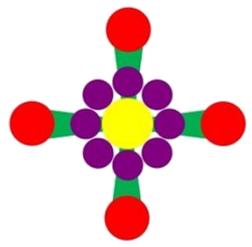


The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
8 May 2022
The Fourth Sunday of Easter



Our Service today was put together by Alison

The Gathering

Alleluia, Christ is risen!
The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Blessing and honor is yours, O God.
Glory to God forever. Alleluia

Silence is kept

The Lord is here
His Spirit is with us.

Faithful one, whose word is life:
come with saving power
to free our praise,
inspire our prayer
and shape our lives
for the kingdom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

God is present to guide our journey
and eager to forgive us when we go astray;
therefore, in humility and faith,
let us confess our sins against God and neighbour.

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Penitence

Prayer of confession

**Holy God,
we confess that we have strayed
from your paths of right relationship and peace,
and we have dishonored you,
ourselves, and your creation;
we repent of these hurtful ways.
Forgive us, we pray,
as we learn to forgive others,
and guide our feet into the way of peace.
Amen.**

Absolution

God's mercy overflows as a healing spring
to cleanse us of our offenses;
therefore, know that you are forgiven
and receive new life in Christ.
Amen.

Praise Response

Let us give thanks to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
**who has blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing.**

Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ,
that we might be holy and blameless before him.

Let us praise God for the glory of his grace,
for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son.

To Father, Son and Holy Spirit
**give praise and dominion, honour and might,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:
teach us to hear your voice
and to follow your command,
that all your people
may be gathered into one flock,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

First Reading Revelation 7:9-17

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,' nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

Thanks be to God for the gift of his word

Gospel Reading: John 10:22-30

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 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. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all[b]; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word

Reflection with Janice

"All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well." Such well known words from St Julian of Norwich, and at the time of preparing this reflection for 8 May I discover that on 8 May 1373, St Julian had a vision which led her to the sense of Jesus wanting us to turn to him and that love is the answer.

That is a very simplified take but today, when looking at the Gospel reading, Jesus had just told his followers that He is the Messiah, the son of God and that He is one with God. He is the shepherd of the flock and the flock is those who hear his voice and follow him.

It is all about relationship. He knows them and he knows US and loves US. But what, in response to that amazing grace and love, do we do?

Our relationship is with God and with his Son. Are you willing to follow Jesus no matter where that takes you? Are you ready to feed his sheep and tend his lambs? In some churches this day is known as Good Shepherd Sunday, a time when Jesus is recognised as the Good Shepherd and, indeed, we have Psalm 23 as the Psalm for the day; that most well known and loved Psalm speaking of the love and support that God alone can offer.

We know that God loves and provides for us, that God protects us from ourselves but, so often personally speaking I can hear him calling my name. I recognise his voice and yet I bolt off in the other direction.

Do you ever do that? God is calling your name. He knows you. You are part of his flock. You know his voice. It is all about relationship. Come on home.

Affirmation of Faith

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession with Judith Drake

Heavenly Father we bring our prayers for ourselves and the world in need:
We pray for the church throughout the world and for those who minister within
it, both laity and ordained. We pray for areas where the church is marginalised,
persecuted or simply deemed irrelevant. Father help your church to understand
what it really means to love and serve. At times of testing strengthen us, in the
unexpected support us, at the end of our energy revive us, and teach us through
it all the inexplicable peace and joy that comes from doing your will.

We are your people; the sheep of your pasture.

Lord of all nations, we pray for those suffering as a consequence of the decisions of others. For those living in war zones and fleeing their homes and countries, their lives disrupted by the evil of war. We especially remember the people of Ukraine, but also remember there are other countries in the world where peace is still very fragile. Lord Jesus, be with them and wipe every tear from their eyes.

We are your people; the sheep of your pasture.

Lord of great power and majesty, we pray for those who have been given power in government; may they speak truth into motives, honour into actions and share your vision of justice and peace. We pray for those recently elected in our local areas and that they will listen to the needs of their constituents and local communities.

We are your people; the sheep of your pasture.

Lord there are people who never have enough. People who see no way of paying off their debts, and queueing at the food bank is all that the future seems to hold for them. We pray for those whose lives have little love, people estranged from family and friends, those who are sad and lonely. We pray for those who are suffering from ill health, those waiting for help and treatment, and those in the final stages of their life. We know you as Lord and healer of your broken world, and we ask you to touch with your generous love all who are on our hearts today because of their special need. May your love flood their lives with hope and healing in spirit, mind and body.

We are your people; the sheep of your pasture.

Lord we pray for those who have died, and those who miss them and find it hard to cope with their loss. We give thanks for lives well led and for happy memories, and may they rest in the eternal peace of heaven.

We are your people; the sheep of your pasture.

When the world seems too big a problem to face,
we come to still waters.

When the worries of time and money overwhelm us,
we come to still waters.

When our families and friends let us down,
we come to still waters.

When we are heavy with sorrow or pain,
we come to still waters.

When we have nowhere else to turn,
we come to still waters.

Good shepherd,
we give you thanks for the quiet still waters that bring
refreshment, renewal, and restoration through the message of hope,
and an assurance of your forgiving and enduring love.

We are your people; the sheep of your pasture.

**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.**

Go forth to follow paths of righteousness;
go forth to follow paths of peace;
and may God's goodness and mercy
follow you as you serve the risen Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

May Christ the Good Shepherd
bless and guide you this day and always.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Rest upon you this day
And always,

Amen.

Sending Out

The Lord God almighty is our Father:
he loves us and tenderly cares for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:
he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end.

The Lord, the Holy Spirit, is among us:
he will lead us in God's holy way.
To God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory today and for ever.
Amen.

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