



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

10th. December 2023

Second Sunday in Advent

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Gaynor, Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Donna Bradley, George, Olive Robinson, Harry Scorer, Terry Gregory, Jack, Kath Finkill, Amanda, David, Chris, Liz, Tracey, Sue, Pam Kenyon, Arthur Lightfoot, Alison, Robin, and Dan.

RIP

Sally Page, Mavis Laphorne, Michael Broad, Elizabeth Silver, Ken Gill, Paul Stepford, and Dennis Carling.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

ADVENT LITURGY

Leader: We long for the peace of Christ in our world

All: **Come, Prince of Peace**

Choir:

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

All sing:

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church

gathered today.

The second candle is lit and this response is used

Reader: Listen for the voice of the prophet

crying out in the wilderness:

prepare the way of the Lord.

All: **Come, Prince of Peace**

Reader: The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him

and the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord

All: **Christ, shine on the earth today**

Collect

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

First reading - Isaiah 40.1–11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, Here is your God!' See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Second reading - 2 Peter 3.8–15a

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him,

Gospel reading - Mark 1.1–8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" ', John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

Post Communion Prayer

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMENTARY ON THE READINGS

Old Testament Isaiah 40.1-11

The original context for this prophecy was probably exile in Babylon about 540 BC in the hope of return to Jerusalem (vv. 1-2) but as a reading for Advent, Isaiah's hope of salvation looks to the Christ/Messiah. The original (and unspecified) voice of verse 3 becomes in Mark's Gospel, as we have seen, John the Baptist. This shows how scripture can yield new meanings when read in fresh contexts.

The first image is of the land being smoothed for God's pathway, when 'the glory of the Lord will be revealed' – a line that always draws the musically inclined to the first part of Handel's Messiah. The prophet then reminds us of our mortality (Brahms' German Requiem this time) but while we wither like grass, 'the word of our God will stand for ever'. This word is the 'glad tidings' (the Greek Old Testament uses the word we translate as 'gospel') to Zion/Jerusalem that 'here is your God' (v. 9). God comes as a warrior in verse 10 but Isaiah then uses conventional pastoral imagery to portray God's future care for his people (v. 11).

New Testament 2 Peter 3.8-15a

This letter is difficult to date. It could have been written by Peter though probably wasn't, but it may express a Petrine tradition from the latter part of the first century. The content suggests a context similar to that of 1 Thessalonians (see 9 November) where, because of deaths in the community, newly baptised Christians despair that there will be a coming

of the Lord. The author tells them that our time is not God's time (see Psalm 90.4). The day of the Lord will come but its coming will be unexpected, like a thief in the night – a theme with which we have become familiar (see the Gospel readings for 9 and 30 November). The rest of the passage is concerned with what sort of people we ought to be 'living lives of holiness and godliness' as we wait patiently for his appearance.

Gospel Mark 1.1-8

This reading is about preparation. This opening sentence tells us first what kind of literature we are about to read: gospel, good news. Although it takes the form of a narrative, it will not be an objective, chronological biography. While the book is about a historical figure and will be full of historical information, it is a news broadcast and the news is about a victory – euangelion is the word Rome used to announce an imperial victory.

Jesus is called the Christ, which means 'anointed one' (messiah in Hebrew) and this places him in the context of Jewish messianic expectations. The messiah is the anointed king of Israel. These expectations of a new, divinely appointed king frame many of our readings for this period before Christmas. 'Son of God' was an expression used of the Jewish king and could indeed be used of any of God's people. It does not necessarily mean divine son as in the second person of a trinity. After the introductory sentence, there is no mention of Jesus.

Before John is named, he is placed in the context of a divine plan. In Malachi 3.1 God announces that he is sending his messenger to prepare your, i.e. the people's, way. Mark combines this with Isaiah 40.3 prophesying that one from the wilderness will come to 'prepare the way of the Lord'. Clearly Mark understands John to be the messenger and Jesus now to be the Lord, kurios, the word used of God in the Greek Old Testament. Such a high Christology suggests that perhaps 'son of God' in verse 1 does imply divinity.

John appears in the Jordan valley, which is hardly 'the wilderness' and it is certainly an exaggeration to say that all of Judea and Jerusalem went to hear him. The dress and diet of John (v. 6) show him to be an Elijah figure (1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 2). This is important because Elijah is said not to have died but to have been taken straight to heaven, so the belief grew that Elijah would return to earth to announce the beginning of the messianic age. John is not Elijah, but he carries out Elijah's role. In order to prepare for this new event in Israel, indeed to prepare for a new Israel, John began a movement of national repentance with a ritual of mass baptism (literally a 'washing') in which people confessed their sins in anticipation of their forgiveness. But the one who is coming will wash them in the Holy Spirit, reflecting what we read about Christian baptism elsewhere in the New Testament, e.g. Acts 2.38. So the great story begins, though we have to wait until after Christmas to resume Mark's narrative

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>
10th Dec	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Burrill Church
16th Dec	18:00 St Gregory's - Carol Service		
17th Dec	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass	St Mary's Thornton Watlass— Carol Service
		11am St John's, Leeming #	
18th Dec	18:00 Carols Around Burrill		
19th Dec	18:30 Carols around Thornton Watlass		
20th Dec	19:00 St John's Leeming—Carol Service		
Christmas Eve Services			
24th Dec	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass	No evensong, see the other services.
	16:00 St Gregory's Crib Service	15:00 St Mary's, Thornton Watlass Crib Service	
		19:30 St John's, Leeming Christmas Communion #	
	23:30 St Gregory's Christmas Communion #	23:30 St Mary's Christmas Communion #	
Christmas Day Services			
25th Dec	8:00 St Gregory's, Bedale	9:00 Burrill Mission Church	No evensong, see the other services.
	9:15am St Gregory's, Bedale	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass	

Communion F Facebook



***This week's floodlighting is in memory of
Jenny Dunn***

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

BURRILL MISSION CHURCH CAROLS ROUND THE VILLAGE

This will now be at 6pm on Monday 18th December

Everyone is welcome



Tuesday Togetherness

Tuesday 12th December

There will be no coffee morning on the 12th December due to the Christmas Lunch. Ticketed guests for the lunch can arrive from 11:45am for the lunch.

Tuesday 19th December

There will be coffee from 9:30am, with a Communion and Carol service at 10am. No lunch will be served that day.

**Coffee Morning St John's Church, Leeming
Thursday 21st December - 10:00am - 12:00pm**



We are struggling for bags for life, if anyone has any spare, it'd be much appreciated

Our current shortages are: Tinned Pies, creamed rice, hot dogs, jars of jam, small bags of sugar, tinned fruit, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, UHT milk, coffee, tinned potato, toilet roll, washing powder, instant mash, sponge puddings, squash and individual cereal packets.