



# BENEFACT BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

16th February 2025

## The Third Sunday before Lent

### Service Times and Venues

*Daily Morning and Evening Prayer conference calls at 8:30am and 4:00pm*

*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>
16thFeb	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass # 11am St John's, Leeming #	St Mary's, Thornton Watlass
23rd Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #F	9 am Burrill Church # 10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St John's, Leeming
2nd Mar	8:00am 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 #	

# Communion F Facebook

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

## NOTICES

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

***Dave Collingwood***



To sponsor the floodlighting in memory of someone please get in touch with Sarah in the office on 07949 006681 or [admin@bedale.church](mailto:admin@bedale.church)

**Coffee Morning St John's Church Leeming**  
**Thursday 20th February - 10:00 - 12:00**



### Office Closure Next Week



Due to school holidays the office will only be open on Tuesday 18th February. The rest of the week I will be working from home, so emails and phone calls will be responded to sporadically. With blessings Sarah Ryder

## PRAYERS AND READINGS

### 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

David Pratt, and Carolyn Searle.  
*May they rest in peace and rise in glory*

### *Praying for Edwin in Bolivia*

*Father God, I thank you that you made us to be in relationship with others. We pray for Edwin to know great care and support from those around him. May he be encouraged by his friends at school, and may he show your love and care to his friendship circle. Amen*

### 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 - Jeremiah 17.5–10

Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse - who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

### Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 15.12–20

If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are

not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

### **Gospel Reading - Luke 6.17–26**

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ‘Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled’. ‘Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh’. ‘Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets’.

‘But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation’. ‘Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry’. ‘Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep’. ‘Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets’.

### **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**

Jeremiah employs the metaphor of a withered shrub and a watered tree to talk about trust. The shrubs are those who trust in their own human strength and ingenuity or in other “mere mortals” to deliver them in adverse situations. The green trees are those who trust in God. Then Jeremiah makes one additional comment about hearts, one of his favourite topics. The heart, he says, “is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it?” The heart, in other words, plays tricks. It is fickle, rationalizes, makes excuses, tells lies. It fools others and even itself.

Jesus saw that perverseness of the human heart. He saw that the hearts of some had played tricks. These people had become convinced that it was by their own reason and

strength, by their own hard work in keeping the law that they were successful and powerful, healthy, wealthy and wise. And he saw that the poor, the sinners and tax collectors, the sick and outcast had been excluded by others and thus didn't dare to expect any better reception from God.

Jesus revealed a different kind of heart, one whose mission was "to bring good news to the poor . . . release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind." He was talking about recovery for "shrubs in the desert" who couldn't see relief even when it stared them in the nose, who didn't believe they deserved it, and thought that if it came their way, it must be a mistake.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus comes down from the mountain where he has been praying and stands on a level place among his disciples and other listeners. These are not people who have come to see Jesus out of simple curiosity. They are "shrubs and scrubs" who have heard of his inaugural address and of his healing of lepers and paralytics and of his forgiving sins and calling sinners to follow him. They are beginning to believe that this Jesus might have good news for them. And they are cured!

Jesus's sermon on the plain is his enlistment speech for that great crowd of disciples who want to follow him. It is a wonderful combination of promise fulfilled and promise still to come, and of marching orders.

Jesus tells them: "Yours is the kingdom, the reign of God, that my mother Mary sang about in a lullaby before I was even born. Where the powerful and proud are brought down and scattered in the imagination of their hearts; where the poor and lowly are gathered up in grace; and where the hungry are filled with good things, while the rich are sent away empty."

Jesus speaks "on the level" to you and me too. He urges us to hear both the blessings and the woes in this text, the promises and the warnings. Our hearts sometimes trick us into believing that either we have earned everything we have by our own strength, or that God's grace for us is too good to be true. But the reign of God in Christ Jesus is always about reclamation.

When reclaimed, we no longer have to be the perfectionist, the pleaser, the clown, the mascot, the scapegoat. We can feel again, we can trust again, we can speak again—of this one who loves us steadfastly, who has the power to turn deserts and wastelands into lush groves of fruitful trees.