



The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale

'Church in the Home'

September 2023



Edition Number 96

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From the Vicarage:

September is here, and to coin a phrase –
'Normal Service is Resumed'.

Reducing our services to just one on each of the Sunday's in August and rotating them across the Benefice, has been an interesting experiment providing an opportunity for all of our leadership team to experience some rest and to give a sense of something 'different' during the holiday season. Feedback so far has been supportive. If you want to record your opinion please let your respective PCC members know.

August in Wensleydale is always a busy time for our farmers and those working in retail and hospitality and the Dale has been full of activity again ... it will be interesting to see how sales in waterproof outdoor clothing have fared considering the very wet weather that has predominated.

We have celebrated a number of weddings and baptisms (some pictures are included in this edition) along with concerts, produce shows and other outdoor events. My thanks to everyone who has been involved in any way in their organisation and delivery. Particular thanks to Ian Woolley for his wonderful work once again in organising such an interesting and varied group of speakers at the 5 '**Dales Discovery**' events in St Margaret's. Ian, together with Alastair Macintosh, has been organising these evenings for many years. They were originally conceived to help in the raising of funds for the essential building work required at St Margaret's and have continued to bless the community and its many summer visitors ever since. Thank you, gentlemen, for your vision and for all your hard work in making these evenings so entertaining, varied and enjoyable.

Those of you present at Semerwater on Bank Holiday Sunday will know just how dreadful the weather was. When Hawes Band arrived pouring rainwater out of their instruments we knew that the situation wasn't looking favourable and with no let-up in sight to the torrential rain, the decision was made to abandon the beach and to head for the shelter of St Matthew's where we enjoyed fellowship and singing together as the steam of drying clothes filled the building.

You will see the start of a new feature this month with the inclusion of a short Bible Study, '**Seasons of Giving**', exploring our attitudes to giving in response to God's generosity. I hope that you might find this interesting and engage with it in whichever way you can.

It would be wonderful to have a strong attendance at our first September Communion service together in St Margaret's where we will be looking at our statement of faith in the words of the Creed and praying for our children as they head into a new school year. It will be lovely to see you all again and to catch up on your adventures.

Rev Dave



The next 'Gathering' will be on **Sunday 3 September**
10:30am at St Margaret's in Hawes

We look forward to welcoming you there!

Be a Blessing – Be Encouraged – Be Church



Wensleydale Filling Station



Thornborough Hall, Leyburn

Friday 8th September 2023 7-9pm



Speaker: Chris Bennet

Hemel Hempstead

Chris has been a pastor of 3 different churches for a total of 38 years. In addition, he lectured in subjects such as New Testament, Greek, Hebrew and homiletics for many years at London Seminary.

He is married to Esther and they have 3 grown up children. Presently he is the minister of Alexandra Road Congregational Church in Hemel Hempstead. He says that he likes playing the violin and walking in the Lake District

Come along to one of our prayer meetings

Did you know that there are regular prayer meetings held in the Benefice? Everyone is welcome to come and join in.

St Margaret's Church, Hawes

Every Tuesday morning, 9.15am to 10am

St Oswald's Church, Askrigg

Alternate Tuesdays, 11am to 12 noon (5th & 19th September)

Summer across the Benefice



Weddings at Askrigg and Hawes in July and August



The yarn bombers have been active in Hawes

Baptisms have taken place in Hawes, Hardraw and Askrigg



Forest Church at Foss Close, Brecon Bar





We had an acoustic evening in St Oswald's and, of course, the wonderful Dales Discovery evenings in St Margaret's

Many will remember the lovely Samuel from his time worshipping with us when he was working at Hawes Pizza. We helped him with his asylum application, which after 7 years has finally been granted.

He now has his own Pizza business in Blackpool, which he has called Pizzalujah! If you are near South Pier – pop in and see him at 11-12 Station Road, FY4 1HT



The Summer spectacular with the Hawes Band by Semerwater had to be abandoned due to heavy rain, but many enjoyed coffee and cake (and an impromptu singalong) at St Matthew's

Have you visited the Benefice website yet?

Click on to the Benefice website:

<http://upperwensleydalechurch.org/>

If you've been unable to attend a particular Sunday service and would like to know what the teaching and reflection was on that particular day, then audio recordings (under 'Services') and transcripts (under 'resources' – 'From the Rev') are available on the website.



Seasons of Giving

Issues of Stewardship

The Day God's Piglet Died!



I was told this story by a Christian friend of mine when we were chatting about the generosity of God and why it is that we can so often struggle with living our lives with that same generous spirit.

The story is about the son of a Christian Pig farmer who one year gave his son a sow who was expecting a litter. The farmer had been teaching his son about rearing pigs and he had built a special pigsty for his son to use. The boy knew what the sow liked to eat and how to keep the pigsty as clean as possible but his father had also been teaching him about Biblical giving.

As a keen Christian the farmer and his wife practised tithing whatever their land produced and according to Old Testament principles gave one tenth of all they sold to a missionary society to help spread the gospel message. The farmer did not know how many piglets would be born, but he knew it should be at least 10. "Remember," he had told his son, "When you come to sell the piglets, one in ten of them belongs to the Lord. You must rear them well and give the Lord his tenth,"

As it happened, at farrowing time ten lovely little piglets were born and the boy took great delight in watching them feed and grow. The boy couldn't really tell them apart from one another, although some seemed to develop particular personalities. Sometimes, he would pick up a piglet at random and say, "Hello, little piglet. You belong to God." He would then pick up a different piglet and say, "Hello little piglet. You belong to me."

Then one morning, tragedy struck. The boy discovered that in the night the sow had accidentally laid on one of the piglets and it had died, leaving him with just nine little piglets that he hoped would grow up to be big pigs. That night when he went to bed, he knelt to pray as usual. "Dear God," he began, "I have some really sad news for you. It's about your piglet".

Generosity is at the heart of our faith – we worship a generous God. The Biblical narrative is one of God interrupting the lives of ordinary men and women with His love and generosity, supremely demonstrated through the gift of Jesus Christ opening the way for our salvation.

One of the defining characteristics of the Christian life is of men and women responding to God's love for us by choosing to live selflessly and generously for the benefit of others. Across the millennia, faithful soldiers and servants of Christ have given their time and gifts and financial resources to helping others, combatting social injustice and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ

The four wonderful buildings in which we currently worship stand as a physical witness to the glory of God and create a space in which many come to visit, experience and use as a place of prayerful retreat and contemplation. Our electronic counters on the door are regularly registering over 300 visitors a week in both St Margaret's and St Oswald's and the comments left in all of the buildings bear witness to the ministry they have in their own right in speaking of the Life, Love and Hope that there is in Jesus Christ to all who enter. Our buildings, just like our homes, require constant maintenance and upkeep and the costs of trying to keep them open, accessible and safe are rising. The life changing work with which the church is engaged, relies upon the generosity of its members. Our treasurers, PCC's and I are extremely grateful for all you give and do but it seems timely to take a fresh look at the issue of financial stewardship, not to lay a sense of burden upon anyone, but to re-examine *why* God calls us to give and to consider *how* we might respond.

From the first verses to the last, the Bible offers a glorious picture of a generous Creator God who lavishes his love upon us. Made in his image we are invited to join in the adventure of knowing Him and experiencing His love in every aspect of our lives. But do we? If our lives were a home, would we invite God into every room or are there certain rooms we restrict access to? Do we keep Him out of certain areas and aspects of our lives? If so ... why and what are they?

Because the newsletter is shared with nearly 200 people, it should be an effective platform to explore BIG issues together. So: I invite you over the next few months to take some time over reading these thoughts and prayerfully considering the questions raised regarding:

How generous and grateful am I to God? How might this be reflected in my financial giving?

Let's start our journey with the story of **Jonah**.

Open your Bibles and read the first three chapters of Jonah. It will not take you very long



Many see this account as just a children's story featuring a large fish and nothing else, but there is so much more for us to consider here. Issues of justice, mercy, passion and generosity. It is a book about God's love for all people *and* about his perfect timing.

Knowing a little more about Ninevah and the Assyrians can help us place Jonah's response into a clearer context. Ninevah was once the largest city in the known world. It had amazing architecture. The city was fed fresh water through an elaborate system of canals. Its walls were over 12km in length, 20 feet high and served by 15 gates. It was the centre of the Assyrian empire; an empire hungry for land and power. The army was feared for its ruthless and barbaric approach to warfare and conquest. Torture and beheading for those who disturbed their way of life was common practice. Simply put, they were brutally efficient in fulfilling their desires. My empathy is rising for Jonah.

And yet, even here, even with *these* people, God's love is made apparent. Despite Jonah's refusal and attempt to run away from God (Tarshish was at the edge of the known world at

that time) Jonah and Ninevah are both given a second chance. God offers us the same; an opportunity to grow and change so that we can live lives of 'transformed generosity' to bless others.

Some questions to ponder over:

1. Have you ever experienced times in your life when you have felt you might have taken a wrong turn? What did you do? How does Jonah get back on course?
2. Ninevah was quite an intimidating place. What is *your* Ninevah? What are the things and who are the people that you naturally retreat from and why?
3. What are the things that you find difficulty in trusting God over?
4. God's timing was perfect with regards to Ninevah's response. Without His generosity and Jonah's reluctant obedience, their lives would have been very different. I wonder how many people might have missed out on a blessing from God because of our reluctance to live our lives with a generous spirit?
5. Can you think of a modern day Ninevah?

Now spend a couple of minutes reading the conclusion to the events in chapter 4

1. What new insights into Jonah's motives do we see now?
2. What might prevent us from being open to God's new possibilities for us?
3. What barriers might stand in the way of us living fulfilling and generous lives?
4. Can you identify God's acts of generosity in this account?

Prayer

God of infinite grace

Thank you for your love for us. Help us to listen to your calling in our lives.

Help us to be prepared to spread your light in the darkness, that your love might be known throughout this Dale.

Give us Lord, we pray, a generous heart towards everyone around us.

Amen



Upper Wensleydale Benefice Services September 2023



	St Mary & St John's, Hardraw 9.00am	St Margaret's, Hawes 10.30am	St Oswald's, Askrigg 10.30am	St Matthew's, Stalling Busk	Evening Prayer 4pm
1 Sept	Sycamore Hall – Communion Service in the long Lounge – 10am				
3 Sept	The Gathering Benefice Family Communion St Margaret's Church, Hawes at 10.30am				Evening prayer by telephone
10 Sept	Harvest Celebration 3pm	Ecumenical Service Hawes	Harvest at Lowlands Farm		Evening prayer by telephone
17 Sept	Holy Communion	Family Service	Morning Prayer		Evening prayer by telephone
	Churches Together Harvest Celebration – Market Hall, Hawes 6.30pm				
24 Sept	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Afternoon Prayer & 3.15 Pathfinders	Evening prayer by telephone

Invite someone you know to join us for Evening Prayer on Sunday

For some time now we have been offering the opportunity of sharing in a service of Afternoon/Evening prayer by telephone from your own home. It is very simple to join in. I am confident that there are many more people in the upper dale who would benefit from joining with us. You may be one of them or you may know of someone who would appreciate the chance to do so. If that is the case, then follow the instructions below and we look forward to welcoming you at 4pm on a Sunday afternoon.

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#**

And then you are in...

say 'Hello' or sit quietly and join a short service of prayer and reflection

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Upper Wensleydale Church – CofE

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