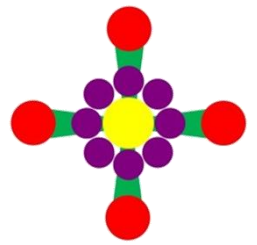


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 19 January 2025
The Third Sunday of Epiphany**



Preparation

The Lord is here
His Spirit is with us

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

The Greeting

Prayers of Penitence

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
Through our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own.

Let us confess our sins.

Father eternal, giver of light and grace

We have sinned against you and against our neighbour

In what we have thought,

In what we have said and done,

Through ignorance, through weakness,

Through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded your love,

And marred your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed,

And repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,

Who died for us,

Forgive us all that is past;

And lead us out from darkness

To walk as children of light. Amen

The God of all healing and forgiveness

Draw you to himself

And cleanse you from all your sin

That you may behold the glory of his Son,

The Word made flesh,

Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

Almighty God,

Whose Son revealed in signs and miracles

The wonder of your saving presence:

Renew your people with your heavenly grace,

And in all our weakness

Sustain us by your mighty power;

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 First Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His word

The Second Reading: John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His Holy Word

Just recently, it was brought home to me just how true the observation is that we don't really appreciate many things until we have to manage without them. That was certainly the case during the week of wintry weather. I'm not thinking of how I missed the opportunities to get out and about – there are certainly plenty of things at home to keep me occupied for much more than a week! Nor am I thinking about the opportunities to meet up with people though obviously I did miss seeing friends and meeting with people at various church services or activities – thankfully there are phones and zoom so that we can keep in touch with each other. But one thing which I grew to appreciate a great deal was the regular bin collection. I confess that it is something which I have taken for granted in the past, but when it was not operating for a week or more, I became increasingly aware of how much I depended on it. The main concern was the recycling bin. Not only was there the usual recycling waste, but that was augmented by the various packaging leading up to and following Christmas – and the added papers etc which I managed to sort out whilst I was confined to the house. The bin was filled – and there will be more to dispose of afterwards. And yes, it has made me even more grateful for those who provide that service regularly, week by week, when the weather permits. Certainly, a God-given reminder to appreciate the everyday things which make such a difference in our lives.

Of course, I would probably have struggled to move the full bin over the packed ice and snow, so maybe would not have managed to get it to the roadside. In normal circumstances, the bins rarely do get absolutely full, but when they do, they can become quite unwieldy and difficult to manoeuvre. Just imagine how difficult it would be to move them if they were full of liquid! Not just the weight, but all of that liquid sloshing about. It sounds like quite a challenge.

One writer worked out that a standard wheelie bin is 120 litres, about 26 gallons. That is an awful lot of liquid! I found it fascinating to read that would be the equivalent of approximately 160 standard bottles of wine – though also find it difficult to picture how much space those bottles would need. And even more amazing is that when we consider the story of the wedding feast in Cana, we learn that Jesus turned the water from six stone water jars into wine. That would be like the equivalent of 960 bottles of wine!

The stone jars would normally contain water for the Jewish purification rites – a practice which would have been commonplace to all of those attending the wedding, something which would not have been out of the ordinary at all. Yet, Jesus was able to turn the contents into wine – and not just basic, almost vinegary wine, but wine which those who tasted it, confirmed was much better than any that had been consumed previously at the wedding. And, as we have just seen, Jesus did not just provide the company with a small amount to eke things out a little, but with such amazing generosity so that there was more than enough for everyone. It truly was miraculous!

This was the first of Jesus' miracles and we can only image the joy that it gave to all who were assembled at the wedding feast. Joy that would have been felt in so many ways – such joy for the disciples that it cemented their faith in Jesus; joy for Mary who could see that her son was becoming the man he was created to be; joy in the relief of the steward who was aware of just how close they had come to running out of wine and the shame that would have caused for the family; joy for the bride and groom and their parents who could see how much their guests were enjoying the celebrations; joy in the servants who were aware of what had happened and had actually witnessed the miracle. God's generosity, manifested through the actions of Jesus his Son, resulted in an abundant blessing for all those who were there and great joy which was shared with the whole community. How many times have we seen that joy can be catching, as it brims out of the life of one person and is communicated and shared with others.

That joy is there for us too, through the love of God and his Son, Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Maybe we need to be more like those servants at the wedding feast and keep our eyes, ears and minds open to what is going on around us so we may discern the work of God which is changing the ordinary things of life into extraordinary gifts and blessings which we can all appreciate and enjoy.

One of the songs which we sing asks God to give us joy in our hearts and is followed with the line "keep me praising!" As we become more open to noticing God's generous blessings in our own lives, however simple they may be, may we give thanks for the joy they give us and as we praise our generous God, may that joy be shared with those around us and enrich our community.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
He did not cling to equality with God,
But made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
He was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
And was obedient to death,
Even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
And given him the name above every name:
That at the name of Jesus
Every knee should bow,
And every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
To the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession with Jasmin

Blessed are you, Lord our God, and life. To you be praise and glory forever.
In your presence is the fullness of joy. With you is life and life eternal.

Lord God, strength of the weak and light to all who walk in darkness, help us to proclaim your saving power not only in words but also by our lives. Help us to reveal the joy of knowing you and your love. We ask you to bless all preachers and teachers of the faith. Guide all who study scriptures and all who are learning through the example of others. We pray for the leaders of our church and ask that you guide them in all their decisions. We give thanks for all who serve in our benefice enabling us to worship and praise together.

Lord of life and Love,
Renew and refresh us.

Lord, we pray for the world and the right use of its resources. We ask your blessing upon any who are suffering from natural disasters, upon those suffering from famine or flood or fire, especially remembering the people of California. We remember all those whose resources are running low,

and we pray for the world poor and all who are without work or proper shelter. In this cold season, we pray for those who are homeless and in need of support. We give thanks for those who volunteer in shelters and those who contribute to and help run food banks.

Lord of life and Love,
Renew and refresh us.

We give thanks for all who have supplied us with our daily needs, for our homes and for our loved ones. We ask your blessing on homes that are suffering from great debt or where the household is unable to cope through various troubles. We pray for Christians Against Poverty and the invaluable work they do.

Lord of life and Love,
Renew and refresh us.

We give thanks for our well-being and pray for all who are struggling currently. We remember those who are suffering from physical disability or weakness, all who are losing agility or mobility. We pray for all who do not have the strength to cope on their own. In a moment of quiet, we bring to you those in our hearts who need our prayers.

Lord of life and Love,
Renew and refresh us.

We give thanks for the resurrection of our Lord and for the promise of life eternal. We pray for our friends and loved ones departed and ask that they may know newness and fullness of life in your Kingdom. We rejoice in the fellowship of all your Saints and pray that we may share with them in glory.

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

The Lord's Prayer

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 Prayers

Almighty Father,

Whose Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world:

May your people,

Illumined by your word and sacraments,

Shine with the radiance of his glory,

That he may be known, worshipped and obeyed to the ends of the earth.

For he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing and Sending Out

Christ the Son of God

Perfect in you the image of his glory

And gladden your hearts with the good news.

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:

in the name of Christ. Amen.

