



# BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

2nd February 2025

## The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

### Service Times and Venues

*Daily Morning and Evening Prayer conference calls at 8:30am and 4:30pm*

*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>16:00/18.30—Evensong conference call</i>
2nd 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 #	
9th Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Burrill Church
16th 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 F Facebook

Conference Call Tel 03330110945 and enter when prompted Room No.66307496# PIN 9498

## NOTICES AND PRAYERS

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

**Eithné Summers**



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](mailto:admin@bedale.church)

### OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Chris, Donna Bradley, George, Olive Robinson, Chris, Justin, Amanda, Sue, Alison, Tim, Dan, Jeff Betts, John Pickard, George Carling, John, Rachel Oysten, and Doris Pearson.

### RIP

*Heather Abbott, Prudence Southall, Ann Weatherill, and David Pratt.  
May they rest in peace and rise in glory*

### Praying for Edwin in Bolivia

*God, we thank you for the gift of knowledge. We praise you that you provide us with brains to think and question the world around us. We pray that you would help Edwin learn well and flourish. May he discover his unique talents and giftings. Give him a passion for the world around him. Amen.*

## PRAYERS AND READINGS

### Collect

**Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ 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 - Malachi 3.1–5

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

### Second reading - Hebrews 2.14–18

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

### Gospel reading - Luke 2.22–40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was

customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.' There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

### Post Communion Prayer

**Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.**

## COMMENTARY ON THE READINGS

### Candlemas

Now, on 2 February, comes Candlemas. It is also known as the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and the Purification of St Mary the Virgin. That range of titles offers a lot of potential themes for a commentator: blessing (of candles for the year); a Temple epiphany; and — more sensitive because of the implication of “uncleanness” — purification.

Luke could not have known what we would do with his story. Neither the glitz of Christmas, nor the Lord's carefully timed nativity feast, were part of his good news back in the first century AD. Yet it is Luke who links up the two ends of Christmas, turning the Lord's nativity into a season rather than a moment. The first mention of Jesus as Messiah, Christos, comes when angels announce good tidings of great joy for all people to some shepherds (2.11). The next mention of that title comes in this Gospel, at verse 26, where we learn of the Holy Spirit's message to Simeon: that, before he died, he would see the Christ.

Although more than a month separates these two Gospel readings in the Church's liturgy, a mere 15 verses separate them within Luke's Gospel. There, proof follows promise with remarkable rapidity. What is more, the causative factor at work in apparently humble human affairs — the

Holy Spirit — is woven through both. We can trace the action of the Holy Spirit right from the incarnation (1.35), and we learn that, even from Mary’s womb, the Christ-child has an effect on individuals through the Holy Spirit (1.41).

Two highlights feature in verses 25 and 38. The first is “the consolation of Israel”. The second is “the redemption of Jerusalem”. Reading both phrases, we may not think twice about the linguistic shorthand that allows us to say that a nation can be consoled, or a city redeemed. Such wording need be no more than a convenient way of referring to a whole people (Israel), or a whole population (Jerusalem). It goes without saying that not every single one of the children of Israel must be consoled, any more than every inhabitant of a city must be redeemed. That fact of group versus individual identity was long ago shown up by Abraham (Genesis 18.23-33).

Casting light on the meanings of “consolation” and “redemption”, both have reference to “buying back”. It can mean a price paid for the return of hostages, which is topical—or the release of a debtor after payment of a penalty.

We can have confidence in Anna’s prophecy that this baby will “ransom” or “redeem” his people, because it is a corroboration, from a completely different source, of what the Song of Zechariah proclaimed in the previous chapter (1.68). Ransom and redemption are financial transactions; so the language helps to show a concrete judgement being made rather than a vague tone set, as one thing of value is exchanged with another.

What about “consolation”? In Greek, it is *paraclesis*; but the term is not alien, despite its ancient origin; for many Christians are familiar with it. This becomes clear the moment we realise that someone who effects *paraclesis* is called a “*paraclete*”. Versions of John 14.16 from the Roman tradition (Vulgate) retain this Greek word, “*Paraclete*”, for the Holy Spirit. Reformed translations tend to vary between two words to encapsulate its meaning: either “Comforter” or “Advocate”. Thus, the “consolation of Israel” embraces powerful blessings, namely, comfort and defence; and a third shade of meaning should be factored in: encouragement. Simeon’s song says that encompassing all three will enlighten Jew and Gentile alike.