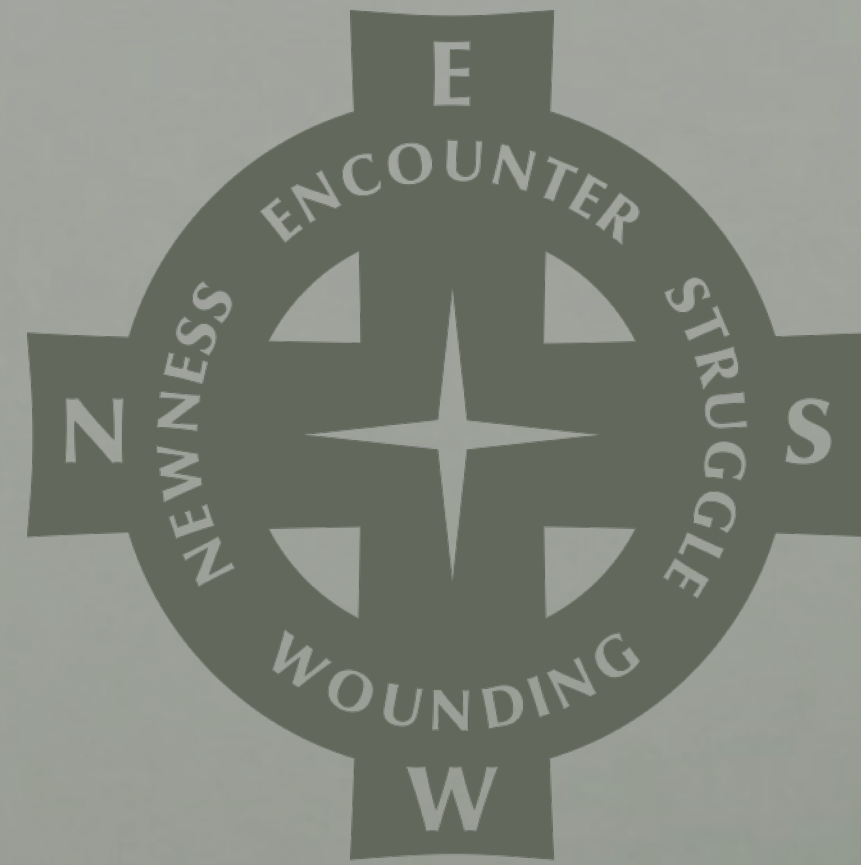




THE  
**PILGRIMAGE**

THE WAY OF THE PILGRIM 2025

COMPASS GROUPS AND CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINES



**WELCOME!**

**OUR PRESENTER TODAY IS KIT O'NEILL,  
PILGRIMAGE GUIDE  
AT  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
FARGO, ND**



Words of  
Greeting from Dr.  
Paul Lang

# Sharing Together

Share a moment of joy you  
experienced since our last  
time together



# The Pilgrimage Mission Statement

*Pilgrimage* creates community and provides tools and experiences through which we learn to hear God's call and respond in faith, **journeying together with friends** on the path to a Spirit-led and joyful life.



# Classical Views of Friendship

Friendship is highly valued as “the crown of life”

Friendship defines us as human beings

Friendships involve deep connections

➤ Intimacy

➤ Trust

➤ Commitment

➤ Loyalty

# Modern View of friendship

Friendships are utilitarian.

Friendships meet our various needs:

➤ *Success at work*

➤ *Companionship*

➤ *Assistance with daily living*

➤ *Fun*

Friendships often are casual relationships.

# Soul friendship is a special place

The gift of a place where anything can be said without fear of criticism or ridicule.

A place where masks and pretensions can be set aside.

A place where it is safe to share deepest secrets, darkest fears, most acute sources of shame, most disturbing questions or anxieties.

A place of grace – a place where others are accepted as they are for the sake of who they may become.

*--Cindy Schwartz*

“How happy, how carefree, how joyful you are if you have a friend with whom you may talk as freely as with yourself, to whom you neither fear to confess any fault nor blush at revealing any spiritual progress, to whom you may entrust all the secrets of your heart and confide all your plans. And what is more delightful than so to unite spirit to spirit and so *to make one out of two* that there is neither fear of boasting nor dread of suspicion? A friend’s correction does not cause pain, and a friend’s praise is not considered flattery.”



ST. AELRED

# Soul Friendship

In Gaelic, *anam* = soul, and *cara* = friend.

In the early Celtic church, an *anam cara* was a teacher, companion, and spiritual guide; someone to whom you confessed the most intimate details of your life.

In relationship with an *anam cara*, you discover your true self and a transformational love that mirrors the love of God.

“The *anam cara* is God’s gift. Friendship is the nature of God.”

--John O'Donohue

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1. Do you have an *anam cara*, a soul friend? How is that friendship different from other relationships?**
- 2. What are the characteristics of a soul friend that you value most?**

In your group, you are invited to share your answers to these questions.

Allow 10 minutes for your discussion.

# Fostering Soul Friendships

## Ways we seek God together:

- Compass Groups
- Courses with small group discussion
- Pilgrimage travel
- Contemplative practices



# Compass Groups

Groups are central to The Pilgrimage  
Ongoing source of spiritual friendship

Spirit-led  
Guide establishes structure and flow

Shared goal is seeking God together  
Diverse personalities and perspectives

Invite silence; listen more than speak  
Encourage deep reflection

Safe space for authentic sharing  
Maintain confidentiality; build trust



# Format of Compass Groups

- Opening Liturgy
- Check in using Pilgrim's Compass
- Prayers
- *Lectio Divina*
- Close with Pilgrim Prayer

# Pilgrim's Compass



**E** = Encounter

**S** = Struggle

**W** = Wounding, Wandering,  
Weakness, Wilderness

**N** = New Name, Newness

# Lectio Divina Process

## 1. *Lectio* (Read)

- Silently repeat a word or phrase that interests you.
- Share aloud the word or phrase that spoke to you. No elaboration.

## 2. *Meditatio* (Reflect)

- Silently reflect on “Where does this scripture or quote touch my life?”
- Share aloud: “I hear, I see, I was struck by...”

## 3. *Oratio* (Respond)

- Silently reflect on “How is God calling me to respond?”
- Share aloud your response to God’s call.

## 4. *Contemplatio* (Rest)

- Rest in God’s grace, in silence.

## QUIET FRIENDSHIP

“Still, when we ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and to touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not-knowing, not-curing, not-healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is the friend who cares.”

Henri Nouwen.  
Seeds of Hope: A Henri Nouwen Reader,  
p. 129

## Lectio Quote

The Pilgrimage maintains a collection of Atlas Pages (*lectio divina* passages) that are used monthly by Compass Groups. You can access them in the Pilgrimage app.

**Experiencing the Lectio  
in Small Groups**

**Follow the pattern of  
Read...Reflect...Respond...Rest**

***For each movement, ponder in silence,  
then briefly share***

Each small group  
has been given a  
designated guide  
to lead the *lectio  
divina*.

You have 15  
minutes for this  
experience.

# A Friendship Blessing

May you be blessed with good friends.

May you learn to be a good friend to yourself.

May you be able to journey to that place in your soul where there is great love, warmth, feeling, and forgiveness.

May this change you.

May it transfigure that which is negative, distant, or cold in you.

May you be brought into real passion, kinship, and affinity of belonging.

May you treasure your friends.

May you be good to them and may you be there for them.

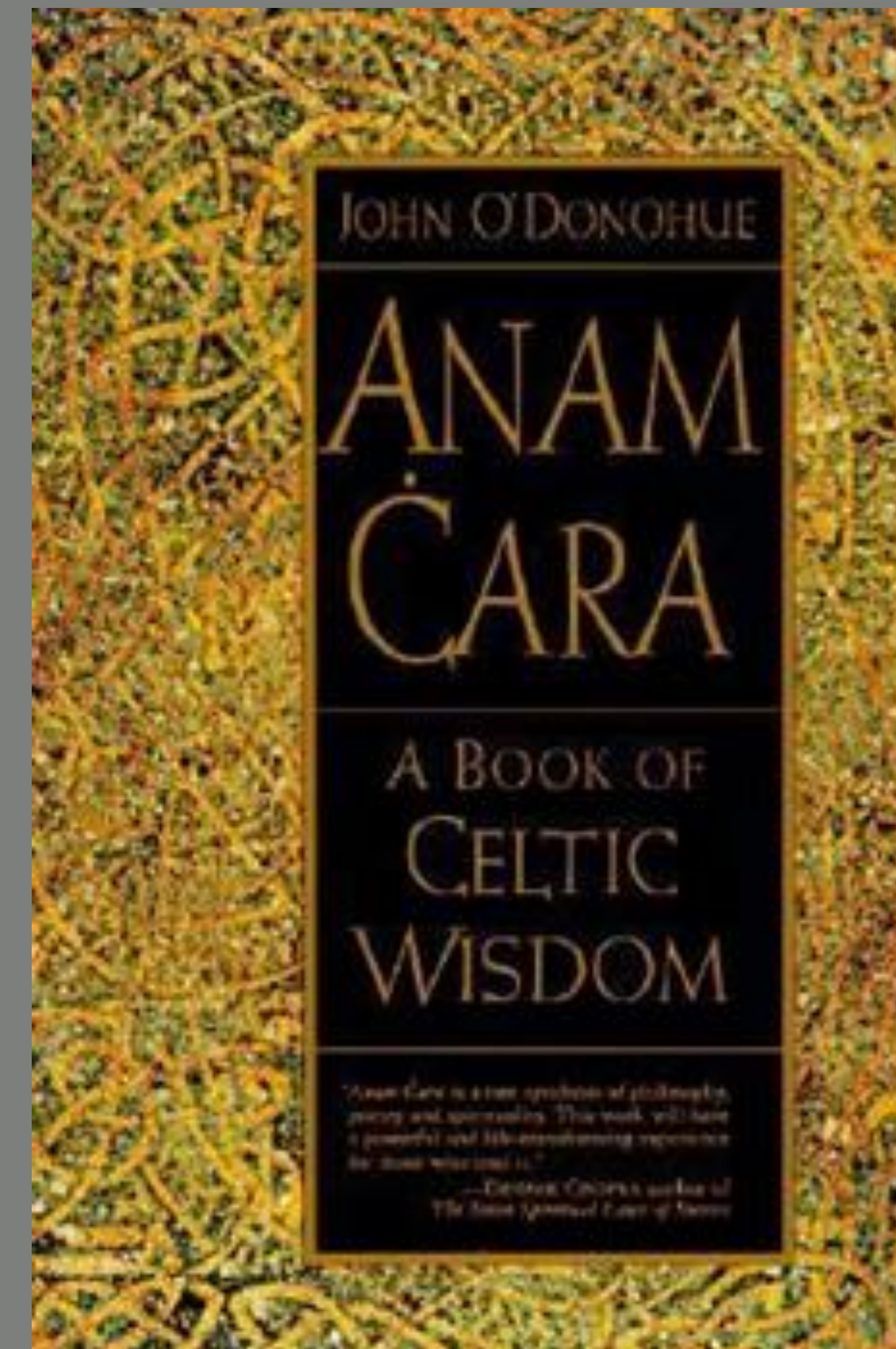
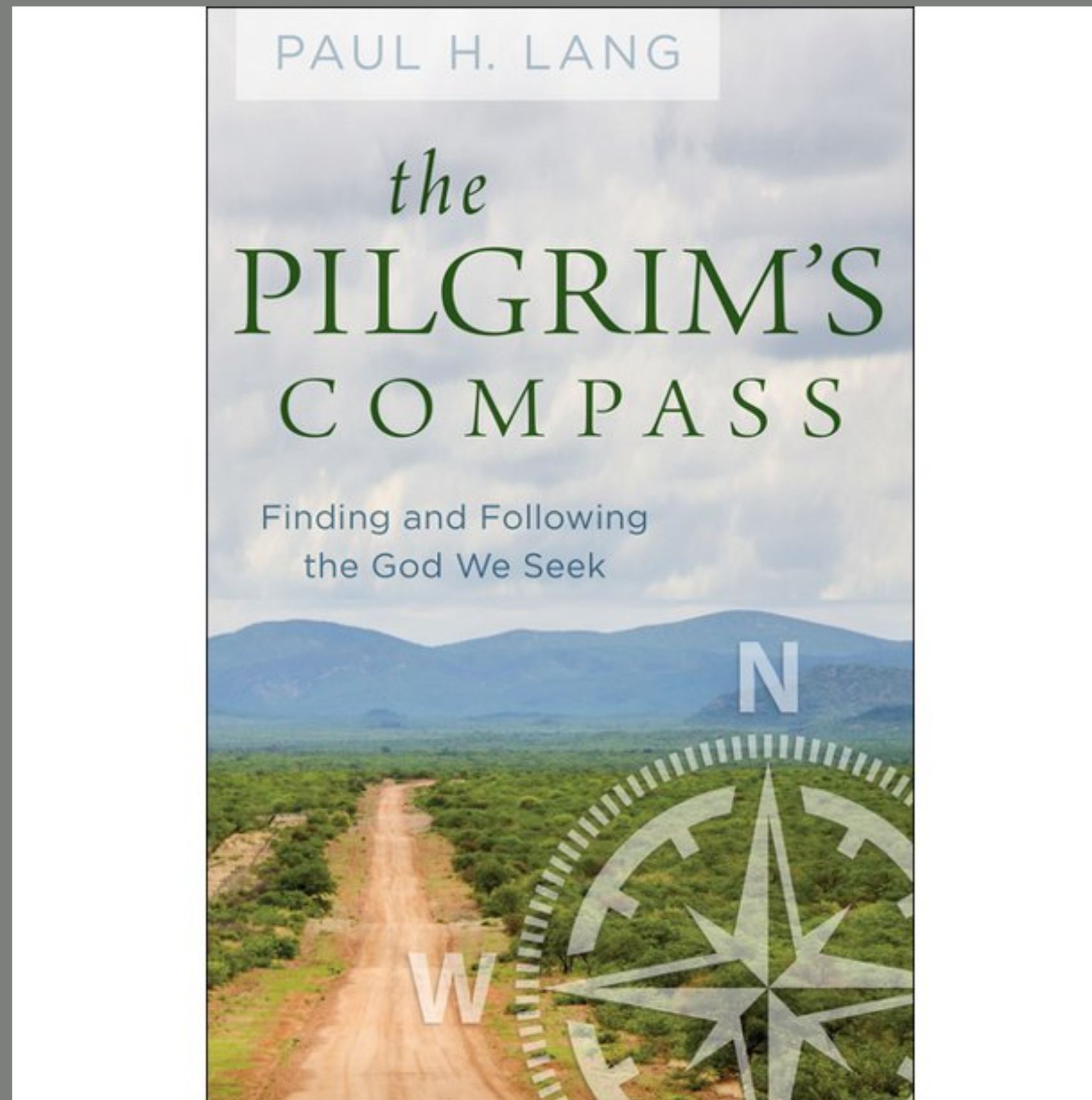
May they bring you all the blessing, challenges, truth, and light  
that you need for your journey..

May you never be isolated.

May you always be in the gentle nest of belonging with your *anam  
cara*.

--John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara*, p.36

# Recommended Reading



# The Way of the Pilgrim

## Upcoming Events

**TWOTP Session 7: Discernment**

**October 11**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Note: *this will be our final session.***

**2026 Travel Pilgrimage**

**Information Sharing  
Session**

**September 25**

**7:30 p.m. ET**