

## February 2026 -----BENEFICE NEWS-----February 2026

For enquiries please contact Revd Dr Robert Brown

Priest-in-Charge, Bewcastle, Stapleton and Kirklington with Hethersgill  
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Date	Sunday	Bewcastle	Stapleton	Hethersgill	Kirklington
1 Feb	Candlemas				10 am HC
8 <sup>th</sup> Feb	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sun before Lent		10 am MP*		
15 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Sunday next before Lent			10 am HC	
18 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Ash Wednesday		6 pm HC with Ashes (BCP)		
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	Lent 1	10 am MP			
1 <sup>st</sup> Mar	Lent 2				10 am MP

HC = Holy Communion, MP = Morning Prayer, EP = Evening Prayer

\* Led by Bishop John Richardson

**Knowe United Reformed Church, Bewcastle**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at 2.15 pm**

### Prayer for the Month

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord who, with you and the Holy Spirit, reigns supreme over all things now and forever. Amen.

### Church Notices

**Sunday 8th February 10am - 1pm Kirklington with Hethersgill PCC 'Big Breakfast'**, Hethersgill Parish Hall, £10 a head (under 5 free). To book please telephone Irene: 01228 675389, Margaret: 01228 675652 or Sandra: 01228 675510. All welcome.

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 7pm Bewcastle PCC meeting** at Murray Holme.

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 6 pm Ash Wednesday Service at St Mary Stapleton.** This is our last service of Holy Communion before Easter, as we head into the season of Lenten fasting. Everyone, including children and young people, are welcome to this service, in which we receive the sign of the cross on our foreheads, marked with the ash of a burnt palm cross from Palm Sunday last year.

**Monday 2nd March 7 pm Kirklington with Hethersgill PCC meeting** at Netheronsett Farm (home of Irene Armstrong)

Please note **evening services at Bewcastle** during the winter will be held at **3 pm** instead of the usual 6 pm in summer.

If you know of someone who would be unable to attend church but would like to receive communion at home, or would appreciate a visit from me, please do let me know. My contact details are below and at the top of the newsletter.

If anyone would like to talk to me about anything (doesn't need to be church-related, for example if you don't know where to turn for help or someone to speak to), please do feel free to contact me.

Conversations will always be confidential. My normal parish working days are Monday and Friday (plus Sundays) but I will always try and find time to listen. Phone no: 016977 48438, email:

[Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk)

A selection of podcast sermons can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website under the 'Podcasts' menu tab.

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Dear Friends,

February is one of my favourite months. It's the last one of meteorological winter, but also usually the driest and coldest, giving those clear crisp days that beckon you outside. White carpets of snowdrops nod gently in the woodlands, crocuses start colouring the garden, and daffodils begin to sunlight the roadsides. On bright mornings birdsong fills the air for the first time and the days are noticeably longer. The early lambs appear in the fields and the awakening of the good earth begins. Signs of resurrection after the stillness of winter. Plus it's my birthday.

The year is still new, and a new year brings the hope of new beginnings, a reflection of the soil, of which we are made, once again giving birth to new life. But although the deepest days of winter occur around the solstice in the second half of December, the New Year number used to change on 25<sup>th</sup> March until 1752. So you had 24<sup>th</sup> March 1649 and the next day was 25<sup>th</sup> March 1650. Why 25<sup>th</sup> March? Because it's exactly nine months before the 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day, the day of Jesus' birth. It's the day on which the Church celebrates the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary (called 'The Annunciation') to announce to her she had been chosen to bear God's Son, and to which she said 'yes' (known as Mary's Fiat). That was the day the world changed. The Holy Spirit overshadowed her and she became pregnant without impregnation. God was to be born as one of us. And so the world chose to change its year on that date because it really did herald a new beginning and a renewed hope, not due to our own doomed 'new year resolutions', or the arbitrary turning of a page on the calendar, but because, beyond anything we could hope for, or do for ourselves, God's help was coming.

Help and hope are desperately needed. There are so many who are struggling in our parishes at the moment. For some, it's finances; for some it's relationships that are breaking, or have broken, down; for some it's sheer loneliness or the heartache of grief; for some it's the terror of being abused at the whim of someone near; and for others its unending chronic pain, or the fear of impending death as the years process, or the diagnosis of a potentially terminal illness. Often these are carried in silence. They are the unshared, sometimes unshareable, burdens.

We often use the terms 'battling' and 'fighting' when speaking about illness, as if there was some kind of violence with which we can counter our difficulties. 'Do not go gentle into that good night...Rage, rage against the dying of the light' as Dylan Thomas wrote. It speaks of a spirit of defiance in the face of death, a fist-shaking, despite the inevitability of our mortality. But raging against death is as useful as King Lear's shouting at the sea. It is born out of a terror of the blankness of unfaith, an utter fear that there is nothing beyond. It belongs to a world that, paradoxically, denies the human spirit, and that has fallen for the ruse that life is mere biological mechanics. The deeper trouble with this attitude, however, is that it blinds us to the opportunity of preparing for the inescapable, to make our peace with God and with each other, and thus with ourselves. Compare it to St Francis of Assisi:

And thou, most kind and gentle death, / waiting to hush our latest breath,

O praise him, alleluia!

Thou leadest home the child of God, / and Christ our Lord the way hath trod.

Here is the changed world that the turning of the year on the 25<sup>th</sup> March celebrated, a world carved with hope, and no longer enthralled to fear. It's a world awash with peace and joy and quietness and love, in which we can rest.

I'm writing all this about the New Year in March in a letter for February. Why? Because this is the month between the years, as it were, when we're in the old year and the new year at the same time. The new and the not-yet-new. And it seems to me that this is a space in which we live much of our lives. It's the story of the Gospel of Jesus, and a metaphor of baptism; baptism signifies our death to the claims, goals, and rules of this world, and a birth into God's universe, which operates by a very different vision of what life is all about, where Love is the force of life. But it's a universe we still wait to see, one for which we hope. And there you have it. Hope. Not the 'hope' that comes from a degraded and demonic understanding of the world where 'might is right' and resentment is seen as a virtue, but the Hope that comes from a knowledge that Love has eaten Death from the inside out and Risen again. It's a quiet, gentle, vulnerable Love, born in a dark stable, unnoticed by the world; a Love that is, at the same time, fierce, loyal and unyielding; a Love that treads to the farthest, darkest, loneliest corners of the world, and the soul, to reach out a hand to those cowering in fear and say 'Come, my child, you're safe now'. And I have yet to meet anyone who, deep inside, doesn't long to hear those words. That's a Hope worth living for. That's a Hope worth dying for.

Your friend and priest, Robert.

## **February 2026-----BENEFICE NEWS-----February 2026**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 11 am – 2 pm Bewcastle Mini Hub at Roadhead Hall.** Come for a chat and free coffee in the supper room; scones and cakes for sale.

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February 8 pm Stapleton Public Hall Dance** . Details Mary Thompson 016977 48379

**Sunday 8th February '26 10am - 1pm Kirklington with Hethersgill PCC 'Big Breakfast'**, Hethersgill Parish Hall, £10 a head (under 5 free). To book please telephone Irene: 01228 675389, Margaret: 01228 675652 or Sandra: 01228 675510. All welcome.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February Kirklington WI Mr Paul Jackson:** North Cumbria Search & Rescue.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 7.30 pm Stapleton WI** at Stapleton Hall. Richard Palmer on Crystals. For more details about WI contact the President Tel 07398 130363

**Sunday 15th February 10.30 am – 2 pm Bewcastle Hub at Roadhead Hall.** Community drop in event, free entry and refreshments. Cakes, bacon rolls, crafts and produce for sale. All welcome.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February 7.30 – 11pm Hethersgill Social Committee Ceilidh/Dance at Hethersgill Parish Hall.** Raffle. Bar. Admission £6, under 12s free, includes tea/coffee/biscuits. Music by Iain Anderson. Enquiries Irene 01228 675389. Everyone welcome.

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 8pm Folk Tunes Sessions at the Black Lion, Hethersgill.** All welcome to come along and play or listen. Some tunes to ensure we have something in common to play can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website. Music can be found by searching for them on [TheSession.org](#) website.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February 10 am – 12 noon. Litter picking in Hethersgill area.** Meet at Parish Hall. Please wear gloves. Equipment provided.

### **Claiming Dates**

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 7.30 – 11 pm** Hethersgill Parish Hall Dance with John & Bobby. £6 includes tea/coffee & biscuits. Raffle. Bar. Contact Irene 01228 675389. All welcome

**Line Dancing Classes: Every Monday 7.30 - 9 pm** at Stapleton Public Hall. Ann Robb 07855 919368 Anyone who can't attend please let Ann Robb know.

**Bolton Fell Moss Volunteer Work Parties: First Tuesday of the month 10 am – 2 pm.** Contact Ros Campbell [ros.campbell@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:ros.campbell@naturalengland.org.uk) 07570 370775

**Stapleton Knit and Natter Group: Every Tuesday 7 pm** in Stapleton Hall. Carol 01697 543094

**Beading Classes: Wednesday 1.30 – 3.30 pm** fortnightly. Details Christine Batey 01228 791348

**Stapleton WI: 2nd Wednesday of every month 7.30 pm at Stapleton Hall**

**Yoga: Every Thursday 6 pm in Hethersgill Parish Hall**

**Carpet Bowling: Every Thursday in Stapleton Hall**

**Badminton: Every Thursday 7.30 – 9.30 pm at Hethersgill Parish Hall.** Contact Andy Little 07765 244071

## **February 2026 NEWS AND THANKS----- February 2026**

**Hethersgill's Christmas Committee** extend their heartfelt thanks to all who donated toys to their Christmas toy appeal. More than 200 toys were donated which meant that every child whose family is supported by the Brampton food bank got at least three presents and we were able to donate around 100 further toys and presents to mission Christmas who also support local families. Everyone's kindness was overwhelming and has made a real difference to local families who need a little support. The committee are now looking at an appeal to support families in the run up to Easter. The families that are supported struggle with the cost of toiletries and cleaning products as well as food. The appeal will be asking for people to donate TLC – Toiletries – Larder food – Cleaning products. Thank you.

**Recently some of the headstones in the churchyard at St Cuthbert's Church, Bewcastle appear to** have been damaged by the grass cutting equipment used by Cumberland Council. Although the churchyard is closed for new burials, and still owned by the church, its management has been taken over by the Council who are now legally responsible for it. Headstones, however, remain the responsibility of the relevant families or their descendants.

Following the damage, the PCC has secured assurance from the Council that their large motorised cutting decks will no longer be used to cut the grass. They have additionally approached their insurers who advise anyone responsible for a family or ancestors' headstone that appears to have been damaged recently to submit a form they have supplied. Copies of this form are available from the noticeboard in the church vestibule. Alternatively, you can email [info@bewcastle.com](mailto:info@bewcastle.com) to ask for one to be emailed back to you. If you want to consult a specialist monumental mason who might be able to effect repairs to a damaged headstone you'll find some business cards from a restorer beside the claim forms.

The council have also conducted a full assessment of the safety of every headstone, a survey they are required to carry out every five years and have reported that only one had to be laid flat as it was deemed unsafe. They have commissioned another survey of the trees in the churchyard and are formulating a plan to manage them.

**Hethersgill Village Hall** All enquiries/bookings please contact Elsie Elliott 01228 675336 or Christine Falder 07790 302016

**Hethersgill Parish Hall 100 Club. January winners:** **1st** Philip Walton, 19; **2nd** Ann Dodds, 30 ; **3<sup>rd</sup>** Amie Riley, 50. If you would like to renew or join for 2026 please contact Irene on 01228 675389 or a Committee Member. £11 per year. Thank you for all your support

**Stapleton Public Hall** can be booked or enquiries made by email [bookings@stapletonpublichall.co.uk](mailto:bookings@stapletonpublichall.co.uk) or calling Eileen on 016977 3196.

**Shankhill C of E Primary School and Nursery** - We have places throughout school for children aged 3 - 11, with free 15 & 30 hours places for children aged 3+ Mon-Fri 8.45-3.30 pm, with the option of Breakfast Club for everyone from 07:45 to 8:45, and After-School Clubs/extended childcare from 3:30 to 5:30. Please call 01228 577264 or email [office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk) for more information

**Shankhill Parent & Toddler Group** every Tues 1:30 –3:20pm during term time. 01228 577264 Updates on our Facebook page

**Bewcastle Primary School and Nursery** – places available throughout school for children aged 3 – 11. We now offer wrap around care, 8am -5pm. For further information please call 016977 48662 or email [admin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk)

**Bewcastle School Nursery** – Nursery places available for children aged 3+, full and part time places available. For further information please call 016977 48662 or [emailadmin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:emailadmin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk)

**Newsletters can be picked up from:** Kirklington Church porch, Hethersgill Church porch, Stapleton Church, Bewcastle Church, Stapleton Public Hall Porch, Smithfield Garage office, Garry Phillip's Garage. Or downloaded : [www.Bewcastle.com/news-events](http://www.Bewcastle.com/news-events), [www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notices](http://www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notices)

Deadline for the **March 2026** issue is **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February** to Tricia Coombe, Damhead, Lyneholmeford, Roweltown, CA6 6LQ. 016977 48833 or [triciacoombe@damhead.me](mailto:triciacoombe@damhead.me)