

The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme

Letter from Liz

One of the pleasures over the last few months has been looking back through old photographs and remembering various holidays and days out with family or friends. There has been time to reminisce and almost recapture the emotions of those times.

One set of photos showed a visit to a theme park and some of the rides – and I could almost relive those feelings – the peace and serenity as pedalos moved along a gently flowing stream, the laughter as we saw each other reflected in distorting mirrors, the cold drenching as we were soaked by the spray when the log surged down the log flume, the way we jumped as strange figures leapt out of the shadows to startle us on the ghost train or the mixture of fear and exhilaration as we plummeted up and down on the rollercoaster. Happy memories and of so many other rides too – though I am not too sure that some of those rides would still appeal to me nowadays!

But when I really consider it, the most important part of the memories is the friendship, the laughter and the companionship which was shared. For each of us, memories play such a vital role in our lives – and as we know, memories are not always good or happy.

Over the past weekend, the 75th anniversary of VJ day was marked with various services and events throughout the country and the world. As we heard people talking about their recollections, there was a mixture of memories. For some, there were happy recollections of the end of the war and reunions with family and friends – but for so many, their memories were tinged with sadness as they remembered the harshness and cruelty that was suffered in Japan or they remembered friends who did not survive. For some, memories were so painful that they were locked away in their hearts and have not been spoken about since. For people living after those events of 75 years ago, they receive a more rounded picture of those times when they hear of both the sad and happy memories and the opportunity to learn from the past.

I wonder what our memories of 2020 will be. No doubt, a mixture of happy and sad memories. Will we think of the seemingly endless weeks of lockdown with its frustrations and opportunities – or the devastating effects of Covid-19 on people across the world – or the wonderful acts of kindness which were shown throughout the country? Or, for our young people and their families, will it be the memories of the educational rollercoaster which they have been on, especially those waiting for exam results and then dealing with the outcomes from those stressful days. Hardly a rollercoaster of their choosing. We do pray for them, that this stress and uncertainty soon become things of memory and they can move forward from them.

For each of us, our memories play a part in our life's story. They have helped to make us the people we are – but our lives are more than our memories. We can learn from the past, but to live, we must continue to move forward. We are not travelling alone because we also share our faith in our loving, living Lord. Our Lord who said, in Isaiah, "I will not forsake you, I have held you in the palm of my hand."

Each of us is imprinted in God's memory, held in God's loving hands and so we can trust that he will be with us at all times, however difficult things may feel to be. Surely we can respond with some of the words from Psalm 71, "For you are my hope, O Lord God, my confidence," and can live in the hope he gives.

May this coming week be a time when you are blessed with opportunities for making more happy memories and if you are going through difficult times, may the memory of God's love for you and the friendship of those around you be a source of comfort and support.

Worship led by Richard

Take a moment to be still. God is with you and unites his church by His Spirit.

As we rejoice in the gift of this day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen

Almighty God,
Unto 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.

Today's Reading: Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Reflection:

When I saw that this was the psalm set for the day I just had to use it as the reading! It is so well known and so beautiful.

I decided to use the form from the Book of Common Prayer too. I imagine that like me you could probably finish each line without looking if you know the first two words.

I wonder how many times you've said it in your lifetime and on what different occasions. We often have it at funerals and it is the basis of many favourite hymns too: The Lords my Shepherd, The King of Love my Shepherd is. I wonder which is your favourite tune: Crimmond, Brother David's Air, Stuart Townend, The Vicar of Dibley?

I think one of the reasons it is so popular is that it speaks in words that give such a great image of how God cares for us. All the psalms speak in words that we can understand and recognise, but this psalm has such comfort and hope in it that whenever I say it or sing it I feel encouraged and I can imagine images which illustrate it in my mind.

It is easy to see the green pastures and the still waters. I can see well known paintings and photos of shepherds with their sheep. It even makes me remember some farmers I've known with their sheep when I've visited their farms.

I think of times of difficulty that I've been through, and give thanks for God's guiding hand through those times. Sometimes God felt far away, but I see now that he was guiding and leading - sometimes it is only the sound of his crook that leads us, or the prod of his staff that moves us forwards.

The end of the psalm speaks of the promise of heaven. God looks after us not only in this life, but also in a life to come beyond death. They are always great words of promise when we use the psalm at a funeral.

Of course the promise of the great feast is something that especially appeals to my heart!

I have no idea how many times I've used the Psalm myself, but it must be into the thousands. Yet it was only two years ago that a whole new insight came when we considered it at a Bible Study.

We were thinking about the phrase: "You spread a table before me, in the presence of those who trouble me." Sometimes it is "in the presence of my enemies." We wondered what that phrase meant and why it was there.

I confess that I had always thought of it, that we got to eat God's feast while our enemies had to look on and wish that they were eating it too.

But someone suggested a completely different interpretation. What if it meant that in heaven things were put right with our enemies in such a way that we would sit down and eat together with them, in celebration of things being resolved by God's grace and love?

As we thought about it, we wondered at the people who would be round the table at our feast. It made us really aware of the love and forgiveness of God, the true wonder of heaven and of how amazing it will be.

Take a moment to think about it, think who would be at your table. Be amazed and humbled.

And once you've thought of that, think about what we next considered: How many invitations would you get to other people's feasts? Who would you be eating with in heaven? Now that really is humbling and very challenging too!

Prayers:

Take a moment to think of times in your life which have been green pasture or still water times. Give thanks for those times.

Consider times which have been difficult, times of sadness and loss. Be aware of how God guided and led you, how he felt far away or close by in your troubles.

Think of friends or members of your family who are in good times or times of difficulty. Pray that they may know the presence of God today.

Give thanks for the promise of heaven: "That I may dwell in the house of God forever."

Think about that heavenly banquet. Pray for those who might gather round your table and those who might invite you to theirs!

And we draw all of our prayers together using 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

Let us bless the Lord: Thanks be to God!

Information:

Services this Sunday, 23 August 2020

10.30am: Benefice Zoom Service: A service of the Word. The Link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86552726655?pwd=ZnB0VDkwa1c3YVpVZkVjVNH1UHE4UT09>

6.00pm Communion: A Common Prayer Communion service at Cullingworth

Zoom Benefice Prayers

Do join in with our Benefice Thursday Prayers at 11am this Thursday.

The Link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83952757402?pwd=eEYrRGFkL3g1dzJLeUcvSDJueTlZdz09>

Churches Open for Personal Prayer:

St Saviour's, Harden: Wednesdays 2.30pm to 3.30pm

St John's, Cullingworth: Wednesdays 2.00pm to 3.00pm

Denholme Shared Church: Wednesdays 2.00pm to 3.00pm

St Matthew's Church will open from 9 September

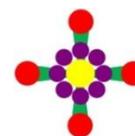
QUIZ!?

The Quiz this week is tonight at 7pm. The Quiz setters this week are The Millers. Come along and enjoy the fun. The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85945699189?pwd=ZzgyZmViSDdxV0xCaWlzbWQvNTFkQT09>



Follow our Benefice Facebook Page. Search for:
"Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme Benefice"



Morning Prayer 8am

Evening Prayer 5pm

Night Prayer 9pm

BENEFICE FANTASY FOOTBALL COMPETITION

Don't forget to send Richard your team choices for the new season.
Choose one team from each of the six lists below:



Premier League	Championship LIST FOUR	League One LIST FIVE	League Two LIST SIX
LIST ONE	Barnsley	Accrington Stan.	Barrow
Chelsea	Birmingham City	Blackpool	Bolton Wanderers
Leicester City	Blackburn Rovers	Bristol Rovers	Bradford City
Liverpool	Bournemouth	Burton Albion	Cambridge United
Manchester City	Brentford	Charlton Athletic	Carlisle Utd
Manchester Utd	Bristol City	Crewe Alex.	Cheltenham Town
LIST TWO	Cardiff City	Doncaster Rovers	Colchester Utd
Arsenal	Coventry City	Fleetwood Town	Crawley Town
Aston Villa	Derby County	Gillingham	Exeter City
Brighton & H. A.	Huddersfield Town	Hull City	Forest Green Rovers
Burnley	Luton Town	Ipswich Town	Grimsby Town
Crystal Palace	Middlesbrough	Lincoln City	Harrogate
Everton	Millwall	Milton Keynes Dons	Leyton Orient
Newcastle United	Nottingham Forest	Northampton Town	Mansfield Town
Sheffield Utd	Norwich City	Oxford Utd	Morecambe
Southampton	Preston North End	Peterborough Utd	Newport County
Tottenham Hotspur	Queens Park Rangers	Plymouth Argyle	Oldham Athletic
West Ham Utd	Reading	Portsmouth	Port Vale
Wolverhampton W	Rotherham Utd	Rochdale	Salford City
LIST THREE	Sheffield Wed.	Shrewsbury Town	Scunthorpe Utd
Fulham	Stoke City	Sunderland	Southend United
Leeds United	Swansea City	Swindon Town	Stevenage
West Brom. Albion	Watford	Wimbledon	Tranmere Rovers
	Wycombe Wand.	Wigan Athletic	Walsall

Bums & Tums

If you have become a little larger over Lockdown then join in with Bums & Tums on Zoom at 7pm on a Monday evening!

Community Support Centres To help with these difficult times of self-isolation and social distancing Bradford Council have set up a Neighbourhood Support Service and have identified, and are supporting, points of contact in our villages.

Everyone in our community is asked to keep an eye on their neighbours (from a distance), particularly those without internet access. If they need help then let them know about the service or the service know about them.

In Harden, the Congregational Church is the contact point and to access the service phone Helen Keighley on 07932 156 337 or 01535 271221.

In Wilsden the service is being coordinated from the village hall by Jane Callaghan and Kelley Sutcliffe. Ring Jane on 07986 294 757

In Cullingworth, the New Village Hall is the contact point and to access the service phone 01274 431000

In Denholme the service is being coordinated by Denholme Assist. Ring them on 01274 019179

If you live outside the two villages and need help then the telephone number of the Bradford Met Centre is 01274 431000. It is the same number if you wish to become a volunteer for the Community Support Centre in your community.

The clergy, ministry team and pastoral team are also ready to respond to calls for help and support, whether for food, prayer or a chat.

DO PASS ON THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO JOIN IN WITH THE BENEFICE ACTIVITIES, THEY ARE OPEN TO ALL!