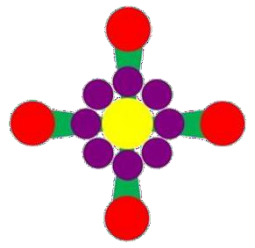


The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 11 May 2025
The Fourth Sunday of Easter



The Gathering

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the Lord has comforted his people,
and will have compassion on his suffering ones.

Isaiah 49.13

Jesus said, 'This is indeed the will of my Father,
that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life,
and I will raise them up on the last day.'

John 6.40

Invitation to Confession

God shows his love for us
in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Let us then show our love for him
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Confession

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength,
and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

Absolution

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins,
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:
raise us, who trust in him,
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,
that we may seek those things which are above,
where he reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

New Testament Reading: Acts 9. 36-end

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his word.

Gospel Reading: John 10: 22-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

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

In this Sunday's Gospel reading from John 10, we hear Jesus say: *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."* These are words of reassurance, of steadfast love, and of deep belonging.

As a benefice of four churches, we find ourselves in a season of change. Our curate Anna has moved on, and our rector Richard is soon to follow. These are significant shifts, and it's only natural to feel a mixture of gratitude, sadness, uncertainty, and perhaps a little anxiety about what comes next. We've been blessed by their ministry among us, and they leave behind the fruit of their faithfulness and care.

But John's Gospel reminds us that the Church is not held together by any one person—however gifted or loved—but by the voice of Christ Himself. It is Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who gathers us, knows us, calls us by name, and walks with us every step of the way. His promise is sure: *"No one will snatch them out of my hand."*

This is not just a promise for clergy—it is a promise for *all* of God's people. Too often we can think that the life and direction of the church depend solely on ordained leaders. While their calling is a gift to the Church, Jesus calls *every one of us* to listen to His voice and to follow. The mission and ministry of our churches—across the whole benefice—continue because *we*, as His flock, are listening, responding, and sharing in His work.

Now is a time to pray for one another and for the future. But it is also a time to recognise and renew our shared calling—to serve, to support, to worship, to reach out. The Holy Spirit is still moving. Christ is still speaking. The Shepherd is still leading.

As we look to the future, may we do so not only with hope, but with a deepened sense of our place in God's story. This is *our* time to be His Church. This is *our* moment to listen for His voice, to follow in faith, and to trust that His hand will never let us go.

Amen

**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 Harrison

Heavenly Father, we think with gratitude of previous generations, those of our grandparents and parents, who lived through the First and Second World Wars and made so many sacrifices in those years so that we have enjoyed 80 years of peace and security. May we ever remember the hard times they endured for the benefit of us all.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of all mercy, we pray for all the nations of the world in the unrest and violence of these times. We pray that moves towards peace may be purposeful, supported from all sides, and eventually achieve justice and security for those on either side of the current battle lines.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Remembering all those throughout the world suffering and enduring hardship from freak weather events, the earthquakes in Myanmar and Thailand, flooding, and other disasters no longer in the news, we ask that relief and comfort is

forthcoming for them, and that they are able to move forward with the support and love of their communities.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Over the next few weeks whilst business meetings are taking place throughout our Benefice, and we face a time of change. We give thanks for the work done by our clergy during their time with us to support us and deepen our love and commitment to you and each other, and we pray for them, and ask you to bless them in their new responsibilities, and to bless all who take on new tasks in leading your congregations and caring for your people in these villages.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Thinking of those in our Benefice who are in any kind of need or distress, and who are in need of your healing today we pray, Heavenly Father, by your grace and through the patience and skill of those who care for others, may the sick and suffering be healed, and those who are in pain be comforted, and those who are worried be reassured.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Our gracious God and Father, creator of all that is good, we thank you for the gift of life, for the wonders of the world in which h you have placed us, and for all the blessings you so freely lavish upon us, your children. Forgive us that so often, we take your gifts for granted and think so little of the giver. Help us to recognise your hand in the ordinary things of life, and never to be ungrateful for food and clothing, work and recreation, health and home, family and friends.

So may we live from day to day in the knowledge of your love and goodness, giving thanks always for all things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Song of Praise

Our Lord Jesus Christ, risen from death,
we praise you for changed lives and new hopes at Easter.
You come to Mary in the garden,
and turn her tears into joy.
For your love and mercy we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

You come to the disciples in the upper room,
and turn their fear into courage.
For your love and mercy we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

You come to the disciples by the lakeside,
and turn their failure into faith.
For your love and mercy we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

You come to the disciples on the Emmaus road,
and turn their despair into hope.
For your love and mercy we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

You come to your people now,
and turn our weakness into triumph.
For your love and mercy we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

The Blessing

Eternal God, giver of love and power,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:
confirm us in this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Sending Out

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Go in peace to love and to serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen

