



The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale



“He is Risen!”

‘Church in the Home’

Edition 5

Sunday April 19th – Saturday April 25th

From the Vicarage

Like me, you may have been struck this week with the image of the 125 foot figure, ‘Christ the Redeemer’, towering above Rio de Janeiro, dressed in a Dr’s scrubs with a stethoscope. This was then followed by other projected images of healthcare workers and the national flags of countries hardest hit by the virus. Messages of hope and unity were also shared in various languages whilst the Archbishop of the city Dom Orani Tempesta celebrated mass in honour of all medical workers. It made for a powerful statement – but of what, I wonder, was it speaking?

Judith Woods writing in ‘The Telegraph’ spoke of the challenge of celebrating Easter in the UK when over 10,000 people have already lost their lives to the virus. ‘Could it be respectful?’ she asked. Her observation was that it seemed to signal a ‘new, if tentative mood of renewal’ with the emphasis once again being on ‘faith in God’, but also of a ‘faith in each other’. Arch bishop Justin Welby praised the ‘heroism’ of NHS staff and key workers and Pope Francis spoke of a ‘contagion of hope’.

It was certainly an Easter the likes of which many of us have never experienced before, but amongst the grief, the heartache and the distress over loved ones, and the anxiety about finances, food and employment, the image of Christ with his arms wide open and looking over us, provides the much needed reminder that **we are not alone**. The Easter message of hope and life in the resurrected Christ is alive and essentially relevant to each and every one of us today. And here is the miracle of Easter. Victory over death and victory over all things that would seek to reduce us and restrict us. Lives transformed, lives filled with the very presence of God through his Holy Spirit, lives safe in the promise of eternal life. I get so excited every time someone undergoes this miracle of transformation, when they meet for themselves, the risen Christ.

The response from around the Dale to the governments direction to ‘stay home, stay safe and save the NHS’ appears to be being well observed with outstanding service from so many members of our community to ensure that we are fed and supplied and kept in touch with. With the signs of new life around us in the fields and in our gardens, the hope of brighter things in the days ahead rises within us. Take a look at the beautiful pictures sent in to the website for our virtual Easter Flower Festival and the joy conveyed in the ‘Lighthouse’ video of so many people of different ages all participating in the dance, and I’m sure your hearts will be lifted as well.

Our Archbishop spoke of the need for there to be ‘a resurrection of our common life, a new normal’ created for our future. May the joy, hope and resurrection life of Christ fill our hearts, our homes and our future afresh, that we may, in the words of Her Majesty the Queen, move forward ‘with new hope and fresh purpose’.

A very happy and hope filled Eastertide to you all.



Crown Him with many Crowns

Music thoughts
from Sarah

This tremendous traditional hymn is perfect for this Sunday. It speaks of the sacrifice of the crucifixion, the victory of the resurrection, the sacrifice tangible in the 'wounds yet visible', the peace he leaves and the unending praise that shall never, never fail! <https://youtu.be/Kc3UnhPHTOo>

Crown him with many crowns
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified;
no angels in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends their burning eye
at mysteries so bright.

Crown Him the Lord of peace,
Whose power a sceptre sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease,
And all be prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end,
And round His pierced feet
Fair flowers of glory now extend
Their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown him the Lord of years,
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.



The Blessing <https://youtu.be/uZ55mDL7dA0>

This contemporary song is brand new. The writers from Elevation Worship in Charlotte, North Carolina had an awesome experience of hearing from God directly when coming to write a song. It was not their intention or style or content, but they heard and received the scripture of blessing. It has gone viral globally as an Easter anthem and totally relevant for these times we are in. It is very moving to know that God wants to bless us ***right now*** and our families and our children and their children and their children ... I have been playing and praying this VERY LOUD over us all.

The Lord bless you
And keep you
Make His face shine upon you
And be gracious to you
The Lord turn His
Face toward you
And give you peace

Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen

May His favour be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family and your children
And their children, and their children

May His presence go before you
And behind you, and beside you
All around you, and within you
He is with you, He is with you

In the morning, in the evening
In your coming, and your going
In your weeping, and rejoicing
He is for you, He is for you

He is for you, He is for you



Sunday April 19th Bible Readings:

Acts 2:14 22-32, Psalm 16, 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31

Click on this site, type in the reading you want and then listen to David Suchet read it to you.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/suchet/nivuk/Gen.1>

Reflection

Low Sunday

Today is sometimes called 'Low Sunday', not because church attendance, swelled by Easter, usually shrinks again, but perhaps because the pomp and finery put on by some 'high' churches, is set aside for more workaday vestments. In the 4th century, St Augustine referred to those who were newly baptised on Easter Even putting aside their special white robes after this Sunday, and resuming their ordinary clothes again. If we didn't know this, we might be forgiven for thinking that today may very *well* be called 'low' after this strange Easter which, in spite of our changed circumstances, has hopefully lifted up our hearts. Because here we are again, still in lock down, with no prospect of anything changing much, for weeks.

'May you live in interesting times'. This is said to be a Chinese curse meaning, 'May ill befall you'. Just now, we would be better off living in *un*-interesting times, when, in the words of U A Fanthorpe, 'only dull peace sprawled boringly over the earth.' Being locked in, even for those who are used to solitude, is peculiarly difficult now because it has (for very good reasons) been imposed upon us. We did not choose it. And with Brexit on the back burner, corona virus fills the newspapers. Self-help articles are being spewed out every hour, on the hour.

We are fortunate to live in a beautiful part of the world. We are able, daily, to lift up our eyes unto the hills. 'From where does my help come? / My help comes from the Lord, who has made Heaven and earth.' (Psalm 121). Today's psalm (16) echoes this conviction. 'Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge / I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing.'

Peter quotes this psalm in today's reading from Acts. 'I saw the Lord before me / Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.' After the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this once cowardly disciple has become a new man. Now, fearless and bold, he proclaims his faith in the resurrected Christ: 'God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Small wonder that those who heard him were 'cut to the heart'.

Another name for today is 'Thomas's' Sunday'. Today, the story from John's gospel, of Thomas's demanding physical proof that Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead, is traditionally read in churches. 'Doubting Thomas' has often had a bad press so I was glad to discover that some traditions actually celebrate this disciple, on this day, glad because his story is central to what Easter is about. It addresses so pointedly the place where, I suspect, most of us now are, both those who believe, and those who struggle to believe. For what on earth is happening to us all? Can we really trust God's promises? Is he really 'our refuge and strength', or are these just empty words?

Thomas was scrupulously honest. The others had seen Jesus, or had seen clear signs that he had risen from the tomb. He had not. How moving is his response to the 'proof' that Jesus offers him, the pierced hands and the pierced feet. Just five simple words: 'My Lord and My God'. Yes, Jesus does reprove him, saying that it is more blessed to believe when you have *not* seen but, in today's language, that is a very big 'ask'. Most of us are like Thomas. The crowds that constantly milled around Jesus desperately wanted a sign, they saw him as a miracle man. We don't live in an age of miracles but now, more than ever, do we not long for one? For a deliverance from this corona darkness that is affecting the whole world?

George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement in the 17 c, spoke of his desperate search to find someone that 'spoke to his condition'. He could not find such a person among priests and preachers. Then, one day, he wrote this: 'I heard a voice which said 'There is one, Jesus Christ, that can speak to thy condition. The Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that he did not dwell in these temples that man had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts..his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them.'

Temples, churches, chapels and meeting houses are all shut up. We miss these sacred spaces. But the love and power of the risen Lord Jesus is powerfully abroad. Many doctors, nurses and other NHS workers have lost their lives to save others. Jesus himself said 'Greater love has no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends.' And all of us are experiencing, though at a necessary distance, the love and care of other people as never before, in what Wordsworth called 'the little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love', except that we **will** remember them, when all this is over.

We long to put our arms again, round the people we love. Today, the risen Christ is speaking to our condition. Let us take heart. We **will** meet again. And in renewing our love for one other, we will meet **Him**. *Ann Pilling.*

Prayers



I love you, Lord for you heard me when I cried out to you. I called to you in dire need, when I was overwhelmed with troubles and sorrows, crushed with anguish, and you saved me. You were so compassionate to me, you kept me from falling into harm's way and you comforted me. Lord, how can I repay you for all your goodness to me? I will offer you my thanksgiving, I will keep close to you and praise your name (based on Psalm 116, The Prayer Trust)

Dear Lord God let us pause and remember all the good things that you have given each one of us in this time of trial. We thank you that Jesus came to teach us how to live and then also took all our wrongs with him on the cross so that we might be cleansed of all our sins. We ask you to give us strength with the help of the Holy Spirit, to follow in your footsteps and to do your will, however, uncomfortable or daunting that may be.

We give you thanks for our beautiful dales, for our Churches in the Benefice and for our very caring local community. We pray that all who live here may seek to work for the good of each other in your spirit of love. We also give thanks for our Vicar Dave & Sarah who continue to guide us closer to you. We ask that you give your strength to them so they can keep on helping all those who live in the Benefice.

We thank you for making this wonderful world with the soil that gives us food, the trees that bring forth abundant fruits for us and the creatures, the birds, all the animals on the land and those in the sea. Help us to put right all the wrongs done by us humans in spoiling this planet with plastics, pollution and greed.

Heavenly Father help us in this time of need as we try to overthrow the Coronavirus. We give thanks for all our health workers, whether they be cleaning the floors, providing supplies or doctors and nurses fighting the virus. We also remember all those who have given themselves up as drivers bringing important medical requirements and food to us and all other workers helping to keep the country safe. Give them strength and wisdom to lean on you, O God.

Holy God we pray for those who are suffering or ill. We ask that you give each one strength and the knowledge of your supporting love. Let us spend a few moments to bring before our Lord any who are known to us who are suffering... Finally, we pray for those who have lost family and friends as a result of the virus and for those who mourn the loss of loved ones in recent weeks. We remember Alexander Lambert, Deryck Spence and James Whaley.

We give thanks for the lives of those who have gone before us and have now entered into your presence. We ask that you will give us strength to follow the example of their lives.

Merciful God we bring all these prayers to you knowing that you are our loving and caring Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Christine Hallas

Merciful Father; accept these prayers, for the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Visit our Website for more information, resources and messages www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk



Church News

Lots of resources and information and the

Family section on our website:

Have a look at the Virtual Flower Festival, children activities, youtube videos, services and messages

www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk

SPRING HARVEST



Spring Harvest Home – ‘Unleashed – The Acts Church Today’

Many of you took advantage of Spring Harvest being online this year. We certainly did. If you want to continue enjoying the worship, Bible study and teaching seminars, go to: youtube.com/springharvest, and there you will find all the sessions from last week.



Let's keep worship on the BBC:

Tune into some of the services on TV and Radio.

Sunday: Radio 4 Sunday Worship 8:10 – 8:50am

Choral Evensong 3:00 – 4pm

Wednesday: Choral Evensong 3:30 – 4:30pm

Sunday BBC1 Worship 10:00 10:30am

Songs of Praise 1:15 – 1:50

On Line: Lots of resources on the Church of England Website

<https://www.churchofengland.org/>



Service of Morning Prayer

Sunday 19th on the website from 10:30am

Service booklet available