

The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale 'Church in the Home'

April 2026



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Edition Number 124

From the Vicarage

Hurrah! The clocks have gone forward and British Summer Time has begun. I love this time of year when evening is increasingly delayed as the night's stay lighter for longer. With the increased daylight comes an increase in our visitor numbers as we welcome so many people seeking rest and refreshing in our beautiful landscape.

This Sunday marks the start of **Holy Week** as we remember the 'Triumphant Entry' of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. Now there was a place with some serious visitor numbers! According to the 1st-century historian Josephus, the number of visitors and residents in Jerusalem during Passover was immensely high and one census in 65AD gave it at over 2 million. Imagine the length of the queue at Hawes Chippy!

Last year a number of us went to the cinema in Catterick to watch some of the events of Holy Week on the big screen as depicted in the television series '**The Chosen**'. If you have never seen any of the episodes I think it to be a particularly well dramatized version of the life of Christ which really communicates the humanity of the disciples and the complexity of the relationships between them and the religious and social order in place at that time. They are definitely worth viewing.

I often describe the events of Holy Week as '**7 Days that changed the World**' and I encourage us all to mark them carefully as we lead up to the very focal point of our faith – the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday Morning. We have the opportunity to walk this through together starting on Wednesday April 1st in St Margaret's with a service of 'Compline' at 7pm, Maundy Thursday Supper and Communion in St Oswald's starting at 6pm, our 'Walk of Witness' from Gayle Chapel at 10:15am culminating in a short time of reflection in St Margaret's at 11:30am, a Family Walk from Semerwater Beach at 2pm to St Matthew's for Hot Cross Buns via the Old Cross on the hillside for a reflection at 3pm and then our Day Break celebration with Baptism at Semerwater at 6:30am with our usual BBQ of fish and fresh bread before the services of communion across the Benefice at 9 and 10:30am. I will then be very ready for a Chocolate treat of some kind!

We are all living through some very challenging times at the moment and I know that many are feeling unsettled and uncertain regarding global events and what the future may hold for us all. When things are not looking so good around us it's good to remember that '*it didn't look good at the Crucifixion either*'. The joy of Easter reminds us all that nothing can hold back the power of God. Nothing is so dead that He cannot bring it back to life. He is in control. He is our **HOPE**.

'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' ^{1Peter1:3}

From Sarah and myself ... may you know and experience the joy of the risen Jesus in your hearts and in your homes this Easter. **HAPPY EASTER!**

Rev Dave.

The next 'Gathering' will be on May 3rd
at 10:30am at St Oswald's in Askrigg



'Pentecost Preparations'



Our April Gathering took place on the 5th Sunday of March as we celebrated the events of **Palm Sunday**. The message was recorded and can be found as usual on Apple / Spotify or the Benefice Facebook page: **Upper Wensleydale Church - CofE**
'Rev Dave from Wensleydale' – *'Identity in the Crowd'*

This service is an opportunity for us to unite as Church in the Upper Dale in worship and to share in Biblical teaching together. Please do all you can to make this service a priority in your diary – our physical presence always encourages others in their faith. We look forward to welcoming you there.

Be a Blessing – Be Encouraged – Be Church



Easter Eve: A Pause for Thought

From Canon J John



In the Bible, the Saturday of Holy Week – our Easter Eve – is a moment of stillness between two days of the worst and the best kind of activity. Behind it lies the sorrow, pain and shattered hopes of Good Friday with the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, and ahead lies the joyful, astonished action of Easter Sunday as the impact of the resurrection spreads.

Between these two eventful days comes this uneventful one. Easter Saturday is a day when the clocks of heaven stopped and all history catches its breath. In the best sense, Easter Saturday is a pregnant pause: the Old Covenant has been fulfilled at the cross; the New Covenant is hours away from its birth at the resurrection.

The Bible only mentions two things happening on that Saturday and they form a striking contrast.

The first is recorded in Matthew 27:62-66 (NIV):

'The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 'Sir,' they said, 'we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, "After three days I will rise again." So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.' 'Take a guard,' Pilate answered. 'Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.'

It's an unhappy, troubled group of individuals.

First, we see fearful anticipation. By all human logic this powerful leadership should be able to relax. They have achieved all they wanted. Jesus, the man who troubled their consciences and threatened their control, has been publicly executed in the most brutal and shameful way.

Unarguably dead and buried, that matter is over. But they are nagged by the feeling that it isn't. They want a Roman guard around where Jesus is buried and offer the rather ridiculous argument that a robbed tomb might convince people of his resurrection.

Did they actually want more official proof that Jesus' death was approved by Rome and a discouragement of any attempt to make the tomb a shrine? Perhaps. But here's the thing about Jesus – he won't stay dead. Once we encounter Jesus, even if we reject him, he becomes the man you can't forget. He troubles the mind and disturbs the conscience of even the strongest opponent. To reject the presence of Jesus is to be troubled by his absence. The only sure way to avoid that sense of Jesus looking over our shoulder, is in fact to turn to him and accept him as Lord.

Second, I see frantic activity. This may be a solemn day of rest, but not for these men. Troubled by Jesus, they are driven to bend, if not break, every rule of their faith by meeting with the Roman governor on a Sabbath. These are plotting, scheming, restless men. They are fulfilling to the letter God's ancient wisdom.

“But those who still reject me are like the restless sea, which is never still but continually churns up mud and dirt. There is no peace for the wicked,” says my God. (Isaiah 57:20-21 NLT)

Many would identify with this restlessness: the sense that we must act, must go somewhere, must *do* something. Without Christ to hold things together, lives inevitably slide into confused and chaotic activity.

Third, I see futile achievement. The leadership hope the governor will grant them a Roman guard whose authority and ruthlessness will deter all visitors. And in one of those ironies, the very presence of the guard ends up acting as evidence that the empty tomb is not due to human intervention but divine action. Again there are lessons for us: to stand or act against God and his Messiah is utterly futile. Easter is about God's triumph. We must join it or accept utter defeat.

The second biblical mention of that Saturday is recounted by Luke. He says of the women who had followed Jesus and watched him being buried that they *‘went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment’* (Luke 23:56 NIV). Here, although painted in the darkest of tones, is a truly uplifting picture. A group of women to whom the very worst has happened, whose hopes have been dashed by the horror of the crucifixion, continue in their faith by resting on the Sabbath, as ordered by their faith. We can only imagine their thoughts and prayers but in the midst of the cruellest, saddest chaos, they somehow rested and trusted in God. And, of course, the next day their sorrow was turned into joy.

Today, with Jesus' resurrection behind us and the Second Coming ahead, we also live in a pause. These two groups with their contrasts of restlessness and rest, faithlessness and faith, failure and fulfilment, speak to us today. With which do we identify? Are we those who have rejected Christ and have our existence marked by fearful anticipation, frantic activity and futile achievement? Even if we are in some way 'religious', would we prefer to see Jesus safely buried in the ground rather than uncomfortably alive in the world and in our lives? Or are we those like the women who, despite all discouragements, cling on to God in faith and hope? Remember, one day, perhaps sooner than we think, the pause in history we know will be ended. The Lord Jesus will return in glory! Those who have stood against him will find their worst fears are realised, and those who have stood for him will find their wildest hopes are fulfilled. Let's be ready!

J. John

Easter Celebrations with our Schools

St Oswald's hosted the Easter Celebration for Askrigg and Bainbridge schools whilst St Margaret's hosted the children and staff from Hawes School and 'Dalesplay' along with parents and members of the Church Family for a truly joyful time together. In Hawes there really was such a wonderful sense of the presence of the Lord with us and the children were impeccably well behaved and thoroughly engaged in what was unfolding around them. Below is an extract from the Hawes school news letter.

'As a school we so enjoyed the Easter Service at the Church on Tuesday. The children sang beautifully and it was wonderful to share Easter joy with the wider community. It was so nice to have Dalesplay join us at this event. Thank you as always to Rev Dave, Mrs Clark and Mr Hirst for the organisation and making us all part of the Church family.'

And the more that they feel part of the 'family' the better!



THE WENSLEYDALE TOURNAMENT OF SONG

The children of **Hawes School** romped to success at the tournament taking home several trophies for their confident and spirited singing! **Sarah Clark** has been visiting the school every Tuesday morning for the last 10 years to lead their singing and the results on that Friday morning were a fitting tribute to her hard work and to the high regard and love that the children have for her. Mrs Foxwell conducted the choir as Sarah played the piano. Two of the songs they sang were written by Sarah especially for the school. **Well done everyone!**

Events for Holy Week

Compline



Wednesday April 1st: St Margaret's – 7pm

As we enter into the final days of Holy Week take an opportunity to be still and to reflect on the magnitude of the events we remember.

Maundy Thursday: St Oswald's, Askrigg – 6pm

Come and join us for a wonderful Shepherd's Pie and choice of deserts at 6pm. Vegetarian option available. If you would like to stay we follow the meal with a said communion service at approx. 7pm. To help us with catering, if you would like to share in the meal please call 01969 667553 to let us know .. but there is always plenty!



**Good Friday Morning:
'Walk of Witness'**

Meet at Gayle Chapel at 10:15 – we walk around the town of Hawes pausing at key points and finish in St Margaret's for a short time of reflection at 11:30am



A walk to the
Old Cross
Stalling Busk



Meet on
the Beach

Followed by:
Hot Cross Buns



At St Matthew's Church Stalling Busk

Good Friday Afternoon: A walk for all the family from the beach of Semerwater to St Matthew's in Stalling Busk for Hot Cross Buns - an opportunity to pause just before 3pm at the 'Old Cross' in the former church yard for a moment of reflection when Christ died upon the cross to pay the price for our sin. Approx 3 miles circular - strong footwear required - join us for the walk or meet us in St Matthew's for refreshments!

Easter Morning



Easter Morning: 6:30am

Join us for our annual Daybreak service as we celebrate an Easter morning Baptism in the lake! A memorable way to start your Easter celebrations with BBQ fish on the beach – just like Jesus did!

Funerals

The funeral service for **Anne Renshaw** of 'Garnon', Askrigg will take place in St Oswald's Church on **Tuesday April 7th** at 1pm

The funeral service for **Ann Macdonald** of 'Brandymires', Hawes will take place in St Margaret's Church on **Wednesday April 8th** at 1pm



Saturday July 18th 12-4pm

Save the Date!

St Margaret's Festival Day

Stalls  **Lunches** **Cakes** 

Community Raffle with Great Prizes!

Community Concert Fun at 7pm!



Recycle empty Blister Packs

We will take these to a
central collection point at
Boots in Catterick

Collection box in
the porch of St
Margarets for your
empty blister packs

Wensleydale Filling Station



Thornborough Hall, Leyburn 7-9pm

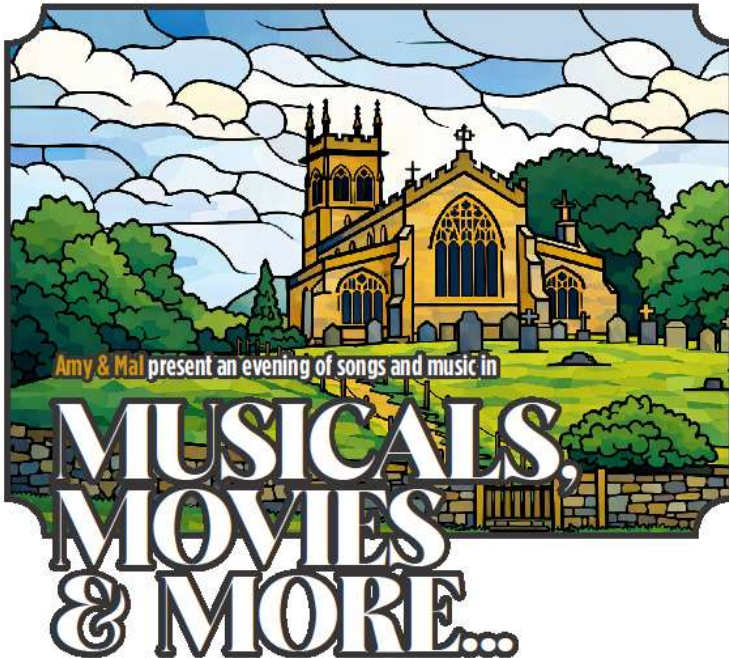
Andy Peace (Threshfield / Yorkshire camps)
Worship led by Dave and Sarah Clark

Future Events:

8th May – Graham Emerson (Penrith – Church in the Barn)

12th June – Matt Hirst (Lake District)

10th July – Sebastian Rab (Jonas Centre)



Saturday 18th April 7.00pm.
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH AYSGARTH.



Free entry.
Interval Refreshments.
Retiring Donations towards
Church Fabrics Fund



THIS EVENT IS KINDLY SUPPORTED BY:

Aysgarth Falls Hotel | WS Hartle Family Butchers | Marais at Penny Petroleum

St Oswald's Coffee Morning
on

Saturday 11th April

in the church

10am to 12 noon



Cake Stall

Book and Jigsaw Sale

Tombola

FROM THE BENEFICE CALENDAR



Baptisms:

March 21st. St Oswald's
Hallie Louise Lambert
Maddison May Lambert

Funeral:

March 18th St Oswald's
Alec Lambert

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

Search for:

'Rev Dave from Wensleydale'

March 3rd: 'Dealing with Fear'

March 9th '6 Questions'

March 16th 'One Amazing Mum'

March 22nd 'This is for You!'

March 29th 'Identity in the Crowd'



Available on Apple podcasts and Spotify **OR:**



Upper Wensleydale Church - CofE



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





Upper Wensleydale Benefice

April 2026

	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	
1 April		7pm Compline			
Maundy Thursday 2nd April	Communion at Sycamore Hall – 2pm in the Activity Lounge				
			6pm Benefice Supper followed by 7pm communion		
Good Friday 3 April		10.15am Walk of Witness from Gayle Chapel to Hawes 11.30am Service at St Margarets		2pm walk from Semerwater to Busk 3pm Hot Cross Buns	
Easter Sunday 5 April	6.30am Daybreak Service at Semerwater including Baptism				
	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion		Evening Prayer by telephone
12 April	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Café Style	12.30 Soup followed by Afternoon Prayer	Evening prayer by telephone
19 April	Holy Communion	Family Service	Morning Prayer		Evening prayer by telephone
26 April	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	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)