



The Inner Journey

Lake Susan to Walk Jones Wildlife Sanctuary

Overview

This pilgrimage invites you to examine how events in your life (past and/or present) have changed you and calls you to consider what that change might be preparing you for in the future.

Duration: ~1.5-2 hours **Distance:** ~1 mile round trip **Route:** Lake Susan → Greybeard Road → Walk Jones Wildlife Sanctuary → Return to Lake Susan **Tone:** Contemplative, unhurried, grounded in faith and honest reflection

GATHERING — Lake Susan

Welcome & Framing

Welcome. You are about to take a short pilgrimage together. Before you start, let's name the difference between what you're doing and just going for a walk: **A walk takes you somewhere. A pilgrimage changes you along the way.**

Ground Rules

Before you head out, a few things to know:

- **Distance & time.** It's about a mile there and back. This should take right around an hour.
- **Road safety.** Most of this walk is alongside a road, so stay aware and watch for cars.
- **Bathrooms.** There aren't any at the sanctuary. If you need to run to the Inn quickly before you begin, now's the time.
- **Pace yourself.** The road gets kind of steep going up — but it's all downhill coming back. Don't race. In fact, do not make this an aerobic activity. Take your time.

- **Lean in.** You are invited to lean into this. If you are doing this as part of a group, be respectful of your fellow pilgrims. Just tone it down for an hour and see what could happen.

PART ONE — The Walk In (Silence)

Beginning the Walk

You will begin this walk in silence. No talking, no phones. Just you and what's around you.

As you walk, notice the creek on your right. This creek was transformed by Hurricane Helene. It will never be the same. As you look at it, think about how that might be reflected by something in your own life — an event that changed everything, a goal you haven't yet reached, a goal you didn't reach at all. Notice how the rock bank has been reshaped. Notice the damage done to the creek.

At some point along the way, walk to the creek and pick up a rock that draws your attention. Carry it with you. Make it small enough to hold comfortably — you'll have it for a while.

Walk in silence.

At the World Cities Distance Sign (left side of road)

(Pause here briefly.)

From this point on, if you want to talk to someone, you may — but only in pairs, and only about what you're thinking and feeling right now. If you don't feel like talking, stay in the silence. Be respectful of those who choose to remain quiet.

Continue walking.

PART TWO — Walking Deeper

Into the Destruction

As you continue along the road, you'll soon notice that you're walking deeper into this destruction. The landscape around you is unraveling — scarred by the storm, reshaped by

forces beyond anyone's control. Let that symbolize something in your own life. An unraveling. A season that felt — or feels — like too much.

Paul writes in Romans 8: *"We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption, the redemption of our bodies."* This land is groaning. Maybe you are too.

"Dead End" / "No Outlet" Signs

Soon you'll see the sign ahead that says "Dead End," and to your left, one that says "No Outlet." You're making a conscious choice to keep walking into this. That takes courage — in this moment and in life.

PART THREE — Walk Jones Wildlife Sanctuary

Entering the Sanctuary

Follow the signs into the sanctuary.

Station 1 — Leave Your Rock

At Station 1, leave your rock here. Putting this rock down represents leaving behind the thing you've been carrying — the thing you've been thinking about on this walk. You have moved through it. Set it down.

The Pond

Continue around the pond. Stay present. Notice the landscape around you — what's growing, what's still, what's moving.

Station 3 — The Labyrinth

At Station 3, follow the instructions for the labyrinth. Walk it at your own pace.

Leaving the Labyrinth

As you leave the labyrinth, you are coming out on the other side. You are not forgetting or pushing aside the ways you've been shaped by difficulty. You are noticing how God continues to form you — through the hard things, not in spite of them.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians: *"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here."* You are not who you were when you started walking. The old hasn't disappeared — it's been made part of something new.

PART FOUR — The Walk Back

Returning

It's time to walk back the way you came. This walk back symbolizes your return to normal life.

As you walk, notice the beauty around you. Listen to the stream as it flows. Notice the plants and trees. Look up at the mountains.

If something draws your attention along the way — a leaf, a piece of bark, a rock, a stick — pick it up and bring it with you. We'll use it when we close this pilgrimage together.

Walk back at your own pace.

CLOSING — Lake Susan

Communal Art

(Once everyone has returned.)

Take whatever you brought back and place it here as a small piece of art to leave for others to enjoy, and an offering of gratitude for whatever we received on this walk.

Allow time for everyone to place their items and step back.

Reflection

The landscape you just walked through has been scarred and shaped by erosion, by storms, and by the slow work of time. And it is still beautiful. It reflects your life. Think about how this place

— and you — have gone through change after change, some good, some devastating, to become what it is right now.

Closing Silence

Close with two minutes of silence.