



The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale

News Sheet: Jan 31st – Feb 6th

Mal.3:1-5, Ps.24:1-7, Heb.2:14-end, Lk.2:22-40



From the Vicarage: A call to prayer

Our Archbishops have been on the news this week inviting the nation to turn collectively to prayer in response to the tragic death toll associated with the virus. Their call reminds us (had we needed it) of the seriousness of the situation we are in. As we remember the words of Simeon declaring Jesus to be a light of revelation, we can pray for that light to shine afresh.

There are many questions that we all have surrounding 'Why?' but as scripture and Jesus himself reminds us, we are called to pray in faith no matter what the circumstances and to let God have our fear and our uncertainties. He is our Rock and He is our Hope ^{Psalm 62}. Many in our communities are worried and fearful for the future at the moment as together we are faced with the increasing realisation of our own mortality; something that has been missing from general conversation and acceptance for many years.

Last week Helen provided a lovely activity for children and adults to engage in (see our Facebook page and Website) that could help with this. It was the creation of a Prayer Tree or a 'Worry Tree'. A place where concerns could be declared, hung and prayerfully handed over to God. They may be about situations seemingly out of control or for people we care for and love.

The reality is that prayer is *always* a sign of love. It's a sign of love towards the one for whom we are praying but it's also a sign of love to God; the one we are trusting our prayers to. Prayer connects us and prayer unites us. It is, as John Wesley wonderfully stated, the place 'where the action is'. It is also the place where we build a closer and a deeper relationship with God. If we want to know God more we do it by spending time in his presence in prayer. Find a quiet place and let Him know how you are feeling. Perhaps you might like to light a candle to remind you that Jesus is the light of the world and that when we pray we are never alone. Reading some scripture always helps me to begin to focus my prayer time and using the Lord's Prayer ensures that I keep my eyes on his majesty rather than just presenting a list of requests.

I encourage us all to respond to our Archbishop's invitation and to give some time to pray for everyone affected by the virus. They request that this should be at 6pm every evening, beginning on Monday, February the 1st and have published the prayer below for our use. Let us cry out to God as we lament the loss of so many and the grief and the heartache that is being borne across the nation. As a church we must continue to reach out in love and compassion and do all we can to share God's love and hope with those who are in such desperate need right now.

Rev Dave.

*Gracious God; as we remember before you the thousands who have died,
surround us and all who mourn, with your strong compassion.*

*Be gentle with us in our grief, protect us from despair
and give us grace to persevere and face the future with hope,
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.*

Amen



Candlemas

Elizabeth Fawcett



*'Deep sleeps the winter, Cold, wet and grey; Surely all the world is dead;
Spring is far away. Wait! The world shall waken; it is not dead,
for lo, the Fair Maids of February stand in the snow!'*

Cicely Mary Barker

Elizabeth has created a lovely **video** with Mike Hirst of the walk to **Mill Gill** that she describes here. You can enjoy the beautiful scenery and see the candles alight in the wood by clicking on the link below

<http://www.upperwensleydalechurch.org/services/>

Candlemas commemorates the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus. This day also marks the ritual presentation of the baby Jesus to God in the Temple at Jerusalem. The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus was met by Anna and Simeon. Simeon held the baby Jesus and called him a "Light to the World".

The festival is called Candlemas because this was the day that all the Church's candles for the year were blessed. In the middle ages, everyone in the parish brought their candles to church to be blessed by the priest, and after a procession and the blessing, each person lit a candle to set before the statue of the Virgin Mary – in those dark February days it must have provided quite a spectacle of brightness. On Candlemas night, many people place lighted candles in their windows at home.

In pre-Christian times, it was the festival of light. This ancient festival marked the midpoint of winter; half way between the winter solstice (shortest day) and the spring equinox. It's good to know that we are half way through!

Another symbol of Candlemas is the snowdrop and indeed, it is often called the 'Candlemas Bell'. And even today many of the best snowdrop displays are associated with the old faith, clustering around churchyards and ancient religious foundations, ruined abbeys and priories, where they were once planted with Candlemas in mind. The purity and beauty of the petals were seen as representing Mary on this special day.

Every year, our **Sunday School** children enjoy a noisy ramble from St Oswald's church to Mill Gill. We've been in snow, wind, rain and frost. We enjoy the magnificence of this tiny, gregarious, strong little flower as it pokes through the frozen ground. I tell the children that God created that tiny, beautiful & fragile flower to lead the way out of winter into Spring, in the same way as he loves them, the children who give us love, light, laughter and above all HOPE. We all light candles and say a prayer and then run back to church for hot chocolate, fun and laughter. This year we can't be together in the same way, but we can look forward with faith knowing that Christ's light is never dimmed and that, if we let it shine forth from us with confidence, others will see the joy that a life lived with Christ in our hearts can bring.

So, why not light a candle in your window tonight and say a prayer for PEACE, LIGHT & HOPE. And next year, we'll be back full of outdoor praise in the heart of God's creation, with happy chatter & joy.



Sunday Services



This Sunday, January 31st

10:30am: A service of **Morning Prayer** – streamed on our FaceBook page and website. The service was recorded in St Matthew's Church, Stalling Busk.



Upper Wensleydale Church – CofE OR <http://www.upperwensleydalechurch.org/services/>

4:00pm: A service of **Evening Prayer** will be held in our telephone meeting room. 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 Service sheets and Readings for **January 31st** are attached for you to use. You will be able to join in with the responses or just listen, which ever you prefer. Calls to 03 numbers should be free as they are included in most UK landline or mobile minute packages.

We hope that many of you will engage with these different opportunities to share in worship together whilst staying in the safety of your own homes.



On Monday we said 'Goodbye' to two lovely friends of Askrigg and St Oswald's church: **Robert and Tricia Selby**

Rob and Tricia lived in the Manor House in the village and Tricia has been a much loved and valued member of the church family for many years serving as both Church Warden and a member of the PCC with great grace and diligence. We shall miss them enormously but wish them well in their new home where they can enjoy having their family close at hand.

God bless you both and Thank You for all you have been to us.

Sunday 31 January 2021 Presentation of Christ in the Temple

COLLECT

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son
was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Malachi 3:1-5

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi.

Thus says the LORD God: See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

PSALM Either Psalm 24:[1-6] 7-10

*R The Lord of hosts,
he is the king of glory.*

or

*R The Lord whom you seek
will suddenly come.*

[The earth is the Lord's and all that
is in it,
the world and all who dwell therein.
For it is he who founded it upon the seas
and made it firm upon the rivers of
the deep. **R**

"Who can ascend the hill of the Lord?
and who can stand in his holy place?"

"Those who have clean hands and a
pure heart,
who have not pledged themselves to
falsehood,
nor sworn by what is a fraud. **R**

They shall receive a blessing from the
Lord
and a just reward from the God of
their salvation."
Such is the generation of those who
seek him,
of those who seek your face, O God
of Jacob. **R]**

Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
"Who is this King of glory?"
"The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle." **R**

Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
"Who is he, this King of glory?"
"The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory." **R**

Or Psalm 84 (RCL only)

SECOND READING Hebrews 2:14-end

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Since the children share flesh and blood,
Jesus himself likewise shared the same
things, so that through death he might
destroy the one who has the power of
death, that is, the devil, and free those
who all their lives were held in slavery
by the fear of death. For it is clear that
he did not come to help angels, but the
descendants of Abraham. Therefore he
had to become like his brothers and
sisters in every respect, so that he might
be a merciful and faithful high priest in
the service of God, to make a sacrifice
of atonement for the sins of the people.
Because he himself was tested by what
he suffered, he is able to help those
who are being tested.

GOSPEL Luke 2:22-40

*Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.*

When the time came for their purification
according to the law of Moses, Mary and
Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to
present him to the Lord (as it is written
in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn

male shall be designated as holy to
the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice
according to what is stated in the law of
the Lord, "a pair of turtle-doves or two
young pigeons." Now there was a man in
Jerusalem whose name was Simeon;
this man was righteous and devout,
looking forward to the consolation of
Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.
It had been revealed to him by the Holy
Spirit that he would not see death before
he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided
by the Spirit, Simeon came into the
temple; and when the parents brought
in the child Jesus, to do for him what
was customary under the law, Simeon
took him in his arms and praised God,
saying, "Master, now you are dismissing
your servant in peace, according to your
word; for my eyes have seen your
salvation, which you have prepared in
the presence of all peoples, a light for
revelation to the Gentiles and for glory
to your people Israel." And the child's
father and mother were amazed at what
was being said about him. Then Simeon
blessed them and said to his mother
Mary, "This child is destined for the
falling and the rising of many in Israel,
and to be a sign that will be opposed so
that the inner thoughts of many will be
revealed – and a sword will pierce your
own soul too." There was also a prophet,
Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the
tribe of Asher. She was of a great age,
having lived with her husband seven
years after her marriage, then as a widow
to the age of eighty-four. She never
left the temple but worshipped there with
fasting and prayer night and day. At that
moment she came, and began to praise
God and to speak about the child to all
who were looking for the redemption of
Jerusalem. When they had finished
everything required by the law of the
Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their
own town of Nazareth. The child grew
and became strong, filled with wisdom;
and the favour of God was upon him.

POST COMMUNION

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and
Anna,
who lived to welcome the Messiah:
may we, who have received these gifts
beyond words,
prepare to meet Christ Jesus
when he comes to bring us to eternal life;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.