



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

28th December 2025

First Sunday of Christmas

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>
28th Dec	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	No evening prayer
4th Jan	8:00am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St Gregory's, Bedale
	9:15am St Gregory's #F	11am St John's, Leeming #	
11th Jan	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

This week's floodlighting is in memory of

June David



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

PRAYERS

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Olive Robinson, Chris, Justin, Alison, Dan, John, Rachel Oysten, Doris Pearson, Mal Rowland, Michelle Hammond, Terry and Marion, Caleb, Bailey Cuthbert, Brenda, Ann Madsen, and Claire Bell.

RIP

Steve Madsen, Renee Stag, Alistair Bain, Bob Turnbull, Joan Marshall, and Meg Graham.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

Collect

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading - Isaiah 63.7–9

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their saviour in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Second Reading - Hebrews 2.10–end

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.'

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 - Matthew 2.13–end

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had

been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

Gospel Reading—Luke 2.1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMENTARY

It is into the real world of political intrigue and violence that Jesus came as God-with-us. It is in this real world that the work of God continues. In spite of appearances, history is never out of divine control.

Isaiah 63.7-9

These verses are but a small part of a much longer poem: Isaiah 63.1 – 64.12. Taken on their own they sound like a song of God's mercy remembered, but the context is crucial. Verses 1-6 are a song of victory, with God announcing what he has done by the strength of his arm. Verse 7 then begins an extended lament. It begins with Israel recalling the mercy of God and the great acts of redemption in the Exodus. The rest of the poem tells the story of the wilderness before turning to penitence and longing for God. Crucially in our passage it is God's presence that saves the people, not an intermediary. The context is probably the exile, with Israel blinded by the recalling of what she has lost. If, as some scholars suggest, it is post-exilic, then the lament expresses sorrow that the high hopes have not been fulfilled. But God is remembered as the one who meets Israel with generous grace and mercy. Verse 9 is difficult to translate but the NRSV is on sure ground in affirming God's saving presence with his people whatever the circumstances.

Matthew 2.13-23

This material is unique to Matthew and reflects some of his theological themes. For example, again, Joseph is a key person as one who is alert to God's call. For the new family, life has become highly unstable and frightening but Joseph does what he is told and goes to Egypt. Matthew's citing of Hosea 11.1 is illustrative of his creative use of Scripture. In context, Hosea is affirming the Exodus. In Matthew, the holy family is sent to Egypt so that Jesus may be safe and that his life may also mirror God's story of Israel's. The sense Matthew has of Jesus as true Israel emerges steadily as Jesus is the chosen one who remains faithful to the covenant calling.

Matthew also affirms in the narrative his understanding of God at work in human history. A story of grace and salvation is being told in the face of events which seem utterly senseless and negative. But the story of Israel has always been one of God bringing new life from disaster, of redeeming situations beyond human control and hope. The slaughter of the innocents is horrific. Fearful, Herod attempts a final solution. In the same way Pharaoh killed those he saw as a threat, in Matthew's theology, it is not that Herod acts to fulfil God's word but that Jeremiah's prophecy is fulfilled. The murder of the children is not God's will but is a situation, all too common, where the activity of God goes on quietly in spite of human arrogance and fear.

This incident is followed by another journey, this time from Egypt to Nazareth, as Matthew links his life to the pilgrimage of Israel. God is doing a new thing but it is the same God who acted in the past. Jesus has a history that Matthew will not forget since it is this history which gives the deeper meaning to God's present action. The journey to Nazareth begins with the news that Herod, the one who sought the child's life, is dead. But there is no political safety for the child or man. There will always be those who seek his life.