



# The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale



News Sheet: Jan 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>

Genesis 14:17-20, Rev.19:6-10, John2:1-11

## The blessing of a party

Weddings are usually saved up to be the last scene of a feel-good film or story. The characters, having been through many twists and turns, end up dancing on the stage together and rejoicing in the kiss between the bride and groom. That is why the imagery of a wedding appears in our reading from Revelation.

The climax of the Christian story is a crowd gathered in heaven, dressed like a beautiful bride. The Saviour who sacrificed himself for them, the Lamb, is revealed and there is rejoicing, praise and an overwhelming current of love. John, in exile on the island of Patmos, encourages his readers to live their lives through troubled times in secure hope of a final happy ending. But in our gospel we see that the public revealing of Jesus began at a wedding.

The mother of Jesus cares deeply that the wine has run out. Nobody wants embarrassment or disappointment at a wedding. It is one of the heartbreaks of lockdown that long-planned weddings have had to be cancelled or scaled down. Mary turns to Jesus. She may not have expected a miracle, maybe just his power to rally people locally to provide more wine. Or maybe she did hope for a decisive miracle that would make everyone acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, as the angels had promised her. Jesus in his reply makes it clear that he is now no longer under her maternal authority. Her local concerns are no longer his priority. He also says, 'My hour has not yet come'. His vindication as Messiah will not come until his resurrection. But she sees he is going to do something. She asks the servants to cooperate with him and quietly he gets them to fill the jars used for purification rites with water and they discover that they are pouring out wine. The party becomes amazingly joyful.

In the telling of this story the evangelist has summed up Jesus' earthly ministry. He loves ordinary people. He cares about their needs and their celebrations. He has come to bring the presence and the reign of God into their lives. The mention of those jars is a hint that the rituals of washing and sacrifice to deal with guilt and pronounce forgiveness will be made redundant by his death. Today people worldwide eat bread and drink wine to remember that Jesus died for all and God is gracious to forgive. Last Monday was supposed to be the day when the largest number of people in Britain suffer from depression in the slump after Christmas. So let those of us, for whom Christmas is the birth of our Saviour do our best to be uninhibited in our love and joy for the epiphany of our bridegroom and let our joy overflow as widely as it can.

Rev Vera

# Information on Services

## Closure of the Church Buildings in the Upper Wensleydale Benefice

Sadly, the cases of infection from Covid19 have been rising steadily in our local area. With the rapidly deteriorating situation in our hospitals and the exhaustion and distress of medical staff, patients and patients' families, we took the decision last week to close our church buildings once again in order to ensure that together with our communities, we are doing all that we can to help restrict the possibilities of transmitting the virus. Opportunities to engage in worship will continue through a telephone conference room, our weekly 'Church in the Home' news sheet and e-message as well as online. Details of services and communications may be found on our website: [www.upperwensleydalechurch.org](http://www.upperwensleydalechurch.org) or our Facebook page: [Upper Wensleydale Church – CofE](#)

This is a difficult and painful time for everyone, not least for those who mourn the loss of loved ones. I encourage us all to do everything that we can to help keep one another safe.

**This Sunday, January 24th**, there will be a service of **Evening prayer** held in our telephone meeting room at 4pm. It's easy to join in and many have been drawing comfort and strength by doing so. It's been good to hear one another's voices as we use the humble telephone to connect us together in worship. It works with both landline and mobile phones.

As 4pm approaches call this number: **03330 164757**  
you will then be asked to enter the Room Number: **893 277 00#** and the PIN: **2772#**

The service will last for approx. 25 mins

The Evening Prayer Service sheet and Readings for **January 24<sup>th</sup>** are attached for you to follow along with. You will be able to listen to the service and join in the responses which everyone will hear. Calls to 03 numbers should be free as they are included in most UK landline or mobile minute packages.

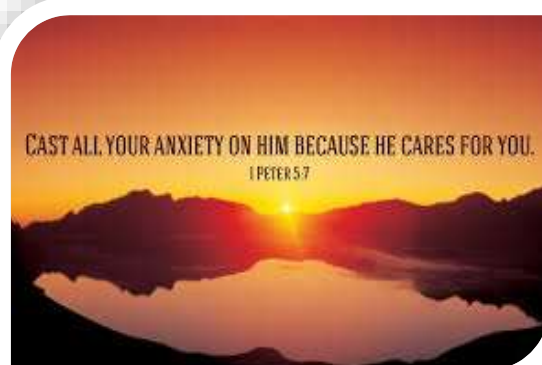
We will keep you informed of other events taking place as we respond to this 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown.

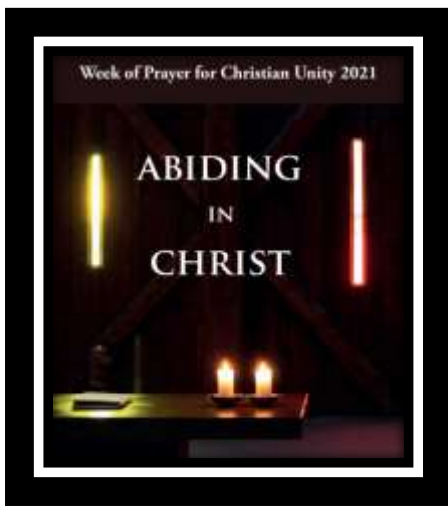
The church **Facebook page** and **You Tube channel** will also continue to be used to publish information and video messages at regular intervals – if you have missed any they can be found on our website: [www.upperwensleydalechurch.org](http://www.upperwensleydalechurch.org)



[Upper Wensleydale Church – CofE](#)

We hope that many of you will engage with the opportunity to share in our service of Evening Prayer this Sunday whilst staying in the safety of your own homes.





## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This last week has been the international week of prayer for Christian Unity.

Jesus prayed that we might be 'one': "*I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,<sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.*" Jn17.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The resources and booklet can be accessed at: [WPCU-2021-English-pamphlet-Final.pdf.pagespeed.ce.SnR5lgw9dp.pdf \(ctbi.org.uk\)](https://www.ctbi.org.uk/WPCU-2021-English-pamphlet-Final.pdf.pagespeed.ce.SnR5lgw9dp.pdf)

### Opening Prayer

Lord, you invite us to abide in you who are the vinedresser who cares for us with love. You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person. And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid; we withdraw into ourselves and our trust in you and one another is lost. Come and direct our hearts toward you once again, that as one family we may praise your name.

**Amen.**

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and all peace in faith, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

## Matt Redman – Sunday Worship



You may like to listen in to this service of worship led by the Hymn writer Matt Redman that was broadcast by the BBC on Sunday January 17<sup>th</sup>. It's a mixture of traditional and contemporary worship with reflection and personal testimony. Including: 'Bless the Lord O my soul', 'It is well with my soul', 'Blessed be your name'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p094bqsj>

## Like the Outdoors? Can You Help?



**Low Mill Outdoor Adventure Centre** in Askrigg is looking for a new member to join the team of Trustees as a representative from the church in Upper Wensleydale. Outdoor education can play such an important role in the lives of young people and Low Mill is an important part of our community. If you are at all interested then please contact the chair of the trustees, Andrew Civil by email at:

[Andrew.Civil@als-europe.com](mailto:Andrew.Civil@als-europe.com)