrimage to Ninian's Cave, Whithorn

(one day walking, but two nights also involved: Tuesday 3rd – Thursday 5th May 2022)



Ninian's Cave on the coast of Galloway is a wildly beautiful spot which has been a pilgrimage destination for over 1500 years. The cave, situated on a pebble beach, is thought to have been a place of prayer and refuge for the 4th Century Saint Ninian, who built what is generally regarded as Scotland's earliest Christian building, the 'Candida Casa', in nearby Whithorn after landing in Galloway in 397AD.

The pilgrimage involves one full day's walking with two nights' accommodation in Newton Stewart, which is accessible by bus from Dumfries.

Tuesday 3rd May: Pilgrims arrive at The Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart (<https://the-bruce-hotel.com/>) in time for dinner at 7:30pm. After the meal we will gather for a short time to get to know one another and learn a little more about the history and spirituality of the region.

Wednesday 4th May: After breakfast in the hotel the pilgrimage begins with a 70-minute bus-ride (8:45am bus from Newton Stewart) through the local area passing through Whithorn and the Isle of Whithorn before disembarking at a quiet crossroads near Kidsdale. From here we walk (approx. 2 miles) to the beach and cave where we will spend about an hour, before taking a cliff path route to the Isle of Whithorn. It is about a six-mile walk, quite steep in places, and takes around 3 hours, including a picnic lunch stop on the way. In the Isle of Whithorn we will have time for refreshments and to explore this rugged little peninsula, including the harbour and the watch tower finishing with prayers at the ruined 13th Century 'Ninian's Chapel' before catching a bus back to Newton Stewart for dinner and another time of sharing together as a group.



Thursday 5th May: Breakfast in the hotel is again included after which pilgrims can choose to travel home or explore the area further individually.

- **Estimated Cost:** The cost for two nights' dinner, bed & breakfast will be £95 per person in twin or double rooms (£140 for single accommodation). In addition pilgrims will need to bring/purchase a packed lunch for Wednesday, any other refreshments and will need about £7 for bus fares (or a bus pass!).
- **Requirements:** A reasonable level of fitness is required along with walking shoes/boots with ankle support as the cliff path is rough in places.
- **Leaders** for the group will be Rev. Andrew Baker, Superintendent Minister of the Strathclyde circuit and Jill Baker, local preacher and former Vice-President of the Methodist Conference.
- **Prayer and worship:** During the time together we will share in morning, midday and evening prayers. It is hoped all pilgrims will participate in these, but no-one will be put on the spot!
- **Registration:** The group is limited to no more than 12 pilgrims. For more information or a registration form please email ejillbaker@btinternet.com.