



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for
Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

16th March 2025

The Second Sunday of Lent

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—Evensong conference call</i>
16th Mar	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass # 11am St John's, Leeming #	St Mary's Thornton Watlass
23rd Mar	9:15am St Gregory's #F	9 am Burrill Church # 10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St John's, Leeming
23rd Mar	10:30 Benefice Service -		CANCELLED—Benefice Confirmation

Communion F Facebook

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

NOTICES

LENT COURSES

Monday's at 7pm in Bedale and District Methodist Church, Wycar,
and Tuesday's at 2:00pm in Chantry Hall.



This Year we will be using a booklet from the Diocese of Edinburgh entitled 'The Emotions of Jesus'. Everyone is welcome to join in.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, THORNTON WATLASS—Lent Lunches

Soups and puds, will be held on Saturday 5th April from 12noon until 1.30pm in the Village Hall. All are welcome.

SAVOY CINEMAS (in Catterick near Tesco).

'The Chosen: Last Supper' - Thurs. 10th April - time: tbc, and Sun. 13th April

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



PRAYERS AND READINGS

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Chris, George, Olive Robinson, Chris, Justin, Amanda, Alison, Tim, Dan, George Carling, John, Rachel Oysten, Doris Pearson, Kevin, and Rev'd Ann Fraser.

RIP

Sue Ward, Edna Surtees, Emma Singleton, Fred Webster, George Sinclair.
May they rest in peace and rise in glory

Praying for Edwin in Bolivia

Lord God, we praise you that you are fully in control of all things. We pray you would protect Edwin, his family and those at the project. Keep them healthy and help them to thrive. We thank you that you know every hair on Edwin's head. You know exactly when he rises and when he falls. Watch over Edwin in every area of his life and keep him safe we pray, Amen.

Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading - Genesis 15.1–12, 17–18

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. Then he said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.' But he said, 'O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.' He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire-pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.'

Second Reading - Philippians 3.17 – 4.1

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Gospel Reading - Luke 13.31–35

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." '

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMENTARY ON THE READINGS

Today's Old Testament and Epistle passages follow the theme of trust in God's promises. The Gospel reading is largely a collection of fragmentary sayings of Jesus about his destiny in Jerusalem – which we observe at the end of Lent.

Genesis 15.1-12, 17-18

At the beginning of this passage Abram is beginning to doubt the promise made by God in chapter 12 that, despite old age and childlessness, he would become the father of a great nation who would have a land to dwell in. Now Abram meets with God in a vision. The passage ends with Abram in a 'deep sleep' – using the same unusual word as in Adam's sleep when God ripped a rib (or side) from him (Genesis 2.21). Whatever the word, Abram met God and it would have been terrifying.

Without children of his own, Abram appointed Eliezer, a slave, to be his heir. The word translated 'of Damascus' is actually untranslatable. God reassures Abram that his promise is sure: he will have a son as an heir, a promise fulfilled first in 16.15 with the birth of Ishmael and fully

redeemed in 21.3 when his wife Sarai (by now renamed Sarah, just as Abram had been renamed Abraham in 17.5 and 17.15) gave birth to Isaac. We must wait six chapters for Isaac's birth, but the key to chapter 15 is that, improbable as the promise seems, Abram believes it will happen and God counts him a righteous man. The New Testament writers see Abraham as a model of faithfulness (Hebrews 11.8-10) and Paul especially uses verse 6 to reinforce his argument about how God counts us as righteous: through faith, trusting God's promises (Galatians 3.6, Romans 4.3).

The second half of the passage presents a primitive ritual for establishing a covenant (echoed in Jeremiah 34.17ff.) which seems to come from a different hand from verses 1-6. A number of animals (all of which can be used in other circumstances as sacrifices acceptable to God) are slaughtered and split in two. The halves are laid opposite each other to form a passageway. The two partners of the covenant – here God and Abram – pass between the carcasses to establish their bond. Abram is anaesthetised in his sleep and God is represented by fire, as with the burning bush in Exodus 3 and with the tongues of fire at Pentecost (Acts 2.3).

This ritual confirms God's choice of Abram, but the general point is the free and unconditional nature of the choice: it is a grace and Abram's 'reward' is a free gift. All Abram has to do is believe it and trust God.

Philippians 3.17 – 4.1

Now Paul tells us to 'stand firm in the Lord' (4.1). He warns about the citizens of this world who are set on earthly things, whose god is their belly and who hate the cross. It all sounds very modern. The preceding verses (3.15f.) show that Paul, writing from prison around AD 58 towards the end of his life, is concerned that, in the face of this opposition, those in the community should be faithful to what they attained and that they should all be of a like mind. He recommends that they imitate him and those who follow Paul's own example. Although Paul held Roman citizenship as did the citizens of Philippi, he tells them their ultimate citizenship (politeuma) is in heaven. And their Lord is not Caesar but Jesus Christ, from whom salvation comes.

Luke 13.31-35

The Pharisees, religious enthusiasts and lay people who studied the Torah, are generally shown in opposition to Jesus, but here a sympathetic group warns Jesus to clear off because Herod intends to kill him – he had already killed John the Baptist. This is not Herod the Great, who had died long before, but one of his sons, Herod Antipas, who ruled in Galilee until AD 39.

Jesus' reply seems to be a composite of separate sayings that don't fit together very smoothly. Verse 32 suggests that Jesus has a job to do and will not be deflected by Herod's threat. The phrase 'on the third day' is a Hebrew expression meaning 'in a short while': he will finish his work in a short while, but later Christian readers would see an obvious link to the resurrection.

Verse 33 suggests that Jesus is not going to hang about because a prophet (himself) cannot be killed outside Jerusalem – his destiny is not to be killed by Herod in Galilee. Luke throws in a lament about Jerusalem and a quotation from Psalm 118 which links this passage to Jesus' entry into the city.