



# BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

21st May 2023

## Seventh Sunday after Easter / Ascension Sunday

### OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Gaynor, Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Chris, Lynne Riddlestone, Olive Robinson, Harry Scorer, Kath Finkill, Barbara Cooper, Harry Lillystone, Anne Jardin, and Trevor.

### RIP

Amos Mutasa, Anthony Longstaff and Joseph Richardson  
*May they rest in peace and rise in glory*

### Praying for Edwin in Bolivia

Families face many challenges including unemployment and a lack of clean water.

### COLLECT AND READINGS

#### Collect

**O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever . Amen.**

#### First Reading - Ezekiel 36.24-28

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

#### Second Reading - Acts 1.6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy

Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’ Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

### **Gospel - John 17 v 1-11**

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. ‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

### **Post Communion Prayer**

**Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **COMMENTARY ON THE READINGS**

### **Acts 1.6-14**

Luke begins his second volume by retelling the story that concluded his first (see Luke 24.50-53). The ascension of Jesus is not only the event which declares Jesus' true identity as God's

Messiah and Son; it is the event that inaugurates the story of the Church and its mission to the world. The scene uses images that speak of God's glory seen in the risen Jesus: the cloud of chapter 1 verse 9 symbolises the presence and power of God. (Compare this with the transfiguration story in Luke 9.34-35 and its background in Old Testament texts like Exodus 16.10 and Ezekiel 10.3-4). The Mount of Olives is the location of God's final victory and the 'men in white robes' are angelic figures (compare with Luke 24.4). Note how the account in Acts 1.6-14 is full of the language of movement. The disciples come together (v. 6), Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will come upon you (v. 8), Jesus is lifted up (v. 9) but will come again in the same way (v. 11). These highly compressed descriptions of ascension, Pentecost and Jesus' return are deliberately brief, because at this stage, Luke is more interested in the response of the disciples themselves. The glory of God that they now see in the risen and ascending Jesus could be

the basis for a life of waiting and gazing and contemplation (v. 11). Instead, they witness this event so that they can be transformed (in verses 6-8 their assumptions about the meaning of Jesus' resurrection are overturned) and become witnesses themselves. Now that Jesus has been lifted up they are to be taken out in the power of the Spirit, to the ends of the earth. Note how they take the first obedient steps in verses 12-14 by going to Jerusalem and waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Further steps are described in the rest of Acts: work in Jerusalem in Acts 2-7; in Judea and Samaria in Acts 8-9 and to the ends of the earth in the remaining chapters, Acts 10-28. For Luke, then, there is a right kind of waiting for the Spirit and of watching for Jesus' return. Both are focused on the call of disciples to be witnesses, a key theme in Acts. In the opening chapters the witness call recurs many times. (See, for example, Acts 1.22, 2.32, 3.15, 4.20,33; 5.32.) Luke wants to make sure that the believers get on with the task of living and proclaiming the gospel. To this end he consistently removes the idea of Jesus' 'imminent' return. Disciples are not to concern themselves with 'times or periods set by the Father'. In verse 14 he also gives an early indication of the kind of new community that Jesus has formed for this task, a community in which women and the family of Jesus receive special mention. The role of women in the Church is a favourite theme in Acts. The ascension vision is only given to 'men of Galilee' but the new community called to mission is soon inclusive of women, and, at Pentecost, of all nations.

### **1 Peter 4.12-14, 5.6-11**

In 1 Peter 4-5 the Church is encouraged to live faithfully in the midst of suffering and persecution (the reference to the devil as a 'prowling lion' in 1 Peter 5.8 is probably an allusion to Christians being killed by wild beasts in the Roman arena). However, their present struggles are set within the context of a larger story of God who is a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4.19) and who will provide everything they need: the Holy Spirit (4.14), support and strength (5.10) and the promise of final glory (4.13-14; 5.6, 10).

### **John 17.1-11**

John 17 is all about the glorification of Jesus and in many ways is the Johannine equivalent of the ascension story. At times it seems here that Jesus has already been 'lifted up' to the Father.

In John 17.4 he speaks in the past tense of having finished the work given to him and in verse 11 he can say that he is 'no longer in the world'. In this Gospel, Jesus' glorification through death, resurrection and return to God leaves the disciples 'in the world', equipped with the words of Jesus and a living relationship with the Father and the Son (v. 11). While not explicitly mentioned here, the gift of the Holy Spirit will also be given to those who, having seen God's glory in Jesus, are now called to God's life in the world.

## Notices

### 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>18.30—Evensong conference call</i>
21st May	9:15am St Gregory's #*F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #* 11am St John's, Leeming #	St Mary's Thornton Watlass *
28th May	9:15am St Gregory's #*F	9 am Burrill Church # 10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #*	St John's, Leeming *
4th June	8am St Gregory's # 9.15am St Gregory's #*F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass # 11am St John's, Leeming #*	St Gregory's, Bedale *

# Communion \* conference call F Facebook

### Deanery Prayer Meetings 2023

Everyone is welcome to join these at 11am on Wednesday 24th May at St Mary and St Alkelda, Middleham, to pray for the work in the Wensleydale Deanery.

### THE BELLS



As planned, we rang the bells for 9.00am on Coronation morning, and next day for morning service, and for the Civic Service in the evening, including the King's Change on all three occasions. All twelve of our members were able to take part at least once: Chris, Fiona, Geoff, Jan, Mal, Matthew, Phillip, Sarah, Robin, Simon, Steve, Val. Congratulations to Matthew, ringing confidently just seven weeks after his first lesson! Thanks to Jan and Val, who gave valuable extra help on Coronation afternoon to three other towers in the area.

Robin Brown.

### Bedale and Beyond

The next magazine is being prepared. If you have any contributions please send them to Simon or Sarah by next weekend . Thank you.