



Shore To Shore – Litter-Picking Pilgrims



Over the summer, churches along the north Wales coast have been gathering on the beach every Monday afternoon to walk, talk, pray and pick up litter. Shore to Shore began at Talacre with a blessing from the Bishop of St Asaph and ends at Llandudno. As the Archdeacon of St Asaph, Andy Grimwood explains, it is part of a strategy being developed to tackle the specific challenges of coastal communities.

Last year, the BBC reported on research by the University of Manchester suggesting that the north Wales coast would be one of the most deprived areas in Britain post Covid. In response to this, Aber-Morfa Mission Area started a Hygiene Hampers project, distributing toiletries, cleaning products and other items to those in need along the coast. Soon, Aled Mission Area got involved and churches discovered how good it can be working together. The question was asked, what more could be done?

Shore to Shore is an answer to that question, recognising that so many people would be opting for a staycation this year. We are walking the coastal path through four Mission Areas, praying for those communities, talking to people about our faith, about our churches and serving our communities by collecting litter, demonstrating our love for the area.

I'm sure the question will be asked, "what next?" We will be having a review meeting in the Autumn to plan for next year. Perhaps something more ambitious, now we know that we can do the simple and show our faith in action, bring hope and demonstrate love.

Here are some reflections from those who have walked Shore to Shore.

A Wonderful Adventure

**Revd Chris Spencer,
Aber-Morfa Mission Area**

I was ready for a new and wonderful adventure in the summer holidays. On six consecutive Monday afternoons a group of us from different churches in the St Asaph Archdeanery would walk a stretch of the north Wales coastline. As we walked together from shore to shore we would be cleaning the beaches, praying for the local communities, spending time in God's glorious creation and with each other.

The exact starting point was in view of Ayr lighthouse, travelling along the beach, through the sand dunes before arriving at Prestatyn. For me one of the many highlights was passing through an area of salt marsh and reed beds and there was stillness with just a few calls of the birds; a haven between the busyness of the beaches and very refreshing along the beautiful stretch of the coastline.

As we picked up litter or spoke to people or prayed we found ourselves embracing the love of God which is always with us and sharing this love with others whom we met, the environment we cleaned and prayers to our loving Father.

My prayer is for us to keep moving forward in God's mission, charting new adventures together and knowing that deep down Jesus walks beside us on our road.





Venturing Out

**Steve and Sharon Ing,
Church of the Holy Spirit, Prestatyn**

On a gloriously hot Monday, laden down with water, we set off, with enthusiasm, for this multi-church event. We had a pleasant start, meeting up with old friends and new, before the Bishop sent us on our way with a very heartfelt prayer and blessing.

The beach dwellers were curious, making obvious trips to the bins, vehemently denying the ownership of the rubbish, and extremely grateful for the work being undertaken.

Following such a hot weekend the bins were overflowing and we were kept very busy litter picking; so much so that we missed the first prayer session at the lighthouse!

But as we walked along Talacre beach, towards Presthaven Sands, the rubbish became scarce and our group of about 30 from various congregations, friends and dogs, became very scattered.

We loved venturing out from the safety of our church, to be greeted by smiles and loud thank yous, and sincerely hope this is the start of us leaving behind the buildings and utilising our wonderful environment for the good of Gods' world. Surely this is the future?

Utter Beauty

**Theresa Curran,
Administrator, Canolfan Dewi Sant
Centre, Pensarn**



I have always followed the thinking that "A stranger is a friend that you just have not yet met" and Shore to Shore is indeed bringing together so many people of different ages and backgrounds. It is wonderful to see new friendships being made, old friendships being re-kindled – all providing much needed comfort to us at a time so many of us still haven't been able to meet up with loved ones who live away.

We chat with one another, pick up litter and stop for prayers along the way. We stop to talk to people we meet as we walk. So many holiday makers are visiting this beautiful part of the country for the very first time, and my experience is that they have loved to have a chat about the area and find out more about Shore to Shore.

I have lived on the north Wales coast all my life, and these walks are truly helping me to appreciate both the utter beauty of the coastline as well the beauty in the hearts of many that live here.



Shore to Shore Seaside Spectacular!

A poem by by Chloe Spencer, age 10

We began our journey at Talacre beach,
On a hot and sunny afternoon,
Bishop Gregory blessed us and sent us on our way,
Shouting "Keep cool" and "see you soon".

With grabbers, red sacks and plenty of gloves,
We marched along the seashore,
When up ahead we spied a light house,
And we knew there was much more.

As we filled our sacks with plastic and junk,
We made our way along the dunes,
We stopped to pray near a saltwater marsh,
And listened to the little terns' tune.

Our second journey began at Prestatyn's Nova Centre,
We were all pumped up and ready to go,
We met many friends along the way,
Hunting for rubbish high and low.

As we passed along the golf course on our way,
Dodging flying golf balls and cars,
We knew that the Harbour Hub was calling our names,
"Keep going" we said, "It's not too far!"

After many hours we reached our next stop,
Counting 50 red sacks of trash,
We were tired but happy and needed a lolly,
Proclaiming "Next week's going to be a bash!"