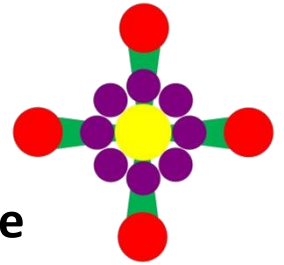


The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme



10 May 2020 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

If you can, start at 10.30am.

Do not worry if you cannot keep to that time, still join in!

Take a moment to be still. Perhaps light a candle or hold a cross.

Be aware that others will be saying these same words and prayers.

We are united in prayer and worship.

Robert Smith leads us in our opening and closing worship

Opening words:

We are never left outside God's house.

There is always room for us.

Jesus himself has prepared a place for each of us.

When our time comes, we will be welcomed and made whole in Christ.

Make your hearts ready to receive the goodness of the Lord.

We are ready to step into service for God.

The brightness and dazzle of Easter has dimmed in our midst, O Lord.

We have allowed ourselves to slip back into old habits and attitudes.

Bring to us again your Resurrection Spirit that we might know of your abiding love and presence.

We want to place our trust in Jesus. We want to be of service to you by serving others; but our courage and strength is weak, and we wonder if we can do the work you have set before us.

It would be very easy for us to turn away. Turn us around, Lord. We need your love. We need your guidance. You are the cornerstone. You are the strength to whom we can turn when our own strength has ebbed.

Build us up to be a people of honour, integrity, and compassionate service to others; for we pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen

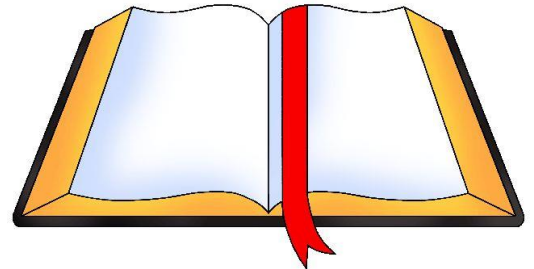
Jesus said, I am the Way – come!

Jesus said, I am the Way and the Truth – come and receive.

Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life – come, receive, and respond.

First Reading: Acts 7: 55-end

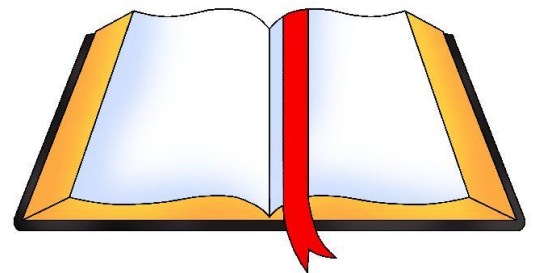
But filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he died.



Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word

Second Reading: John 14: 1-14

Jesus said ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?’



And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word.

Liz Maitland leads us in our reflection

Jesus knew all about troubled hearts; his friends were worried, confused and wanting answers. They were in a strange place, times were very uncertain and they were worried about the future ahead of them ... hmm that sounds familiar ..

We also know about troubled hearts just now, with everything that's going on. Just as he reassured his disciples, Jesus reaches out across the years to us when he says 'Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.'

"Ok, Jesus, how are we supposed to stop being troubled? There's a lot of trouble going on." 'Believe in God, believe also in me.' Jesus says. For when we believe more, it takes up the space where the fear would dwell.

At Manorlands it has been a privilege to be invited into different rooms to pray and sit with people from various traditions. Last week a patient who was a

Catholic priest invited me to stay while another priest prayed with him. I was a welcomed guest in their special space. A tradition and liturgy which had always seemed a bit mysterious and private turned into a time of inclusion and welcome.

When I was a child, I wondered what God's house was like, with all its rooms or mansions. Would each room be decorated to suit its occupant? (Oh, I hope mine will be purple.) Would I have to share with my sister? (Oh please, no!) Would we be able to visit the other rooms (Knocking first, obviously) and did you get a better view from your window if you had been to church more often?

Even as a child I recognised that people expressed themselves and their faith differently and that this passage told me that God is saying, that's alright. Belief can be expressed in different shades, styles and designs and there's a room for all who seek to follow Jesus.

I was fascinated with the thought that Jesus was getting *my* room ready, like we did when Auntie Doris came to stay and we made up the bed with the flowery duvet cover she liked.

As the years have passed, I have continued to be amazed by the Jesus who knows me and cares for me. I don't need to be afraid; he's got this. When it comes to the things I cannot change or control, I can leave these to God, for worrying is a waste of precious time. Just as Jesus reassures Phillip, so he encourages us; you *do* know the way, and you *do* know God because you know *me*. Don't worry. You've got this.

But yet, for now I recognise that Jesus needs *me* to keep a room for *him*.

Julian of Norwich (who is especially remembered on May 8th) said "Lord, let not our souls be busy inns that have no room for thee or thine..."

Like many of us, I have had more time in recent weeks and been able to open up some room for Jesus. It has been one of the unexpected blessings of this strange time of lockdown. The 'busy inn' of my life has emptied out a bit and Jesus has pulled up a chair to chat. It's been good.

So, let us remember to make room for Jesus, for surely this is the best way to keep our hearts full of hope, rather than troubles and fear, for he is always there for us, only a prayer away.

Maybe I will drop some hints on having a room with a view... (purple of course!)

Margaret Harrison leads us in our prayers

Lord Jesus Christ you said that when we worship in your name, however many or few we may be, you will be in the midst of us. Be present with us now as we open your word, delight in your truth and glory in your name. Inspire us with wisdom, excite us with passion for justice and send us out renewed in faith that our lives may honour you in all that we say and do, for you are one with the Father and the Spirit in all eternity. Amen

Heavenly Father we thank you for all the work being done by our clergy team to find new ways for us to worship when we cannot meet together which give us comfort and reassurance in these uncertain times. It is good to have a sense that we are all together although physically apart.

Spirit of God proceeding from the Father through the son, uniting in truth and love, breaking down barriers and connecting people in thought and will – thank you for the internet – its power to share ideas and news and to bring people together. May it open for us a channel of your transforming grace. Expand our vision and set us free to delight in this wonder of your creation that our hearts may be inspired to action for your glory.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Almighty God we give you thanks and praise for the arrival of springtime, for lighter nights and warmer days, the coming flowers and the birth of young animals and birds. We pray that we will always appreciate the lovely

surroundings in which we are privileged to live. Help us to do our part in caring for your world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

As this weekend marks 75 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe, we pray that we will always acknowledge with gratitude the enormous sacrifices made, and hardship endured, by so many of previous generations which have enabled us to enjoy our lives as we do.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord you call everyone to follow you and give us gifts to use in your service -be with all who have lost, or are likely to lose, their jobs. Hold those who are anxious about making ends meet, and feel frustrated at loss of position and place. Open opportunities for talents to be channelled constructively, that dignity may be restored, hope renewed, and none feel that they are without worth or value, for in your sight all are a unique act of your creation and purpose, and in your love, we flourish now and always. Amen.

Remembering the many areas of disaster and unrest in the world, both natural and human-made and all those still enduring hardship and suffering from events no longer in the news, as well as all suffering, throughout the world, in the present pandemic, we pray for them and for all in our benefice in special need of your loving care at this time – for those who are sick, lonely or anxious, and for those who have lost someone they loved – those known to us personally and for those unknown to us but always known by you. We ask you to be especially close to them – enabling those helping and caring for them to have the necessary skills and compassion to bring healing and comfort. We pray for all who keep vigil by the side of someone they love – to their anxiety bring peace – to their fear bring hope and to their tears bring your loving embrace, for all our lives are held in the purpose of your love and we look to the joy of your salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen

Lord you come to our aid as Saviour. We thank you for all in the emergency services and our hospitals, who emulate this self-denying love in risking their own lives to save others. Bless them as they respond to calls for help and

advice on safety and strengthen them as they face danger and scenes of suffering. Keep them ever under your protection through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Heavenly Father, we pray for those who exercise authority in Government. Grant that they may be wise in judgement, seeking first and foremost the good of the community and so direct and strengthen them in all their work and planning that they may further your will among us for the glory of your name.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God, the source of light and hope, in your grace we thank you for your love which guides us through storm and calm. Illumine our course, inspire our vision and ignite our passion for your service in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

And we draw all of our prayers together in the words of 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.

As we draw our shared act of worship to a close, a thought from Thomas a Kempis as we commit ourselves to God's service and we offer one another a blessing.

Follow thou me. I am the way and the truth and the life.

Without the way there is no going, without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living.

I am the way which thou must follow; the truth which thou must believe; the life for which thou must hope.

I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth, the never-ending life.

I am the straightest way; the sovereign truth; life true, life blessed, life uncreated.

Thomas a Kempis

May God bless you; guide you and direct you.

May God bless you; give you strength and the assurance of his love.

May God bless you and fill your life with his presence – today and always.

Amen.

Show me your way; help me to know your truth, and to live your life. Amen.

Peace I leave with you
MY PEACE
I give unto you: 
Let not your heart be
TROUBLED
neither let it be afraid.
John 14:27