



EARTH & SOUL

reawakening to the sacredness of the earth and every human being

Disappointments & Hopes

Hello, dear friends.

I was sadly disappointed not to be with you this month in Virginia for our School of Earth & Soul retreats at Shrine Mont. And I was so sorry for the inconvenience and changes in schedule this meant for those of you who were signed up and ready to come, as well as the time and energy that leadership teams had put into these events only for them to be cancelled. There have been many disappointments over these past months, but most of all it has been the sadness of not being together again physically that has been most difficult.

The October cancellation of events has been full of disappointment. But it has also been a time in which I have felt prompted to ask some important questions about the ongoing life of Earth & Soul and the possibility of reimagining our work. Until this point in the pandemic I have been in waiting mode, waiting for COVID to pass before resuming our School retreats and Iona pilgrimage weeks. I now see that we don't need to simply wait. There are things we can explore together in new ways to nurture us as a community of study, spiritual practice, and compassionate action.

I'd like to share with you two hopeful explorations that we are looking into. The first is that we are exploring the possibility of a livestream presentation from Iona this November! It will be especially for those of you who were signed up for the October events, as well as for our School leadership teams across the country. The second is that we are almost ready to launch our House Gathering initiative, in which we will offer a template for small group meetings online to nurture our shared commitment to study, spiritual practice and compassionate action. So, stay tuned! We'll be in touch soon with more detail.

With gratefulness and blessings to you,

John Philip Newell

(Edinburgh, 18 October 2021)