

The Wild and Sacred Spaces of Iona: A Pilgrimage to the Isle of Iona, Scotland

Led by Denise Crawn and Nick Prance
of Walking Awake, LLC, and Justine Johnson of Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center, PA, USA
Friday, September 4th - 12th, 2020



You are invited to become one of a small group of pilgrims to embark on a soul-enriching journey to the Isle of Iona, Scotland September 4th - 12th, 2020.

Our week together on Iona will offer a balance of structured group gatherings, opportunity to participate in guided walks to many of the island's wild spaces and sacred sites, an informative tour of the Iona Abbey, Nunnery and Oran Chapel, a boat trip to the majestic Isle of Staffa featuring Fingal's Cave, opportunity to attend some of the island's various religious services, and individual time to 'just be'.

Our group sessions will include information and discussions on Celtic Spirituality (then and today), our connection to (and with) Nature, the Iona Community and the everyday community of Iona, exploring the many connections between Iona and Kirkridge Retreat Center, as well as delving into the historical and mystical stories of the Isle including tales of Columba, Oran and Brigid.

This Walking Awake adventure will begin at the Glasgow Queen St. train station where Nick and Denise will guide the group via public transportation (train, ferries and bus) to the Isle of Iona. Our 9 day/8 night pilgrimage will commence with a three hour train ride said to be one of the most scenic in the world. Be sure to keep your eyes open and camera ready for possible sightings of wildlife and breathtaking views as we weave our way alongside the beautiful lochs and mountains to Oban, Scotland's Sea Food Capital. Upon arriving in Oban we will settle into our overnight accommodation located on the Esplanade with plenty of time for individual sight seeing, shopping or rest. Later we will gather for our Welcome Dinner (included) at an atmospheric (and delicious!) restaurant.

After breakfast the next morning (included) we will board the ferry to Craignure. This beautiful 45 minute sail with stunning views will provide additional opportunities for great photos! After arriving in Craignure we will board a bus and make our way across the Isle of Mull to Fionnphort where where we will catch our final 15 minute ferry across the turquoise blue Sound of Iona to the Isle of Iona and begin our 7 night stay. Once on Iona, our base will be two charming self-catering cottages located right next door to each other (bring your suits...one has a hot tub!). Each cottage will be stocked with all the group will need for breakfasts and packed lunches and a few home cooked meals throughout the week. Your "home away from home" for the next 7 nights is literally steps away from the Sound of Iona and within walking distance of the village, Iona Nunnery and Abbey, restaurants and shops. On our final evening on Iona we will gather at one of island hotels' gourmet restaurants for our closing dinner (included).

As in all Walking Awake events, this pilgrimage will include a mix of traditions old and new; story, song, poetry, ceremonies, and “Walking Awake” in and with Nature blended beautifully with our group sessions and the historical and mythical energies of Iona.

PRICE:

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL:

\$2000.00 per person if paid in full and registered before September 1st, 2019 (*includes \$500.00 non-refundable deposit*).

\$2100.00 if paid via *payment plan and reserved by September 1st, 2019. (*Payment plan: 2nd payment of \$500.00 due 11/1/19, 3rd payment of \$500.00 due 2/1/20, 4th payment of \$500.00 due 3/1/20, and final payment of \$100.00 due 5/1/20).

After September 1st, 2019, the Early Bird Special ends and the price increases to \$2300. per person. All payments must be made in full by June 1st, 2020. *See *Walking Awake, LLC's website for pilgrimage terms of agreement and cancelation policy*.

There are a limited amount of spaces available for this pilgrimage. You may hold your space by paying in full or placing your \$500.00 non-refundable deposit via the PayPal link on Walking Awake's website (www.walkingawake.com)

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Price includes: Return transport from Queen St. Station, Glasgow to Iona (trains, ferries, buses), shared overnight stay in Oban, shared self-catering accommodation in cottage on Iona, week-long admission fee to the Iona Abbey and Museum, boat trip to Staffa where you can search for puffins or explore Fingal's Cave, a stock of basic breakfast and packed lunch items at our cottage on Iona, two group booked evening meals; one on our first evening in Oban and one on our last evening on Iona (meal allowance is £40 per person), and guide fees.

**Price does not include air travel and other meals/items/options not listed above.*

*Guided walks and tours are optional and may include all or most of the following: The Iona Abbey, Nunnery and Oran's Chapel, Columba's Bay and Iona's Labyrinth, the Hermit's Cell, Dun-I and Brigid's Well (aka: The Well of Eternal Youth), the North Shore, the Marble Quarry, St. Martin's Cave (a magical place only accessible during low tide). An itinerary for the journey will be given prior to the pilgrimage. A list featuring degree of difficulty for each walk will be included with itinerary (walks range from easy/moderate to challenging). There will also be plenty of un-programmed time for quiet reflection and individual exploration.

*Note: If you wish to arrive in Scotland prior to our pilgrimage or stay afterwards, Walking Awake can provide you with some possible options. Contact Denise Crawn with any questions at dcrawn@walkingawake.com



Bios of Leaders:

Denise Crawn is a former Kirkridge employee, Columcille Board Member and resident of the mountain now residing in Scotland with her husband, Nick Prance. Owner of Walking Awake, LLC, Denise is an ordained Interfaith Minister through One Spirit Interfaith Seminary, NYC, author of "Walking Awake: The Faces In Nature", and creator of several inspirational card decks. Denise's ministry and love of nature is expressed through her photography, book, cards and events which focus on becoming more aware and awake by accessing our innate connection with Nature and our relationship with the Divine within and around us. Her deep rooted relationship with Nature began as a child when she would join her father and brothers hunting and fishing. No longer engaging in those activities, she remains forever an outdoors woman with a keen eye for tracking and a gift for reading Nature's hidden messages. Since her discovery of Columcille in 1996 which inspired her first visit to Iona in 2003, she has enjoyed visiting Iona on a regular basis becoming very familiar with its landscape, history and myths, and its longtime residents.

Nick Prance was born in the north of Ireland, raised in Liverpool, and has lived in Scotland for the last 16 years. During this time in Scotland, he lived on Iona for three years working for the Iona Community helping to organize and run the program for the many guests who came on pilgrimage and retreat. He also joined the Iona Community as a member at that time. Following a career working within the Mental Health services and training for the Anglican ministry, Nick has been exploring Buddhism, seeing it as a helpful way of engaging compassionately with the human condition and the nature of suffering. Now mostly retired, Nick currently spends his time alternating between walking in the wild and beautiful spaces of Scotland and enjoying the inner child by playing as often as possible with his four young grandchildren!



As a couple: Nearly six years ago, Denise and Nick met on a ferry while each were traveling to the Isle of Iona, Scotland. In October 2016 they were married in Scotland surrounded by family and friends. A 'ferry-tale' come true indeed! Since meeting, they have traveled together throughout Scotland, England, and Wales along with other magical places visiting standing stones and ancient sites and loving every moment of it! Both have deep and long standing connections to the people and energies of Iona. As co-leaders they bring together an eclectic mixture of backgrounds including everything from trainings in ministry, theater, mental health, shamanism, mindfulness, as well as their love and connectedness to poetry, story, music and nature. Nick and Denise enjoy sharing these treasures, passions and adventures with others as they lead and co-

lead workshops, retreats and pilgrimages on 'both sides of the pond'.

Justine Johnson: Originally from Wisconsin, Justine moved to Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center as their Associate Director in April 2019. She's had the privilege of being able to serve many non-profit organizations and universities in the United States and abroad, including Ireland, Viet Nam, and Kyrgyzstan. She has a stretch of diverse work and life experiences, mostly based in social justice and equity.

