

PARISH OF THE UPPER SKERNE

God is light; and in Him there is no darkness at all.

1 John 1.5



Service of Light

Every Sunday

As a sign of solidarity and hope, light a candle & place in your window.

Service starts at 6.45 pm, to light the candle at 7.00pm, during the service

Please pray –

for those who are sick

for the anxious

for the bereaved

for all health workers

Christ is a light which can never be extinguished

The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Collect

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First reading Ezekiel 37.1-14

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' ⁴Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.' ⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. ¹¹Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

Second Reading Romans 8.6-11

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law - indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Psalm 130 **R With the Lord there is mercy
and plenteous redemption.**

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice;
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss,
O Lord, who could stand? For there is forgiveness with you;
therefore you shall be feared. **R**

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;
in his word is my hope.
My soul waits for the Lord,
more than the night-watch for the morning,
more than the night-watch for the morning. **R**

O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy;
With him there is plenteous redemption,
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins. **R**

Gospel Acclamation Praise and honour to you Lord Jesus Christ ! I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord , whoever believes in me shall never die **Praise and honour to you Lord Jesus Christ !**

John 11.1-45

¹ A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸ The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹ Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹² The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' ¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother

would not have died.²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.’²³ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’²⁴ Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’²⁵ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’²⁷ She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.’²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, ‘The Teacher is here and is calling for you.’²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.³⁴ He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see.’³⁵ Jesus began to weep.³⁶ So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’³⁷ But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?’³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.³⁹ Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, ‘Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.’⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, ‘Father, I thank you for having heard me.’⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.’⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

Parish Prayers

Week beginning 29th March THOSE WHO LIVE IN: (Mon) The Orchard, S (Tue) Orchard Close, S (Wed) Palmers Terrace, BM (Thurs) The Park, BM (Fri) Park Road, TC (Sat) Park View, F

As you will be aware, our church buildings will be closed until further notice. Our prayer life, however, will continue. Please check the parish website, upperskerne.org.uk, for the latest news and for prayer resources. Members of the Ministry Team will be saying Morning Prayer between 8.30 and 9.30 every day, and Night Prayer (Compline) at bedtime. The texts of these services are also on the website so that you can join in at home.

The Morning Prayer readings for next week are as follows:

Monday 30th March - Psalms 73, 121 (or) 27, 30, Exodus 8.1-19, Hebrews 11.17-31

Tuesday 31st March - Psalms 35, 123 (or) 32, 36, Exodus 8.20-end, Hebrews 11.32-12.2

Wednesday 1st April - Psalms 55, 124 (or) 34, Exodus 9.1-12, Hebrews 12.3-13

Thursday 2nd April - Psalms 40, 125 (or) 37*, Exodus 9.13-end, Hebrews 12.14-end

Friday 3rd April - Psalms 22, 126 (or) 31, Exodus 10, Hebrews 13.1-16

Saturday 4th April - Psalms 23, 127 (or) 41, 42, 43, Exodus 11, Hebrews 13.17-end

There are a number of opportunities to join in with worship and reflect on matters of faith on BBC radio and television. All BBC radio programmes available via the BBC Sounds app.

The Daily Service

Radio 4 LW 9.45am Monday – Friday

Sunday Worship

Radio 4 8.10am Sunday

Choral Evensong

Radio 3 3.30pm Wednesday

Repeated 3pm Sunday

Pause for Thought

Radio 2 5.45am and 9.20am Monday – Friday

Thought for the Day

Radio 4 7.45am Monday – Friday

Sunday

Radio 4 7.10am

Recently Departed

St Alban's – Lillian Younger , Georgi Thomas Douglas, Edward Callan Bage **St Catherine's** -
Maureen Carr, John Woods **St Edmund's** - Roland Brownson (Roly), Shelagh Dixon **St**
Michael's - Norman Mayhew

The Sick

We remember those known to us who are ill at this time. We give thanks for those who are regaining their strength. This week our prayers are asked especially for-

St Alban's –Margaret Gowland, Joyce Teasdale, Joan Mawson **St Catherine's** - Ivy Potts, Norma Uren, **St Edmund's** –Emma Dawson, Keith Wells, Anthony Eadsforth, George Morrison, Luke Spalding, Monica Wilkinson, Chris Fothergill, Gill McDade, Frank Simpson, Martin Smith, Kim Sutton, Freda Gunn, Gill Bowman **St Mary Magdalene's** –Maurice Wilkinson, Angela Quinn, Daisy Sayers, Marlene Readman, Neville Robson, Billy Anderson **St Michael's**- Betty Dykes, Paul Gray, Gina Mitton, , Graham Jeffs

Thanksgiving For A Measure of Recovery

St Michael's - Roger Peebles, John George Woods

Lord, we pray for those infected by the coronavirus around the world, for those who care for them, for health specialists and the authorities who are working to halt the spread of infection, and for all who at this time are feeling anxious, especially those with friends and family in China. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Parish Notices

If you have anything you wish to be placed on next week notice sheet please contact the Parish Office on 01740 622012 by **Wednesday** morning. **Email** - office@upperskerne.org.uk
Find us on Facebook – **Parish of the Upper Skerne Website** – www.upperskerne.org.uk

Clergy Contact Details

Team Vicar – The Revd Elizabeth Bland, St Alban's Vicarage, Salters Lane, Trimdon Grange TS29 6EX 01429 883151. **Clergy (retired)** – The Revd. Martin King - 01740 620424, The Revd. Malcolm Masterman 01740 644787 **Parish Contact details Parish Church Wardens** John Burrows - 01740 469757, Bill Armstrong - 0191 3773847

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Latest Advice

In light of the Government guidance around non-essential contact, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have issued advice that churches are closed until further notice.

Daily Quarantine Questions

1. What am I grateful for today?
2. Who am I checking in on or connecting with today?
3. What expectations of 'normal' am I letting go of today?
4. How am I getting outside today?
5. How am I moving my body today?

PASTORAL LETTER FOR USE ON PASSION SUNDAY SUNDAY 29th MARCH 2020 –

From Bishop Paul

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

Today is Passion Sunday, the gateway to Passiontide where our focus turns towards the suffering of our Lord Jesus as we journey with him towards Holy Week and the cross and, in time, to the Resurrection. In all honesty, something of the rhythm of Lent has been lost for me over the past two weeks. So much has happened in our nation, and we as the Church of England have had to play our full part in helping others as much as we can to respond wisely to the very hard situation that we all face. We are in this together, as a nation and around the globe. So there has been much work taking place, locally and nationally, happening at a fast rate and changing by the day.

There is a lot of emotion surfacing at the moment and I feel it too. The first is fear; that natural fear of what is happening and lies ahead; fear for our own families and friends; fear for ourselves. Then there is sadness; sadness for those whose loved one's funerals and their own grieving have been disrupted; sadness for those who have had to postpone weddings and baptisms; sadness that our schools have had to close; sadness at not being able to visit people as we long to do. For many of us, there has also been the more uncomfortable sense of anger; anger at the virus; anger at those ignoring guidance and stripping shelves bare needlessly. There is also pity; pity for those who are suffering badly; pity for those who are dying and those bereaved. Finally, there is pride; pride in our NHS and the amazing staff; pride in our Emergency Services and Armed Services; pride in all those working in Government and the civil service to handle this at breakneck speed. I am immensely proud of the clergy, lay leaders and others who have responded so amazingly quickly and adapted in a whole host of ways to keep the church worshipping and praying in our homes. I am proud of the way you are praying, caring, supporting, volunteering and seeking to be the body of Christ in ways we have never experienced before so broadly.

Thank you for all you have done, are doing and will continue to do.

I recognise that the coming weeks will be very difficult indeed. There is much more sadness ahead before we begin to come through the other side of this pandemic. So pray honestly; lament, rage, cry out, thank, intercede and keep looking to our Lord who will keep saying to us, 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.' (Isaiah 43v1)

The gospel reading for today from John 11 begins with the reality of death. It includes the fear of death. It has Thomas rather bravely, and yet grimly, committing to die with Jesus if that is what following him means. It then goes into the extraordinary story of how Jesus responds to both Mary and Martha's grief at the loss of their beloved brother Lazarus. Jesus then raises Lazarus from the dead. In the midst of this we have Jesus declaration, 'I am the resurrection and the life', that hope that lies at the heart of our faith'. In the weeks ahead there will be sadness at loss. There will be a need to be like Thomas, sticking with Jesus even though the outlook looks grim. There will be a need to comfort those who have lost loved ones. There will be suffering and pain. Most who catch the virus (and it is likely to be most of us at some point in the coming months) will recover; we might not even be that ill ourselves. But we already know that it will be a very tough battle for a significant number, and it will end in death for some. So just as Passiontide begins with this story of Jesus bringing hope so too we will need to travel this road knowing that God travels it with us. We will need to hold

onto our Easter hope and the truth of the resurrection. There will be much Good Friday and Holy Saturday but Easter is coming and beyond the great day of resurrection that is yet to be.

My sisters and brothers you are in Bishop Sarah and my prayers. Thank you for being faithful to Jesus. Hold fast to God. Fear not. Trust in the one who is the resurrection and the life.

+Paul

Team Rector - Latest

The latest news we have is that Geoff is still signed off sick until 9 May. The Archdeacon and Area Dean attended a recent PCC meeting to discuss the situation with members. They are also talked about how we will need to support both Geoff and Paula when Geoff does feel able to return to work. Please continue to remember Geoff and Paula in your prayers. Please do not contact Geoff on church business either by phone or email. If you need to raise any matters please contact the Revd Elizabeth Bland or the Parish Wardens - Bill Armstrong and John Burrows. You can also contact the Parish Office. Further information will be published when it is available.

Calling all bakers!

In 2020, we are intending to make a Parish of The Upper Skerne recipe book.

This will include any tea time treats– cakes, bakes, biscuits, pies, muffins and more.

There will be a box at the back of each church to drop in your ideas, with a suggested format for your recipe. The book will be sold across the locality later in the year. Proceeds will be given to each church. Which of your family favourites will you share? Please could all recipes be collected in each church and handed to Sharon Stevenson by Sunday 26th April.

Information

Bookings for Baptisms and Weddings

Please e mail the parish Office to enquire about baptisms & weddings.

Trimdon Bereavement Support Group

Please contact Joan Clifford on 01429 880313 for further information

One step Forward Sedgfield Bereavement Support Group.

Please contact Sue Archer on 07779 093386.

BALM

Bishop Middleham Village Hall is closed until further notice and BALM sessions will be by telephone only until it opens again. Please ring Janet on 01740 656391 or email janetgraham456@btinternet.com if you'd like to make an appointment to talk about a bereavement or loss of any kind.

St Alban's Luncheon Club

This is cancelled until further notice