



The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale

News Sheet: Feb 14th – 21st

Psalm 103, 1 John 4:7-12, John 15:9-17



1 Before
Lent



From the Vicarage: 'Love Actually'



Valentine's Day this year falls on a Sunday. The last time this occurred was in 2016 BC (Before Covid *and* before 'Clarkie's') I wonder what the day means to you?

There are many different stories surrounding St. Valentine; perhaps this is because the St. Valentine who inspired our current celebrations may have been two different men.

He is known to have died around the year 270 with one account stating him to have been a Temple Priest and another a Bishop. Whatever his role was, he was martyred for his faith during Claudius II's persecution of the Church.

There are various legends that have become attached to his name and his association with love and lovers - that he defied the Emperor's orders and secretly married couples to spare the husbands from fighting in the war; that he cut out the shape of hearts from parchment and shared them with imprisoned Christians to remind them of God's love and another that after his own arrest, imprisonment and torture he wrote a thank you letter to his gaolers daughter for her kindness, signed 'from your Valentine'.

I've always enjoyed the Richard Curtiss film '**Love Actually**'. In the opening monologue, Hugh Grant's character David speaks over a montage of different people meeting one another at the arrivals gate of Heathrow Airport.

'General opinion's starting to make out that we live in a world of hatred and greed, but I don't see that. It seems to me that love is everywhere. Often, it's not particularly dignified or newsworthy, but it's always there: fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, old friends... If you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling that love actually is all around.'

Dr Gary Chapman's book 'The five Love Languages' was first published in 1992 and has sold over 13 million copies. He states that we have five essential ways of expressing our love for one another. These are, words of affirmation, spending quality time, the giving of gifts, acts of service and physical touch and, according to Chapman, the most popular is words of affirmation.

With the annual celebration of Love falling on a Sunday, it gives us a fresh opportunity to look again at the narrative that extends throughout the entire Bible; God's deep love for us all and for all that he has created. **Psalm 103** is full of expressions of this love and how God has shown it: he forgives our sins, heals our wrongs, provides us with good things, is full of compassion, caring, considerate, faithful etc etc. John's gospel and first letter reminds us that in the gift of Jesus, God has touched us all with his greatest gift. All of this given freely that we might once again live in a restored relationship with him. God loves us, but for a relationship of love to develop and grow that love must be reciprocated.

In the OT **Moses** is instructed by God to speak to the people and to tell them how their lives can be full of joy, peace and satisfaction. It's an invitation to relationship and blessing. They are to *'Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'* Deuteronomy 6:v5

The shorter Westminster Catechism of 1648 puts it like this:
'A man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.'

I love the invitation from God for us to **enjoy** him. Love should be enjoyable. Love should be fun. Love should not be a chore. Loving God shouldn't be that different from loving any other human being. We can show him our love by wanting to spend time with him, enjoying learning more about him, appreciating his unique qualities, participating in what he finds important and giving him gifts our praise, our worship, our lives.

I spoke last week of the very real pain and anxiety that is in the world and our nation at the moment. We have all been touched with the hardship that the virus has brought but some have experienced this to a much greater cost. Our hearts cry out 'How much longer?' and 'Why?' A relationship based on love can accept these questions being asked in frustration and even anger but many struggle with the idea of such a relationship with God. They see him as angry, oppressive, restrictive, outdated and dusty, a figment of the imagination. It was Abraham Lincoln who once said of a difficult individual: *'I don't like that man. I must get to know him better.'* The promise of God is that he is not hiding and that if we want to find him we can and we will. Jer29:13

If we have attitudes of animosity or even indifference towards God then the answer is in getting to know him better. As we do, we will see that the languages of love that Dr Chapman identifies and speaks of with such enthusiasm have all been displayed in His character since the very beginning of time.

I close with a wonderful truth. We are not alone. We are loved and we are called to love.
What better thought for the days that we are living in and on this Valentine's day?

Prayer.



Join our Archbishop's and the Church in Prayer

February 1st began a nationwide call to prayer
from our Archbishop's.

Many of you have already put aside a few minutes at 6pm to pray for the nation in these challenging and testing days. The guide below gives a focus for our prayers. Perhaps you might light a candle or put a light in your window during this time.

Sun: Family, friends, loved ones **Mon:** Schools, Colleges and young people,
Tues: Elderly, isolated & vulnerable **Wed:** Businesses, workplaces & the economy
Thurs: NHS & Keyworkers **Fri:** National & local government
Sat: The grieving and the sick



Services For Sunday February 14th



10:30am: A service of **Morning Prayer**

Streamed on our FaceBook page and website.

The service was recorded in **St Oswald's Church, Askrigg.**



Upper Wensleydale Church – CofE Website: www.upperwensleydalechurch.org/services

4:00pm: A service of **Evening Prayer**

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

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.



Lent 2021 begins on Wednesday February 17th

Ash Wednesday



A short service of prayer will be streamed from our Facebook page and website on the 17th.

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

Lent is traditionally a time of self-examination and repentance and so in the imagination of many it has become a melancholy season. It needn't be. It is right to scrutinise the way in which we live our lives in relationship with God, but this can be done with a joyful spirit.

For example: **Repentance** allows us to live our lives with a burden lifted,

Prayer draws us closer to God and the opportunity to see the world in new ways and

Fasting and **Self-Denial** allow us to focus on the things that are really important in our lives and for which we are grateful.

After a long and difficult year you might find it helpful to look at Lent in a new way.


**HAVE A
BREAK**
drink
**COFFEE
EAT CAKE**



ZOOM! in and share a cup of
Coffee or Tea with friends during the
weeks of Lent.
Wednesday mornings.
Details next week.

'Look Up' in Lent

Lent Study with
Rev Vera

You are invited to join a **Zoom** group to study
the First Epistle of Peter on five Thursday
afternoons in Lent from 4.30 to 5.20pm,
Feb 25th – March 25th

Session 1: 'The joy and treasure of the Christian Life

This is a lovely opportunity for us to learn together. If
you have access to the internet joining a Zoom call is
really quite simple. If you've not tried it before why
not give it a go this Lent? If you are interested or
would like further information please contact Vera
and she will provide you with the details you need.
vera@vsinton.co.uk 666948



Wensleydale Churches 'Filling Station'

A message from Mike Hirst



Rev Matt

February would have seen our first Filling Station meeting of 2021. Lockdown, however, is continuing to affect our plans. There will be many who are struggling through this Covid time but there can also be opportunities to share in prayer and worship 'countrywide' using recorded and streamed services as well as connecting with our local church via YouTube, Facebook and telephone services. Matt Hirst spoke at our meeting in November 2019. Here he is talking about **Worship in the Wilderness** Use this link: https://youtu.be/vEpfZgcc_w

Sunday

February 14th 2021

Sunday before Lent



Psalm 103 Of David.

Loving God completely

Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
² Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
⁶ The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbour his anger forever;
¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear
him;
¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
¹⁵ The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
¹⁶ the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting
the LORD's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's
children—
¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.
¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.
²⁰ Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.

²¹ Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.

²² Praise the LORD, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

John Chapter 15

Remain in Jesus: Remain in Love

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.
Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my
commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have
kept my Father's commands and remain in his
love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in
you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My
command is this: Love each other as I have loved
you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down
one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you
do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants,
because a servant does not know his master's
business. Instead, I have called you friends, for
everything that I learned from my Father I have made
known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose
you and appointed you so that you might go and bear
fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you
ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my
command: Love each other.

1 John 4

God's Love and Ours

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes
from God. Everyone who loves has been born of
God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does
not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God
showed his love among us: He sent his one and only
Son into the world that we might live through
him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he
loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for
our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we
also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever
seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us
and his love is made complete in us.