



The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme

14 June 2020 - First Sunday after Trinity

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.

Helen Ludkin leads us in our opening and closing worship

Worship God with gladness, come into his presence and sing his praises.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Loving Lord, your grace draws us to your presence;
your peace unites us in your love;
your hope inspires us to praise your glory.
May our worship be worthy of you. Amen.

We come before you, gracious God, just as we are.
We come with our weaknesses and our vulnerabilities.
We come with our fears and apprehensions.
We come with our faith and doubt.
We come to offer and receive.
We come to you, the king of love –
In the name of your Son, and in the power of your Spirit. Amen.

First Reading: Romans 5:1-8

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.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 9:35-10:23

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their

food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that town.

‘See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word.

Helen Keighley leads us in our reflection



It's not every day you are asked to become the voice of a talking donkey! So, when this happened to me last week, I had mixed emotions. I was pleased at having being asked. But also, it caused me to wonder why that particular character had been allotted to me. What did this request say about me as a person? It's good to be included. Then again why wasn't I asked to be the narrator or the angel of the Lord? Still, a talking donkey can't be bad – even if this particular donkey was rather sarcastic. After all a donkey is humble and readily serves its master. It's steady and reliable. So off I went with my lines. It's interesting to become the voice of someone else. In this case the words were written for me but sometimes in life we become someone else's voice and have to use our own words. Some of you may have acted on behalf of a

friend or family member when trying to help them sort out a difficult issue. You might have phoned another person or an institution on their behalf. You are trying to help. Sometimes it's easier to stand up and speak for another person rather than stand up for yourself.

The reading from Romans today speaks about gaining grace through the faith of God. We stand in a relationship with God. Aren't we lucky to be in this position? We are able to reconcile with God. Shouldn't we be speaking up and making this known to others? How can we do that? Jesus shows us the way. He travelled among the people, teaching and spreading God's word. He then instructed the disciples to do the same. By extension, then, we are called to do likewise. To spread the Good News. We can get out there and boast about God's deeds, about His forgiveness and about salvation.

It also speaks of suffering. There is a great deal of suffering at any time in our world but, at this time, it seems nearer to home. During lockdown people are suffering illness, dental pain, loneliness, despair, separation and worry. Are these things we can glory in like the reading suggests? Glory in our sufferings? The result of the suffering it says is the ability to persevere. We are certainly doing that! Some find it harder than others. Some are tempted. Tempted to go out, to gather, to seek social interaction. We are essentially a social people and interaction with others is natural to us. We want to talk, to hug, to laugh and cry together, to learn and grow. But we are encouraged to keep strong until the pandemic is over and follow the guidance that will protect everyone. Perseverance builds character and character brings hope. So, we stick at it.

We all hope that soon we will be able to go out more and reconnect with others. The reading from Matthew speaks of the disciples being sent out among the people of Israel, to drive out evil spirits and heal the unwell. They were to seek out the lost sheep and proclaim the message that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. They were to speak out in Jesus' name, act in His name, spread His message with their voices and their actions. They would be led and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would work through them and provide the words. They were to use their voices in a powerful way to lead the people to God. This, of course, was not an easy task. They were in difficult times, at risk

of persecution. But they were told to stand firm and trust in the Holy Spirit. And this was an ongoing task, one which would continue and become our responsibility as Christians.

The recent 'Black Lives Matter' protests have provoked much thought and discussion. The issues of equality among people are being widely debated. Many people, across the world, have felt so strongly about injustice that they have been moved to find their voice and speak out. Whether or not large gatherings are morally right at this time of pandemic or not, people felt that now is the time to express themselves. Although Jesus initially sent out his disciples specifically to the people of Israel it is important that following his death and resurrection it was clear that here was a message for all people.

Jesus was an inclusive guy. He was criticised for associating with 'undesirables' but He came to save us all. Every life matters. Everyone should be treated with love and respect. Everyone should have a right to speak and be heard. But Jesus also taught peace and humility. Ghandi showed us the power of peaceful protest. **We** need to show God's love.

God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. The proof of God's love is that he sent his son to die for believers at a time when they were weak. We are still weak, particularly now, but we know that God is with us and He will be our voice as we try to move forward, serving others and spreading His word. Coming out of lockdown is a wonderful opportunity to think of ways of reinventing our mission and getting His word out there. I encourage you to be a part of it. Find God's voice within yourself.

Brenda Wilkinson leads us in our prayers

Prayer for the World in Crisis

Heavenly Father, we bring before you our world in crisis filled with disease, pain and injustice. We pray for our world leaders, our own government, and especially the governing bodies of the United States and Brazil, that leaders may be granted wisdom to make the right decisions in a time of such fear and

uncertainty as they are faced with making decisions that take us into an unknown future. We bring before you scientists who are leading the fight against the virus that has so recently and suddenly decimated our world. We pray that they turn to you for strength and guidance.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Dear Lord, we bring before you all those in ethnic communities who often face injustice and inequality even at the cost of their lives. We pray that we can each learn to recognise our brothers and sisters of all colours, creeds and faiths as equals and as valued members of all societies across the world. Help us to recognise and remember we are one nation and one global family.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Dear Lord, we ask that you look on our communities with compassion and love, that you comfort those who are sick, those who are grieving. We pray you to grant peace of mind to those who have lost loved ones, especially those who have been unable to hold them and comfort them in their final moments. We pray for those, who of necessity have been unable to share in funeral services to say farewell. We ask that you hold in your loving arms all those who have died and receive them into your kingdom.

We pray for all the health and social care workers who have given their skills and often their lives to care for the sick and dying. In doing so they have shown great courage in the face of such a deadly disease, working long hours, often in anxiety and discomfort.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for the staff providing care in care homes and across all community services, for police, social workers, ambulance staff, firemen and all key workers. We thank you for those who have continued to maintain the food supplies and shopping facilities. Farmers' supermarkets and all the volunteers who have given freely of their time to staff food banks, homeless facilities and the ongoing work of charities.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly father we pray for our families, loved ones and friends, especially those from whom we have been separated because of the lockdown and social distancing, that we must necessarily adhere to, to maintain our safety and address the need to control the disease.

Help us to remember how much we value and appreciate our loved ones and that separation will remind us that we must never again take them for granted.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We bring before you our church family and pray that it will not be too long before we will once more be able to gather together in the communion of the Holy Spirit in our local church buildings. Until then we thank you for the facility of technology to enable us to see one another and gather together in a virtual world. We thank you Lord for the preachers and members of our benefice who have continued to pray for us all and to ensure that no one is forgotten. We ask you to be with those who live alone, those who are necessarily socially isolated and maybe lonely. Those who are dependent on others for their day to day basic needs and thank you for those in our community who have ensured our neighbours and vulnerable members of our local society have been cared for and supported.

Please take a moment of silence to remember anyone you particularly wish to bring before God in your own thoughts....

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We ask you Lord to care for and comfort those for whom financial and employment security is threatened and help us to recognise where those who are more fortunate can extend a helping hand to those who have less, ensuring that no one falls by the wayside through our indifference or lack of insight into their plight.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Dear Lord, we thank you for this beautiful world in which we are surrounded by the majesty of nature. The crisis we are living through has given us positives in the beauty of the spring we have just experienced. The birdsong heard more clearly, perhaps because there has been less traffic and industrial noise, to skies that have seemed bluer without an excess of pollution. We pray Lord that

as we go forward into the future, we no longer take the health of our planet for granted and we all work harder to maintain a cleaner environment for ourselves and for future generations.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father we thank you for the gift of your son our Saviour Jesus Christ who always walks beside us to strengthen, guide and love us even when we sometimes ignore or forget He is always with us. Dear Lord, help our brothers and sisters to always remember you send your Holy Spirit in good and bad times as our strength, shield and comforter

Lord, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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.



Jesus sent the disciples to proclaim the gospel, to cure the sick, to welcome outcasts and to cast out demons. Jesus calls us to do the same.

Here I am, wholly available. As for me, I will serve the Lord.

Let us go to serve, to love, to bring healing and peace.
In the strength of the Father, the power of Jesus and united by the Spirit;
and as we go, may we know his grace. Amen.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and
the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.