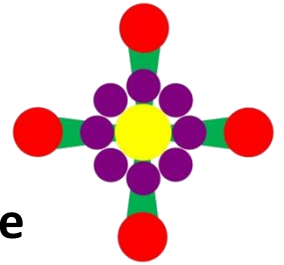


# The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme



**17 May 2020 - Sixth Sunday of Easter**

*If you can, start at 10.00am.*

*Do not worry if you cannot keep to that time, still join in!*

*Take a moment to be still. Perhaps light a candle or hold a cross.*

*Be aware that others will be saying these same words and prayers.*

*We are united in prayer and worship.*

*Jill & Paul Britton lead us in our opening and closing worship*

By the power of your Holy Spirit unite us as one body as we come to you in worship and praise this morning:

Gracious God, we come before you,  
drawn by the power of your welcoming love.

We come with our sorrows and joys.

We come with our expectations and apprehensions.

We come with what we have done.

We come as who we are.

In your love we find peace and hope.

**Amen.**



Spirit of the Living God,

Fall Afresh On Me.

Melt Me, Mould Me,

Fill Me, Use Me,

Spirit of the Living God,

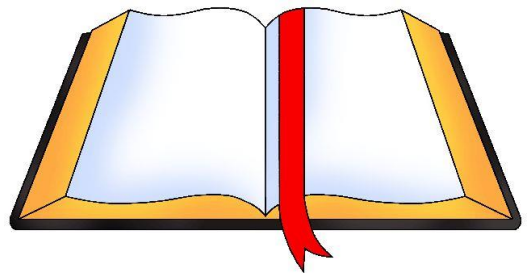
Fall Afresh On Me.

## ***The Collect for the Sixth Sunday of Easter***

God our redeemer,  
You have delivered us from the power of darkness  
And brought us into the kingdom of your Son:  
Grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,  
So by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy;  
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: Acts 17: 22-31***

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ‘Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription:



“To an unknown god.”

What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said:

“For we too are his offspring.”

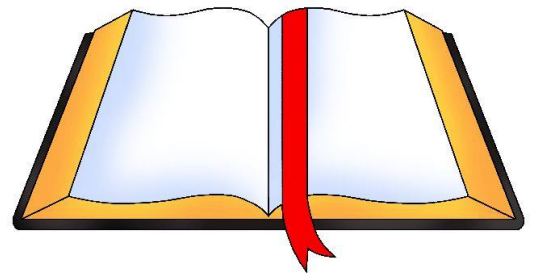
Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.

While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word

***Second Reading: John 14: 15-21***

Jesus said 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.



'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word.

*Janice Le Blancq leads us in our reflection*

Who is God?

The early citizens of Athens certainly didn't know; amongst many other idols they had even erected an altar to an unknown god, no doubt covering all bases just in case.

They were clearly "religious" but had failed to grasp the one true God. They needed the message that God doesn't live in shrines.

Now, of all days we're aware that we don't need to enter a building to find or worship God. Don't get me wrong, I'll be rejoicing along with everyone else when we can re-enter our buildings, joined together as a community of worshippers, but we are still the same community, albeit worshipping differently, knowing and sensing our Christian brothers and sisters as we read the weekly material.

Paul was reiterating that message of hope that Jesus left with his disciples, the promise of his Spirit ... "In him we live and move and have our being ... For we too are his offspring."

God is closer to us than the air we breathe, God isn't confined to temples or sanctuaries. In the words which are attributed to St Teresa of Avila:-

"Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes.  
You are his body.  
Christ has no body now but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

As we enter another week let us remember the one true God that Paul was proclaiming to the citizens of Athens and use our bodies and resources to be channels of hope and peace to others. Amen.

*Pauline Stern leads us in our prayers*

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Lord of all, we pray that the Church may be alive with your risen life, refreshed and revived by the breath of your Spirit, so that we truly offer the possibility of saving love to the searching world.

Lord of all, we pray for the Church worldwide and for its leaders in these difficult times. We thank you for the clergy and lay ministers in our benefice in their work to support our communities.

Lord of all, we pray for all world leaders and for those who govern this country and we pray that in all meetings where important decisions are taken, hearts may be turned to honour what is just and true, compassionate and constructive.

Lord of all, we pray for all those who work to support people who are particularly vulnerable at this time, all who work in hospitals, care homes, hospices, in the community and all who risk their lives in the care and service of others. We thank you for the commitment of those who support our daily lives – local shopkeepers, supermarket workers, refuse collectors, delivery drivers, postal workers and all those who maintain the services which we rely on. We pray for the work of volunteers in our communities, especially the work of our Community Support Services.

Lord of all, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength.

Lord of all, we commend to your eternal love those we remember who have died and we pray too for those who miss their physical presence. At this time we remember Linda White and all the family and friends of Paul.

Lord of all, as Christian Aid week finishes we pray for their work in areas of the world where people are already facing a lack of water, food and healthcare and now face covid-19. We offer to you the virtual fundraising events in this benefice in support of this work.

Lord of all, your love for us is so great and our love for you so small. Thank you for accepting what we are able to offer and ignite us to a blaze of love.

*And we draw all of our prayers together in the words of the Lord's Prayer.*

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
On earth, as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
Forgive us our sins,  
As we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power  
and the glory are yours  
Now and forever. Amen.

Lord Jesus, you sent the Holy Spirit to live within us, to guide us in all we do and to be our comforter in times of trouble.

We thank you that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can face the week before us with confidence. May those with heavy hearts be revived, restored and renewed by your love.

As we close our worship this morning, may we walk in your love, be attentive to your prompting and kept safe in the hope you have set before us.

In Jesus' name.

**Amen**

*"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."*

*Numbers 6:24-26*



## Pentecost Sunday: 31 May 2020

On Pentecost Sunday we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. We will hear again the story of how they were in the locked room when the Spirit came upon them in wind and fire. The Spirit united them in their mission to praise God and to share the Good News.

On this Pentecost Sunday we are hoping that we can be united together in praise and worship in a very special way. We will share together in our first communion service since we last met in our churches in March.

It is important to me that everyone is able to be part of the service and also that it is something we join together in, not something where you watch a recorded service. I am proposing something that will take some organization, but I am hopeful that we can make it happen and give everyone the chance to be included.

We will be holding the Pentecost Benefice Communion Service at 10am on Sunday 31 May and everyone is invited!

If you are able to use Zoom on your computer then please follow the link that we send you when we send the Pentecost service sheet and you will be able to join the service using the Zoom platform.

If you are not online, or not able to use Zoom, then we would still like you to join in and be present at the service. We are asking those who are on Zoom and who are willing, to phone those who are not on Zoom. Everyone will then be able to hear the service and be able to join in the responses.

It will most likely not be perfect but we will truly be our benefice worshipping together! Please help us to make sure that we do our best to include everyone.

As technology unites us in sound and vision, much more so the Spirit will unite us in Praise and Worship. I hope that it will be something that lifts our hearts and encourages us!

May you know God's blessing and peace in these strange times.

God bless,

Richard