



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

1st February 2026

Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

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>
1st Feb	8:00am St Gregory's #	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Bedale
	9:15am St Gregory's #F	11am St John's, Leeming #	
8th Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Burrill
15th Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Thornton Watlass
		11am St John's, Leeming #	

Communion F Facebook

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

NOTICES

Funeral Notice

The funeral of Bishop Bill Godfrey will take place on
Tuesday 3rd February, at 12:30pm in Ripon Cathedral.

There will be a number of people going from the benefice, if you would like a life
please speak to your churchwarden.

Tuesday Togetherness

This Tuesday, 3rd February, there will be no lunch at Tuesday Togetherness due to
staff attending Bishop Bill's funeral. There will be coffee and biscuits from 10am
until 12 noon, for a donation.

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, Claire Bell, and Christina.

We continue to pray for our local schools and care homes.

RIP

Bishop Bill Godfrey, Malcolm Bramham, Alan Firth, and David Rayner.

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.

READINGS

Collect

God our creator, who in the beginning commanded the light to shine out of darkness: we pray that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may dispel the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, shine into the hearts of all your people, and reveal the knowledge of your glory in the face of 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 - 1 Kings 17.8–16

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.' So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, 'Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.' As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, 'Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.' But she said, 'As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.' She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 1. 18–end

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.’

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’

Gospel Reading - John 2.1–11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, ‘Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.’ So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.’ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY

Paul responds to the divisiveness within the church at Corinth by emphasizing that God’s wisdom—the wisdom through which God saves us—is radically different from human wisdom. So different, in fact, that human beings, left to themselves, will inevitably find God’s ways foolish and weak. And yet, it is precisely because God’s wisdom testifies so powerfully to the saving virtues of humility, sacrifice, and apparent weakness, that it challenges human notions of pride and power.

Specifically, Paul highlights the divine wisdom of the cross, which is “foolishness” to the Greeks and “a stumbling block” to the Jews. In Paul’s cultural, political, and religious context, crucifixion is a scandal; there is nothing redemptive about it. It is no more sacred or salvific a symbol in the public imagination than electric chairs or lethal injection chambers are for 21st century Americans. So why does God allow Jesus’s humiliating crucifixion to become the means of humanity’s salvation? Why is a cross—an instrument to crush criminality or rebellion through public disgrace—chosen to become the instrument of liberation?

Paul suggests that this astonishing and scandalous “foolishness” on God’s part is specifically intended to teach human beings that God’s ways are not our ways. In the inbreaking realm of God, business as usual will not work; human assumptions around power, popularity, and might-makes-right have to give way. God’s ways are specifically intended to “make foolish the wisdom of the world.” Where human beings prize power, money, celebrity, and self-achievement, God prizes humility, simplicity, service, and self-sacrifice. Where human beings flock to the strongest, wealthiest, and most eloquent, God intentionally chooses the lowly, the weak, the poor, and the socially despised. Where human beings often exacerbate divisions based on social status, privilege, and hierarchy, God always cherishes unity, humility, and mutual care.

Having described the ways in which God reverses human priorities and preferences through the paradoxical wisdom of the cross, Paul suggests that followers of Jesus must likewise embrace the same countercultural wisdom. The church should “boast” in nothing but the cross and Christ crucified. The scandal of Jesus’s humble death should be the foundation of a radical humility among Jesus’s followers. God’s decision to choose, not the wise and powerful of the world, but the simple and lowly, should inspire a unity that supersedes all differences of intelligence, eloquence, education, or socioeconomic privilege. And because the ultimate source of Christian life is Christ, “who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,” Christian identity should be rooted deeply in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, not in leaders who encourage cults of personality, with all their attendant cliques, divisions, and factions.