



BENEFACT BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

8th March 2026

Third Sunday of 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>
8th Mar	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Burrill
15th Mar	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Thornton Watlass
		11am St John's, Leeming #	
22nd Mar	9:15am St Gregory's #F	9:00 Burrill	Leeming
		10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	

Communion F Facebook

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

NOTICES

March Office Opening Hours

The office will not be open on Tuesdays 10th, 17th and 31st March, but it will be open on Tuesday 24th March Thursdays throughout March.

Easter Lilies

Please see your church warden or Sarah in the office if you would like to donate towards Easter Lilies in the churches.



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, 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

Betty Gentry.

May she rest in peace and rise in glory

READINGS

Collect

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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 - Exodus 17.1–7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The Lord said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

Second Reading - Romans 5.1–11

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Gospel Reading - John 4.5–42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to

you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Lord, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMENTARY

The passages today show the nature of faith & the challenge of trusting in grace alone, rather than in achievement.

Old Testament Exodus 17.1-7 This story tells of one of the tests with which the people of Israel challenge God as they travel through the desert. The story is told as a way of accounting for the name of a geographical feature, showing that God's history with the people is rooted right into the land. The language is very heightened, indicating that this story bears more weight than simply an historical account. It is deeply theological. The term 'quarrel' in verse 2 is a legal term for bringing a complaint against somebody in court. The people attack Moses, but the story is told in such a way as to show that it is really God they are not trusting. The heart of the question is whether God is among them & is trustworthy. The people focus on Moses, but Moses sees more of what is happening. There is a parallel account in Numbers 20.2-13.

New Testament Romans 5.1-11 The passage begins 'therefore': Paul is continuing a discussion about the nature of the life in Christ. He goes on to look at what this life consists of, & challenges assumptions about what a religious life will look like. In a culture such as Paul's, which had a concern for honour & shame, difficulty was understood as a sign of failure, & so of God's abandonment. Paul challenges that by showing that 'success' in this faith is based on hope founded in God rather than on circumstances. Paul goes on to extend this challenge to received assumptions by showing how God's action in Christ does not fit normal patterns. From this he concludes that salvation comes from nothing in ourselves, but from grace, & therefore is utterly trustworthy. Verses 5 & 8 may represent the beginnings of trinitarian language.

The Gospel John 4.5-42 There are important parallels between the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in this passage & his encounter with Nicodemus in John 3. Jesus takes the literal questions &, in answering them, moves his companion to a greater understanding. There are also important echoes of Old Testament meetings. There are several meetings between men & women at wells in Israel's foundations stories & they are of profound significance in God's action with the people. In this story, John also emphasises the breadth of Jesus' mission. Several barriers are demolished here – racial, gender, & moral. Jews regarded Samaritans as unclean; rabbis did not talk to women in public; by coming at noon we are shown the woman as outcast from her community, & the reason is indicated in her sexual history. Jesus bypasses all of these. Jesus uses water as a symbol for the Spirit, &, at first, his metaphorical language is interpreted literally. He challenges this & deepens the woman's understanding. She then recognises him as a prophet & so asks him for the solution to a dispute. Jesus' answer to this is to present himself as the replacement for the Old Testament reality, & the one who transcends the previous holy places. There is reiteration of the discussion, moving back to a notion of a prophet but Jesus refuses to be classified in this way, again insisting on the coming of something new. The story climaxes in Jesus' self-disclosure to the woman. At this point, the story moves further than the discussion with Nicodemus. The next episode, verses 27-38 shows the consequences of the discussion. The assumptions of the disciples are also challenged by Jesus' behaviour, but they are unwilling to question him. The woman's witness to her neighbours seems limited, but it is effective. Verse 35 seems to refer to a proverb, possibly one about not hurrying things. Jesus challenges this & insists on taking the moment that is presented. Jesus' words about sowing & reaping insist that work is God's & no disciple is fully competent alone. Verses 39-42 tell of the long-term consequence of the discussion, & show the way in which hearsay becomes personal experience. The end of the story is untold, we do not learn whether this community continues in the new faith or is lost. There are no further references to a Messianic community among the Samaritans.