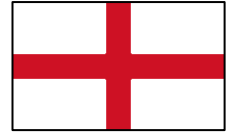


The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
Written Sunday service sheet



19 April 2026

The Third Sunday of Easter and St George's Day

Call to Worship

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world:  
**a light no darkness can quench.**

Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening:  
**and the day is almost over.**

Even the darkness is not dark for you:  
**and the night shines like the day.**

Let your light scatter the darkness:  
**and fill your church with your glory.**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts,  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Prayers of Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you,  
most humble and hearty thanks  
for all your goodness and loving kindness.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
And all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies,  
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,  
and that we show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips but in our lives,  
by giving up ourselves to your service,  
and by walking before you in holiness  
and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honour and glory,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## The Collect

Almighty Father,  
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples,  
with the sight of the risen Lord:  
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,  
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life  
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;  
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 2: 14a, 36-41

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah,<sup>[h]</sup> this Jesus whom you crucified.'

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers,<sup>[i]</sup> what should we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.' And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

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

### Second Reading: Luke 24: 13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles<sup>[a]</sup> from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad.<sup>[b]</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth,<sup>[c]</sup> who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.<sup>[d]</sup> Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah<sup>[e]</sup> should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening, and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us<sup>[f]</sup> while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word.**

Reflection from Chris

It is hard to imagine just what was going through the minds of the two disciples as they figuratively shook off the dust of Jerusalem's streets and headed for home. The death of Jesus had plunged them into gloom. Their dreams about him being the long-awaited Messiah had been reduced to rubble. Inevitably, as they walked along, their conversation turned to the circumstances surrounding his death.

They looked at it from every conceivable angle and still couldn't make the slightest sense of it. A humiliated, crucified Messiah! It was impossible not to say unthinkable. It was at this point in their sad homeward journey that Jesus appeared to them. He showed great sensitivity by joining them as a stranger. It is true to say that people often find it easier to talk to a stranger in difficult times.

With a simple, direct question, asked in a kindly manner, he got them to open up. And they began to pour out their sad story to him. While they talked, he listened patiently and lovingly so that all that was dammed up inside them poured out.

Jesus did more than just walk with them he accompanied them. Accompaniment is something very gentle. Communion is gradually built up, and mutual trust and a desire for the truth increase over time. Sometimes people do not want to listen to the truth or to look at reality. We have to wait for the right moment to help them accept their reality.

Only when the disciples had finished did Jesus begin to talk. He took up the story where they had left off. He opened their minds to a new way of looking at the Scriptures. He showed them how all the prophets had foretold that the Messiah would suffer and die and thus enter into glory. So, the death of Jesus, far from being the end of the dream, was precisely the way in which it had been realised.

With the words of Jesus light and warmth began to filter into the darkness caused by their pain and grief. By the time he revealed himself at supper they were transformed. So much so that they immediately set off back to Jerusalem. Even though the night was dark, their hearts were bright. Even though their feet were heavy, their hearts were light.

So, what was it that had happened to them? What did Jesus do for them? He certainly illuminated their minds – no question about that. But he did something better. He set their hearts on fire. ‘Were not our hearts burning within us as he explained the scriptures to us?’

Faith is very much concerned with the mind in so far as it has to do with truths, doctrines and creeds. But it is even more concerned with the heart. It consists in a relationship of love with the God who first loved us.

‘We will never believe with a vigorous and unquestioning faith unless God touches our hearts. It is to the heart that the call of God comes.’ (Blaise Pascal).

What was the main thing that came across to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus? It was the conviction that Jesus loved them.

That is what made their hearts burn. The story shows the goodness of God who makes our deepest dreams come true in the most surprising of ways.

And the story also shows us what ministry is all about. It means to walk with people, to be present to them, to listen -these are the essential 'good works' of today.

St Augustine says this:

If you wish to have life,

do what the disciples did.

They offered him hospitality.

The Lord looked set on continuing his journey

but they detained him.

At the end of their journey, they said to him:

'Stay with us, for the day is far spent.'

The Lord revealed himself in the breaking of bread.

Hospitality restored to them

what lack of faith had taken away.

So, if you wish to recognise the Saviour,

take in the stranger.

Seek the Lord in the sharing of bread.

### Prayers of Intercession with Astrid

We have read how, after that first glorious Easter Day, Jesus appeared to sorrowing followers and brought them joy, and we have heard how Peter was enabled to bring that same news to a great crowd and to tell them that the message was to them and to all who are far away.

So we bring before you, Lord, the needs of the world near and far:

Let us pray for the needs of the world beyond our parish boundaries. For our own country, let us pray for political leaders and Members of Parliament of all parties, for wisdom in the face of so many problems in national and international affairs.

As we hear so much of wars and threats around the world, let us pray for those leaders whose words and decisions reach far beyond their national boundaries. Lead them to speak and act with honour and courage, coupled with wisdom and care.

Lord we pray for the countries where war, terror attacks or oppressive regimes continue to bring so much misery – for the people of Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Ukraine. Lord bring peace and hope and better times to these and to other areas of suffering that we hear less about. Let us pray for all the people of Sudan in their ongoing civil war, and as we remember Archbishop Ezekiel and our Christian brothers and sisters there, let us pray for them and that we may feel humbled and inspired by their faithfulness.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Thinking of our own villages, Lord we praise you; we thank you for all the goodness by which we are surrounded even in these difficult times, for the beauty of our surroundings, for family, friends and neighbours and all those acts of kindness large and small that we experience. Lord help us to be good neighbours in our communities. Let us pray for those around us in need at this time – those who are suffering most from rising prices, those who are ill and may be facing long delays in treatment, those who are lonely and those who mourn. Give grace to us, that we may serve Christ in one another and love as he loves us.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the churches in our villages, the officers and council members who will be appointed at annual meetings over the next few weeks, the clergy and lay ministers who serve us, and the person you, Lord, will call to serve as Team Rector for Hewenden Benefice.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

## Collect for St George's Day

God of hosts,  
who so kindled the flame of love,  
in the heart of your servant George  
that he bore witness to the risen Lord  
by his life and by his death:  
give us the same faith and power of love,  
that we who rejoice in his triumphs  
may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection;  
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.**

## 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.**

## Closing Prayer

Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples,  
in the breaking of bread:  
open the eyes of our faith,  
that we may see him in all his redeeming work;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Blessing

The Lord bless us, the Lord go with us and strengthen us,  
The Lord look kindly on us, and give us his deep peace. **Amen**