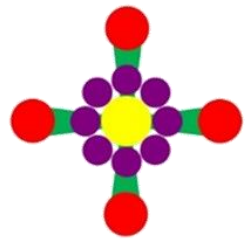


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
17 November 2024**



The Second Sunday before Advent

Anna has prepared our worship for today

Call to Worship

Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray.
Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of Preparation

God of our days and years,
we set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ
so that our lives may glorify you. **Amen**

Call to Confession

Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world;
its pride, its selfishness, its greed;
its evil distortions and hatreds.
Let us confess our share in what is wrong,
and our failure to seek and establish that peace
which God wills for all his children.

Prayers of Penitence

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

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Heavenly Lord,
 you long for the world's salvation:
 stir us from apathy,
 restrain us from excess
 and revive in us new hope
 that all creation will one day be healed
 in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

First Reading

Hebrews 10: 11-25

And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, 'he sat down at the right hand of God', and since then has been waiting 'until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.' For by a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying,

'This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts,

and I will write them on their minds',

he also adds,

'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'

Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Therefore, my friends,^[g] since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Mark 13. 1-8

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!’ Then Jesus asked him, ‘Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.’

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ‘Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?’ Then Jesus began to say to them, ‘Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, “I am he!”^[a] and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

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

Reflection from Richard

I quite miss the days when we used to navigate on car journeys using a map! Our modern technology with Sat Nav systems means that finding our way should be very easy and we will always be heading in the right direction.

Although they are not perfect and there are plenty of stories about drivers who have been almost literally led up the garden path when they are trying to get to a destination. The Sat Nav is not infallible and it is also restricted by signal strength and the health of the device it is on.

When I’ve travelled to see my parents recently, I have been plunged into a navigational darkness when my phone loses connectivity and the Sat Nav freezes. It has led me into a place that I don’t know well and I trusted it without question, but suddenly it abandons me with no clue as to which way to go!

Our two readings today speak of the direction of travel too. The Gospel from John sees Jesus warning his followers: “Beware that no-one leads you astray.” While the first reading encourages us to: “approach [the sanctuary] with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”

We are all on a journey through life and are constantly faced with choices. Sometimes it is easy to see which way we should go, other times it is not so simple.

We can make a wrong turn for many different reasons. I am always drawn to the list in the confession: We have sinned in thought and word and deed, through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.

It is as if we are driving to our destination and take a wrong turn. It might have been because we didn't realise, or because we didn't read the signs, or because we thought we knew a better way! We all know what it is like to take a wrong turn. I've certainly taken wrong turns when driving for all of those reasons!

But when we do take the wrong path in life, what is important is that we try as soon as possible to get back onto the right one. And that is why the first reading is so important. It highlights that following Jesus is the most magical Sat Nav, because it is set up in the understanding that we constantly keep taking the wrong way.

Wherever we go, Jesus is forever drawing us back and calling us to follow more closely. He is like a constant Sat Nav bringing us back on track.

Just before my ordination I did the Coast to Coast walk with a friend. As we got off the train near the Western Coast to begin the big walk of 190 miles, he had the map and was taking on the role of being our navigator. I followed him for about twenty minutes before I realised that we were going uphill from the station, when we were trying to find the beach and the start of our walk. Surely, I thought, we shouldn't be going uphill to get to the beach.

Like the Gospel reading, he was leading us astray from the way we should have been going. I brought it to his attention and we looked at the map together. We were indeed going in the wrong direction. A readjustment put us back on track and we started to approach the beach in full assurance of faith! And from that moment I did the map reading!

Our journey through life is a complex one, filled with many choices, ups and downs. Let us try not to be led astray too far, but to approach the way of God with true hearts and in full assurance of faith.

**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 led by Jill Britton

Lord Jesus, we thank you for the route to forgiveness through your one perfect sacrifice, that following confession and repentance, you no longer remember our sin. We thank you that our salvation is not dependent on ritual or rules. But through your death, the law is now written in our hearts, so we come before you today in gratitude and sincerity seeking to serve you and others because we are now your people, loved and commissioned by you to share the good news of salvation and eternal life. Help us to persevere and be courageous in the face of ridicule, opposition or disbelief, to share our faith and hope into a troubled world.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

We pray for your world and everyone whose lives have been damaged by the actions of those who seek to dominate and control them. We pray for victims of neglect, sexual abuse and domestic violence, who live in fear about what each day will mean to them. Help us to be vigilant, responsible and appropriate in the part we play to protect the innocent. We pray for people working in social service organisations, counsellors and the individuals who staff confidential chat lines, we give thanks for their resilience and ask that you sustain them. We pray for those who manage social media platforms that they will be responsible in monitoring content, ensuring that there are safeguards in place to protect the vulnerable. We pray for mainstream media, editors of news channels, TV programmes and newspapers that they will take responsibility for ensuring fair

and accurate reporting, so that there is no provocation of anger within those who desire to agitate and create pockets of hatred within communities.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We hold before you leaders of countries, communities and organisations. We pray for those elected to positions of great power and authority, that they will lead with compassion, responsibility and honesty. Keep us all mindful of your servant kingship and we pray that all leaders will seek to follow a path of justice for the people they have been elected to serve. We pray for all countries at war, for the people in fear for their lives and those they love. We pray for all the places broken and troubled by war and terrorism and all who long for freedom and a sustainable peace. We pray for our government as they plan policy and negotiate our place in Europe and the world. Give wisdom to members of parliament, treasury officials and cabinet ministers in their decisions that they will ensure small voices are not left unheard. We pray especially as they debate and vote on the Assisted Dying Bill and for all the people whose life and death will be touched by the outcome.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your church worldwide and at home, we pray for your blessing on its worship and witness, inspire and unite us in love to be a shining example of your kingdom on earth. We pray for our own church, and we hold Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury before you. We pray he will feel peace and calm in his decision, and we thank you for his work, ministry and service to you. We pray you will guide his future, and we pray for his family at this difficult and very public time. We pray for the Church as it now faces many crucial decisions of leadership. Lord, may your hand guide and bless our church in this nation, in our region and in our parishes. We thank you for all the faithful people who serve you, leading, teaching and guiding your flock. We thank you for our Benefice Team, Richard, Alison, Liz and Anna, bless them and we ask that your peace, strength and love will sustain them in their calling.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

We thank you for the beauty of the natural world, for the colours of autumn as nature rests and prepares for new growth and life in the spring. We thank you for the complexity of creation, the circle of life and the abundance of opportunity it produces if we care for it and share its resources fairly. Forgive us Lord, when we have abused and neglected creation, consuming without thinking about the consequences. We pray for people suffering because of climate change, warming seas and rising temperatures. We pray for the people of Spain, devastated by recent flooding and for those countries where drought has destroyed crops and livelihood. As world leaders consider the climate, we ask that you will help them find answers to the complex issues. Prompt our consciences when we purchase, to support fair trade and sustainable farming so we can play our small part in the stewardship of the planet you entrusted to us.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We give thanks for those we love and who love us, our friends and families who fill our lives with their lives. We name before you those we know who are ill, suffering with pain, grief or anxiety. We long for your healing and release for them from pain or distress and we pray for your touch, your peace and your love to fill them full beyond measure. So, Lord, let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds encouraging each other in our faith.

Merciful Father,

**Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. 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 for ever.
Amen.**

Closing prayers

Lord Jesus Christ,
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:
give us the courage to follow you
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen

God's Blessing for us

May God give to you and to all those whom you love
his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy,
in this world and the next;
and the Blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us
and remain with us always.
Amen.

Sending Out

**We go into the world
to walk in God's light,
to rejoice in God's love
and to reflect God's glory.**