

## Walk 1: Grasmere to Chapel Stile

This walk takes you up and over the fell from one valley to another, with stunning views in every direction.

**Difficulty: Hard**

**4.8 miles**

**1082 ft altitude gain**

**2-3 hrs**

This glorious walk is not especially long, but it is exciting, with views stretching over Grasmere in one direction and Langdale in the other.

It is one of the harder walks in our collection as it has some steep patches, including one very steep ascent from Chapel Stile. After heavy rain the streams can become much fuller and more difficult to cross. There are also boggy areas to cross which can be slippery. Please bear this in mind before you set



out.

If you are looking for something more adventurous, you might choose to leave Chapel Stile via Meg's Gill - a spectacular ascent up a steep gully.

There are many places to find refreshments in Grasmere, but [Grasmere Garden Village](#), just opposite the church, serves a lovely cup of tea.

In Langdale, [Wainwrights' Inn](#) serves food at lunch time and the shop opposite will provide an excellent selection of sandwiches.



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## St Oswald's, the parish Church of Grasmere.

The first church was founded by Oswald, King of Northumbria, in 642. The present church stands on or near the same site, and is dedicated to him. It dates from the 14th century, and has doubled in size by the addition of a parallel nave situated to the north of the original nave, between 1490 and 1500. The roof was rebuilt circa 1562, which involved adding a second tier of arches to the arcade. The churchyard is famous for the grave of William Wordsworth who lived nearby at Dove Cottage

### **The Walk**

Park in Red Bank car park or use the 599 bus that leaves every 20 minutes from Bowness / Ambleside. Alternatively, roadside parking in Chapel Stile and on the route above Elterwater is free.

1. From St. Oswald's church, exit by main S gate, turn R, then immediately L to pass the Garden Centre and car park, continuing up Red Bank Road. Go past the Faeryland tea garden and walk on up the hill for approx. half a mile to "The Lea" [OL7 333064]. (20 mins)
2. Opposite "The Lea", take the tarmac drive R up to "Huntingstiles", then go straight ahead up a cobbled and stony track, eventually following the fingerpost, signed to Elterwater. Go through the gate with a yellow arrow on a clear track straight ahead. Near the top of the hill, a boggy patch can be crossed using stepping stones. At the top, turn around to take in the view and do the first meditation. (20 mins)



### **Meditation 1 - Just above the bog at the top of the field**

Turn round and look north. In the distance you can pick out Helm Crag, rising just left above Grasmere village. Notice the large rock on the right of the summit, commonly known as “The Lion and the Lamb”, because it looks as though a great rock lion is towering over a remarkably unperturbed and distinctly small lamb. Power and powerlessness, strength and vulnerability in one rock formation. It is strange to think that these two creatures have lived in such close proximity to each other for millions of years.

For the Christian, when God became human, power and powerlessness were disorientating close to each other. The God who created the entire universe, became a tiny vulnerable baby in a manger; the God who is the ground of our very being, was nailed to a cross. In fact, Jesus is described as being both the Lion of Judah and the Lamb that was Slain (Revelation 5:5-6). The Word was made flesh—the lion and the lamb were together in one person.

Take a moment to think about where in your life you feel strong and where you feel vulnerable.

3. Go through the gate at the top onto the Open Access area and follow the well-defined path over the rise and downhill to the fingerpost on the unfenced road. Turn R, following this road (or the first bend can be avoided by using the footpath marked with a fingerpost.)



At a junction on the road, you will see a sign to the right for Dungeon Ghyll painted on the wall; follow it and continue all the way to Chapel Stile Church where you can do meditation 2. (30 mins)

**Holy Trinity Church** is at the heart of the Langdale Valley community and welcomes everybody, whether they're born and bred here, newcomers, regular visitors or simply passing through. Built in 1851, it is a fine example of a country Lakeland church, home to the much-admired Millennium Tapestry depicting the history of Langdale. In its peaceful location, the church offers respite, and a beautiful place for private prayer.



### **Meditation 2 - In Chapel Stile churchyard, before the ascent**

Mountains can be spiritual places for many people. Jesus often went up into the mountains to pray. Moses went up to receive the commandments (Ex 19:3) and to see the Promised Land (Deut 34:1-3); Elijah to pray for rain on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:42); and Peter, James and John to witness Jesus' transfiguration with Moses and Elijah (Matt 17). Mountains can be places of strangeness, otherness and transcendence. For a moment, perhaps, we see our lives transfigured, we see more clearly what really matters, and maybe we feel closer to God.

Is this your experience of being in steep and rocky places? Are you hoping to feel closer to God as you climb? What might that be like?

4. After exploring the church, exit the churchyard by the east gate and go back up the lane beyond "Walthwaite" cottages as far as the last house on L [323055]. Take the wide grassy track L ascending gently through a gate, and follow the now narrower path as it climbs alongside the wall. Leaving the wall, continue up to a path junction. Here, turn L to climb the steepest path, pausing for breath at a viewpoint, then continue round a bend L to reach the cairn at the top [328057] between Spedding Crag and Dow Bank. (20 mins)

### Meditation 3 - at the highest point cairn

For centuries travellers through these hills have relied on cairns (piles of stones, or stone structures) to indicate that they are on the right route. Spotting a cairn in the mist can be an enormous relief. In many religions cairns mark some spiritual site. They indicate to the spiritual traveller that they are on the right route in more than just the geographical sense. In the Bible stones were often used to build altars to God in strategic places. Jacob built one to mark his treaty with Laban (Gen 31:41-49). At God's direction, Joshua ordered the Israelites to build a memorial after the miraculous crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land (Josh 4).

In modern times, pilgrimage routes often feature large cairns and adding a stone can represent a symbolic laying down of our sins with thanks to God for forgiveness through Jesus, our Redeemer.

Would that be helpful for you?

5. Beyond the cairn, continue north; the path skirts the right-hand side of the bog. Aim for a large boulder, backed by trees and another view of "the Lion and the Lamb" on Helm Crag (see photo right).



The path becomes quite uneven and boggy in places as it passes

through juniper bushes, descending to a path junction just before a wall. Here, turn L to follow this path uphill by the wall to a junction of 4 paths [326064]. (15 mins)

6. Here, turn R to take the path going downhill, keeping the wall on your right; views of Grasmere soon appear. Go through a kissing gate to leave the open access area and continue down along the wall, crossing a small stream. At the next kissing gate, the path goes through the wall, passing two prominent trees and crosses a clear area. It then continues through a further gate, into an enclosed stony track leading down to exit on Red Bank Road opposite the Faeryland tea garden (excellent cream teas!). Follow the road L back into Grasmere. (25 mins)