

What happens?

Through a WhatsApp group we invite members to meet up with each other in the morning for a physical activity (walk, run, swim or cycle) or creative opportunity (read, write, draw, paint). Alternatively, you may simply prefer to use the time to savour the peace of Rydal gardens. The more structured part of the event starts at 1pm, meeting outside the café at Rydal Hall. We then walk to the Pilgrim's Rest, a covered area in the woods, where we gather for a shared lunch around a fire. Each of us brings something to share for an outdoor feast, trusting that between us we will have something of everything. This is a time for catching up, making new friends and sharing life together. After the lunch we walk to a nearby hill, wood, river, tarn or garden to share in a symbolic act of celebration and thanks. Each Sacred Practice follows a seasonal pattern and adopts a different theme each month. Having re-gathered at the Pilgrim's Rest, we conclude the structured time with a shared blessing.

When and where do you meet?

We meet once a month outside the café in the grounds of Rydal Hall at 1pm on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

Is it religious?

Sacred encounters are open to people of all faiths or none, whilst being informed by the Christian faith. It is religious in the sense that we seek spiritual engagement, but it does not require conformity to a rigid set of beliefs. We make every effort to use inclusive language and to respect the views of everyone. Come with an open, inquisitive mind, and to be prepared to listen to others as well as having the opportunity to share your own perspectives.

What you need to bring

Please ensure that you bring a proper waterproof jacket and trousers, spare warm top, hat, gloves, walking shoes, and a good sense of humour for those days when the delights of nature are less apparent. If the event involves water, please also bring a towel and clothing suitable for paddling. If you plan to swim, please bring appropriate clothing and a change of clothing.

Will you look after me?

The expectation is that you will only engage in activities where you are able to look after yourself and any dependents (under 18 year olds and pets). Please see the description for each Sacred Encounter to assess your own ability, and anyone attending with you against the risks encountered.

What level of fitness do I need?

All of the walks are modest in length (generally up to 7 km) and typically utilise good paths. However, some walks may involve rougher ground and steep slopes. The event information includes details on the walk to help you decide on their suitability for you.

Are there toilet facilities at Rydal?

Yes, there are accessible toilets.

Do I need to book?

No, you can just turn up, but it would be helpful if you contacted us so that we know to expect you.