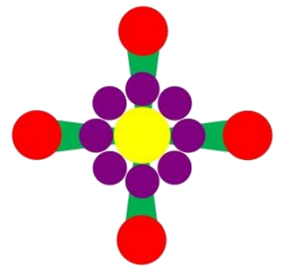


The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
Sunday 21 July 2024  
The Eighth Sunday after Trinity



**Anna has prepared our worship for today**

**Preparation**

O Lord, open our lips  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**  
May Christ, the true, the only light  
**banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.**

Blessed are you, Sovereign God, creator of all,  
to you be glory and praise for ever.  
You founded the earth in the beginning  
and the heavens are the work of your hands.  
In the fullness of time you made us in your image,  
and in these last days you have spoken to us  
in your Son Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.  
As we rejoice in the gift of your presence among us  
let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,  
your Spirit ever renew our lives  
and your praises ever be on our lips.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

**Invitation to Confession**

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world  
and knows our every word and deed.  
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord  
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

## Words of Confession

**Almighty and most merciful Father,  
we have wandered and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.  
We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.  
We have offended against your holy laws.  
We have left undone those things that we ought to have done;  
and we have done those things that we ought not to have done;  
and there is no health in us.  
But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us sinners.  
Spare those who confess their faults.  
Restore those who are penitent,  
according to your promises declared to mankind  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,  
that we may live a disciplined, righteous and godly life,  
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

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

## Words of Praise

**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,  
born of the house of your servant David.**

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,  
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,  
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old  
to save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all that hate us,

- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors,  
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear,  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

*Luke 1.68-79*

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,  
born of the house of your servant David.**

### **Collect for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity**

Lord God,  
your Son left the riches of heaven  
and became poor for our sake:  
when we prosper save us from pride,  
when we are needy save us from despair,  
that we may trust in you alone;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Jeremiah 23:1-6**

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD. The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

**Thanks be to God for the gift of his word.**

**Gospel Reading**

**Mark 6: 30-34, 53-end**

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him and rushed about the whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into the villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

**Praise be to God for the gift of his Holy Gospel.**

We are blessed with quite a few fields around our villages which hold sheep! It is great to see them as I drive around.

In Spring it is such a joy to see the young lambs, especially when they are gambolling or racing across the grass, enjoying their new life and their play together. On days of bad weather I sometimes see them all huddled in a line against the dry stone walls, finding the shelter from the wind and rain. And there have been several times when I've seen one with its head stuck through the fence, or sometimes even on a bid from freedom outside the field and on the verge next to the road. And if you have ever tried to round up a flock of sheep and you are not a shepherd with a clever dog, then you will truly understand the meaning of the word frustration.

I remember once, when I was in the Scouts, we arrived at a field where we were set to camp for the weekend. On our arrival we discovered a flock of sheep had got into our field from the one next to it. There were around thirty scouts and leaders and about twenty sheep. We outnumbered them, but they outsmarted us! Just at the moment we thought we had them heading in the right direction one would break away and when one broke away the ones around it decided to make a break for it too. And as we rushed to bring them back three from the other side would head off in the opposite direction. And as much as we tried, we just couldn't be in all the places we needed to be at once!

Sheep can be incredibly frustrating! And in our readings today we are compared to sheep!!! And as much as I find it a bit insulting, the more I think about it, the more I have to concede that I am very much like a sheep. There must be lots of times when God sees me going in the right direction, following his call and blessings, then I decide to do something that takes me away from his path. And as a human race, the goings on of the world can be seen as a field of very unruly sheep all going off in unwanted directions.

And in both our readings the character of the God who looks over these sheep, is one of compassion. For God is the Good Shepherd who desires and works hard to bring the sheep back together.

There is excitement and adventure when we wander away, but there is also danger and stress too. And we should remember that God, the Good Shepherd does not just hold us and restrain us, but leads us to good grazing, cool waters and through the valleys of death and darkness. Walking with God is no less exciting!

Which is the thing that I love about our Gospel reading. The very first sentence reminds us that Jesus had sent out his disciples, “like sheep among wolves”. He had sent them in his protection on an exciting adventure. And in this passage they return and “told him what they had done and taught.”

I can imagine their excitement as they related their stories! So as we imagine ourselves as God’s sheep, part of the flock of the Good Shepherd. Are we unruly and wandering? Are there things that we too can come to God and speak about, of how when we have followed God’s call we have seen him work in and around and through us?

### Prayers of Intercession with Jill Britton

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are never too busy to hear us. We pray that we will have your compassion and always be ready to love and to serve ceaselessly, as you did. May we follow the example of the disciples in working determinedly for your Kingdom and sharing the good news of salvation, gifted to us through your sacrifice and death on the cross. Thank you for recognising the need for relaxation and restoration. Help us to take time out to slow down and reflect on our blessings and not always be in pursuit of a perfection we cannot attain. We thank you for Sabbath rest with time to worship and reflect on the wonder, beauty and complexity of your creation, helping us to greet the week ahead refreshed with vigour, joy and thankfulness that we are beloved of you.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We thank you Heavenly Father for our Christian brothers and sisters in our local churches and across the Benefice, we thank you for the shared unity we enjoy in worship, and the common bond of commitment to the communities we serve in our locality. May our churches be as bright lights attracting people to come and see; as your teaching attracted many to come to listen to your message of good news and salvation.

We give you thanks for all who lead and work in our churches, the clergy, the lay readers, those who serve behind the scenes on committees, admin, finance and rotas, playing important parts within the whole body of the church. Help us to look out for others, as you did, ensuring there is no overburdening, or over

demanding of personal time so our clergy and leaders can also take time to go to their own deserted places to rest and restore.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all the children in our villages breaking up for the summer holidays, we know that some will be anxious about moving to new schools and unknown futures and some will be worried about difficulties at home they will be increasingly exposed to; may they all feel your presence with them. We pray for all families, we know that not all homes will be places of love and security, or places of joy and companionship, we ask that you guide and direct parents, carers and social care workers to work together to establish sanctuaries of love, companionship and refuge for all family members, young and old. We think too of families, and their friends, in the news this week, for those who have received awful news regarding missing family members, and those who have had family members cruelly taken away by violence, and whose grief is very public. We pray that in these darkest of times, your spirit of peace will pierce the sorrow and they will be able to find comfort and consolation.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our world, remembering the suffering faced in war zones, areas of conflict and terror. We pray for an end to power through violence and dictatorship and for a renewal of sustainable peace. We hold before you Palestine, Israel, the Sudan, Ukraine, Russia and all those places where people are oppressed but not in the headlines. We pray for world unity and a real desire for a just and peaceful world, we pray for world leaders and those seeking election as world leaders, with great influence affecting all humankind. Lord, we place them and the future before you, and ask that your kingdom will come and your will, will be done. For the newly elected Government here in the UK we pray for wisdom and discernment so that justice, compassion and equality for all will be their focus.

We pray for all those competing in the Olympics Games starting this week, may it be an example of how working together, pursuit of goals can be achieved, through just and fair means and not conflict.

And finally, we pray for ourselves, for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on us and we pray for those we love and care for. We name before you now: those we know

who need your touch - for healing, for peace, for comfort and for strength.....

**Merciful Father,**

**Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

### **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 for ever. Amen.**

### **Words of Praise**

Blessed are you, God our Father,  
through your Son the Christ.

His name is Jesus.

**God is with us. Praise the Lord.**

Jesus came and shared our life.

**God is with us. Praise the Lord.**

Jesus' touch made people whole.

**God is with us. Praise the Lord.**

Jesus raised the dead to life.

**God is with us. Praise the Lord.**

Jesus died to set us free.

**God is with us. Praise the Lord.**

Jesus rose to life again.

**God is with us. Praise the Lord.**

Jesus is our King on high.

**God is with us. Praise the Lord.**

### **Conclusion**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**