

# The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme

It is lovely to be in Easter Week! While life is very much the same as it was last we, while we wait for the lifting of lockdown, it also feels very different to have completed our journey through Lent!

Lent felt even more of a fast this year, as we all had to give up so many of the things we usually do, or had to find new ways of doing them. And the journey through Holy Week, as we recognised how Jesus entered our suffering had a very real poignancy to it.

It was great to rejoice on Sunday at Jesus' victory over the grave and to feel the shining of the Christ light so strong in the message of Easter.

We still have a good deal of waiting to do and sadly there will still be many who suffer because of this situation. Our discipline of Lent will stand us in good stead for the patience we need.

On this side of Easter we can also draw hope from God's promises and we can feel even more assured of his presence with us.

Lent lasted for 40 days and they were times when we experienced a once in a generation change in the running of the world. Easter is a feast which will last for 50 days up to Pentecost. We do not know how things will be changed again by then.

We hope and pray that we may have overcome the virus and that we are able to come together once again, but we will have to see how things go and play our part to make the difference.

Whatever happens, may we know more each day the joy of God's presence!

God bless,

Richard

Midweek worship:

*Take a moment to be still.*

*God is with you and unites his church by His Spirit.*

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:*

*Acts 3:1-10*

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, 'Look at us.' And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

*Reflection:*

The beginning of the Book of Acts is filled with wonderful stories which show the power of the risen Christ within the newly energised disciples.

Here we see the wonderful story of the man who asked for alms and was given legs! (You have to say it out loud to get the full joy of the story's title!)

It is a great story for us to read and think about because it gives us the opportunity to enter the story from the perspective of each of the characters.

Think about the person who is healed. It is easy for us to be like this person, bringing our needs before God. There is so much at this time that we pray for. On our hearts we hold our friends and family, the health of people close by and around the world. We can take encouragement from the story in the way that this man's prayer is answered and God's love brings blessing in response to his prayers

In the person of Peter we see that God's power is displayed through those who follow him. It is not a magic power or a power of Peter himself, but he is able to be a means by which the blessing of God comes into the world. In our prayers and actions we can pray that we too may know this blessing.

And in the person of John we have the supporter, the companion. John does not seem to take a great role in the story, but he is still there. He was on his way to worship with Peter, and indeed he is still part of what goes on. He must have rejoiced at what he saw!

At this time there is a role for everyone to play. The things we do will be as different as the roles of the characters in this story. The important thing is that we all do our bit to allow the blessing of God to be seen around us!

God bless you this week!

*Prayers:*

*Think like the man who wanted alms:*

*Ask God earnestly for the things on your heart.*

*Think like Peter:*

*Pray that God will show his love and blessing around you*

*Think like John:*

*Rejoice and give thanks for the action of God in the world*

Lord of all life and power,  
Who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
Overcame the old order of sin and death  
To make all things new in him:  
Grant that we, being dead to sin  
And alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
May reign with him in glory;  
To whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
Be praise and honour, glory and might  
Now and in all eternity. Amen

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

May the presence of God surround you and all those you pray for today.  
May you see the blessing of God and show his hope to others.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

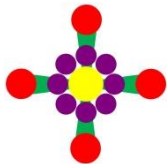
Information:



Richard continues to live-stream Morning Prayer at 8am and Evening Prayer at 5pm each weekday. You can join him live each weekday, or watch later. If you search in your app provider for “Daily Prayer Church of England” you will find the Free Daily Prayer app.

Follow our Benefice Facebook Page. Search for:

“Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme Benefice”



There are lots of uplifting things in our Facebook community and there will be more regular features in this time when we cannot meet as we normally do!

Each of our Communities now has a Community Support Centre. We are active in being part of the support in each of our communities. If you, or anyone you know, requires any kind of support then please contact the Council Contact Centre on 01274 431000.

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

We have set up a dedicated email for prayer requests. Please let people know about it! Any requests can be sent to: [say14me@hotmail.com](mailto:say14me@hotmail.com) and we will be able to get people praying for the things on people’s hearts and minds.



We are also continuing to light a candle in a window each evening at 7pm. Make sure you light it safely! If you have a pretend candle that would be even better. Light it and put it in a window at 7pm each night. "It will be a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished."

May God bless you in the today and in the days ahead!