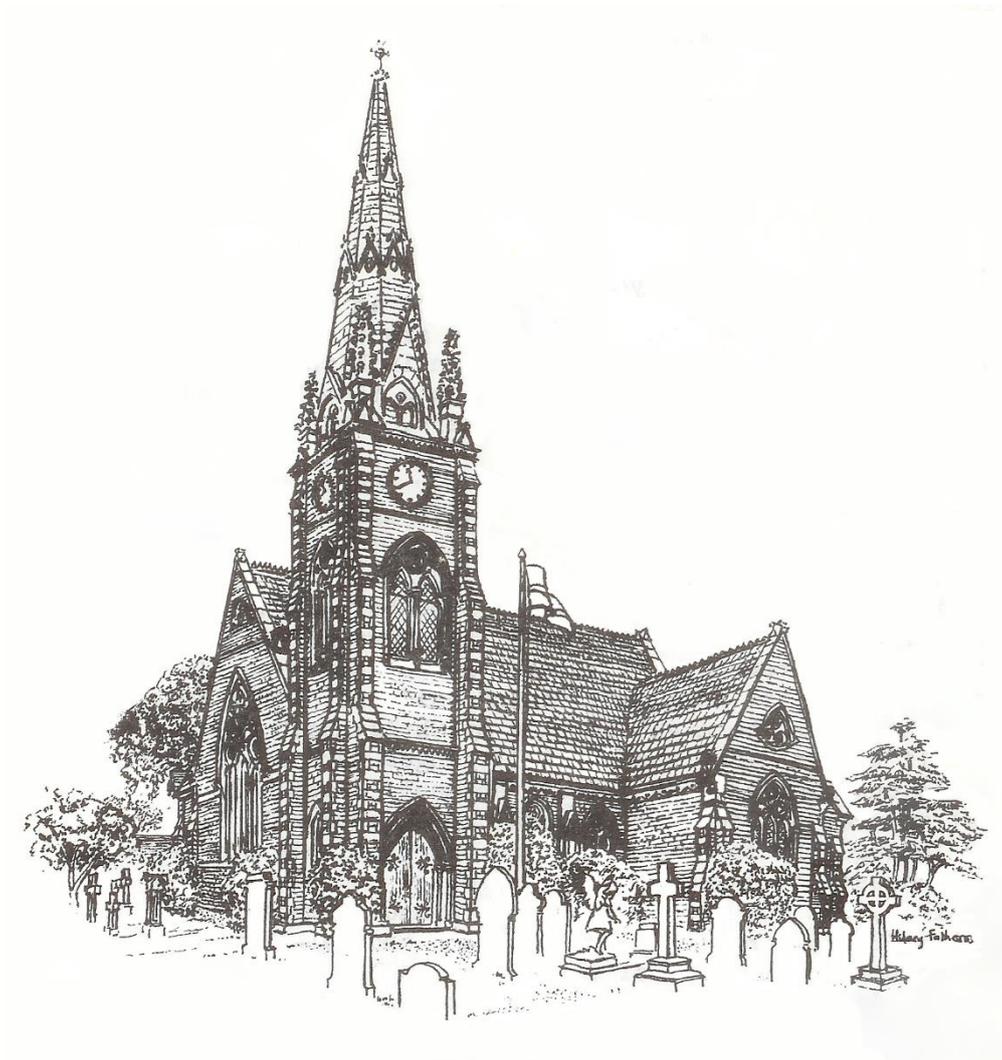


All Saints' Church Thornton Hough



Morning Prayer
Second Sunday before Lent
Sunday 7th February 2021
Online (from 10:30am)

The Greeting

The Lord be with you

and also with you.

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.

Hymn: Jesus is Lord

- 1 Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
for by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!

praise him with Alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!

- 2 Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding,
yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free:

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!

praise him with Alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!

- 3 Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,
from death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.
Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit
to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord:

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!

praise him with Alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!

David John Mansell (b. 1936)

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Prayers of Penitence

The word of God is living and active.

It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him
to whom we give account.

We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,

we have sinned against you,

through our own fault,

in thought, and word and deed,

*and in what we have left undone.
We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins.
For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.*

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings

Proverbs 8:1, 22-31

Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?
'The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;
I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.
When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;
before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth,
before he made the world or its fields
or any of the dust of the earth.
I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
when he gave the sea its boundary
so that the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
Then I was constantly[c] at his side.
I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,

rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in the human race.

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reflection: Where is your Wisdom?

One of the many catch-phrases from the comedy "Dad's Army" is that of Sergeant Wilson, played by John Le Mesurier, who would raise an eyebrow, pause, look at Captain Mainwaring and ask, "Is that *wise*, sir?"

Captain Mainwaring's pompous behaviour was often far from wise, but part of the comedy was that Sergeant Wilson was also himself often foolish and mistaken.

True wisdom is not something to be understood by our human standards of what appears sensible, or right, or proper. In fact, our understanding of wisdom – what it is and where it comes from – needs an overhaul. We need to explore the worlds of creativity and poetry to help us do this, which are found in the beautiful wisdom literature of Proverbs and the beginning of John's gospel. Wisdom is part of God's nature, present with and in him from before anything even came to be. Wisdom is found in God's word, the creative spark which delights in each aspect of creation as it is brought into being, and is in union with God. The picture of Wisdom at one with God and the created world reminds us that God created the world to be a place of joy, to be at one with him, where humans are made and known in God's own image.

“I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,
³¹rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in the human race.”

God’s Word is also the way that John describes Jesus. God’s “bright spark”, his wisdom, purpose and plan, became flesh and lived a human life among us. He “made his dwelling among us” choosing to settle with us: real, historical, human, utterly earthly, yet also real, beyond history, utterly divine. It is not that Jesus was “like” flesh, but “*was*” flesh. It is a mark of how much God loves his creation, and how he longs to bring it back to the kind of relationship of delight and communion with him which he intended.

No-one says to God, “Is this *wise*, sir?” It is certainly beyond our understanding, and an act which many choose to ignore or reject out of hand, or even oppose. What are people *worth*? We might weigh up people’s worth by their wealth, their contribution to the economy or society at large, their fame, looks or whether we like them or not. What is the world worth? What about all those parts which we have still yet to properly map out? What value is there on tiny island archipelagos and people which are at risk of being rinsed off the planet as our sea levels rise?

God has placed his imprint on each of us. He sent his Son to live with us because he loves each of us, and tells each of us in the open arms of Jesus on the cross: “You are worth it.”

That is the extent of the extravagant, joyous, delighted love of the Father for his creation. That is wisdom.

Where is our wisdom? How do we reflect the worth which God has placed upon his creation? Do I respect others because God has made them in his image every bit as much as he has made me? How might living that out affect the way in which we live and work together, both as a local community and across our world?

The Collect

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image;
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit
reigns supreme over all things,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

***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

Today's form of prayer is one which you can practise at home.

Five-Finger Prayer.

Begin by holding your hands out in front of you, with your palms up. You are both asking, but also ready to receive.

Thumb: We pray for those closest to us: our family, loved ones.

Index finger: The "pointer" of our church. Pray for the Holy Spirit to point all to Christ; for wisdom and direction for those in charge. Please remember the All Saints' PCC meeting which will be taking place this Tuesday evening.

Middle finger: The tallest one! We pray for those in positions of leadership in this country and abroad. Please remember the situation in Myanmar, where a military coup has taken place.

Ring finger: The weakest one. We pray for those who are particularly vulnerable: for those facing isolation, hardship, physical, mental or spiritual illness.

Little finger: We pray for ourselves: for the week ahead, for God's will to be done in us, with us, and through us.

Gathering all our prayers together, let us pray with confidence:

***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.*

Hymn: For the healing of the nations

- 1 For the healing of the nations,
 Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing
 of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
 help us rise and pledge our word.
- 2 Lead us forward into freedom,
 from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
 all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
 fear will die and hope increase.
- 4 You, Creator-God, have written
 your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
 bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
 earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan (1929–2009)

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The Conclusion

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
through the power of the Holy Spirit;
And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord;

thanks be to God.

Blessing, honour and glory be yours,

here and everywhere,

now and for ever.

Amen.

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