



# BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for  
 Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass  
 25th May 2025

## The Sixth Sunday of Easter

### 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>18:30 —Evensong</i>
<b>25th May</b>	9.15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St John's, Leeming
<b>1st June</b>	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 #	
<b>8th June</b>	9.15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Burrill

# Communion F Facebook

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

## NOTICES

### **Burrill Mission Church**

There will not be a service at Burrill on Sunday 25th May due to holidays. The next service will be Sunday 8th June at 6:30pm for evening prayer.

### *Ecumenical Holy Communion Service*

*for Ascension Day*

*Thursday 29th May at 7pm in Jervaulx Abbey*

*(East Witton Church if wet weather)*

*Wensley Area Dean, Rev'd Stephen Hanscombe to preside with North Yorkshire Dales Methodist Circuit, Rev'd Jo Brown preaching.*

*Please bring your own seat. The collection from this service will go to Christian Aid. Please park across the road at the Tea Room Car Park.*



## 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 Pam Conway.

### RIP

Chris Till, William Wallis, and Elizabeth Rushby.  
*May he 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*

### Collect

**God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; 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 - Acts 16.9–15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us.

### Second Reading - Revelation 21.10, 22 – 22.5

And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practises

abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

### Gospel Reading - John 14.23–29

Jesus said, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. 'I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.'

### Post Communion Prayer

**God our Father, whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life: may we thirst for you, the spring of life and source of goodness, through him who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.**

## COMMENTARY ON THE READINGS

It is a relief to discover that the heavenly Jerusalem contains a river and a tree. Without such delights of nature, it seems an uncomfortable place, covered in metal and jewels, and cube-shaped. There is not a comfy armchair in sight. The thought of there being no darkness is particularly unappealing. A city that is all blazing light is a recipe for migraine.

But I am being too literal. That is not how John of Patmos means it. If it were a literal picture, how could the single tree of life stand "on either side of the river"? He is evoking Ezekiel 47.12, but his own symbolism demands both a single tree, and also symmetry (an aspect of beauty) in the heavenly city. There is no temple in the city, therefore no sacrifice. But this is not a deprivation. In the presence of God, sacrifice becomes redundant. Our access to the divine will go beyond anything we could hope for on earth. And, yes, John declares that there will be no night there, because the city will have God's glory, and the Lamb to light it. As for the gates, they will not be shut, because the city has no need of protection or defence.

John's language evokes other prophetic visions (Isaiah 60.19, Zechariah 14.7) to underline that

his prophecy is authentic, a confirmation of what was foretold long ago. But the power of his vision is more rapturous than logical. He moves us with words of love and wonder, giving hope that death is not the end.

Paul's vision is different. It is a message for right now, in the form of travel directions. He must forget going to Asia, and head for Greece (Macedonia is in the mountainous north of that land). So, the text goes on, "we" came to Philippi (the same place where Caesar's supporters overcame the assassins Brutus and Cassius in 42 BC). Blink, and you will miss it. But open your Bible commentary and you could lose yourself in the sheer mass of scholarship on what is, after all, a mere change of verb form from the third person ("Paul", "they") to the first person ("we").

What this untidy text reveals is the sticking together of two sources. Luke the historian has so far been telling a story about what Peter and then Paul did. But, suddenly and without explanation, it is as if he opens his notebooks and continues the tale by transcribing notes from his diary. True, it is a clumsy use of sources, perhaps an unfinished draft. But the benefit is that it allows us a glimpse of the author at work. We are suddenly hearing eyewitness testimony from someone who travelled with Paul, who was there to watch Lydia and her household being baptised.

There are two possible Gospels for this Sunday. One, John 14.23-29, looks forward explicitly to the giving of the Holy Spirit. The choice of the other, John 5.1-9, for the run-up to Ascension and Pentecost, needs a bit of explanation.

It begins by mentioning an unspecified festival of the Jews. One early tradition identifies this as Pentecost, the festival of "weeks". Here is the implicit reference to Christian Pentecost. Unfortunately, the text is confused at this point: just look at the wodge of footnoted "other authorities" in NRSV. Did an angel stir up the waters, giving them healing properties? Was the place called Bethesda ("house of mercies" or "house of flowing"), or Bethsaida (confusing it with a place in Galilee)?

Despite this clutter of variants, it is clear that the pool — which has been excavated, complete with its "five porticoes" — was partly filled by springs. So, the invalid man is referring to water bubbling up from below: the seeming miracle of the water's movement gave rise to hopes of healing. Being first into the waters meant catching the curative capacity at its strongest. The sick man had gone there for 36 years without success. He had put his faith in the magic of angelically kinetic water. Jesus repeatedly warned people not to demand signs and miracles. Now, he ignores the magical pool, and simply tells the man to get up and walk. So, was the man's disability all in the mind? No. He really is healed — by the words of the Word, which are more powerful in their effect on us (body, mind, and spirit) — than any holy hot-tub.