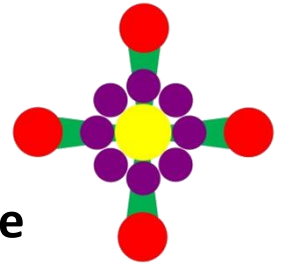


# The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme



**24 May 2020 - Seventh Sunday of Easter**

*If you can, start at 10.00am.*

*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.*

*Stuart Faulkner lead us in our opening and closing worship*

Holy Lord, the God that hears our prayers, you have said that you will be present whenever two or three gather in your name. We welcome your presence and grace in our lives. We ask that you manifest your glory today and shine your light on us. Through your light, may we illuminate the lives of those around us. As we feel your presence in worship today, may our knowledge of your divine mysteries continue to grow and change our lives forever.

The Collect for the Sunday after the Ascension:

GOD the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven: We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

You are the King of Glory,

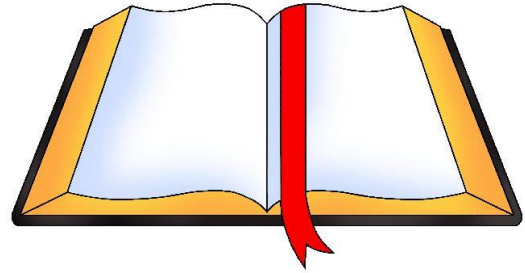
You are the Prince of Peace,

You are the Lord of heaven and earth

You're the son of righteousness

**First Reading: Acts 1: 6-14**

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods



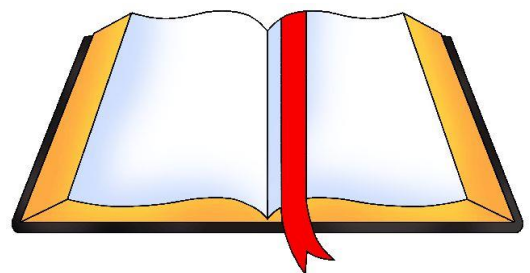
that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word

**Second Reading: John 17:1-11**

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.'



'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word.

*Richard leads us in our reflection*

In the reading from Acts we hear Jesus' last words to the disciples:

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

They would have had no idea what he meant when he talked about the Holy Spirit, but they would soon find out when the day of Pentecost came a week later. Although I am sure that the promise of the Holy Spirit was overshadowed for them by the second part of the sentence.

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Every phrase here must have filled them with dread! Here were a group of eleven men who were still barricading themselves inside locked rooms for fear of the people outside.

As amazing as the resurrection had been for them, they must have felt more than ever like the group of fishermen and tax collectors that they really were. Surely, they believed that now Jesus had risen from the dead, overcoming the crucifixion by the Romans, he would lead them to glory. But his words were:

“You will be my witnesses ...” Surely there must be some mistake.

And there was more to come in this bombshell when they heard the places, he was sending them.

Jerusalem: Well that was difficult, these were the ones they were hiding from!

Judea: Well for eleven men this was somewhat impossible!

Samaria: Now Jesus was talking the unthinkable - everyone avoided Samaria!

As they were taking in the impossible task that Jesus was setting them, they must have been even more bemused and distraught that he then rose out of their midst leaving them all alone to face it. It is no surprise that they all stood there looking into the sky, probably with their mouths gaping open at those famous last words!

Jesus said to them: you take my message to the difficult, the impossible and the unthinkable! It must have really felt like Mission Impossible!

And the mission of course wasn't just for those disciples. It is the same mission that we are called to today.

Just because our church buildings are closed doesn't take away our call to bring people to know Jesus. Now, more than ever, people need to know his message of hope, love and peace.

So, you could:

- invite someone to one of our online activities - a service or the quiz
- pass this sheet to someone
- ask someone if they would like to be on the mailing list
- share one of our Facebook services with people

And who might be the people you could share the good news with? Don't just think of the easy ones! Who is difficult, who is impossible, who is unthinkable? Thinking about this task of mission can leave us feeling quite unfit to meet it. And I am sure that is how the disciples felt too.

But Jesus had not left them, he sent his Spirit so that he was still with them. The task was not something that they had to do alone, but Jesus went before them, as he goes before us too.

Let us pray that our hearts may be prepared to receive afresh the gift of the Holy Spirit to give us courage to meet the task Jesus has set. May the Spirit enable us to make and find opportunities to bring to others the Good News of Jesus that we value so much. And may the Spirit give us courage to share this Good News, even with the unthinkable!

*Joan Slater leads us in our prayers*

### **LORD YOU ARE SO AMAZING.**

Thank you so much for the beautiful colours of spring as it bursts forth into trees, bushes and flowers. For the variety of birds with their amazing colours and songs, for newly born lambs, and for the ducks and geese with their fluffy young chicks. Thank you for the abundance of your creation made for us to enjoy.

Everything you do Lord, reveals your glory and majesty, your righteousness never fails. You cause us to remember your wonderful works in nature and in our lives. How gracious and merciful are you Lord.

Lord as we are experiencing a way of life that we haven't experienced before, so we pray for the church and its leaders who interpret your word and teach. May it be interpreted in a true, honest, real, forgiving and loving way. Thank you for the clergy in our land and overseas, for helping them do church on the internet, by video and zoom. Thank you for their hard work in keeping your people connected in praise and worship. Help those in lands where it is difficult being a Christian and where they are persecuted for their faith and love for you. Help them to know your love and strength.

We continue to pray for front line workers, that you would protect them, providing them with good quality PPE, and with energy and stamina to do their jobs. Please bring healing and wholeness to those who are suffering from the virus, and replace their fear with your peace. Lord we pray for those who have lost loved ones and ask that your arms would be around them and they would know your comfort in their grief.

We pray for those who are finding the lockdown difficult and ask that you would fill them with your peace. Over the next few weeks as restrictions are eased and people return to work, we pray for safe environments and sensible attitudes. May your perfect love cast out all fear and anxiety. Please Lord would you push back this awful virus and equip those who are working to develop a safe vaccine to combat Covid 19

For countries where there is little food and protection, we lift to you and we pray for the organizations working tirelessly to bring food, medical care, and accommodation for those in desperate need.

Please send your Holy Spirit to bring wisdom, discernment and integrity to the leaders of all nations to bring unity, wholeness and love to our communities. That your life-giving Spirit would fill this world with your love and compassion bringing people into your kingdom and glorifying your name.

Breathe on us breath of God, fill us with life anew  
That we may love as you do love and do what you would do.

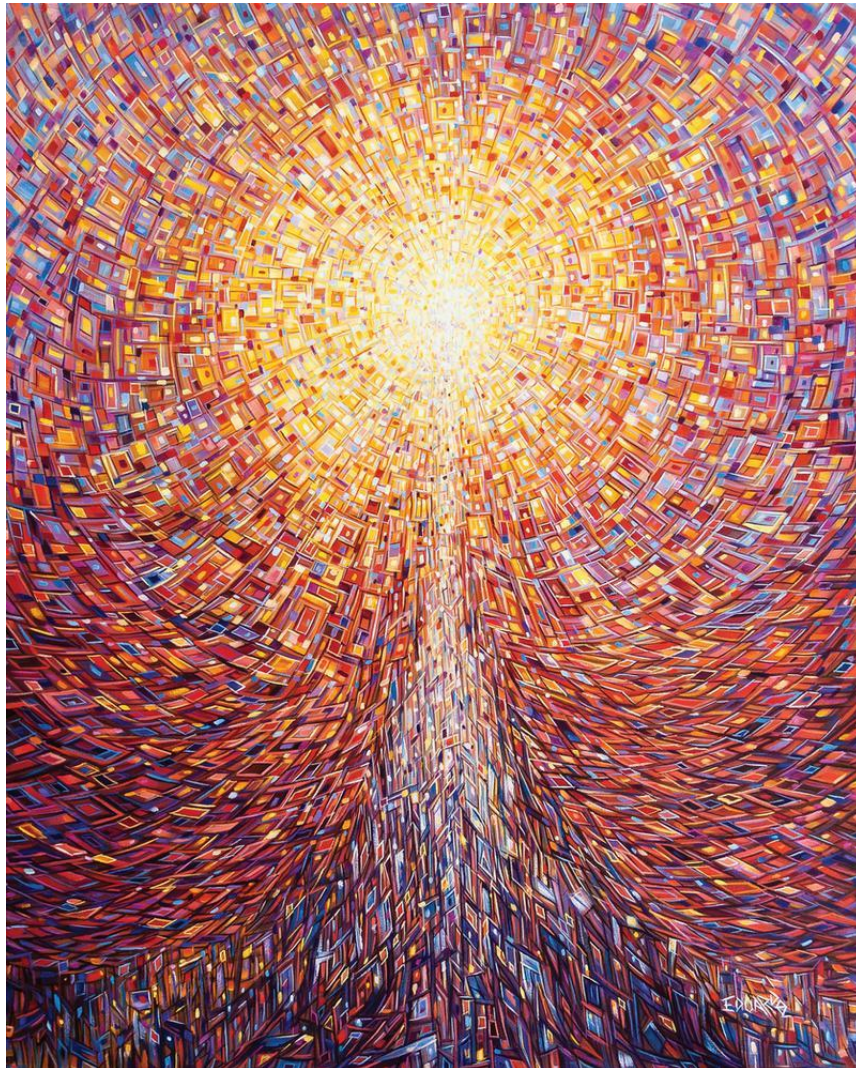
*And we draw all of our prayers together in the words of the Lord's Prayer.*

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.

Almighty God  
by your command time runs its course;  
forgive our impatience, perfect our faith,  
and, while we wait for the fulfilment of your promises,  
grant us to have a good hope because of your word;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord  
Amen

“Anxiety Weighs down the heart,  
But a kind word cheers it up”  
Proverbs 12:25

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and  
The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.



*Ascension by Eduardo Rodriguez Calzado*

## Next Sunday is Pentecost Sunday

We will be sending out a service sheet as usual for next Sunday and we hope that everyone will join together for our service. It will be lovely to see people and hear people's voices as we worship together with prayers, readings and responses.

In the service there will be a spiritual communion where we will remember that God loves us so much that he sent his Son for us who gave his body and blood for us all. We will pray for the blessing of the Spirit to come to us all and to send us out into the world.

Bishop Toby, the Bishop of Bradford is giving our sermon. It is a message that we will share together with others across the area.

We will send out an invitation to join the service via the zoom platform to everyone who is on our email list. If you are not able to join via zoom with a computer you can join the service directly by phoning 02034 815240 and typing in the meeting code and password when prompted. We can give you this information if you call Helen on 07788 848830.

Even if you do not feel able to join directly we hope that we can connect everyone. So someone will hopefully be in touch to check that you are able to join in. If you have not been contacted by Thursday 28 May, then please ring me (01535 273758) and we will get you linked in!

It may not be perfect but it will be joyful and we will do our best!!

Remember that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are:  
Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Goodness,  
Gentleness, Faithfulness, Kindness, Self-control

May you be filled with the Spirit and may your thoughts, words and actions show these fruits in great abundance.

God bless,

Richard