



The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale 'Church in the Home'

May 2024

Tel: 01969 667553 Email: office@upperwenben.org
www.upperwensleydalechurch.org



Edition Number 103

From the Vicarage: Prayers, Pigeons and Parish Giving

When **Samantha Amsden** isn't helping parish treasurers as part of her work with the Diocese of Durham, she works on the family farm, 'East Shaw Farm' in Gayle, with her husband David and two young daughters Esther and Elizabeth. Last year, between September and November, I shared three Bible studies with you on the issue of financial stewardship and our own personal giving to the work of God's Mission. As the lambing season on the farm draws to a close, Samantha reflects on the nature of personal offering in the Old and New Testament.

'Another busy lambing season draws to a close for us in the dales. For the past two months I have spent many hours in a large steel framed agricultural shed in sheep pens, often on my knees, sheltering from the cruel weather that March can often bring. Sheep tend to give their best to their lambs during pregnancy and need to be well cared for after the birth so the shelter of the shed is very much needed. Much of the time is spent dealing with problems, trying to encourage new-born lambs to take to ewes and ewes to take their lambs, it's all about trying to save as much 'life' as possible. Through the challenging times I have often found myself thinking of the shepherds of the Old Testament and wondering whether, Moses, Joseph and David ever had these issues!

This year the sound of lambs bleating has been accompanied by chirping and cooing from a pigeon that has also chosen to seek shelter and raise its young on a beam above our pen of orphaned lambs. It reminded me very much of the writings of Luke (2:24) and the offerings of old. In Luke we read that Jesus is brought to the temple as part of the purification rites were the family were required to bring a lamb for an offering. If a lamb was too expensive, the parents could bring a dove or pigeon instead, which is what Mary and Joseph presented as their offering. I imagine the process of sacrifice and offerings in those days to be a messy business! I for one am very grateful that we live in New Testament times. Jesus became the sacrificial lamb for our sin offering and as church we are no longer required to take grain, drink, bulls, lambs, birds etc. before an altar as a sacrifice. But wait a minute, isn't sacrifice still mentioned when we come before the altar?

Ah, yes that big prayer during communion "we pray that our souls and bodies will be a living sacrifice". Wow, now that is a big prayer! But what does it mean to be a 'living sacrifice'? Well I trust that God does not require us to die for Him (though sometimes He does), but He *is* asking for something difficult. He requires us to live for Him. We are to give our entire being, all our heart, love, talents, energy, and *all* of our strength to serve Him. I trust he's not thinking about the small and simple either; this is not about going to church, donating a bit of money to charity, buying blankets for the poor etc. But it is akin to what Paul wrote about; we're asked to excel. Excel in the grace of giving, love your neighbour as yourself, be kind to the poor, leave our possessions and follow him.

From Paul's writings (2 Cor. 8:7) we know that the Corinthian church excelled. They had faith, much knowledge and enthusiasm yet Paul explicitly encouraged them to excel in giving too. I wonder if the church in Corinth had 'giving' as a lower priority than other aspects of their discipleship? Is this something that we also might be complacent about from time to time? Is it time that we consider growing in giving alongside our growth in our love, devotion and knowledge of God? And if so, how do we do this? Well, Paul gave great advice on the subject; give according to what we have, be eager in the giving (not reluctant), give the matter some thought, and give proportionately. As I'm on my knees in the shed, perhaps it's time I switch my prayerful thoughts from lambs and pigeons to my direct debits.'

Best Wishes
Samantha

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Dave." with a stylized flourish at the end.



The next 'Gathering' will be on **Sunday 5th May**

10:30am at St Oswald's in Askrigg

'Resurrection Power!'

What does the Resurrection of Jesus Christ mean for us in our daily lives in Upper Wensleydale

We look forward to welcoming you there!

Be a Blessing – Be Encouraged – Be Church

Home Groups – Explore faith together

Don't forget there are two Home Groups running across the Benefice:

**Wednesdays 7.30pm in Hawes
and**

Wednesdays at 7pm in Askrigg

Contact the office for further information

St Oswald's Coffee Mornings

First Saturday in each month at the Village Hall 10am to 12 noon



Next one – Saturday 4th May

Wensleydale Filling Station



Why not come along and join us? Be encouraged in worship and in what the Lord is doing across the UK. If you need a lift just let us know and we can arrange transport for you

Thornborough Hall, Leyburn

Friday 10 May 2024

Speaker: Phil Ireson - Sheffield



Philip Ireson was Vicar of two rural groups of parishes in Sheffield Diocese before becoming Senior Chaplain at HMP Doncaster. He then moved on to be a Vicar of an inner-city church in Sheffield before retiring. He has close links with South Sudanese refugees in north Uganda and has helped to develop a prison project in Malawi for young offenders. He continues to support prisoners and ex-prisoners. He is married to Frances and they have three grown up children. Philip is passionate about helping fellow believers to remember who they are in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.



St Oswald's Tower Public Meeting

Wednesday May 8th
St Oswald's Church: 4:30 – 6pm

Meet and hear from the National Experts regarding this major restoration project.
Opportunity for Q&A

If you are able to attend your support and interest would be most welcome

'Rev Dave from Wensleydale'

Apple or Spotify Podcasts & on the website



Listen in or Listen again

Join us for Evening Prayer on a Sunday afternoon!

For some time now we have been offering the opportunity of sharing Afternoon/Evening Prayer by telephone in your own home. It is very simple to join in.

Follow the instructions below to join us at 4pm every Sunday afternoon

As 4pm approaches, call **03330164757**. You will be asked to enter the room number **893 277 00#** and the PIN **2772#** Then you are in!

Say hello and sit quietly and join in with the short service of prayer and reflection

St Austin's Choir Wakefield



St Oswald's Church
Saturday 4th May 4-6pm

'Missa'

Music for a Spring Afternoon

*Celebrating 1000yrs
of Sacred Music*

Refreshments available
Admission Free.

Retiring Donation for the
Church Building of St Oswald's

Ascension Day

Thursday 9th May 2024 at 7pm
Jervaulx Abbey

You are warmly invited to attend the ecumenical Holy Communion service for Ascension Day led by The Rt Rev'd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon together with the Bedale Brass Band



Please bring a chair and park in across the road in the Tea Room Car Park.

In East Witton Church if the weather is wet

Upper Wensleydale Benefice Services

May 2024



	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 2.30pm	Evening Prayer 4pm
3 May	Sycamore Hall – Communion Service in the Activity Lounge – 10am				
5 May	The Gathering Benefice Family Communion St Oswald's Church, Askrigg at 10.30am				Evening prayer by telephone
12 May	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Café Style	12.30 Soup followed by Communion	Evening prayer by telephone
19 May	Pentecost Benefice Family Communion St Margaret's Church, Hawes at 10.30am				Evening prayer by telephone
28 April	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Afternoon Prayer & Pathfinders	Evening prayer by telephone

PENTECOST 19th MAY 2024

Special Pentecost Communion for the Benefice
at St Margaret's Church Hawes at 10.30am

Rev Dave Clark: The Vicarage, Burtsett Road, Hawes. DL8 3NP, 01969 667553, office@upperwenben.org

Upper Wensleydale Church – CofE www.upperwensleydalechurch.org