



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

22nd March 2026

Fifth 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

	Morning Services - St Gregory's, Bedale	Morning Services - St Mary's, St John's and Burrill	16:00—Evensong conference call
22nd Mar	9:15am St Gregory's #F	9:00 Burrill # 10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Leeming
29th Mar	10:30am Benefice Palm Sunday Service at St Mary's Thornton Watlass #		No evening prayer
5th April Easter Day	8:00am St Gregory's # 9:15am St Gregory's #F	9:00 Burrill # 10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass # 11am St John's, Leeming #	Bedale

Communion F Facebook

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

NOTICES

Easter Lilies

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



St Gregory's Spring Clean

Please join us to spring clean St Gregory's on Friday 27th March from 10am - many hands make light work and all help will be appreciated.



Prayer & Praise Live!

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Friday 27th March @ 7pm - Chantry Hall, Bedale
Doors open 6.45pm for refreshments
Everyone welcome!

St Mary's Thornton Watlass welcome you to their **Lent Lunches**. Soups and puddings on Saturday 21st March from 12 noon to 1:30pm in Thornton Watlass Village Hall. Everyone is welcome.

RIP

Betty Gentry, David Hewison Sandyford, Raymond Lawton and Carol Grayson.
May they rest in peace and rise in glory

PRAYERS

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Delma Bode, Olive Robinson,
Chris, Justin, Alison, Dan, John, Rachel Oysten, Doris Pearson, Mal Rowland,
Bailey Cuthbert, Claire Bell, Christina and Christine.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Thank you to everyone who regularly prays for those on the prayer list, we thought we would share some answers to those we have been praying for.

Terry and Marion - Terry has made a good recovery. Marion was dying and his passing was peaceful. Caleb - is getting the right support and is healing well.

Brenda - has recovered well.

We would encourage you to keep praying, it makes a difference in peoples lives.

READINGS

Collect

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; 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 - Ezekiel 37.1–14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

Second Reading - Romans 8.6–11

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel Reading - John 11.1–45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may

believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY

The readings today think about death and resurrection, surely these are issues faced by every living soul. But the condition of death can mean so much more than just the physical moment when we need an undertaker. When the prophet Ezekiel spoke to the people they were living, but they were in a condition of death. They were a shattered and captive nation; they were exiles in Babylon. On their own, they had no future and no hope of restoration. They were like "Dry bones" strewn on a desert landscape. This picture conveys to us how the people felt, despair and lifeless. They lived in a foreign land and could no longer call themselves a people and they lacked the resources to do anything about it. We all know people like that: a death or serious illness has changed their lives dramatically and they despair about the future.

Yet Ezekiel tells that when God is involved, nothing is hopeless. God makes a promise, "I will open your graves and have you rise from them and bring you back to the land of Israel." God did fulfil that promise and the people were brought back home. They were raised from their graves and they, who were no-people, became a new people through the Spirit of God. Death and its manifestations affect even those who are still physically alive. But, the prophet assures us, God has power over death in all its forms.

John spends a long time telling the story of how Jesus gives life to Lazarus. It is an important episode, the decaying corpse of Lazarus, locked away in a tomb is brought to life and it aroused much faith in Jesus. Understandably the Jewish authorities were furious about Jesus who had so much power that he was a serious threat to them, their religion and way of life. From now on the Jewish leaders had a decision, either kill Jesus or he would start a religious revolution in which they would be overthrown. We all know how this ends, they made their decision and choose to pursue him to death on the cross. Thankfully they underestimated the power of Jesus, not only could Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, he could be raised himself, to a life that could never be taken away again - everlasting life. That is what Easter is all about, discovering the new life which Jesus gives, so that we need not fear anybody or anything, not ever death itself.

But there is also something more which is very symbolic about this passage. Jesus finds Lazarus in Bethany. Lazarus means 'God helps,' whilst Bethany means 'House of Affliction.'

We can all find ourselves in a place of affliction, a place so bad it is like death itself in its debilitating hopelessness. Sometimes the living need someone to call them out of their graves and to give their spirit new life, just as the people in Ezekiel's time needed God to raise them from their graves. Our Christian faith is not just about a reward in the next life, Jesus is concerned about our lives now. He calls us out from our darkest places, he calls us to leave the tomb and gives us the strength to live as his resurrected people.