



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for
Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

Sunday 23rd January 2022

Epiphany 3

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Bel Newman, Marge Craddock, Lucy, Geordie, Lesley Hall, David & Delma Bode, John Hall Fr Simon Gurd, Lynne Riddlestone, Olive Robinson, & Barbara Jaques.

RIP

Kathleen Marshall, Pat Edmondson, Elaine Holden,
Sid Blanchard, Colin Johnson and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

COLLECT AND READINGS FOR EPIPHANY 3

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; 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 - Nehemiah 8.1–3,5–6,8–10

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink

sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'

Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 12.12–31a

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Gospel - Luke 4.14–21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Service Times and Venues. (Thursday 10am Holy Communion - St Gregory's

| | 9.15am—Communion <i>Facebook & Conference Call</i> | *—Communion <i>Conference Call</i> | 16.00—Evensong <i>Conference Call</i> |
|--------|--|--|---|
| 30 Jan | Week 5 - 30 Jan Benefice | Service St Gregory's, Bedale | *St Gregory's Bedale |
| 6 Feb | St Gregory's Bedale 8am and *9.15am | 10.45 T/Watlass *11am Leeming | *St Gregory's Bedale |

COMMENTARY ON THE READING

To hear God's word was a precious thing for Israel, and supremely for Jesus. Jesus is the perfect example of obedience, and calls us to recognise him as the fulfilment of God's past 'words', the lens through which we must read them. Paul's appeal to the Corinthian church for unity is grounded in the conviction that they are 'the body of Christ' so must develop the love-language of organic relationship.

Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10

The book of Nehemiah records the first tangible signs of the fulfilment of prophecies such as Isaiah 60 – 62 (see Isaiah 61.4) in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. But Nehemiah and Ezra recognised that outward rebuilding was only a prelude to true restoration, which must arise from renewed obedience to Yahweh.

This passage tells of the dramatic day when – for the first time since their return – the people gather to hear the words of the Law. Note several features of this gathering. First, there was public reading (vv. 2-4): an event for the whole community. Second, there was worship (vv. 5-6): the book being read was not an impersonal instruction manual, but the gift of God who lived among them. Third, there was explanation (vv. 7-8): Yahweh's law was meant to be understood and applied. Fourth, there was celebration (vv. 9-10): although the natural response of the people was to weep as they realised their failure to keep Yahweh's law. The law was the gift of the God who had bound Israel in covenant. God's joy would be their strength as they sought to obey (v. 10).

1 Corinthians 12.12-31a

'Body' was a metaphor for human society in the first-century Roman world, which gives special force to Paul's use of it here: Christians were an alternative society. (This did not mean they should withdraw from the world: 1 Corinthians 5.10.) Paul's development of the metaphor is striking. Christ is not seen as just one part of the body, the head, as in Ephesians 4.15: the whole body is his – more daringly, we might say, is him.

Metaphors should not be over-pressed, and Paul does not mean that Christ now has no existence apart from his people – as if his earthly life, present reign and future appearing have somehow

vanished into the existence of the Church. But the challenge of the passage remains powerful: it is not a challenge to achieve unity, but to maintain a unity already given by God, through the Spirit (v. 13). This means learning respect for other members, especially for the weak and those lacking a sense of self-esteem and belonging, which 'comes' as instinctively as the working together of parts in a healthy human body (vv. 14-26).

Luke 4.14-21

Since the Babylonian exile, synagogues had been vital centres in Judaism for worship, education, local government and the administration of justice. So it was natural that Jesus' public ministry should begin in the synagogues (v. 14). Luke stresses how Jesus came into the midst of the Jewish people as the fulfilment of their hopes. This occasion, however, shows Jesus making a claim for which they were not ready (cf. vv. 22-30). There would be readings from the law and the prophets, according to a set cycle of readings, followed by exposition. But on this occasion the visiting preacher did not merely explain the prophetic text from Isaiah 61.1-2: he claimed that it was now fulfilled in him (v. 21). He was identifying himself as a prophet inspired by the Spirit (cf. v. 14). So like the speaker of Isaiah 61, Jesus claims he has good news to share. 'Poor', 'blind', 'captives', 'oppressed' all echo language used in Isaiah 40 – 55 of the Israelites in exile. Jesus came to restore God's broken people, to announce that the time of Yahweh's favour had at last come (v. 19). The Isaiah quotation stops there, before mentioning 'the day of vengeance of our God' (61.2). Jesus' ministry is certainly a time of judgement (3.16, 17), but salvation for Israel does not mean, in the gospels, destruction of other nations, but their salvation too (cf. vv. 25, 26).

St. Mary's Church, Thornton Watlass 100 Club. The time has come to join or renew memberships for this year. Subscriptions remain at £12 for the year, £1 per month, and two prizes are awarded each month. If you wish to join for 2022 then please let Chris Carruthers have your cheque (payable to "PCC of Thornton Watlass") or cash, at your earliest convenience. Last year the 100 club made a profit of £750 for church funds. Many thanks to those who support our church in this way. Chris Carruthers, School House, Thornton Watlass, Ripon, HG4 4AH

Benefice PCC Meeting

**Monday 24th January 2022 at 7pm in
St Gregory's Church**

Rev Gareth Baron and Rev Simon Moor are inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting on 23rd January from 6.15pm for a service of prayer for Christian Unity.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81429180417?
pwd=Z2J2N2o1VFJud2d5SlZmeEhMNXBqQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81429180417?pwd=Z2J2N2o1VFJud2d5SlZmeEhMNXBqQT09)

Meeting ID: 814 2918 0417

Passcode: 128371



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