



BENEFACT BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

5th February 2023

The Third Sunday Before Lent

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Ross, Gaynor, Toni and Eric Kent, Bel Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Barbara Pike, Chris, Lynne Riddlestone, Olive Robinson, Harry Scorer, Kath Finkill, Harry Lillystone, and Pauline.

RIP

Ena Rudd, Pamela Exelby, Virginia Finkill, David Disney and Enid Farrow.
May they rest in peace and rise in glory

Praying for Edwin in Bolivia

Please pray for Edwin, as he celebrates his birthday.

COLLECT AND READINGS

Collect

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity: give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; 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.

First Reading - Isaiah 58.1–12

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God. 'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?' Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bullrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will

answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 2.1–16

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him' - these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are discerned spiritually. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. 'For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 5.13–20

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life, that those who come to him should never hunger: draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom, where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY ON THE READINGS

God wants to bless the world through people whose faith is surprisingly generous and just. Through Isaiah, God calls his people to turn from selfish behaviour and to be a blessing to themselves and to the world. The psalmist observes that a right understanding and response to God's teachings is a generosity and justice towards others, and that brings real hope. Paul warns the Corinthians that dependence upon a limited human perspective, instead of God's Spirit, is to miss God's wisdom exemplified most fully in the cross. As salt and light, Jesus' followers are called to bring blessing to the world through lives that reflect a different, generous kind of righteousness.

Old Testament - Isaiah 58.1-12

The prophet is called (the commands in verse 1 are singular) to confront the people with their sins of rebellion against God. They appear to be very religious, even fasting and wearing sack-cloth and ashes as they try to move God to act in righteousness and to preserve their peace, yet they refuse to be moved to do the same for their own people. It is impossible to please God while failing to show his love, mercy and compassion in practical ways towards others. Instead of a fast, God wants a feast of sharing food, housing the poor, clothing the naked and helping the afflicted so that everyone benefits. The best thing to forego is the individualistic lifestyle that does not seek the prosperity of the community that belongs to God. Loving God cannot be separated from loving the neighbour. Learning that lesson brings real blessing for all, and God's light to the wider world.

New Testament - 1 Corinthians 2.1-16

Unlike the travelling sophists who sought to impress their hearers with eloquence, philosophy and powerful oratory, Paul emphasises that the apparently 'foolish' message of Christ crucified – preached in humility rather than arrogance – had changed the Corinthians' lives through the power of God's Spirit. The message of God's rescue of humanity through the death of Christ conveys a wisdom far superior to that which led the religious and political authorities to reject and crucify Jesus. God's wisdom can only be fully appreciated by those who are led by his Spirit. The Spirit enables understanding of spiritual things and particularly the gifts God has given to us. Without the Spirit, the natural human tendency is to reject both the message and the messenger as foolish. Dependence solely on limited human resources filters out the most powerful and beneficial wisdom of all.

Gospel - Matthew 5.13-20

After the good news of the Beatitudes, Jesus speaks of the identity and consequent mission of his disciples (5.13-16). Jesus' followers are already salt and light; their teacher urges them to be true to their new role so as to be perceived by the world as bringing great blessing. In the ancient world, salt and light were of the highest value. Salt not only provided tasty seasoning but more importantly was an indispensable preservative. 'Tasteless' (the Greek word here normally means to become 'foolish') salt may seem impossible, but what was called salt in the first century was rarely pure sodium chloride. Exposed to moisture, the valuable salt could leach out with the remainder proving useless. With a rich background of significance in the Old Testament (and especially Isaiah), light enabled sight, communicated God's presence and brought a sense of security. The world should experience Christians as people pure in purpose with lives that bring undeniable benefit to those around them, leading all to praise God.

In 5.17-20, Jesus begins a much longer section on the Jewish law and the specific character of the life to which he is calling his disciples. Although some details in these verses are difficult to interpret, the overall message is clear. He has come to *fulfil* (a word not normally used by Jews with respect to the law because it could never be 'filled up' or completed), not to tear down. The law has lasting value and authority, as Jesus' interpretation of it that follows demonstrates. The kingdom's greater righteousness than that of the religious experts would seem impossible, but Jesus is speaking about faithfulness to God seen not in religious practices but in a quality of life that challenged the world's standards.

Service Times and Venues
Thursdays 10:30am BCP communion at St Gregory's

	<i>Morning Services - St Gregory's, Bedale</i>	<i>Morning Services - St Mary's, St John's and Burrill</i>	<i>16.00—Evensong conference call</i>
5th Feb	8am St Gregory's #	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St Gregory's, Bedale *
	9.15am St Gregory's #*F	11am St John's, Leeming #*	
12th Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #*F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #*	Burrill Church *
19th Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #*F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #*	St Mary's Thornton Watlass *
		11am St John's, Leeming #	

Communion * conference call F Facebook

***This week's floodlighting is in memory of
Lawrence Jardin***



To sponsor the floodlighting in memory of someone then please get in touch with Sarah in the office on 07949 006681 or admin@bedale.church

Wensleydale Filling Station

These are monthly meetings where we can celebrate our Christian faith in an informal manner and provide an opportunity to hear more about the love of God for our lives

Thornborough Hall, Moor Road, Leyburn DL8 5AB

Friday 10th February 2023 7.00 – 9.00pm

Speaker : Graham Emerson from Penrith



St. Mary's Church, Thornton Watlass - 100 CLUB

The time has come to either renew your membership or join for the first time. £12 for the year with two prizes each month, £20 and £10. If you are interested in joining then please get in touch with Chris Carruthers, cjcskiwatlass@aol.com or 01677423519.

The first draw will be in February when both January and February prizes will be drawn. Good luck.