



Trinity 12-15

The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale 'Church in the Home'

September 2025

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Edition Number 118

From the Vicarage

It's certainly been a very busy August for the Dale with thousands of visitors arriving to enjoy the warm, dry weather and to 'recharge their batteries' in the glorious landscape that we love so much. But with the start of a new academic year, the season of recreation is over and the seasonal clock gently rotates once more into a time of mists, heavy dew, sheep sales and Harvest Festivals.

In an increasingly hungry world where images of famine and hunger are so regularly presented to us, I believe it important we remain thankful for every meal we are able to consume and to be mindful of the hard work and sacrifice that has gone into bringing it to us. Celebrating a successful harvest is a tradition as old as time itself and there is evidence of ancient civilisations all over the world marking the end of the gathering in of the crops that heralded the promise of a winter free from hunger.

In Britain, Harvest Suppers or 'Churn Suppers' (named after the large jug of cream that might be offered during the event) were traditionally hosted by the land owner. It was a way of thanking the local community for their part in ensuring that the harvest was 'safely gathered in'.

Lammas Day on August 1st celebrated the first fruits of the harvest with the baking of large decorated loaves in the shape of a sheaf which were then brought into the local church buildings to be blessed. At the end of the harvest the final stalks of wheat were kept and woven into 'Corn Dolly's' or 'Kern Baby's' as a sign of the promise of new life returning the following year. Both traditions remain alive in the upper dale even if the harvesting of wheat is not something we see a great deal of in our local fields.

As disciples of Jesus we look and work for a different type of harvest – that of people's lives discovering freedom, joy and eternal life through forgiveness and faith in Jesus Christ.

"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." ^{Matthew 9:35} Praise God for the testimonies that have been shared amongst us in recent days of men and women turning to Christ here in Upper Wensleydale and receiving His promise of Salvation. A reminder of the power of the Gospel when it's shared with love and in its unaltered truth.

Festivals, Sheep Shows and Sheep Sales will take place all over the upper dale in the coming weeks as we gather to celebrate and rejoice in our own very local harvest of the land. Such events serve as a timely reminder to us all of the blessings that we are so privileged to be surrounded with and, I hope, stir us into supporting the organisations that seek to help those who are much less fortunate than ourselves.

It is James, the brother of Jesus, who reminds us that ***'Every good and perfect gift is from above'*** ^{James 1:17} Might Church, Chapel, Auction Ring and Animal Pen resound with just such an 'Attitude of Gratitude' in the coming weeks. May you know the blessing of the Lord of the Harvest!

Rev Dave

The next 'Gathering' will be on **Sunday 7 September**
at 10:30am at St Oswald's in Askrigg



Generosity



We hope to welcome you on Sunday Morning

Be a Blessing – Be Encouraged – Be Church

Car Parking available on the cobbles, at the Village Hall & at the former Carrs Billington site.

Bank Holiday Sunday at Semerwater!



How wonderful it was to finally celebrate our annual outdoor event ... outdoors! In the last two years we have had to abandon our plans and move to shelter inside St Matthews as torrential rain and gusty wind had left Hawes Silver Band pouring rainwater out of their instruments, soaked to the skin and shivering with the cold. This year the sun shone brightly as over 90 people gathered to enjoy a short service of Thanksgiving on the shore of the lake. Those enjoying the water for an afternoon's recreation and picnic listened in as we sang with great heart and considered the words of King David and Jesus with scriptures from Psalm 103 and Matthew 11 on how we can find rest and refreshing in God. Physical refreshment was provided by 'Team Busk' with drinks and a wonderful assortment of cakes.

Thank you to everyone involved in its planning and to those who came along and made our time together such a joyful occasion and a wonderful witness of God's goodness amongst us.

FROM THE BENEFICE CALENDAR



Baptisms

23 August	Callum Rosamond	Hardraw
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Weddings

2 August	Fiona Fawcett & James Harmsworth	Askrigg
9 August	Melissa Calvert & Dan Winter	Hardraw
29 August	Katie Duxbury & Thomas Dealtry	Busk
30 August	Samantha Alderson & Oscar Boughen	Askrigg

Funerals

14 August	John Fothergill	Hawes
18 August	Raymond Mark Cloughton	Askrigg
22 August	Joyce Sunter	Askrigg
27 August	William Udale Pratt	Hawes

Stay Connected and make the most of the Bible teaching taking place across the Benefice.

Search for:

'Rev Dave from Wensleydale'

Latest episodes include:

August 10th 'Psalms of Rest for the Summer' - Psalm 121

August 24th 'Beside the Lake' Part 1 & Part 2 - 'Finding Rest in God'

Available on Apple podcasts and Spotify



Join us for Evening Prayer

For some time now we have been offering the opportunity of sharing in a service of Afternoon/ Evening Prayer by telephone in 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 someone who would appreciate the chance to do so. If this 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#**. Then you are in! Say hello, sit quietly, and join in with the half an hour service of prayer and reflection



Are you good with a needle?

Like all Church of England parishes, the Benefice churches hold a variety of fabrics which are used in our worship. These range from the large and heavy altar cloths and lectern falls to the delicate range of fine linen sets used for communion.



We are in need of enthusiastic people who would like to help create, maintain and repair these fabrics across the Benefice. Sadly a few of our altar cloths are in desperate need of some remedial work and we are running out of usable linens. It is possible to buy in new ones, but these come at considerable cost, and many parishes create their own.



Sarah Betts has offered to head up a group and if you are interested in needlework or embroidery, please contact the office so that we can let you know when the group will meet to discuss the project.

The linens consist of Palls, Corporals and Purificators (see left) which are all different sizes and usually have embroidered crosses in differing places (see left).

Below is the 'red' set of liturgical colours at Askrigg.



Wensleydale Filling Station



Thornborough Hall, Leyburn

Friday 12th September

Speaker: Philip Ireson of Sheffield Christian Hope

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.

Who is funding your church?



Parish churches have long stood as pillars of local heritage, spirituality, and social connection. Often nestled at the heart of rural villages or bustling urban neighbourhoods, these buildings are more than places of worship; they serve as gathering spaces, historical monuments, and centres for outreach and support. Yet, despite their enduring significance, parish churches face mounting challenges in maintaining their buildings, programmes, and community engagement.

A couple of years ago, we conducted a survey in Hawes and one of the questions asked was how they thought St Margaret's was supported financially. Over 66% thought that the money came from the Church of England, or from Central Government. Neither of these things are true - The money to keep the parish churches open in England comes from congregations and the wider communities.

Historically, the financial health of parish churches depended on a mix of tithes and donations from parishioners, and endowments from wealthy landowners. For example, in the 17th century, landowners with churches on their land were responsible for paying the clergy and maintaining the church, and if people didn't attend church on a Sunday, they were fined! Until recently, villagers were expected to pay a 'chancel tax' to help maintain the church building and this can still be seen in old deeds. Over the years, this landscape has shifted dramatically, so that now the full costs fall on the congregation. The cost of running a parish church has risen steadily, outpacing many traditional sources of income and maintenance of historic buildings, compliance with health and safety regulations, and improvements to meet current legislation all demand significant investment.

So, keeping a church open and functioning is no mean feat. For example, did you know it costs £234 per week to keep Hardraw Church running and just over double that for Hawes. This does not include any medium to large repairs or improvements.

Churches receive money from

- Congregational Giving: Regular offerings from parishioners remain a principal source of income. Weekly collections, stewardship campaigns, and planned giving make up the backbone of church finances.
- Fundraising Events: Churches frequently organise fairs, concerts, harvest suppers, and charity auctions. These events not only raise money but foster community spirit.
- Church Fees: Income from weddings and funerals, although variable, can contribute to annual budgets. The money charged for these is set by the Church of England centrally, and only some of the money goes to the church, with the majority retained by the Church of England Board of Finance.
- Endowments and Legacies: Some churches benefit from historical bequests, which provide ongoing support. However, these funds are often limited and cannot meet the full spectrum of modern needs.

From this income, each church must meet:

- its utility bills – these things include heating and lighting, insurances, water/drainage, and regular maintenance for things such as the organ, fire equipment and bells.
- professional fees – such as the regular architectural survey and PAT testing of the portable electrical equipment.
- The parish share – this is a levy which all churches are required to pay to their Diocese each year. This money is then pooled by the Diocese and used by the Diocese to pay for their administrative costs, staff, clergy, and other general expenditure of the Church of England in its wider sense. The amount each church pays varies depending on the size of the community and other factors, but as an example, Askrigg church is asked to contribute just over £21,000 per year. As a Benefice we are asked to contribute almost £50,000 a year.

In addition, there is always something unexpected that has to be managed and paid for and this is particularly likely when you look after a listed building, where repairs require specialists and can be costly. We are fortunate that each church has a band of committed volunteers who contribute time, skills and sometimes materials to help reduce costs, for activities such as grass cutting and painting, but these groups are dwindling.



If we are to keep all our Benefice churches open on a daily basis as functioning churches, available whenever needed to those we are called to serve, then we need to be aware that this will only be possible through the continued financial generosity of the worshipping community and other gifts from our local communities.

Members of our four PCC's are meeting together in September to consider how we might be able to manage and meet our financial obligations and share the challenges we face with our respective communities. We need your prayers as we do so.

If you have any imaginative and creative ideas that you would like to contribute to our discussions, then we would be most grateful to hear them. Please contact the office or have a word with a PCC member.





Upper Wensleydale Benefice Services

September 2025

	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	
5 Sept	Sycamore Hall – Communion Service in the lounge – 10am				
7 Sept	The Gathering - Benefice Family Service St Oswald's Church, Askrigg at 10.30am				Evening prayer by telephone
14 Sept	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Café Style	12.30 Soup followed by Communion	Evening prayer by telephone
21 Sept	Holy Communion	Family Service	Morning Prayer		Evening prayer by telephone
21 Sept	Churches Together Harvest Festival 6.30pm in the Market Hall, Hawes				
28 th Sept	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Harvest Festival at Lowlands Farm	Afternoon Prayer Pathfinders and Explorers	Evening prayer by telephone



Rev Dave Clark

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Administrator: Stephanie Durrant (work hours 1-5pm Tuesdays and Thursdays)