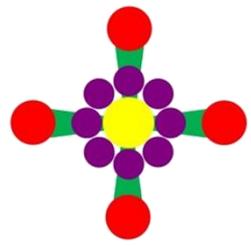


The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 9 May 2021
The Sixth Sunday of Easter



Morning Worship

Preparation

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Christ ascends on high.
He reigns for ever. Alleluia!

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord. Alleluia!

We come before the throne of God
With countless crowds
From every nation and race, tribe and language.
**Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honour, power and might
Be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

Call to Worship

Almighty God,
Your Son has opened for us
A new and living way into your presence.
Give us new hearts and constant wills
To worship you in spirit and in truth;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Gathering Prayer

Prayers of Penitence

Human sin disfigures the whole of creation,
Which groans with eager longing for God's redemption.
We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

For turning away from you,
And ignoring your will for our lives;
Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

For behaving just as we wish,
Without thinking of you;
Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

For failing you by what we do,
And think and say;
Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you
By temptations in the world about us;
Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

For living as if we were ashamed
To belong to your Son
Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

Absolution

The Lord enrich you with his grace,
And nourish you with his blessing;
The Lord defend you in trouble and keep you from all evil;
The Lord accept your prayers,
And absolve you from your offences.
For the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

God our Redeemer,
You have delivered us from the power of darkness
And brought us to 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 our risen Lord,
Who is alive and reigns with you,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. **Amen**

Psalm 98

- 1 Sing to the Lord a new song, ♦
for he has done marvellous things.
- 2 His own right hand and his holy arm ♦
have won for him the victory.
- 3 The Lord has made known his salvation; ♦
his deliverance has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.
- 4 He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness
towards the house of Israel, ♦
and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- 5 Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth; ♦
break into singing and make music.
- 6 Make music to the Lord with the lyre, ♦
with the lyre and the voice of melody.
- 7 With trumpets and the sound of the horn ♦
sound praises before the Lord, the King.
- 8 Let the sea thunder and all that fills it, ♦
the world and all that dwell upon it.
- 9 Let the rivers clap their hands ♦
and let the hills ring out together before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.
- 10 In righteousness shall he judge the world ♦
and the peoples with equity.

THE WORD OF GOD

First Reading

1 John 5:1-6

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His word

Second Reading

John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His Holy Word

Reflection

It is a very simple command: Love one another. Just three words; that is all the command consists of. They are not complicated words, they are all very easy to understand, they are all good words and yet it can be the most difficult thing for people to do.

Why is it so difficult?

It can be difficult to do if we misunderstand the command. We are not commanded to “like” one another. There are some people that we just find it impossible to like. But we are called to “love” one another.

Love is about honour, care, self-sacrifice, respect, dignity, service. Like is about preference and choice. There is no choice or preference in the command. We are simply to “love one another” we are to honour, care, give or ourselves, respect, and serve and we are called to show this love to everyone.

It can also be difficult to “love one another” when we feel that we are the only one doing the loving; it seems to be all “love” and no “one another.”

But we should be very careful about using this as a reason not to follow the command. Jesus makes clearer the basis of his direction. “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Now we see that this is very much not about liking and there is no valid excuse in claiming that we only need to love those who love us in return. For in Jesus we see the example that he expects us to follow. His love for us was given to us with nothing given by us in return ... except denial, betrayal, violence, ridicule and death.

The truth than never fails to stun me every time I think of it, is that Jesus did not wait for me to be worth loving before he loved me by giving his life. He chose to take the risk, to give his love fully and completely for me, for you and for the world, even when we were sinful and unworthy of his love. This is love.

And the love which we show will rarely cause us to go to such extremes, but it should still carry the same mark. It is not easy and we will not always get it right. But to “love one another” should be our goal.

And as we struggle we should note one more great blessing within Jesus' words as he tells us to "love one another" with this outrageous love. He tells us to "abide in my love".

We do not stand far off and look upon the love that Jesus showed us, but we live right in the middle of it. His love surrounds us, his love fills us and it is his love which we can allow to flow from us as we seek to follow his command: "love one another."

Affirmation of Faith

We say together in faith

**Holy, holy, holy
Is the Lord God Almighty,
Who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father
Who created all things:

**For by his will they were created
And have their being.**

We believe in God the Son,
Who was slain :

**For with his blood
He purchased us for God,
From every tribe and language,
From every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:

**The Spirit and the Bride say "Come!"
Even so come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession led by Helen Ludkin

Dear Jesus,

We thank you that you are our friend who is alive and whom we can talk to. Please be with everybody today from all the churches in our Benefice and in every church around the world as they celebrate that you are alive.

Please be with them,

as you are with us.

Please be with all people who are scared, all who are sick, all who are weak and especially those who don't have any friends or family to help them at this time. Be a friend to the bereaved, that they may feel enveloped in your love. Please be with them,
as you are with us.

Please be with all people who feel that they are no good, who feel isolated, neglected, or prejudiced. We pray especially for those who don't know that you love them and that you desperately want to be their friend. Please be with them,
as you are with us.

Lord, you are our friend if we do as you command us. Help us to love one another as you have loved us. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory
For ever and ever. Amen.**

CONCLUSION

Praise Response

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Blessed are those who have not seen him
And yet have believed
He is our Lord and our God.

We have seen his glory

**The glory which he had as the Father's only Son
Full of grace and truth.**

The Lord says to us, "Do you love me?"

Our hearts reply, "You know that we love you."

Jesus says, "Whoever comes to me will never hunger.

Whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

This is the Lamb of God

Who takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus is the resurrection and the life:

Those who believe in him shall never die.

Yes! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Final Prayer

God our Father,

Whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life:

May we thirst for you,

The spring of life and source of goodness,

Through him who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast to that which is good;

Render to no one evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Help the afflicted;

Honour everyone;

Love and serve the Lord,

Rejoicing in the power of the Spirit;

And the blessing of God Almighty,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now

And remain with you always. **Amen**

Sending out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord! Alleluia! Alleluia!

In the name of Christ. Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia!