



Benefice News

The South Dales Benefice

OCTOBER 2023

Announcing a life-changing event

It is a joy to announce that our parishes will be presenting candidates for baptism and confirmation on 26th November 2023 at a service in All Saint's, Sudbury, to be presided at by the bishop of Repton.

Vicars have traditionally regarded Confirmation as a symbol of church health. The more candidates produced has been seen as a sign of a growing, healthy, vibrant Church. Others see it as a ticket of membership, or a badge of acceptability to receive the Eucharist. But is it either of these things? Our new *Common Worship* Confirmation liturgy incorporates so many restored traditional elements which suggest a much deeper, fuller, more mature understanding of the Sacrament. Confirmation is a sealing with chrism. It is a laying on of hands. An emphatic invocation of the Spirit. A baptismal covenant suggestive of a mature Christian commitment. In Confirmation one assumes responsibility for carrying out what one was committed to do at baptism. So, like the Eucharist, Confirmation strengthens, nurtures, and sustain us in the difficult task of being a follower of Christ - to which our baptism has originally called us.

But, I would suggest that there are *three* reasons why Confirmation is so much more than a simple reaffirmation of baptismal vows. First, it is a shift from actuality to epiphany. What is already made real for us at baptism (our becoming one with Christ) begins to be manifested as our own activity for a whole new way of life at Confirmation. Everything has already happened in baptism but has yet to be revealed in our lives, made our own, personally appropriated. In Confirmation, we very intentionally seek to glorify God in and through the character of our lives by allowing what God has done for us in Christ to shine through in a distinctive way that reflects a personal sense of calling.

Second, though complete, baptism clearly *points* to something beyond itself. Confirmation is not simply a looking back at what has already been given, but looks ahead to what baptism is for- the living of

a Christian life of witness and service to the world. In baptism one is committing oneself to take on a task. One is putting oneself in Christ's hands, showing willing to go where Christ will lead. In Confirmation, one begins to live these commitments out and to enter into the struggle to fulfil these commitments with some definite sense of direction. Simply stated, in Confirmation we show ourselves ready to do what one has promised to do in baptism. Confirmation becomes a kind of public rite of accountability. And, this requires the efficacious working of God's Spirit. We must be empowered - or as the prayer puts it "stirred up" by the Spirit for this maturation in the faith. Insofar as it is a sacramental rite, Confirmation reminds us that, here as elsewhere, our acts are never simply ours independently of God's acts for us. We must seek the Spirit in the difficult effort to be what baptism has already made us.

Third, although Confirmation does not have to do with making people Christian, it can be said to be a revival and renewal of an already Christian life. It is also an acceptance of a candidate's baptismal responsibility to ministry. If baptism is our conversion from the world (of sin), Confirmation is our conversion, back again in love to the world, following Christ's own mission for others, sent as Christ is by the Father for this purpose and enabled to perform it in the power of the Spirit. So, might it be possible to talk about a double conversion in the Christian life: a baptismal conversion to Christ and a second one to the world.

But I make this plea - our candidates are currently being prepared for this life-changing event. They need your support and encouragement. Please put the date in your diary. Although the service may not be held in your own particular church I urge you come along to be with your brothers and sisters as they take this important step in their journey of faith. In the meantime pray for our candidates

John Vickerstaff

Our virtual services can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/South-Dales-Benefice-102041281452944>

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13426/>

Our YouTube Livestreaming Channel

https://youtube.com/channel/UCqcfSG84wZzSJCXzfr2q_ygh

THE LECTIONARY IN OCTOBER

Sunday 8th TRINITY 18

Ezekiel 18:14 & 12-16; Psalm 25:1-8: Philippians
2:1-13: Matthew 21:23-32

Sunday 15th TRINITY 19

Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4: 1-9;
Matthew 22: 1-14

Sunday 22th TRINITY 20

Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-9; Thessalonians 1:1-10;
Matthew 22: 15-22



OCTOBER 2023

**Sunday 1st 10.30am, UNITED BENEFICE
E UCHARIST @ DOVERIDGE 'THE
VINEYARD'**

**Thursday 5th 7.30pm, COME TO THE QUIET @
SOMERSAL (L)**

Sunday 8th *Trinity 18*

9.30am, EUCHARIST @ ALKMONTON
11am, HARVEST & HOLY BAPTISM @ CUBLEY
11am, EUCHARIST & HOLY BAPTISM @
DOVERIDGE
11am, MORNING PRAYER @ MARSTON
MONTGOMERY
9.30am, MORNING PRAYER @ SCROPTON
6pm, EVENING PRAYER @ SOMERSAL HERBERT
11am, FAMILY SERVICE @SUDBURY

Saturday 14th Sunday 15th *Trinity 19*

6pm, VILLAGE PRAISE @ ALKMONTON
11am, EUCHARIST @ CUBLEY
11am, FAMILY SERVICE @ DOVERIDGE
11am, EUCHARIST @ MARSTON MONTGOMERY
11am, MORNING PRAYER @ SUDBURY (L)

Thursday 19th **10am, NEW VENTURE: BENEFICE 'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY' & COFFEE TIME @ SOMERSAL HERBERT (LIVESTREAMED)**

Sunday 22nd
Trinity 20

9.30am, FAMILY SERVICE @ ALKMONTON
6pm, EVENING PRAYER @ CUBLEY
11am, MORNING PRAYER @ DOVERIDGE
11am, FAMILY SERVICE & HOLY BAPTISM @ MARSTON MONTGOMERY
9.30am, EUCHARIST @ SCROPTON
9.30am, EUCHARIST @ SOMERSAL HERBERT (L)
11am, EUCHARIST @ SUDBURY

Sunday 29th **FIFTH SUNDAY EVENTS IN THE PARISHES**
10am TEA, TALK, TOST AT TEN @ DOVERIDGE

NOVEMBER 2023

Thursday 2nd 7.30pm, COME TO THE QUIET @ SOMERSAL FOR ALL SOULS' DAY (L)

Sunday 5th
All Saints' Day

10.30am, UNITED BENEFICE EUCHARIST FOR THE FEAST OF TITLE @ SUDBURY

Sunday 12th
Kingdom 2

9.30am, REMEMBRANCE @ ALKMONTON
10.50am, REMEMBRANCE @ CUBLEY
10.50am, REMEMBRANCE @ DOVERIDGE
10.30am, REMEMBRANCE @ MARSTON MONTGOMERY
9.30am, REMEMBRANCE @ SCROPTON
6pm, REMEMBRANCE @ SOMERSAL HERBERT
10.50am, REMEMBRANCE @SUDBURY

Thursday 16th **10am, NEW VENTURE: BENEFICE 'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY' & COFFEE TIME @ SOMERSAL HERBERT (LIVESTREAMED)**

Saturday 18th 6pm, VILLAGE PRAISE @ ALKMONTON

Sunday 19th

Kingdom 3

11am, EUCHARIST @ CUBLEY

11am, FAMILY SERVICE @ DOVERIDGE

11am, EUCHARIST @ MARSTON MONTGOMERY

11am, MORNING PRAYER @ SUDBURY (L)

Thursday 19th

10am, NEW VENTURE: BENEFICE 'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY' & COFFEE TIME @ SOMERSAL HERBERT (LIVESTREAMED)

Sunday 26th

CHRIST THE KING

10.30am, UNITED BENEFICE EUCHARIST @ DOVERIDGE FOR THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING.

6pm, UNITED BENEFICE SERVICE OF ADULT BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION BY THE BISHOP OF REPTON @ SUDBURY



Sunday 3rd December 2023 at 10.30am, **UNITED BENEFICE EUCHARIST WITH HOLY BAPTISM @ St Cuthbert's, Doveridge**

Sunday 10th December 2023 at 6pm, **CANDLELIT UNITED BENEFICE ADVENT CAROL SERVICE** (with choir & organ) @ All Saints', Sudbury.

Wednesday 31st January 2024, **HEPTAHEDRON & PCC MEETINGS WITH THE ARCHDEACON** venue and time to be confirmed. All PCC members please put this in your diary now.

October - the month of the Holy Angels

Heavenly King,
you have given us archangels to assist us
during our pilgrimage on earth. Michael is our protector;
I ask him to come to my aid, fight for all my loved ones,
and protect us from danger. Gabriel is a messenger of the
Good News; I ask him to help me clearly hear your voice
and to teach me the truth. Raphael is the healing angel;
I ask him to take my need for healing and that of
everyone I know, lift it up to your throne of grace and
deliver us back to the gift of recovery. Help us, O Lord, to
realize more fully the reality of archangels and their
desire to serve us. Holy angels, pray for us. Amen

Communications

**Requests for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals or
Interment of Ashes to:**

The Rector Revd Dr John Vickerstaff

Email: drjohn.vickerstaff@gmail.com

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INPUT FOR:

Benefice News, A Church Near You, & Benefice

Facebook Page: drjohn.vickerstaff@gmail.com or
thesouthdalesparishes@gmail.com

Doveridge Parish Magazine:

Jane Sedrak: janeshouksmith@hotmail.com

(articles in .doc, .jpg and .pdf formats)

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Parish News

SUDBURY

- We are busy raising funds for the repair to the Church Roof and it appears that we will need to raise approximately £20,000 to help with the repairs. The lead will not be replaced and where it remains will be removed on the North Aisle. The lead above the Choir and Vernon Chapel will be replaced where damaged to comply with the Church's Grade 2 listing. If you are able to support funding, please donate via the following link.



To kick start the major fund-raising campaign a concert will be held on Saturday the 21st October at 7:30pm. **The Rhapsody Community Choir** will be performing songs from the shows, films and hit records you're your favourite pop, There will be a raffle and refreshments. All this for a ticket price of

£10 for what is promised to be an entertaining evening. Tickets are available from Alan Smith, Mary Larigo, Jane Latham or any PCC member.

- **Hand Bell Ringing practice** takes place at the Church on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30. No experience necessary.

SOMERSAL HERBERT

- **NEW VENTURE.** Here at Somersal we continue to develop our online ministry and are delighted that our presence on YouTube and FaceBook is continuing to grow. From October 19th (on the third Thursday of each month) we will be hosting a livestreamed '**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**'. Hosted by members of the Ministry Team (and beyond) this is intended to consist of a short (10 minute) presentation with a simple message. For those in church there will be a time of fellowship with refreshments following. All are welcome - please do support us in church on the day or at:

https://youtube.com/channel/UCqcfsg84wZzSJCXzfr2q_ygh

DOVERIDGE

- Our Family Service in October (15th) will include a presentation from Scripture Union. All are welcome from throughout the benefice. Also, our popular TEA, TALK, TOAST AT TEN is back on Sunday 29th October.

Benefice Notices

CONFIRMATION

Our candidates are now being prepared for their Baptism and Confirmation by the Bishop of Repton on **SUNDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2023 at 6pm.** Please pray for: Daniel & Habiba Sedrak (Doveridge), Victoria Phillips, (Cubley) & Dino Goold (Marston Montgomery) as they prepare for these sacraments.

HARVEST SUPPERS

Cubley on Monday 9th October at 7.30pm at the Mary Clowes Hall. There is a licensed bar so no bring your own. Auction of produce.

From the Registers

FUNERALS

Irene Bunting @ St Cuthbert's, Doveridge,
on Tuesday 19th September 2023

Anthony James Morley @ St Andrew's, Cubley
on Monday 2nd October 2023

Rest Eternal grant unto them O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

BAPTISMS

Abbey Tomkinson @ St Cuthbert, Doveridge on Sunday
8th October 2023

Archie John Wentworth @ St Giles, Marston Montgomery
on Sunday 22nd October 2023

Olivia Ella Tomkinson @ St Giles, Marston Montgomery
on Sunday 22nd October 2023

Almighty God, who by our baptism into the death and resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ dost turn us from the old life of sin: Grant that we, being reborn to new life in him, may live in righteousness and holiness all our days; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Bible Study on Angels

God is at work in our lives at every moment. One of the ways he shows his care over us is through angels. I love the classic Christmas film, 'It's a Wonderful Life'. I think Clarence, the inept angel trying to win his wings, is lovable and endearing. But, I have to tell you that angels are nothing like Clarence. They are not former humans and they do not win their wings. The Bible sometimes describes angels as beautiful or magnificent creatures and, well, Clarence doesn't exactly fit that description either. Nor are angels like what you see painted on cards or sculpted in figurines in gift shops. They are not women or fat little babies with wings. So, just what are angels? What are they like, and what do they do?

Billy Graham calls angels "God's secret agents." An agent is one who acts on behalf of another, doing work in the name of the one he represents. This is exactly what angels do. In fact, there are times in the Bible when a person having seen an angel counted it the same as having seen God. For example, in that strange story of Jacob wrestling all night with an angel, Jacob explained why he named the place of the encounter Peniel: "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." (Genesis 32:30). Angels are immortal creatures who minister to us in various ways. Above all, they deliver messages from God. Angels told Abraham that Isaac would be born (Genesis 18:10). An angel told Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-31). An angel announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds (Luke 2:8-11). An angel told the two women at the tomb that Jesus had risen (Matthew 28:1-6).

Angels also protect us, as they protected Daniel by shutting the mouths of the lions in the den where he had been thrown (Daniel 6:22).

Angels minister to humans in need, as when they assisted Hagar and her dying son Ishmael in the wilderness (Genesis 21:17-18). An angel fed the exhausted and disheartened Elijah fleeing Jezebel's wrath (1 Kings 19:5), and angels delivered the apostle Peter from prison (Acts 12:7). Angels gave food and water to Christ after his forty-day fast and duel with Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:10-11). They also strengthened Christ after his prayer in Gethsemane so he could face his coming ordeal (Luke 22:43). Angels execute God's judgement, as when they brought death and pestilence to the Israelites when David disobeyed God by numbering the people (2 Samuel 24:15-16). Their role in executing God's final judgment is elaborately pictured throughout the book of Revelation.

However, angels' exact mode of existence is difficult to know. They are equally effective in both the realm we inhabit and the invisible realm which Paul sometimes calls "heavenly" and sometimes "spiritual" (Ephesians 3:10). Their apparent comfort in both realms supports the idea that the spiritual realm is not immaterial, but rather a realm of physical reality that is simply invisible to us because it is in another dimension. We call that other realm supernatural because it is outside the dimension that is natural to us. But to the angels living in that dimension, what seems to us supernatural and ghostly (because it's invisible) is to them perfectly natural, solid, and visible.

Do We Encounter Angels Today? Christians sometimes question whether angels are active in our lives today. I have never actually seen an angel that I knew of (though according to Hebrews 13:2, I may have seen angels whom I thought were human). But I have no doubt that angels are among us. I'll give you three reasons. First, we have the same need for angelic ministry that people have always had. We still live in a fallen world. Our need for supernatural help and protection is as real now as it ever was. Second, we have God's promises of continuing angelic protection. Psalm 91:11 says, "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." Hebrews 1:14 says, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" Jesus, speaking of a child, said, "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).

These verses raise the question as to whether we have guardian angels. The term "guardian angel" is never used in the Bible, but early Christian writers and classic theologians such as Origen and

Thomas Aquinas defended the belief. We simply do not know whether each of us has a particular angel assigned just to watch over us. But we know from the above scriptures and others that angels do guard and protect God's people. Third, we know that angels are active today because we have many credible testimonies of their work among us. In his book, 'Angels', Billy Graham relates several incidents where angels protected missionaries and people in WWII Germany from harm or guided soldiers to safety. Other Christians tell of angels warning them of danger, helping them when stranded, healing the sick, and bringing peace to the dying. Some angel stories we hear may not be credible, but we dare not dismiss all accounts, especially those that come from reliable and trusted witnesses.

How can you know if you've seen an angel? It's not likely that you would know. Usually in the Bible angels appeared simply as human beings, as when they announced the coming birth of Isaac to Abraham and of Samson to Manoah (Judges 13:8-11). At other times angels have been present but invisible, as when an angel barred the way of the prophet Balaam and an army of angels stood ready to protect Elisha at Dothan (Numbers 22:22-23; 2 Kings 6:16-17). In a few instances angels have appeared in their spectacular native form, often scaring people senseless, as when the angel rolled away the stone at Jesus' tomb on Easter morning. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men" (Matthew 28:3-4). If you see a sight like this, you won't have to wonder whether you've seen an angel. Angels are not here to make a show of themselves, but rather to serve and help us. You could encounter angels unaware anywhere—the person you've never seen who gives you encouragement in the hospital waiting room, or the unidentified stranger who appears at a moment when you desperately need help. I am convinced that angels are all around us, right now. We may never know how much they do for us every day, but I'm sure we could not make it through life without them.

Abridged from a sermon of Ron Piper