

Parish of the Upper Skerne

28th FEBRUARY 2021

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



Church closures during Lockdown

The PCC has agreed to extend church closures until 8th March and has dispensation from the Bishop to do so.

It is hoped that we will re-open churches later in Lent but a number of factors will need to be considered in making this decision.

Our worship on Zoom will continue.

Sunday Morning Worship on Zoom at 10.00am.
Weekly Meditation on Zoom: 10.00am Wednesday

Not an internet user? You can join Zoom too – by telephone! Please follow the instructions on the next page.

To access Sunday Worship on Zoom by Telephone:

Dial one of these numbers: 0203 901 7895
0131 460 1196
0203 051 2874
0203 481 5237
0203 481 5240

A voice will say **Welcome to Zoom** and will ask for the meeting number, followed by the hash key.

Key in: 882 4711 3369 #

The voice will ask for your participant number, and will also say that if you don't have one (you don't) to simply enter hash.

Key in: #

The voice will ask for your passcode, followed by the hash key.

Key in: 022477 #

You will be informed that you are in the Waiting Room and that the Host will admit you soon. Enjoy the service!

PLEASE NOTE: The meeting is usually open from about twenty minutes beforehand. This meeting number and passcode will work each Sunday up to and including 28th March, at which point we will set up a new meeting number and code.

The Second Sunday of Lent

Collect

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading Genesis 17.1-7,15-16

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ² And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' ³ Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴ 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.' ¹⁵ God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'

Psalm 22.23-28

(R.) All the ends of the earth shall turn to you, O Lord.

Praise the Lord, you that fear him;
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel;
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.
For he does not despise nor abhor
the poor in their poverty;
neither does he hide his face from them;
but when they cry to him he hears them. **R**

My praise is of him in the great assembly;
I will perform my vows
in the presence of those who worship him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and those who seek the Lord shall praise him:
'May your heart live for ever!' **R**

All the ends of the earth
shall remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall bow before him.
For kingship belongs to the Lord;
he rules over the nations. **R**

To him alone all who sleep in the earth
bow down in worship;
all who go down to the dust fall before him.
My soul shall live for him;
my descendants shall serve him;
they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.
They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn
the saving deeds that he has done. **R**

Second Reading

Romans 4.13-25

¹³ The promise that Abraham would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. ¹⁶ For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations') Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations,' according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' ²³ Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him,' were written not for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Gospel Acclamation Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ! I, when I am lifted up from the earth, says the Lord will draw all people to myself **Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Mark 8.31-38

³¹ Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' ³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty God,
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,
and inwardly in our souls;
that we may be defended from all adversities
which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts
which may assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Parish Prayers

Week beginning 28th February THOSE WHO LIVE IN:

(*Mon*) Milbourne Court, S (*Tue*) Millfield Road, F (*Wed*) Milliner Court, St. Edmund's Manor S (*Thurs*) Mitford Court, S (*Fri*) Moorside Crescent, F
(*Sat*) Mordon Village

Recently Departed

St Alban's – Dennis Young, Sybil Peel

St Edmund's – Nancy Wells

St Mary Magdalene's – Dorothy Hutchinson, Tom Cummings

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, Irene Grint, Doreen Greathead, Richard Wilks

St Catherine's - Norma Uren, Rita Fulton, Katherine Cooper-Young

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, Pam Bennett , Sam Edgoose

St Mary Magdalene's –Angela Quinn, Neville Robson

St Michael's- Betty Dykes, Paul Gray, Kathleen Garrett, Theresa and John Cornwell, Omar Kashoura, Janette Howley

Prayers from Roots website

Through the psalmist, God says,
'Be still, and know that I am God!'
Let us come into God's presence and still our hearts.
Let us come together to listen to God.
Let us be still, and know that God is indeed God.
Amen.

Holy God, we come from our busy lives.
We often forget that you walk with us.
As we gather now, help us to be more aware of who you are.
Give us the courage to admit when we don't understand,
so that we might grow more like you in all we do.
Amen.

Openly come to revere the Lord,
to praise and worship him.
Let our hearts rejoice with everlasting joy.
Amen.

All-powerful God of past, present and future,
keeper of promises:

How we love you.

Son of Man, the way, the truth and the life,
loving despite rejection:

How we love you.

Holy Spirit, living Power within,
helping, guiding, testing and transforming:

How we love you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
your unique relationship – open to us:

How we love you.

Amen.

Words of greeting on the lips; words of love on the lips –
the example you gave us:

forgive us when we fail to act as you do, Lord.

Words of retaliation, insincerity and malice on our lips:

forgive us when we act towards others in this way, Lord.

Overwhelmed by complex relationships and rocky paths:

forgive us for not setting our minds on you and your ways.

Fear of rejection and wary of being our true selves:

forgive us and help us to give of ourselves as you give.

Forgive us, Lord, for our failure to trust you;

for not allowing you to be in the driving seat.

Lord of covenant relationship, lead us

and help us to live your way.

In your name we pray.

Amen.

Jesus was handed over to be crucified because of our sins.

He died and rose again to make us right with God.

Through him we are forgiven.

Let us follow the Lord our God,

giving our lives as he gave his for us.

Amen.

Holy God, open our hearts and minds
to know who you made us to be.
Help us to live every day knowing
that we are your children.
Open our eyes to see not only others,
but also ourselves,
through the eyes of your love.

Amen.

Lord God, we thank you for our relationships.
For spouses. For family.
For children. For parents.
For friends.
For brothers and sisters in Christ.
Lord God, we thank you for all our relationships.
For the good times and the rocky times.
We pray for all those we know and love
– especially those who don't know what it is to know you.
Thank you that when we follow your leading,
you give us the strength and confidence to share without fear.
Thank you that we can stand in faith as Abraham did,
setting our minds on you
and trusting in your timing and promises always.
And when something gets the better of us,
and we forget about you,
thank you for never giving up on us.
We praise you, Lord.

Amen.

Everything I am Lord, and everything I do.
Help me to be always more like you.
Teach me to be yours, Lord, show me when I'm wrong.
Help me to be always more like you.
You accepted all, Lord, help everyone to find the way.
Help me to be always more like you.

Amen.

Morning Prayer Readings

Week beginning Sunday 28th February (2nd Sunday of Lent)

Collect for 2nd Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Day	Psalm	OT Reading	NT Reading
2 nd Sunday of Lent Sunday 28 th February	105.1-6, 37- end	Isaiah 51.1-11	Galatians 3.1-9, 23-end
Monday 1 st March	32	Jeremiah 7.21- end	John 6.41-51
Tuesday 2 nd March	50	Jeremiah 8.1-15	John 6.52-59
Wednesday 3 rd March	35	Jeremiah 8.18 – 9.11	John 6.60-end
Thursday 4 th March	34	Jeremiah 9.12-24	John 7.1-13
Friday 5 th March	41	Jeremiah 10.1-16	John 7.14-24
Saturday 6 th March	25	Jeremiah 10.17- 24	John 7.25-36
3 rd Sunday of Lent Sunday 7 th March	18.1-25	Jeremiah 38	Philippians 1.1-26

Collect for 3rd Sunday of Lent

Eternal God,
give us insight to discern your will for us,
to give up what harms us,
and to seek the perfection we are promised
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION

Rev Malcolm Masterman writes:

I have been struck after nearly 40 years of ministry as a health care chaplain that perhaps the one thing that is common for all is that each of us experiences brokenness. It may be the realisation we have a life limiting illness, the illness of someone we love, the betrayal of a loved one, the loss of a child, the loss of a dream, the oppression of those who hold power over us, or any number of other things. Yet this fact remains to live is to struggle, to be hurt and to experience loss and brokenness. Many of us used try to hide our brokenness from others.

You may have noticed that many people in the media for the first time are acknowledging a struggle with mental health, family issues and illness. The reason we may not have been open in the past is I think because we are embarrassed. We are often afraid that people may no longer respect us if we show our vulnerability or brokenness or wounds. We do not know if others will respect us if we show our wounds. Or perhaps it comes from a fear of being vulnerable. I know staff I have supported have been anxious that their managers did not know of their brokenness in case they were not trusted or not given promotion. We wonder if others will take advantage of us when our guard is down. Or perhaps it comes from a fear of being overwhelmed by our loss and grief. I don't know but I suspect it is all of these and more, varying from occasion to occasion. But I do know that we tend to favour in society strength, health and self-sufficiency over weakness, pain, and dependence.

But while this may be understandable this is ultimately neither faithful to the Gospel nor likely to draw us more deeply toward becoming the persons we have been called to be. Indeed my reading of the Gospel this week is that we are called to take up our cross expecting that God is most clearly and fully present in the suffering and brokenness of the world. We are called to take up our cross by being honest about our brokenness and demonstrate our willingness to enter into the brokenness of others. We are called to take up our cross because we follow the One who not only took up his cross and revealed that nothing in this world can defeat the love of God. Not even the hate and darkness and death present on that Friday we dare call good.

Denying brokenness and pain may indeed be understandable. Just as understandable as Peter rebuking Jesus. Peter thought Jesus was God's promised Messiah and had come to conquer and rule. Certainly not to suffer and die. No wonder Peter rebuked Jesus. Peter knew where to look for God and it was in places of strength. For this reason he could only imagine that grief, loss, betrayal, suffering, and death were things to avoid at all costs because they seemed to him to be, quite literally, God-forsaken. Yet in the cross God demonstrates that there is no place God refuses to go in the quest to love and redeem us.

When we embrace each other's brokenness we experience that God is with us through the cross. We also hear and experience God calling us to life in and

through the resurrection. Perhaps it will be to keep faith with the one who no longer remembers you because of dementia or to sit with the one near death's door or in supporting the bereaved. Perhaps it will be to call for action when action needs to be taken. However God's cross and resurrection call comes through embracing another's pain. It will not stop with "thoughts and prayers" but requires action with and on behalf of those for whom we are praying. The cross calls us to enter into the pain, suffering and brokenness of the world. Not to stand over people but to admit we are broken like them. In so doing we discover God is present in our suffering and fully in our brokenness. This is not an easy road but we are called to share it and by travelling together we will encounter Christ. By recognising our brokenness we will make room for the God of the cross and the resurrection and give hope to all on our journey.

Parish Notices

If you have anything you wish to be placed on next week notice sheet please contact the Parish Office on 01740 651960 (temporary number) by **Wednesday** morning. **Email** – upperskerne@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook – Parish of the Upper Skerne

Website www.upperskerne.org.uk

Twitter - @skerneupper

Clergy Contact Details

Team Vicar – The Revd Elizabeth Bland, St Alban's Vicarage, Salters Lane, Trimdon Grange TS29 6EX 01429 883151.

Temporary Associate Priest - The Revd. Peter Robson – 01740 651960

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

Lent 2021

Following the positive response to last year's #LiveLent, we are again encouraging people to engage with the Church of England's Lent resources, **#LiveLent 2021: God's Story, Our Story**. It is based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for this year, *Living His Story*, by Hannah Steele. Please use the link below to find out more about how to access resources:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/livelent-2021-church-resources-gods-story-our-story>

Lent Course

Sedgefield Area Churches Together will be running a **Lent course** on Wednesday evenings at 7pm, from 24th February to 24th March. We will be following a course called "*Our Common Home: Caring for God's Creation.*"

Sessions will take place via Zoom. Please contact Elizabeth on 01429 883151 or Elizabeth.a.bland@gmail.com) if you wish to receive the link for the Lent course.

Twitter

We will also have **daily Tweets** during Lent on our parish Twitter account. These have been written by a member of one of our congregations. Each week has a theme, and each day there is a short bible reference and a brief thought for the day. You can find the Parish of the Upper Skerne @skerneupper

Lent Charity

This year, the PCC has agreed to support Christian Aid.

To donate on-line go to

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/ways-to-donate>

Because of Covid-19 there are delays to postal donations, but you can donate by telephone by calling 020 7523 2269.

For details on how to donate directly into Christian Aid's bank account, please ring 020 7523 2226.

Bible reading

Have you ever read the whole Bible? If not, perhaps this could be the year you do... Why not start on Ash Wednesday? Look for the daily Bible Reading Plan on the website under the Bible Reading tab.

World Day of Prayer

As there will be no service in church this year, some of you may like to read through the service on Friday March 5th which has been prepared by the Christian women of Vanuatu, 2,000 miles east of Australia.

If you would like a service booklet please contact me on : 622456 or email suemold@hotmail.com and I will post it through your door.

Alternatively, a video of the service will be available on the WDPIC YouTube channel and social media for those of you who wish to access it.

Daily Hope 'phone line – A Brilliant FREE Resource

Daily Hope offers music, prayers, reflections and more, as well as full worship services from the Church of England, all at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly for those unable to join online church services.

Just dial the number (above) and you'll be given options to press on your telephone keypad.

(Options change every month but these are the ones currently available)

- * message from Archbishop Justin
- # reflections to listen to in bed
- 1 Hymns We Love (changes each day)
- 2 Hymn Lines – favourite hymns
- 3 Live Lent – reflections for Lent
- 4 Chair exercises for fitness at home
- 5 More Options
- 6 Weekly Service (C of E)
- 7 Traditional Daily Prayer Service
- 8 Corona Virus information and support
- 9 Mothers' Union Midday Prayers



Sedgefield Area Churches Together

*Everyone is warmly invited to a five-session
discussion group via Zoom for Lent,
**"Our Common Home:
Caring for God's Creation"**.*

*Sessions will run at 7 pm on
Wednesdays 24th February and 3rd, 10th, 17th
and 24th March.*

*Contact sedgefieldact@gmail.com for the Zoom link
and discussion materials (the materials are
available without joining the Zoom discussion). If
you can't make all of them, do join in when you can.*

Easter Hope

*The usual Good Friday Procession not being possible this year,
SACT is putting together an on-line event sharing the hope
that Easter embodies. Keep an eye on Round Up, sedgefieldweb,
Facebook and Twitter for details nearer the time.*

Sedgefield Area Churches Together

With so many of us walking each day, you might like to take the opportunity to pray for the people and businesses in the area as you stroll! Sedgefield Area Churches Together has a map and some suggestions for prayer – e-mail sedgefieldact@gmail.com if you would like to be sent them.

Sedgefield Area Churches Together

Information

Bereavement Support

BALM: The Bishop Middleham branch of the parish bereavement support service has continued working since the beginning of the first lockdown period and is able to offer one-to-one or group support as needed within a friendly and confidential setting. Since the beginning of the Coronavirus lockdown we have worked mostly by telephone, and individual calls can be booked for Mondays and Tuesdays. In addition a group meeting is held on the third Tuesday of each month in St Michael's Church, Bishop Middleham, from 2 to 3.30 pm. (Please note that we are discontinuing the monthly Wednesday evening group and that the Tuesday group will be subject to Coronavirus restrictions).

For further information on telephone appointments or group meetings, or to book a time, please ring Janet Deane on 01740 656391 or email janetgraham456@btinternet.com

Trimdon Bereavement Support Group -Please contact Joan Clifford on 01429 880313 for further information

One step Forward Sedgefield Bereavement Support Group. - Please contact Sue Archer on 07779 093386.

A message from Communities Together Durham – Durham and Stockton Deaneries:

COVID-19 Psychological First Aid - Free Training.

Dear Friends,

As I'm sure you are aware, the impact of the pandemic, directly and indirectly, is huge. This free online training is useful from an employment, volunteering and personal perspective.

Please share with groups and individuals who may be interested, and hopefully it can help lead to that one observation, comment, conversation that can help someone struggling, and that could be ourselves of course.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19>

A message from Durham County Council via Sedgefield Town Council

- Whether you're at the shop, at home or taking exercise, don't forget Hands, Face, Space. Help keep you, and your friends and family safe



- COVID-19 is still spreading within your community, putting people at risk of infection and huge pressure on our NHS. The most important action we can all take is to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.



- You can stop the spread of Covid 19. If you have symptoms of #coronavirus, self-isolate and get a test. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> for more information.