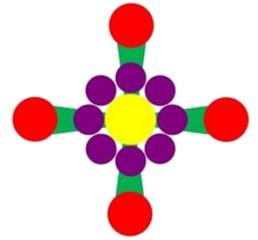


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme**
Liturgy for Written Service 8th March 2026
3rd Sunday in Lent



Today's service prepared by Liz

Call to worship

Come close to God, and he will come close to you.
The Lord our God is worthy to receive glory and honour
And power, for he has created and redeemed us.

**Heavenly Father, in our worship
Help us to sing your praise, confess our sins,
Hear your word and bring our prayers to you,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, whose arms are open to all,
we gather to meet with you and hear your word for us today;
for you know us, all we have done and all that we are.
You offer us 'living water', all that we need for our lives today.
Amen.

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.**

May the God of love
bring us back to himself,
forgive us our sins
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Praise response

Thank you, Lord, for meeting us in our place of need.
When we are burdened by worldly cares,
you come to us
and tell us of a world beyond our worries and toil,
where barriers of convention are cast aside
and we are all one in you.
We thank you, Father, that the kingdom of heaven
is in the midst of us,
and that here you shape our characters in the likeness of Christ,
to bear better witness in the world around us.
Amen.

Collect

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
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: Exodus 17: 1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The Lord said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

Second reading: John 4: 5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So, the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So, when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

Both our readings for today talk about the need for water.

In Exodus the Israelites were complaining to Moses that they were thirsty and asking why he had brought them out of Egypt to end up in the desert with no sign of water and that they were dying of thirst.

When Moses cried out to God he provided a miraculous solution by causing water to come out of a rock when Moses, in sight of some of the Elders, struck a rock. This was an amazing display of Moses's faith and trust in God to do something so improbable in front of the Elders.

In John we have Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well. The words that really stand out for me in this passage are 'we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world'.

Jesus had crossed all the conventional barriers of the day. The Samaritan woman after her encounter with Jesus went back to her town and said to the people '**Come and See**'. Jesus stayed with the Samaritans for two days and they declared '**we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world**'.

So, in today's readings we have God's provision of a physical need brought met, in what appeared to be impossible circumstances, and the words of Jesus completely changing the attitudes and practices of what was a foreign culture. There are numerous examples of such faith acting out in modern times. I read the book about the formation of Christians Against Poverty (CAP). There are local branches in Keighley and Bradford and I believe now Worldwide. It is a story of trusting God right up to the wire on several occasions where God provided exactly what they needed throughout the time when CAP was being set up.

On losing Lorna, my wife of 56 years, I know that it is Jesus and his Church that has sustained me through difficult times. We may not always be aware that the love and compassion we demonstrate as Christians to people that we meet is a real testimony, and is noticed.

So let us declare our faith in Jesus to all we meet and invite people to '**Come and See**' so that they may also know that '**Jesus is truly the Saviour of the world**'.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession with Margaret

Heavenly Father, thinking of all the places in the world suffering from war and violence at this time, particularly the Middle East, Sudan and Ukraine, we pray Almighty God whose will is to restore all things in your beloved son, the king of all; govern the hearts and minds of those in authority and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart, to be subject to his just and gentle rule. May all hostility cease and Lord be with those victims who are not part of the conflict but are caught in the crossfire and bring them aid. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God our Father, we remember before you with gratitude those who in their different capacities serve the community. We pray for those who safeguard the public health and minister to the sick; those who provide for the welfare of the young and care for the elderly and infirm; those who serve in Local Government; administer the law and preserve the peace. Assist them in their varied duties and deepen within us all the spirit of loving service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father we thank you for the dedication of our clergy team and all our volunteers, in their various capacities, who are working to maintain the smooth running of our Benefice during the time where we wait for the appointment of a new Rector.

We pray that the right person will be moved to apply for the position and take us forward into the future. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the surprising beauty of your creation. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear your work in the world. God who delights in diversity, thank you for creating each of us. Help us to appreciate the variety you have made and to treat other persons with kindness in Christ's name. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Compassionate God, the help of all in need, we pray for those in our Benefice, those known to us and those known only to you, who are going through a difficult time because of illness, worry, or grief. We pray that, through the patience and skill of those who care for others, the sick and suffering may be healed and those who are in pain be comforted, and those who are worried be reassured. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, by your grace and through the love and witness of your people, may those who are seeking you find you and those who have found you grow in faith and those who trust in you be drawn deeper into communion with each other and you.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray
**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.**

Closing prayer

Lord,
thank you that you choose to reveal yourself to us
and that you know us, love us, and sustain us.
Help us to return to you, again and again,
to be refreshed and renewed by your living water.
Amen.

Lord of light, we go in your name
to bring your glory into our world.
May we shine
with the joy, peace and hope of your Holy Spirit,
so that people see in us
the face and glory of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you
always. Amen.

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

