

## Walking Sacred Paths: Holy Island Lindisfarne

A Chaplain's Pilgrimage by: Rev Mike Walker, South Wales Police Chaplain and One Spirit Interfaith Minister.



Rev Mike Walker

Rev Kisser Paludan

Rev Carl Denton

Rev Cheryl Harvey and Paul

Rev Gary Dean and Theresa

Rev Sharon Rossi and Paul

And New Friends katie, Jason and Liz

In the ancient tradition of pilgrims seeking solace and meaning, twelve of us set forth to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

Our pilgrimage to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne was a sacred journey of remembrance, prayer, and deep connection. We were a group brought together by faith, friendship and compassion: Rev Mike Walker, South Wales Police Chaplain; Rev Carl Denton, NHS Chaplain; Rev Gary Dean, University chaplain, accompanied by his wife Theresa; Rev Sharon Rossi and her partner Paul; Rev Kisser Paludan; and Rev Cheryl Harvey, joined by her husband Paul. Also with us were two people who became new friends Katie and Jason.

Our journey began not merely with physical steps, but with a sacred blessing from Sister Tessa, who was a Nun on Lindisfarne in her earlier years, whose prayers carried us gently forward.

At both the beginning and end of our pilgrimage, we were embraced by two beautifully crafted ceremonies—one led by Rev. Gary Dean and the other by Rev. Cheryl Harvey. These moments of shared worship gave shape to our journey, anchoring us in unity and purpose. The ceremonies culminated in a moving anointing for each of us.

Before reaching the island, we were serenaded—not only by the ethereal calls of seals gathering nearby, but by the voices of Rev. Cheryl Harvey and her husband, Paul, whose music deepened the sacred atmosphere of the crossing.

We walked to the island barefoot, like the pilgrims who came before us, carrying scallop shells—symbols of spiritual journey and transformation. The cold sand

beneath our feet reminded us that sacred journeys require vulnerability as much as strength.

Within the quiet sanctuary of Lindisfarne's chapel, I lit candles that flickered with meaning and memory. Each flame represented a prayer for the dedicated officers, PCSOs, chaplains, and support staff who serve the communities of South Wales with courage and compassion. We also lifted up prayers for the family and friends of the ministers present.

Particularly moving were the prayers offered for members of our police family who bear the heaviest burdens—those grieving, those who have experienced the heartache of miscarriage, and those mourning babies born asleep. These private sorrows, often hidden in the day-to-day demands of service, were brought into the light and honoured with reverence.

In this ancient place—where prayers have risen for centuries—I felt both the weight of responsibility and the blessing of being entrusted with it. The island, set apart by tides and time, became a sanctuary where heartfelt intentions could be offered without distraction.

For me personally, the lighting of candles and the prayers I offered on behalf of those who had asked me to do so was a humbling and sacred honour. To carry their griefs, hopes, and intentions into that holy space was a moment of profound connection—between us, between heaven and earth, and between all those we held in prayer.

We returned changed—not by a dramatic revelation, but by a quiet grace. A reminder that in our service to others, we walk together on paths that are both professional and deeply personal. And when burdens grow too heavy for one alone, we carry them together.

This pilgrimage was more than a walk. It was a sacred act of love, remembrance, and solidarity. It reminded us of the healing power of prayer, the strength of community, and the quiet dignity of walking in faith alongside one another.

My heartfelt thanks go to the OneSpirit Interfaith Ministers, their partners, and our cherished friends. Thank you for helping me carry the sacred responsibility of lighting candles and offering prayers for the many within the police community who reached out. Your presence and support made the occasion deeply poignant. To walk this journey with those I trained and was ordained alongside—and their loved ones—was a profound blessing. I am proud to call you friends.



Crossing the Sands – The pilgrimage begins on the shimmering tidal causeway.



Pilgrims walking through the sacred path revealed by the tide.



Arrival – The historic church stands as a symbol of spiritual destination.



Inside the Church – A moment of prayer and scripture reading.



Rev Carl Denton & Rev Mike Walker



Rev Kisser Paludan





Rev Gary Dean,Waving.



Shells carried by Pilgrims



Rev Cheryl Harvey and Sister Tessa



