

# Pilgrim for an hour

Let us help guide you  
through the streets  
of Edinburgh

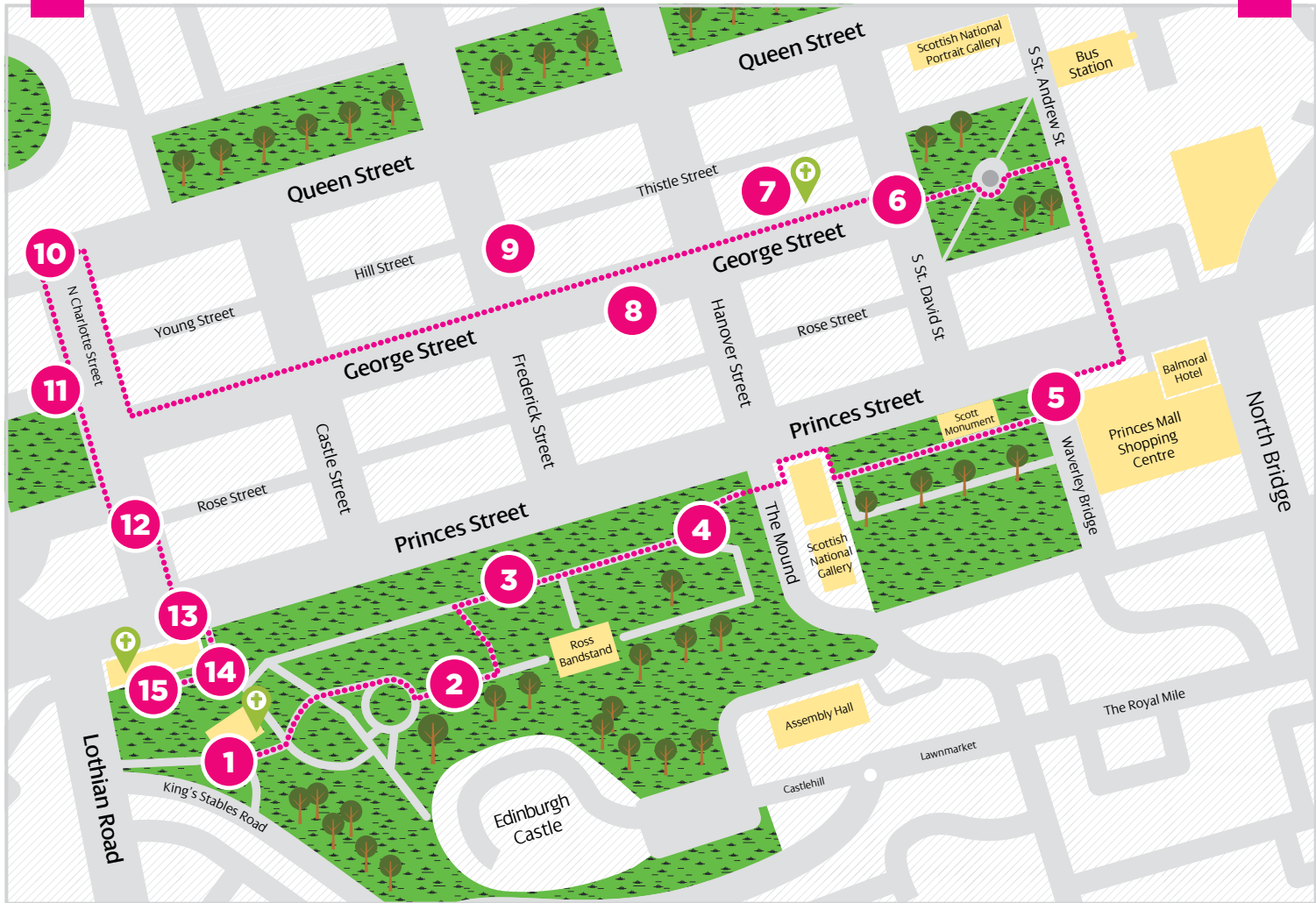


**The city centre of Edinburgh is a bustling place, bursting with energy and activity. It is good to be able to join in, but the walk set out in this booklet offers an opportunity to explore the heart of Scotland's capital in a more contemplative manner. It gives you the chance to reflect on the people and places which have helped shape the life of this great city.**

**It allows you to become a pilgrim in Edinburgh.**

Go to page 4 and 5 to view the map.

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## Introduction

**The walk can be done in about an hour. There are numerous options for you to extend that by going into the various churches or other buildings along the way. It is up to you where you go. It is your pilgrimage: this leaflet is a guide.**

The suggested starting point of the way is the main door of St Cuthbert's Church, with access from Lothian Road, King's Stables Road or from the west end of Princes Street Gardens. However, you are free to start at any point. You will find the map on the inside front cover.

There is a passage from the Old Testament of the Bible, Chapter 3 of The Book of Ecclesiastes. You may like to use it as you follow the pilgrim trail. It speaks of there being a time and a season for everything.



For everything its season, and for every activity under heaven its time:

**a time to be born and a time to die;  
a time to plant and a time to uproot;  
a time to kill and a time to heal;  
a time to pull down and a time to build up;  
a time to weep and a time to laugh;  
a time for mourning and a time for dancing;  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them;  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to seek and a time to lose;  
a time to keep and a time to throw away;  
a time to tear and a time to mend;  
a time for silence and a time for speech;  
a time to love and a time to hate;  
a time for war and a time for peace.**

Before you set off, you could take a few moments of quiet; a few moments to prepare and slow down from the frenetic pace of the city. It may be there was a phrase in that passage that spoke to you. Read these words again if you want,

and reflect on their meaning for you as you still yourself to silence. You may want to remember these words as you walk. When you feel ready, you may begin your journey, your pilgrimage of an hour, and learn a little of our story.

## Stop 1 St Cuthbert's Church

Start your walk outside the main door of St Cuthbert's Church. The castle looms above, and around are the tombstones of generations of people who have lived under its shadow.

As you look at this, think about the passing of time, about what changes and what remains the same:

**a time to be born  
and a time to die**

Head east through the gate into Princes Street Gardens and stop at the huge monumental fountain.

Legend has it that Cuthbert, a 7th century pilgrim who lived and preached in Scotland and the north east of England, pitched his tent here. The stream which ran through this area was dammed in the 15th century, creating a defensive dam, the Nor' Loch. This was drained in the 18th century when the New Town was built.

## Stop 2 Princes Street Gardens

Within a radius of half a mile are the Usher Hall (the city's main concert hall), the Castle Esplanade (site of the Military Tattoo), the Assembly Hall (venue for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and initial home of the Scottish Parliament) and the National Galleries. Princes Street Gardens itself is the site of the annual Passion Play, Assembly Sunday, and (in the Ross Bandstand) various musical events culminating in the Fireworks Concert at the end of the International Festival. The three churches that produced this guide are all used as venues for the Festival Fringe.

Perhaps there have been times when the arts have helped you or others close to you to cope with challenging situations.

Think about the impact of music and drama on your life, of the pleasure and tears both provoke.

**a time for mourning  
and a time for dancing**

If you continue along the central path you will see the stone memorial given in thanks to the Scots by the Norwegians after World War 2. The words of gratitude illustrate the human need to heal and build bridges after war.

Return to the fountain and head up to the higher path, where you then turn right and continue walking.

## Stop 3 Scottish American memorial

Pause at the Scottish American memorial "the Call 1914". The frieze behind the kilted figure shows civilians changing into soldiers as they follow a pipe band.

As you continue along the path, you may reflect on the several war memorials you see in these Gardens.

Do these memorials give you a connection with current conflicts, whether international, national or personal?

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**a time to kill  
and a time to heal**

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## Stop 4 West Princes St Gardens

As you reach the bottom of the steps at the end of the path, look back across West Princes Street Gardens.

In the gardens, there are changes every season to the landscape around you with its huge variety of trees, shrubs and flowers.

For people there are times for uprooting and times for planting. Consider whether there are aspects of your life for which this is true today?

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**a time to plant  
and a time to uproot**

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Ascend the steps, with the Floral Clock flower bed to your left (only planted out in the summer).

Cross at the foot of The Mound, walk past the front of the National Galleries, then continue walking into East Princes Street Gardens.

Take the opportunity to admire the city skyline and Salisbury Crags beyond, a truly magnificent combination of both natural and built features: God's labour and human endeavour before you.

## Stop 5 David Livingstone statue

As you come to the end of the gardens, you will see, near the corner of Princes Street and Waverley Bridge, a statue of David Livingstone, the famous 19th century Scottish missionary and explorer. He made many discoveries in Africa, and died on an expedition searching for the source of the Nile. He inspired others to explore – to search not only the physical world, but also their faith.

Are there times when you feel you are searching for something in your life? How do you explore untried routes which may lead to the excitement of discovery?

One of the psalm writers says:

**Search me, O God and know my heart;  
test me and know my thoughts**

The route now moves away from Princes Street. Cross Waverley Bridge and then to the north side of Princes Street and walk up St Andrew Street, following the tram route, until you reach St Andrew Square.

You can walk through the gardens, and, if time allows, find a quiet spot to pause and appreciate the public oasis they provide. At one time private, the gardens are now free for everyone to enjoy – creating a time to share.

Leave St Andrew Square gardens by the George Street gate and walk to the large statue ahead of you, in the middle of George Street.

## Stop 6 James Clerk Maxwell statue

Stop at the statue of James Clerk Maxwell (1831-79). One of the giants of mathematical physics, he was born at 14 India Street, a few streets from where you now stand and as a child, attended St Andrew's Church (which you will pass shortly) with his father. Even as a school boy he had an inquisitive mind and became a professor at the universities of Aberdeen, London and Cambridge. His theories on electricity and magnetism are the foundation of the science that is behind much of our modern technology – electronic communications, phones, television and space travel. His contribution to the world of science has been compared with that of Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein.

Our world would be a very different place without scientists seeking to advance our understanding of the universe. Much of what has been discovered is good but not all. Ponder on what you seek in life and what would you like to lose.

### a time to seek and a time to lose

Cross to the north side of George Street and continue to the building on the right (with the spire) that was St Andrew's Church until 1964. Since then it has united with two other congregations to become St Andrew's and St George's West.

## Stop 7 St Andrew's & St George's West

In 1843 this was the scene of the Disruption, an event which split the Church of Scotland. The split was due to a difference of opinion about whether the congregation or the 'patron' should nominate the parish minister. About a third of parish ministers and members of their congregations quit the established church and willingly signed away their stipends, their churches and their manses, leaving them homeless and in some cases without an income. Yet the new Free Church soon set about building its own churches and infrastructure to serve parish needs.

The issues which had first caused the great schism of 1843 gradually diminished and in 1929, the Free Church re-united with the Church of Scotland.

In the world today there is the need to pull down in order to build up. Pause here to reflect on times of division and times of reconciliation.

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**a time to pull down  
and a time to build up**

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## Stop 8 Edinburgh Assembly Rooms

Continue your walk west along George Street, and in the next block you pass a handsome Georgian building on the south side of the street, the Assembly Rooms. In October 1830, this building was the scene of a debate on slavery, with a powerful speech given by the abolitionist Dr Andrew Mitchell Thomson, the first minister of St George's Church (ahead of you, in Charlotte Square). An eye witness described his contribution as being "like the bursting of a bomb". Edinburgh, like many cities in Britain, benefited from the wealth coming from slave plantations in the West Indies and America. Proponents and opponents of slavery faced each other daily on these streets and on occasion debated the issues passionately.

Are there any issues affecting our world today about which you feel passionately - and do you feel confident to speak out about them?

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**a time to love  
and a time to hate**

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As you ponder on this, continue your walk along George Street.



## Stop 9 Frederick Street junction

Take time to stand at the junction of Frederick Street. Look north across the Firth of Forth to Fife. The calming expansive view of the water and rolling countryside contrasts with the bustle of the busy street and, the cityscape around you.

Which refreshes you more profoundly?

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**a time for silence  
and a time for speech**

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Saint Margaret (the Queen of Scotland c.1070 - 1093) made the journey across the Forth from Fife to Edinburgh many times. The villages of South and North Queensferry derive their names from that time. The new road bridge across the estuary is also named the Queensferry Crossing. Margaret was a person of depth and integrity and was deeply admired in her lifetime; people saw God at work in her and through her.

Think of people you know whose genuine goodness lifts your spirit.

## Stop 10 Catherine Sinclair monument

Continue along the street towards Charlotte Square. Turning right at the end of George Street, walk down the hill to the end of North Charlotte Street. On the other side of the street you will see a monument to the 19th century writer and philanthropist, Catherine Sinclair. She was instrumental in acting to alleviate poverty in the city, setting up a school, clean water drinking fountains and a food kitchen for the poor.

She was a contemporary of Walter Scott and he, along with Robert Louis Stevenson and several other writers, is also associated with the New Town of Edinburgh. Authors skilfully engage our emotions, and often powerfully harness our imagination to raise awareness of social issues.

If you look east along Queen Street, you will be looking towards the home of James Young Simpson, a doctor and man of deep faith, who was working at around the same time as Catherine Sinclair. He pioneered the use of anaesthetic in surgery and midwifery. His proposed advances in medicine were controversial, but he persevered for the benefit of his patients. His former home now supports people affected by drug and alcohol abuse.

What opportunities do you have to turn people's weeping into laughing in the way that these people did?

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**a time to weep  
and a time to laugh**

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Now return to Charlotte Square.

## Stop 11 Grand townhouses

Look around you at the former grand townhouses in the square, many of them now offices. Over the years, many influential people have made their homes here, including the First Minister of Scotland whose official residence is on the north side. The domed building which now houses the National Records of Scotland was originally built as St George's Church. Charlotte Square itself was named after the wife of King George III, though the original plan had been to call it St George's Square. Much change has been witnessed here over the centuries.

Think of the changes that have occurred or are taking place in your life. Sometimes change is planned while at other times it

is forced upon us. How do you decide whether to embrace change or to resist it?

### a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing

The story is told of the time when so many lawyers had their homes and offices here that they agreed on a one way system for walking around the square, so that they would not have to meet face to face and be drawn into discussing their legal cases.

How do you decide which direction you take in life?

## Stop 12 Rose Street

Cross George St and walk down towards Princes Street. Stop at the end of Rose Street where you may like to pause.

Following a century of religious persecution, a new Episcopal congregation was created by a young charismatic English preacher, Daniel Sandford, in 1792. In its early years, the congregation worshipped in a chapel, the site of which can be seen a short distance along the south side of Rose Street. In a few years, they outgrew the building and another site had to be found for their place of worship. If you look straight ahead, across Princes Street, you will just be able to see St John's Church, the fine building

which became their home in 1818, and where they have worshipped ever since. The Rose Street building then became a Baptist Chapel for many years.

Consider the moves in your own life. What effect have they had on you?

### a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them

Continue to walk down to Princes Street and cross to the Gardens side, turning right to walk along towards St John's Church.

## Stop 13 St John's Church

Pause and look at the mural on the north side of St John's Church. Murals addressing contemporary issues have appeared at St John's for many years. They are intended to provoke discussion and a response from passers-by on Princes Street. The rector in 1982 was responsible for initiating the often controversial series of painted murals clipped to the exterior of the dormitory walls facing Princes Street as part of the Peace Festival that summer. Some 150 have been created over the years, covering subjects from "the troubles" in Northern Ireland to the detention of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. They are painted by Artists for Justice and Peace.

Provocative art asks us to look at the world in a new way, 'tearing opinion and mending situations'.

Perhaps you could create or take opportunities to speak out about justice and peace issues about which you feel strongly.

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**a time to tear  
and a time to mend**

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## Stop 14 St John's Church graveyard

Go through the wrought iron gate you will see in the railings. As you walk, with the mural boards on your right, and begin to move down the small hill towards the terrace, pause and look left, then focus for a moment on the graveyard.

If you had time to explore the whole graveyard, then you would find many interesting stones, for example one to a former slave, Malvina Wells, born in Grenada and another for the anti-slavery campaigning minister, Dr Andrew Thomson. Malvina's stone reveals that she was loved. It says, "For upwards of 70 years a faithful servant and friend". Dr Thomson's life was shorter, though powerfully impactful through

his preaching and hymn writing for St George's church. Some of those buried beside them are painter Henry Raeburn, Lesley Cumming, admired by Robert Burns and Anne Rutherford, mother of Sir Walter Scott.

The great English painter, Sir Stanley Spencer saw his local graveyard (Cookham) as a place of hope and of rising to newness of life. Do you usually view graveyards with a dash of curiosity concerning life continuing beyond the grave or a dollop of caution concerning death?

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**a time to keep and  
a time to throw away**

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## Stop 15 The Peace Pole

Stop at the Peace Pole on your left beside the descriptor board for St John's graveyard.

Our short pilgrimage comes to a close at this visible symbol of peace - a peace pole, one of 200,000 situated around the globe.

### a time for war and a time for peace

We hope this walk has enabled you to breathe deeply and to consider afresh the web of life and perhaps has stimulated some new connections. This pilgrimage concludes with an extract from a prayer, which many have found helpful, by Kate Compston;

**Peace is like gossamer –  
vulnerable, yet indestructible:  
tear it, and it will be rewoven.  
Peace does not despair.  
Begin to weave a web of peace:  
start in the centre  
and make peace with yourself.**

**Take the thread outwards  
and build peace with your  
family, your community  
-and in the circle of those you  
find it hard to like.**

**Then stretch your concern  
into all the world.**

**Weave a web of peace  
And do not despair.**

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**We hope you feel blessed  
as you return to your personal  
pilgrimage through life.**

Suggested  
donation

£2

This guide has been prepared jointly by  
the three churches that form the **Edinburgh  
City Centre Churches Together** group:

### **St Cuthbert's Parish Church**

0131 229 1142

[www.st-cuthberts.net](http://www.st-cuthberts.net)

### **St Andrew's and St George's West**

0131 225 3847

[www.stagw.org.uk](http://www.stagw.org.uk)

### **St John's**

0131 229 7565

[www.stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk](http://www.stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk)

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Visitors are welcome to come to any services in these  
three churches. Please visit our websites for information  
on the many events that go on throughout the week and  
throughout the year in all three churches. There are clubs,  
discussion groups, concerts, and social events.

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