



## Church Rock – Church Rock Mountain, VA

| Length   | Difficulty | Streams | Views | Solitude | Camping |
|--|------------|---------|-------|----------|---------|
| 7.6 mls  | ★          | N/A     | ★     | ★        | ★       |
| <b>Hiking Time:</b> 4.5 hours including breaks<br><b>Elev. Gain:</b> 1,760 ft<br><b>Parking:</b> If the lower gate on FR482 is closed park here 38.72425, -78.86947.<br>Between 8/1 and 1/10 the lower gate is open and you can park at the trailhead and upper lot. |            |         |       |          |         |

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



One of the most secluded panoramic vista hikes in western Virginia. Church Rock has expansive views to the north and east from its main rock outcrop and to the southeast from the Church Mountain ridgeline. The hike climbs Church Mountain with ten switchbacks and it can be challenging if the weather is warm, however the effort is more than worth it as you're rewarded with spectacular views from one of the least visited pinnacles in the Old Dominion.

For most of the year you need to start the hike from the lower parking area as FR482 is closed and only opens from October 1 - January 10. If you do make the hike when it's open the total length will reduce to 5.6 miles. If you plan on doing this as a backpack there are two nice campsites along the route. The first is on the ridge just before the descent in to the saddle, and the second is in the saddle below the overlook from Church Rock. You will have to carry in water.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** - From the lower parking area on FR482 pass around the closed gate and follow gravel FR482 for 1.0 miles. This area was recently timbered and provides nice views of the valley to the east.
- ▶ **Mile 1.0** - Arrive at the end of FR482, upper parking area, and the beginning of the Church Rock Trail. Follow the yellow blazed Church Rock Trail for 50 yards where it makes a sharp right. A old unused road continues straight. Remain right on the yellow trail and begin a gradual ascent of Church Mountain. The trail soon turns right and crosses the only stream of the hike. After 0.85 miles on the yellow trail make the first of ten switchbacks on the way to the ridge. As the Church Rock Trail climbs the mountain cross several old road cuts, make sure to follow the yellow blazes. At the second switchback there are views of Church Rock.
- ▶ **Mile 3.0** - Arrive at the ridgeline and intersection of the white blazed Talc Trail. The ridge here has very little underbrush and is mostly grass covered. Turn left on the white blazed Talc Trail and in 100 yards there is an opening in the trees to the south and views down the valley. Just before the Talc Trail descends into the saddle pass a campsite with room for multiple tents. Continue into the saddle and pass the second campsite of the hike. This campsite has log seats and more room for camping. Pass through the saddle and begin to climb and scramble through a rocky area. The trail veers left here so keep an eye out for the white blazes. Turn directly uphill steeply requiring hand-over-hand climbing for the remaining 60 yards to the summit.
- ▶ **Mile 3.8** - Arrive at the Church Rock overlook area where there are two main view outcrops. The westerly overlook has views along Church Mountain and north of the Great North Mountain range. Cross over to the main easterly overlook with more expansive views where on a clear day you can see both ranges of the Massanutten as well as the Shenandoah National Park in the far distance. This is the turn around point. Retrace your route back to the parking area.
- ▶ **Mile 7.6** - Arrive back at the parking area on FR482