

Walk 10: Rusland to Satterthwaite

A stunning walk round the secluded Rusland valley.

Difficulty: Moderate

4.3 miles

962 ft altitude gain

2– 3 hrs

At the Southern end of our Mission Community, the Rusland valley is quiet and there are not many tourists. You will find parish churches in Rusland and Satterthwaite and a detour will take you to a Quaker Meeting House: Rook Howe, a short walk from Rusland Church.

The walk is shorter than some of the others, but quite tricky in places. You will be on forest tracks which are uneven and potentially muddy, so boots and a map



are recommended.

There is wildlife all around here with ospreys, otters, and all sorts of forest creatures, so it is worth taking some time to be still and enjoy these peaceful surroundings.

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The Walk:

You can park at the side of the road near St Paul's Church, Rusland.

Meditation 1: at Rusland Church

A prayer to start the walk

Lord, today brings
paths to discover
possibilities to choose
people to encounter
peace to possess
promises to fulfil
perplexities to ponder
power to strengthen
pointers to guide
pardon to accept
praises to sing
and a Presence to proclaim.

David Adam in *Pocket Prayers for Pilgrims*, compiled by John Pritchard, 2011 Church House Publishing, p28

1. Leaving St Paul's Church, Rusland behind you, walk into the car park of the Rusland Reading Rooms and turn right through a wooden gate. Take the path up the hill through the trees away from the church, shortly joining a larger path.

2. After a short descent, turn right on a stronger path, which will take you through some high deer gates. Go left at a yellow arrow towards Force Forge Mill. Cross the river by a wooden bridge, go around the house, through the gate and up to the road, where you should turn right.

3. Walk for 50 yards or so and then left up a rocky track. This path climbs steadily for some time before reaching a forest road. Go right and continue until you reach a T-junction. Go right again and the forest road bends away to the left and descends to cross the beck. The road then bends round to the right and you will see a sculpture in the river.



Meditation 2: while overlooking the sculpture

Water is a symbol of life, a symbol of the soul, a gift from God springing from the ground. Without it we wouldn't be here, no life would be here. 'I thirst' said Jesus on the cross, his body demanding that substance which is so vital to life, so foundational to all living things, so basic to existence as we know it: water.

For the Christian, water is also foundational to faith. This ordinary stuff of life is also the symbolic gateway to a new life of faith, through baptism.

In the sculpture by Alannah Robins, which dates back to 1995, two figures stand in the water, 'one baptising, the other being baptised' (the words of the artist). The stationary figures seem timeless in contrast to the constantly flowing water, the quantity of which changes with the seasons. Each individual splash is a unique moment in time, never to be repeated.

If we have been baptised, we can allow ourselves to be reminded of our baptism, not as something that happened just once, perhaps when we were babies, but something that is lived now, with God constantly sustaining us like water does and washing away the things we have done wrong. We are washed by the God who promises streams in the desert, mighty rivers in the dry land and living water to wash away every tear.

As the deer longs for the water brooks,
so longs my soul for you, O God.

My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God;
when shall I come before the presence of God? (Psalm 42:1-2)

A prayer:

Lord, our Living Water,
help me to remember you at all times of day.
Help me to realise
that you are essential to my existence;
that without you life is dry and filled with dust.
Help me to take the time to drink
at the spring of your refreshing and life-giving waters,
so that I in my turn
may live in a way that gives life to others.

Sally Welch in *Pocket Prayers for Pilgrims*, compiled by John Pritchard, 2011 Church House Publishing, p30

4. Continue down the hill, but before you reach the gate, turn left at a green marker and follow a small path up into the trees. Go straight on up the hill, avoiding a track to the right. At the brow of the hill there is an interesting structure made from dry stone walls. Continuing on the same path, you will encounter some steeper steps.



At a fork, follow the arrow on the green marker pointing to the right. This will take you down the hill to the road via the bridleway. When you reach the road, turn left and walk into the village of Satterthwaite. You may decide to stop for some well-earned refreshments in the Eagle's Head, before continuing to the church.

Meditation 3: in Satterthwaite church

Christ is present everywhere, but perhaps we particularly feel his presence in places where prayer has been practised regularly. This church building is modest and architecturally unremarkable. But it is deeply loved and well cared for, and rightly so, for here Christians come to meet others on the same journey, and have done for several generations. Here, people have come with their deepest needs. Some have had great faith and others were not sure what the word 'faith' might mean for them. Here the rhythms of the seasons have been observed and celebrated. Here people have received the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism. Here people have searched for a pardon for their sins and understood God's forgiveness. Here people have come to make their wedding vows, or in grief to say farewell to a loved one. Here people have received a foretaste of the kingdom in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Take a moment to feel the presence of God in the stillness of this place, and to sense the prayers of those who have gone before.

Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

A prayer:

We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all your churches throughout the world, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

St Francis of Assisi, 1181-1226

5. In the village, turn right off the main road, leaving the church on your left. The road soon bends round to the South and becomes a path. It winds up into the trees; finger posts will direct you to Dale Park. Turn right at the fork at the top of the hill and then cross a series of forest roads, following the narrow paths down the hill. (These paths can be wet and slippery and you might prefer to take the forest roads which take slightly longer to achieve the same destination.) At the bottom, go right on the forest road until you reach the road. Again, go right and walk into the hamlet of Force Mills.



6. At the road junction, go straight on and then immediately take the lane which bears up to the left, following the fingerpost to Thwaite Moss. At a stone gate, bear right, staying on this side of the wall (again, following a fingerpost to Thwaite Moss.) The trees will soon clear leaving lovely views and some wonderful wildlife can be seen. After a while, the lane will take you through a gate and on down to the road. Turn right on the road and up to Rusland church.

Meditation 4: At Rusland Church

A prayer to finish

All shall be Amen and Alleluia.
We shall rest and we shall see,
we shall see and we shall know,
we shall know and we shall love,
we shall love and we shall praise.
Behold our end which is no end.

St Augustine 354-430