

The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale 'Church in the Home'

December 2023 and January 2024

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www.upperwensleydalechurch.org



Edition Number 99



From the Vicarage: What can I give Him?



Since the first days I began singing in choirs I have always loved the carol 'In the Bleak Midwinter' by the 19th century English poet, Christina Rossetti. I love its imagery and its association of the birth of the Christ child within an English rural landscape in the depths of winter. Since arriving in Upper Wensleydale I have only grown fonder of the picture that it paints. In a season drowned in the promotion of commercial excesses providing endless alternatives to the perfect gift, its final wistful stanza asks a crucial question.

Amongst the pleasure of giving and receiving presents to one another, it can be so very easy for us to lose focus on remembering that we are celebrating God's greatest gift in making Jesus Christ 'present' amongst us. God stepping into our world. It was the American Pastor Ralph Sockman, who suggested that 'The hinge of human history hangs on the back of a stable door in Bethlehem.' His birth, his '*presence*' changed everything for ever. '*Immanuel*'; *God with us*. He is available for everyone, everywhere, anytime and the lustre and the power of this gift will *never* fade, *never* deteriorate and *never* outlive its purpose in our lives as long as we live. With a gift of such value being given so freely to us, how might we ever be able to respond in a way that shows God our gratitude or comes anywhere close to his lavish generosity? I return to Rossetti's final stanza.

*'What can I give him? Poor as I am. If I were a shepherd, I would give a Lamb.
If I were a wise man I would do my part. Yet what I can I give him ... give my heart'*

The only response that God is interested in, is our response of love and faith and trust in Him. Amongst all the activity and demands upon our time and energy this Christmas season, let's ensure that we show the Lord how much we value the gift of His Son by spending time with Him in the coming weeks and especially over the Christmas weekend. Our '*presence*' *is* our present. Our gift to the Lord.

You will see from reading further the many different opportunities that there are for us all to engage with the good news of Christmas in the coming weeks and the invitational postcards will be dropping through letterboxes very soon. **Please** use these as a prompt to invite someone you know to come with you to one or more of the many different services and events on offer. Don't let them miss out on the joy of knowing the greatest gift of all.

May the peace, joy and presence of the Christ Child be in your hearts
and in your homes this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Happy Christmas to you all!

Dave & Sarah



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



Toy Service



We look forward to welcoming you there!

Be a Blessing – Be Encouraged – Be Church

****Change of Venue for 2024****

From **Sunday 7 January**, **The Gathering** service will be held at St Oswald's, Askrigg. This change of venue will make it easier for people to attend, with both better access and parking and a reliable heating system. Parking will be available on the cobbles (the Parish Council has given us permission to reserve places on the telephone kiosk side of the cobbles), at the village hall and at the old Carrs Billington warehouse. If you need a lift to church, please contact the office.

Wensleydale Filling Station



Thornborough Hall, Leyburn

Friday 8th December 2023



Speaker: Phil Ireson - Sheffield
Seeking the presence of God

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.



Come and celebrate **Christmas Day** with your church family at **St Mary & St John's Church, Hardraw**. The Benefice family communion service will be led by Rev Dave and take place at 10.30am

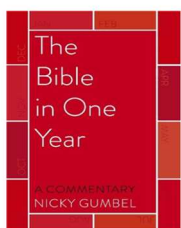
Our Benefice **New Year's Eve** celebrations will take place at 10.30am at **St Margaret's Church, Hawes**. It will be a celebration of God's goodness to us.

There have been so many individual, community and world challenges this year, that it is good to look at God's many blessings to us. If you have a testimony you would like to share, please contact Dave.



The Bible in One Year

Having a good working knowledge of the Bible is essential if we are to live our lives as God intended us to. Reading the Bible from cover to cover is something we should all do at least once in our lives (*and hopefully many more times than that*) But how to begin is the question that prevents most folks from even starting. Would it help you if you knew others in the Benefice were doing it with you as well? Last year several members of the church family joined with me in reading the Bible in one year. We used a wonderful teaching resource from Rev Nicky Gumbel (the author of the Alpha Course) By setting aside just 20-25mins a day you are taken through the Bible in a thematic way, with helpful teaching notes, powerful testimonies and prayers.



If you want to join in next year, then study books can be ordered through the office for approx. £16, **or** you can download a Kindle version for £6 **or** download the App for **free** and listen to Sir David Suchet reading it.



Bible in One Year
Alpha International
Designed for iPad
#107 in Reference
★★★★★ 4.5 • 5.5k Ratings
Free

Obviously other books and apps are available, but these are the ones that we recommend.

Let Dave know if you are going to start in the New Year so that you can be part of a wider group for encouragement

The MAGIC Of Christmas



*Saturday, 2nd December
2-3.30pm*

*The Askrigg Handbells
and
Mal Carruthers
on the organ*

*St Margaret's Church
with mulled wine & mince pies*

*Free admission - Donations to
Salvation Army Christmas Appeal*



Askrigg Christmas Tree Festival



16-31st December

Inside & Outside the Church Building

Christmas

What's it all about?

Four short Bible Studies

Tuesdays

9.15-10am

St Margaret's Meeting Room

When it all began

Why it all began

What it all began

HOW does it BEGIN?

Come and join us - We'll have the kettle on!

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN UPPER WENSLEYDALE

Taizé Service

AT

GAYLE CHAPEL

12 noon TUESDAY

5 DECEMBER 2023



To mark the start of Advent

The event will start with a hearty soup and bread lunch followed by the service itself at 1pm

EVERYONE WELCOME

You are invited to a

Christmas Memorial



St Oswald's Church, Askrigg
Sunday December 3rd 2-4pm

As has taken place in previous years, the Church in the Upper Dale will be holding a Christmas Memorial event. St Oswald's Church will be open on 3rd December from 2-4pm for prayer, thanksgiving and reflection for those we have loved and lost. This invitation is for you to visit the building during this time, where you might like to light a candle in memory of your loved one, write their name upon a star and then hang it upon our Christmas Memorial Tree which will stay in place throughout Christmas.

Reeth Brass Band

Concert

St Oswald's Church

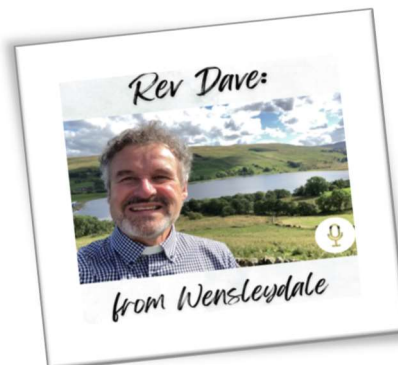
on

Sunday 10 December

3-5pm

Free entry

Refreshments



Catch up on
the week's
Bible
teaching or
listen again

'Rev Dave from Wensleydale'

Apple and Spotify Podcasts





Upper Wensleydale Benefice Services

December 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 2.30pm	Evening Prayer 4pm
1 December	Sycamore Hall – Communion Service in the long Lounge – 10am				
3 December	<p style="color: red; margin: 0;">Said Communion 9am</p> <p style="color: red; margin: 0;">The Gathering – TOY SERVICE 10.30am</p> <p style="color: red; margin: 0;">Above all at St Margaret's Church, Hawes</p> <p style="color: blue; margin: 0;">Christmas Memorial 2-4pm</p> <p style="color: blue; margin: 0;">St Oswald's Askrigg</p>				Evening prayer by telephone
10 December	Morning Prayer	Ecumenical Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	12.30 Soup followed by Communion	No Evening prayer
13 December			BAWB School & Community Christingle 2pm		
17 December	Holy Communion	Jubilate Nativity - A Family Christmas Celebration	Lessons and Carols		Evening prayer by telephone
21 December		Hawes School & Community Christingle 2pm			
22 December	Carol Service In the Long Lounge, Sycamore Hall at 1.30pm				
24 December	Morning Prayer Communion Service 10pm	Holy Communion Community Carols in the Market Square 7pm	Morning Prayer Community Carols around the tree 5pm Midnight Communion Service 11.30pm	Communion Service 3pm	Evening prayer by telephone
25 December	<p>Christmas Morning Family Communion Celebration</p> <p>St Mary & St John's Church, Hardraw @ 10.30am</p>				
31 December	<p>New Year's Eve Family Communion Celebration</p> <p>St Margaret's Church, Hawes @ 10.30am</p>				



Upper Wensleydale Benefice Services January 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
5 January	Sycamore Hall – Communion Service in the long Lounge – 10am				
7 January	The Gathering – Benefice Family Communion St Oswald's Church, Askrigg at 10.30am				Evening prayer by telephone
14 January	Morning Prayer	Ecumenical Covenant Service Gayle	Café Style	12.30 Soup followed by Communion	Evening prayer by telephone
21 January	Holy Communion	Jubilate Family Service	Morning Prayer		Evening prayer by telephone
28 January	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



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

Upper Wensleydale Church – CofE www.upperwensleydalechurch.org