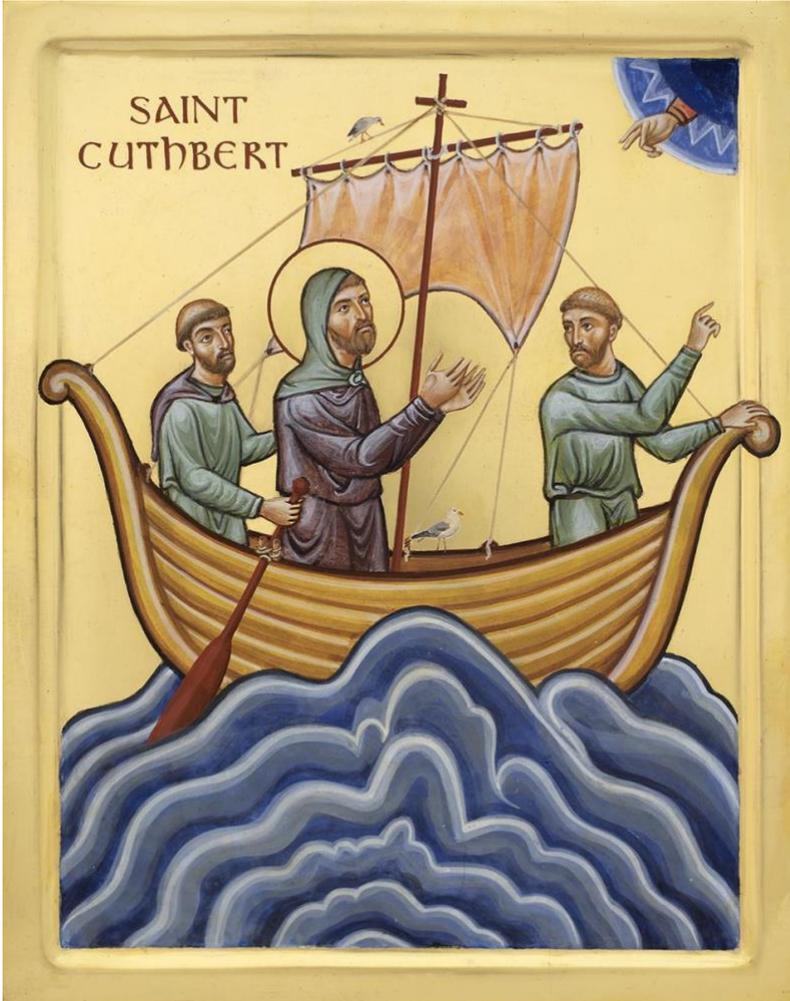


St Andrew
STAPLEFORD

*Journeying through Lent with
St Cuthbert*



Lent with St Cuthbert

14 February to 28 March 2024

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Almighty God,
who called your servant Cuthbert from following the flock
to follow your Son and to be a shepherd of your people:
in your mercy, grant that we, following his example,
may bring those who are lost home to your fold;
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.
Amen.

All services are at 7 pm. The readings which are not from the bible are from St Bede's Life of Cuthbert, written in 721, and translated by J F Webb and published by Penguin in 1965.

Ash Wednesday Communion 14 February

Lent Complines

Friday 23 February

Friday 1 March

Friday 8 March

Friday 15 March

Friday 22 March

Monday 25 March

Tuesday 26 March

Wednesday 27 March

Maundy Thursday Communion 28 March

St Cuthbert (634-687)

Cuthbert was born in North Northumbria in about the year 635, the same year in which Aidan founded the monastery on Lindisfarne. He came from a well-to-do English family and like most boys of that class, he was placed with foster-parents for part of his childhood and taught the arts of war. We know nothing of his foster-father but he was very fond of his foster-mother, Kenswith.

It seems, from stories about his childhood, that he was brought up as a Christian. He was credited, for instance, with having saved by his prayers some monks who were being swept out to sea on a raft. There is some evidence that, in his mid-teens, he was involved in at least one battle, which would have been quite normal for a boy of his social background.

His life changed when he was about 17 years old. He was looking after a neighbour's sheep on the hills. Gazing into the night sky he saw a light descend to earth and then return, escorting, he believed, a human soul to heaven. The date was 31 August in 651, and was the night that Aidan died. Perhaps Cuthbert had already been considering a possible monastic calling but that was his moment of decision.

He went to the monastery at Melrose, also founded by Aidan, and asked to be admitted as a novice. For the next 13 years he was with the Melrose monks. When Melrose was given land to found a new monastery at Ripon, Cuthbert went with the founding party and was made guestmaster. In his late 20s he returned to Melrose and found that his former teacher and friend, Prior Boisil, was dying of the plague. Cuthbert became Prior (second to the Abbot) at Melrose.

In 664 the Synod of Whitby decided that Northumbria should cease to look to Ireland for its spiritual leadership and turn instead to the continent. The Irish monks of Lindisfarne, with others, went back to Iona. The abbot of Melrose subsequently became also Abbot of Lindisfarne and Cuthbert its Prior.

Cuthbert seems to have moved to Lindisfarne at about the age of 30 and lived there for the next 10 years. He ran the monastery; he was an active missionary; he

was much in demand as a spiritual guide and he developed the gift of spiritual healing. He was an outgoing, cheerful, compassionate person and no doubt became popular. But when he was 40 years old he believed that he was being called to be a hermit and to do the hermit's job of fighting the spiritual forces of evil in a life of solitude.

After a short trial period on the tiny islet adjoining Lindisfarne he moved to the more remote and larger island known as 'Inner Farne' and built a hermitage where he lived for 10 years. He was not left entirely alone. People went out in their little boats to consult him or ask for healing. However, on many days of the year the seas around the islands are simply too rough to make the crossing and Cuthbert was left in peace.

At the age of about 50 he was asked by both Church and King to leave his hermitage and become a bishop. He reluctantly agreed. For two years he was an active, travelling bishop as Aidan had been. He seems to have journeyed extensively. On one occasion he was visiting Aelfflæd in Carlisle (on the other side of the country from Lindisfarne) when he knew by second sight that her brother, King Ecgrith, had been slain by the Picts doing battle in Scotland.

Feeling the approach of death he retired back to the hermitage on Inner Farne where, in the company of Lindisfarne monks, he died on 20 March 687.

Taken from Lindisfarne.org.uk accessed 31.12.2023

Ash Wednesday Communion – 14 February 7 pm

Ecclesiastes 11.7-12.1a

- 7 Light is sweet,
and it pleases the eyes to see the sun.
- 8 However many years anyone may live,
let them enjoy them all.
But let them remember the days of darkness,
for there will be many.
Everything to come is meaningless.
- 9 You who are young, be happy while you are young,
and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth.
Follow the ways of your heart
and whatever your eyes see,
but know that for all these things
God will bring you into judgment.
- 10 So then, banish anxiety from your heart
and cast off the troubles of your body,
for youth and vigour are meaningless.
- 12 Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come.

Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

6 'Be careful not to practise your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 'So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

16 'When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

19 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Chapter 24

The holy virgin Aelfflæd, mother of the handmaids of Christ, sent to Cuthbert on one occasion begging him in God's name to come and talk over some important matter. He took a boat and sailed with his brethren to the appointed meeting place, Coquet Island, so called because it lies opposite the mouth of the Coquet. It was renowned for its monasteries. In the course of conversation, after Cuthbert had answered her queries at length, she suddenly broke off and flung herself before him, adjuring him by the awful name of the King of Heaven and His Angels to tell her how long her brother King Ecgfrith would last and who was to rule after him.

'I know you can tell me,' she said, 'if only you will, for the spirit of prophecy is strong in you.'

Her oath frightened him, yet he still shrank from revealing the truth.

'It surprises me,' he answered 'that a sensible woman, and one so well versed in the scriptures should think of calling human life long. Does not the psalmist declare "our years are reckoned as a spider's web"? Does not Solomon exclaim: "If a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. When they form the past is reckoned as vanity."? Then how much shorter must a man's life appear when he happens to be in his last year with death at the gates?'

Compline 1 – Friday 23 February 7 pm

John 6.16-21

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷ where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. ¹⁸ A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, 'It is I; don't be afraid.' ²¹ Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

Chapter 8

All the ways of this world are as fickle and unstable as a sudden storm at sea. Eata and Cuthbert and all the rest were thrown out of Ripon and the monastery they had built was given over to other monks. This change of place did not weaken our athlete of Christ in his determination once taken to do battle for heaven. He followed the words and actions of his mentor Boisil with undiminished fervour.



Compline 2 – Friday 1 March 7 pm

John 7.28-31

⁸ Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, ‘Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, ²⁹ but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.’

³⁰ At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, ‘When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?’

Chapter 9

Inside the monastery Cuthbert counselled the monks on the religious life and set a high example of it himself, and outside, in the world, he strove to convert people for miles around from their foolish ways to a delight in the promised joys of heaven. Many who had the faith had profaned it by their works. And many, even while the plague was raging around them, had forgotten the mystery conferred on them in baptism and had fled to idols, as though incantations or amulets or any other kind of diabolical rubbish could possibly avail them.

To bring back both kinds of sinners he often did the rounds of the villages, sometimes on horseback, more often on foot, preaching the way of truth to those who had gone astray

Compline 3 – Friday 8 March 7 pm

John 8.54-58

⁵⁴ Jesus said, 'If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. ⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.'

⁵⁷ 'You are not yet fifty years old,' they said to him, 'and you have seen Abraham!'

⁵⁸ 'Very truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'

Chapter 12

He had gone out one day to preach as usual, taking a boy with him for company. Long before reaching their destination they were tired out. Cuthbert said to the boy, to test him: 'Tell me, son, where do you intend to eat today? Will you be able to turn in at a friend's on the way?'

'I was thinking about that myself,' answered the lad. 'We did not bring anything with us when we set out, and there is no one to ask a meal from. We cannot cover the rest of the journey fasting, without doing ourselves an injury.'

'Learn to have constant faith and hope in the Lord,' answered Cuthbert.

'He who serves God shall never die of hunger.'

Compline 4 – Friday 15 March 7 pm

John 11.21-27

²¹ ‘Lord,’ Martha said to Jesus, ‘if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.’

²³ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’

²⁴ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’

²⁵ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ²⁷ ‘Yes, Lord,’ she replied, ‘I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’

Chapter 22

Now Cuthbert had great numbers of people coming to him not just from Lindisfarne but even from the remote parts of Britain, attracted by his reputation for miracles.

They confessed their sins, confided in him about their temptations, and laid open to him the common troubles of humanity they were labouring under – all in the hope of gaining consolation from so holy a man.

They were not disappointed. No one left unconsolated, no one had to carry back the burdens he came with. Spirits that were chilled with sadness he brought back to hope again with a pious word.

Those beset with worry he brought back to thoughts of the joy of heaven. He showed them that both good fortune and bad were transitory in this

world. To those beset with temptation he would skilfully disclose all the wiles of the devil, explaining that a soul lacking in love for God or other people is easily caught in the devil's nets, while one that is strong in the faith can, with God's grace, brush them aside like so many spider's webs.



Compline 5 – Friday 22 March 7 pm

John 12.23-26

²³ Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

Chapter 27

From a sermon Cuthbert preached

I beseech you to watch as the apostle warns you. Stand firm in the faith ... lest sudden temptation find you unprepared. Be mindful rather of the Lord's command: 'Watch and pray lest you fall into temptation'.

Compline 6 – Monday 25 March 7 pm

John 12.35-36

³⁵ Then Jesus told them, 'You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. ³⁶ Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.' When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Chapter 33

At this same time the plague broke out and dealt such havoc that of villages and estates once crowded with inhabitants only a tiny scattered remnant remained, and sometimes not even that. Our most holy father Cuthbert went round the diocese with unflagging zeal, preaching and bringing much-needed consolation to the few people left.



Compline 7 – Tuesday 26 March 7 pm

John 12.44-50a

⁴⁴ Then Jesus cried out, 'Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵ The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

⁴⁷ 'If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. ⁴⁹ For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. ⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life.

Chapter 34

Cuthbert knew he was soon to die and made up his mind accordingly to lay aside the burden of pastoral office and retire to a life of solitude. Once free from material worries he might be able to give himself undividedly to his prayers.

Compline 8 – Wednesday 27 March 7 pm

John 13.21-25

²¹ After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, ‘Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.’

²² His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. ²³ One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, ‘Ask him which one he means.’

²⁵ Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, ‘Lord, who is it?’

Chapter 39

I asked him rather urgently what counsel he was going to leave us as his testament or last farewell. He launched into a brief but significant discourse on peace and humility, and exhorted us to be on our guard against those who, far from delighting in these virtues, actively foster pride and discord: “Preserve among yourselves unfailing divine charity, and when you have to hold council about your common affairs let your principal aim be to reach a unanimous decision. Live in mutual concord with all other servants of Christ: do not despise those of the household of the faith ... do not think yourselves any better than the rest ...”



Maundy Thursday Communion – 28 March 7 pm

Exodus 12.1-14

12 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ² ‘This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³ Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁴ If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door-frames of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire – with the head, legs and internal organs. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord’s Passover.

¹² ‘On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

¹⁴ ‘This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord – a lasting ordinance.

1 Corinthians 11.23-26

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

John 13.1-17, 31b-35

³ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’

⁷ Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'

⁸ 'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'

Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'

⁹ 'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'

¹⁰ Jesus answered, 'Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them. ¹³ 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord", and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

³¹ Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³ 'My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ 'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

Chapter 26

Bishop Cuthbert adorned his office with good works. He protected the flock committed to him by constant prayer on their behalf, by wholesome admonition and – which is the real way to teach – by example first and precept later. He delivered 'the poor man from him that was too strong for him, the poor and the needy from him that despoiled them'. He took care to comfort the sad and faint-hearted and to bring back those that delighted in evil to a godly sorrow. He strictly maintained his old frugality and took delight in preserving the rigours of the monastery amidst the pomp of the world. He fed the hungry, clothed the destitute and had all the other marks of a perfect bishop.



