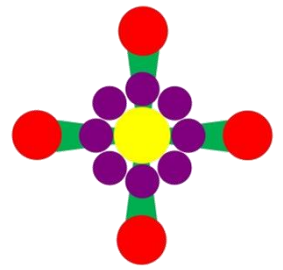


The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
12 July 2026



The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.

**From the rising of the sun to its setting
your name is proclaimed in all the world.**

As we come before you, Lord God, we prepare ourselves to receive your Word. May we be fertile soil for you, the mighty sower, ever casting your seed where it might take root.

We seek to rid our souls of stones and thorns and all that hinders or chokes growth; may we dig deep, and be open and nurturing to receive your message to us today.

Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden, to ask for forgiveness and peace.

Lord God, our maker and our redeemer, this is your world and we are your people: come among us and save us.

We have willfully misused your gifts of creation;

Lord, be merciful: **forgive us our sin.**

We have seen the ill-treatment of others and have not gone to their aid;

Lord, be merciful: **forgive us our sin.**

We have condoned evil and dishonesty and failed to strive for justice;

Lord, be merciful: **forgive us our sin.**

We have heard the good news of Christ, but have failed to share it with others;

Lord, be merciful: **forgive us our sin.**

We have not loved you with all our heart, nor our neighbours as ourselves;

Lord, be merciful: **forgive us our sin.**

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw *us* to himself,
and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins that *we* may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The love of God has been poured into our hearts
Through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

We dwell in him and he in us.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.

Sing to him, sing praises to him,
and speak of all his marvelous works.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,
who was and is and is to come.

The Collect

Creator God,
you made us all in your image:
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

First Reading: Romans 8: 1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God

Gospel reading: Matthew 13:1-9. 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.

Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!'

'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.

As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

This is the word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Have you ever really taken a seed out of its packet and looked hard at it? This small, insignificant seed is a marvellous thing – it can make barren ground fruitful. But, in essence, a seed is an extremely weak and vulnerable thing. On its own it is nothing, without help it will remain just a seed. It depends entirely on the kind of soil in which it is planted. How well the soil has been prepared. If the soil is lacking in nutrients, the seed will come to nothing. If the ground is well prepared and after planting the seed is fed and watered regularly it will produce a good crop.

So, it is with a word. A word is a powerful thing. It can comfort, inspire, teach, correct, challenge change a life... or it can come to nothing. It is entirely dependent on the attitude of the one who hears it.

On the face of it, it might seem from today's Gospel that Jesus taught in parables in order to prevent his hearers from understanding. But such a purpose is completely alien to the character of Jesus. Jesus used parables as an effective way of teaching. Those who were open to him received more. Those who had closed their minds against him received less. His parables generally used everyday situations with which his listeners were familiar. No doubt his hearers had many times seen a farmer striding through his prepared fields sowing his corn.

But no matter how well the soil had been prepared some seed fell on the hard path where it had no chance of putting down roots. Exposed to full view, it was easily spotted and eaten up by the birds.

So it is with words that are spoken to people with closed minds. Prejudice closes a person's mind. So does pride – the case of the person who thinks they know it all. So does fear – fear of new truth, or fear of hearing a disturbing truth. Then some people seem to be unteachable. Trying to get through to them is like knocking your head against a brick wall. Some fell on the stony ground at the side of the path where it quickly took root but because of lack of soil and moisture. Some hear the word and receive it with enthusiasm, but when the carrying out becomes difficult, their enthusiasm wanes and they quickly abandon it. You only have to look around at the lives of some people, littered with things started but never finished. Then some seed fell on ground littered with weeds. It got off to a good start. But then the weeds established themselves and smothered the good seed.

People may receive the word of God, but there are so many other interests in their lives that the most important thing gets crowded out. People are too busy to pray. People are so involved in their careers that they have no time or energy left for the things of the spirit. Finally some seed fell on good well-prepared soil, where it put down deep roots where it found nourishment and produced a harvest. So there are people who hear the word, understand it and then act on it. Their lives are enriched by it. God's word comforts, guides, inspires and challenges us in turn. It is like precious seed. The sower sowed the seed haphazardly: on the path, on the rocks, among the thorns, and on good ground. You might say he was wasteful and foolish. But, in fact, he was extremely generous, even prodigal with the seed. He wanted to give every part of the field a chance to produce something. God keeps on sowing his word in our hearts even though he knows that much of what he sows will be eaten by birds or fall on rocks or among thorns. In nature the seed has only a short growing season in the early part of the year. Not so with the seed which is the word of God. Growth can come at any stage of a person's life. The seed of God's word, once dropped into the human heart, never dies. It's never too late to act on the word of God.

"A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day."
(Emily Dickinson)

Affirmation of faith

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;

**he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.**

Amen.

Prayers of Intercessions with Diana

Great and holy God, we come before You in reverence and praise and in thanksgiving for the many blessings we enjoy and which we too often take for granted. Especially at this time, we thank You for long summer evenings and the abundance of flowers and greenery in gardens and countryside. But, Lord, we are mindful of those suffering under intense heat waves, both here, In Europe and in America. We pray that You will bring them relief and keep them safe. We pray for Your blessing on farmers across the world as they seek to adjust their work to fit with a changing climate.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask Your comfort and strength, Lord, for those suffering from wildfires, drought and other natural disasters. Especially at this time, we hold up to You the people of Venezuela as they recover from devastating earthquakes.

We pray for Your healing for those who mourn, especially for those whose loved ones are lost under the rubble. We pray for those in temporary living spaces, that their needs may be met. We ask Your strength for those with the massive task of clearing the rubble.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, between nations and peoples there is so much mistrust, hostility, a struggle for power, resources or revenge that is causing violence, fear and oppression. We pray for leaders of all nations that they may be guided by Your Spirit of wisdom, honesty and care for those whom their decisions will affect. We pray Your guidance for all who are seeking peaceful and just solutions. We ask for Your blessing and the safety of all who are working to bring medical services, food, education and opportunity to those who are suffering the effects of conflict. We hold up to You, especially, the children who have never known peace or plenty.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for our country, where the gap seems to widen between those who have the means for a reasonably comfortable lifestyle and those who have not. As the workplace becomes increasingly automated, we pray for those who cannot find work, especially holding up to You the many young people who are unemployed.

We pray that those who find the cost of living more than they can cope with may find help and support. We ask Your blessing on food banks, debt advice services and for those, like Awais, working with refugees.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for the communities in our benefice. We ask Your healing for those who are ill and Your comfort for those who are grieving, especially remembering before You those we know. We ask for renewed hope and peace for those who are anxious, depressed or facing serious problems and Your guidance for those taking big decisions. We thank You for those who work in many different ways in our churches and ask Your blessing on all that they do. We remember before You Daniel and his family as they prepare for their move and Daniel's new role among us.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray, Lord, that our lives may be fruitful in Your service and that we may follow in Your Way with gladness of heart.

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

The Peace

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you are called to peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Ever-giving God, we thank you that you have never stopped sowing your word among us.

Give us receptive hearts and make us fruitful for you in the week to come.

Amen.

Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone; love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you today and always

Amen.

Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

