

The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale 'Church in the Home'

May 2026



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From the Vicarage

What a wonderful Easter we have had together. Thank you to those of you who displayed in your windows the posters made available for you to remind our communities what these days are really all about. We entered the final days of Holy Week with the peaceful office of Compline led in St Margaret's on Wednesday evening by Martin. Our Maundy Thursday Supper in St Oswald's was a very happy occasion with nearly 40 people attending a lovely two course meal. Our thanks to Steph, Liz, Mel and the amazing team that set out the tables so beautifully and gave of their time and skill in creating such wonderful food. Graham Di Duca organised our Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' around Gayle and Hawes which was then followed by a time of reflection with Rev Vera. The afternoon walk from Semerwater to the old cross in Stalling Busk still drew a good number despite the attempts of 'Storm Dave' to blow us off our feet(!) and after a short time of contemplation at the cross we joined lots of folks at St Matthew's enjoying friendly conversation and tasty Hot Cross Buns thanks to Miriam and Jackie.

Many were praying for a break in the storm to allow the daybreak service to go ahead and Praise God, we got one. The waves subsided and despite the cold the immersion baptism went ahead and a joyful time was experienced by all. Our thanks to Sarah for organising the BBQ breakfast once again. We just managed to enjoy it before the rain, wind and hail returned!

And so our walk of faith continues ... this month brings '**Rogation Sunday**' (May 10th) and '**Pentecost Sunday**' (May 24th). In the Middle Ages it was a common practice for the villages to 'beat the bounds' in mid spring. Many of you may have done this yourselves (not that I'm inferring anyone is quite *that* old!). This involved the parishioners walking the boundaries of their communities whilst being led in pray for God's blessing on a successful harvest. The words from the 1662 prayer book include the following: '*Merciful Father we beseech thee to continue thy loving-kindness unto us, that our land may yield us her fruits of increase, to thy glory and our comfort.*' As a church in the upper dale we have maintained a regular rhythm of praying for our communities and our farmers. I constantly marvel at the skill and determination with which our farmers work in all weathers on our behalf. As we enjoy new life leaping & bouncing across our landscape in this lambing season, I encourage you to pray a blessing on our farmer's wellbeing, that the Lord would bless the work of their hands and keep them safe.^{Ps.90:17}

Pentecost should be such an exciting time in our year as we celebrate the Lord sending His Holy Spirit in power to *all* believers.^{Joel2:28, Acts2} The gifts of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit is available now just as it was then but we have to *want* Him to fill us and empower us. The Church needs Disciples of Christ fully *armed* and fully '*charged*' to be about the Lord's business. Let's approach this Pentecost with an eagerness to receive all He has for us and an expectation of seeing the Lord work through and *with* us in new and powerful ways.

'Heavenly Father, you are the source of all goodness and the giver of every perfect gift. Release within me, I pray, the gifts of your Holy Spirit that I may bear witness to your love and bring glory to your name. Amen!'

REV Dave

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



'Pentecost Preparations'



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 monthly service a priority in your diary – our physical presence always encourages others in their faith and it's important that we learn and grow as a united Church in the upper dale. Thank You. RD

Be a Blessing – Be Encouraged – Be Church



St Oswald's Coffee Morning

Saturday 2nd May 2026

10am to 12 noon
in the church building

Cake stall * Tombola
Book & Jigsaw Stall

Come and join us for a cuppa!



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*



CHURCH WORK DAY AT ST OSWALDS – SATURDAY 9TH MAY

Come and join us from 10am – there are plenty of jobs to do, big and small, including dusting, cleaning, tidying, painting, repairing and.. emptying the hearse house! Refreshments available to all workers.

Wensleydale Filling Station



Thornborough Hall, Leyburn 7-9pm

Friday 8th May

Speaker:– Graham Emerson (Penrith – Church in the Barn)

Worship led by Dave and Sarah Clark

Nest Meeting: 12th June – Matt Hirst (Lake District)

Asknigg Village Hall, DL8 3HT



Charity...

CEILDH

With Blind Panic

Doors - 6:30pm

Saturday 16th May



**RAFFLE-
BAR-BAND**

Adults - £10 Kids - £5

Family (2+2) - £25

contact 07398 329669 for tickets



Scan to
buy
tickets



RIPON
CATHEDRAL



**Are you grieving the death of a loved one or
struggling with the long-term effect of loss?**

Join us for a seven-session weekly course

**Location : Thorpe Prebend House , High St.Agnesgate,
Ripon, HG41QR**

When: 9th September – 21st October 2026

7.00-9.00pm

Topics include :

- Attachment, separation and anxiety
- Impact of the pain of bereavement
- Adjusting to change
- Anger and guilt
- Coping with others reactions

For more information or to register, please contact:
fionapearman@riponcathedral.org.uk or ring 01765 603462

Easter around the Benefice



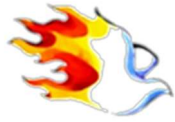
It was a packed crowd at St Oswald's for the Maundy Thursday supper and service



The Walk of Witness from Gayle Chapel to St Margaret's took place again on Good Friday, and the walk to Stalling Busk in the afternoon



The Easter Daybreak Service at Semerwater went ahead, including a full immersion baptism. Fortunately 'Storm Dave' had moved away in time, allowing a beautiful sunrise and a rainbow!



'Come Holy Spirit'



Sunday May 24th is known as **Pentecost Sunday**. It's a day in the churches calendar when we remember the life changing, pivotal moment in history when God sent his **Holy Spirit** upon the first believers and the church as we know it was born.^{Acts2} The Holy Spirit is referred to in the Bible on numerous occasions. In its opening sentences and at the start of creation itself, the Holy Spirit is there and described as 'Hovering'.^{Gen1} I love that image of the Holy Spirit waiting for a call to action. Before this moment of outpouring as described by the apostle Luke, this 'call to action' showed itself principally on certain individuals for a particular purpose but God had been speaking through various prophets across a millennia, that a time was coming when the Holy Spirit would be poured out and available for *everyone*.^{Joel2:28} That's *you* and *me*, and that is what we remember and celebrate at Pentecost and, hopefully, *every* day of our lives.

The Holy Spirit makes a difference. Without the Holy Spirit in our lives we cannot hope to live our lives the 'Jesus way'. He makes the difference. When we accept Christ as God's Son and our personal Saviour, it's as if the 'pilot light' in our eternal spirit has come on. That's good ... but oh, there is so much more! When we ask for the Holy Spirit to baptise us in His power, it's like the full burner roaring into life. **He** makes the difference!

Sadly, there are some branches of the church today that deny the existence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They read the biographical accounts of the Spirit bursting into the early church^{Acts2ff} as a time for then and *only* for then. I do not understand or recognise this theology or practice and can only put it down to people denying the existence of things which they have not yet encountered for themselves – never a satisfactory reason for repudiation I think. I have witnessed on so many different occasions the Holy Spirit coming in wonderful power upon individuals and on whole worshipping communities. He comes *where* He is wanted and He comes *when* He is invited, but He is real and, Praise God, very active in the Church today ... and in Upper Wensleydale!

I find it fascinating and exciting to read of real accounts where the Holy Spirit has manifested himself upon the church and faithful disciples. What has become known as the '**Hebrides Revival**' was a life changing experience between 1949 and 1952 for the communities of those islands and in particular, the isle of Lewis. But it didn't stay there. I remain excited that these particular events began with the prayers of two faithful, elderly sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith. One blind and the other crippled with arthritis, they were unable to travel to their local church to worship and so their small cottage became a house of prayer. They prayed fervently every day for God to pour out his Spirit so that the church they had attended since childhood would once again be full and filled with young people. The events that followed changed the communities for ever and went on to influence the worldwide Church. Blacksmiths, Butchers, teenagers, men, women and children, ordinary folks of the isles encountered the power of God, close up and personal. In the village of Callanish, just as happened in Jerusalem all those centuries before, those present in the church meeting said that '*The Spirit of God swept into the building with the force of a hurricane and the floodgates of Heaven were opened*'. The church buildings could no longer contain the crowds of people who were filled with the

Spirit and seeking worship. Hundreds of people gathered outside desperate to hear and experience more.

Nearer to home we also have the wonderfully exciting accounts of the Holy Spirit descending in the 19C '**Cotterdale Revival**'.

This contemporary account comes from a Mr Bill Phatt, a local Methodist Preacher living in Kendal.

In the early 1830's, Cotterdale was known as a 'rough' place. Lord Wharnccliffe who owned the estate had to employ four gamekeepers to keep the poaching down. A Primitive Methodist preacher – possibly William Clowes from Burslem, travelling to or from Kendal felt he should go into the dale but was warned not to. He went in regardless and conducted an outdoor service. A number were converted – the beginning of the revival. Following this, local men built the chapel on land given by Lord Wharnccliffe who also subsequently only employed one gamekeeper because of the 'change of heart' of the local people.

Further confirmation of these historic events comes from the pen of Mr John Slinger whilst listening to the memories of his friend Ralph Metcalf.

*'It was 1836, when, by the goodness of the Lord, a blessed revival of religion broke out, and affected nearly the whole of the inhabitants in the dale. The work first appeared at a class-meeting held in father's house, when my brother William was suddenly and unexpectedly brought into gospel liberty. And from that time it began inwardly to work like fire in the bowels of proper materials. And in about three weeks the Lord broke in upon the assembled congregation. That divine influence which had been working inwardly **burst into a visible flame**. The greater part of the congregation were arrested by the power of conviction, and a cry for mercy followed; and it seemed as if the answer to so many faithful prayers could no longer be delayed.'*

Take note of the description of the Holy Spirit descending visibly just as it did upon the early church as described by Luke some 1800 years earlier.^{Acts2:3-4}

Many of you will have heard me share the story of a good friend of mine from our home church in Normanton, West Yorkshire. I will, no doubt, be telling of it again this Pentecost, so listen into the teaching to hear a remarkable and encouraging story of what can happen when we open ourselves up to the Lord and receive the blessing of His Holy Spirit. He comes where He is wanted and He comes when He is invited and when He is ... He *always* turns up! Halleluya!

'I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy' Joel2:29

Dave

Are you able to offer some occasional help to either St Margaret's in Hawes or St Oswald's in Askrigg? 'Maggie's Angels' and 'Ossie's Army' are WhatsApp groups which you can sign up to. Every now and again, a message will go out asking for help for a specific event – such as a workday, or a coffee morning. You can then choose whether to help or not! To sign up – speak to the churchwardens or email the office with your mobile phone number. It's also a great way to invite folks not yet part of our church family to draw closer to us – perhaps you can think of someone who might really appreciate an invitation?

Gift Aid Reminder – Start of the New Tax Year

As we begin the new tax year, it's a great time to check whether you're signed up for **Gift Aid**. If you're a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid allows the church to claim an extra **25%** on your giving at no extra cost to you. It's a simple way to make your giving go further. If you already use Gift Aid, please take a moment to confirm that your **tax status hasn't changed**.

Every Gift-Aided donation helps support the ministry and mission of our churches in a meaningful way. The **Parish Giving Scheme** is also the most efficient and secure way to give regularly (with or with Gift Aid) helping the church plan confidently for the year ahead.



If you'd like a PGS form or have any questions about Gift Aid, please speak to your treasurer.

Using your gifts for God

When Dave leaves at the end of August, there will be a number of tasks that he currently does that we will need to cover. Obviously, there are tasks like the Sunday services, but there are also many others, such as visiting the sick or bereaved and going into the schools or Sycamore Hall.

If you feel that these tasks, or any other that Dave currently does, may be something you would like to take on, or be part of a team that takes them on, now is the time to let us know. Please contact your churchwarden, Dave or the Office in the first instance.



FROM THE BENEFICE CALENDAR



Funerals

7 April	Ann Renshaw	Askrigg
8 April	Ann Virginia Macdonald	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:

'There is HOPE!' no 121
'Let's be like Thomas' no122

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 Services

May 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 May	Sycamore Hall: Communion Service in the 'Activity Room' – 10:00am				
3 May	The Gathering - Benefice Family Service St Oswald's Church, Askrigg at 10.30am				Evening prayer by telephone
10 May	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Café Style	12.30 Soup followed by Afternoon Prayer	Evening prayer by telephone
17 May	Holy Communion	Family Service	Morning Prayer		Evening prayer by telephone
24 May	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Afternoon Prayer Pathfinders and Explorers	Evening prayer by telephone
31 May		BCP Service at 9am	Forest Church @ Sycamore Hall 10.30am		No evening prayer

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026

- 6th May St Margarets. Hawes at 10am
- 6th May St Oswalds. Askrigg at 6.30pm
- 7th May St Mary & St John, Hardraw at 5pm
- 12th May St Matthew's, Stalling Busk

All are welcome to attend, whether you are a regular churchgoer or not

Rev Dave Clark

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