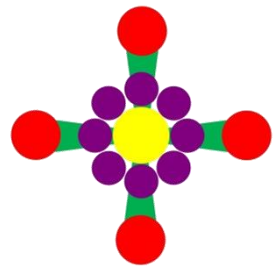


# The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme



**29 November 2020  
Advent Sunday**

## The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it**

## Advent Candle

Now is the time to wake out of sleep,  
**for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.**

People of God awake!

The day is coming soon when you shall see God face to face.

Remember the ways and the works of God.

God calls you out of darkness to walk in the light of his coming.

You are God's children.

**Lord, make us one as we walk with Christ  
today and forever. Amen.**

## Collect

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns,  
turn us from the darkness of sin to the  
light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you  
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## First Reading: **Isaiah 64:1-5**

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,  
that the mountains would tremble before you!

As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil,  
come down to make your name known to your enemies  
and cause the nations to quake before you!

For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,  
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.  
Since ancient times no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.  
You come to the help of those who gladly do right,  
who remember your ways.  
But when we continued to sin against them,  
you were angry. How then can we be saved?  
All of us have become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;  
we all shrivel up like a leaf,  
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.  
No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us  
and have given us over to our sins.  
Yet you, LORD, are our Father.  
We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD;  
do not remember our sins forever.  
Oh, look on us, we pray, for we are all your people.

**Thanks be to God for the gift of his word.**

Penitence

When the Lord comes,  
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

**Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.**

**We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy, forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly, love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

Heavenly Father,  
you have created a universe of light:  
forgive us when we return to darkness.  
Lord, have mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus,  
you are the light of the world:  
cleanse and heal our blinded sight.  
Christ, have mercy: **Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit,  
you give us light in our hearts:  
renew us in faith and love.  
Lord, have mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

May God who loved the world so much  
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour  
forgive you your sins  
and make you holy to serve him in the world,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.  
**And Christ shall give you light.**

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.  
**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.**

Set your minds on things that are above,  
not on things that are on the earth.

**And Christ shall give you light.**

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,  
and Christ shall give you light.**

## Second Reading: Mark 13:24-end

“But in those days, following that distress,  
“the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light;  
the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

“At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

**Thanks be to God for the gift of his Word.**

## Reflection from Richard

On Advent Sunday we begin to look forward in hope! We look forward to the coming of Christ with hope and expectation to the change that his coming will mean.

It is easy this year to understand this hope and expectation for change as we also await the arrival of the vaccine which we hope and pray will bring us into a time beyond COVID.

Our hope is for a time when we will no longer be hearing news of how many deaths have occurred each day, when we don’t need to wear masks and wash and when we can again come within two metres of each other.

It is a great hope and the promise of that Post COVID world makes us long for it to be here now. We look forward in hope and expectation.

We look for the coming of Christ with the very same anticipation. He brings the same hope and promise but to an even greater level. For when Christ comes there will be no more death at all. There will be no veil covering our faces and we will see God face to face and we will be united in heaven, raised in our glorious resurrection bodies.

Our hope in the vaccine comes from the news and reports we've heard regarding the trials that have been carried out. It has been tested on a few people and their response has seemed to show that it will make the difference to all of us that we hope for.

Our hope in the coming of Christ also comes from the message we have heard, passed down through generations from the time when God came to be with us in Jesus.

On Advent Sunday we begin too, to look forward in hope to the Christmas message once again. We will remember how Jesus came in such a surprising way. God came to us not in great power, but as a vulnerable baby.

We will remember again how amazing God's presence with us is and how he would prove his promise by demonstrating his love in his ministry and in his death and resurrection.

As we journey through the days of Advent we will get ready for the coming celebration of Christmas, perhaps even more aware of it with it being in such a different setting this year. As we journey through Advent we will look forward to the days when the vaccine brings the change we long for. And as we look forward to these things, let's remember too the promise which Advent gives of that time when God's kingdom will come and every kind of evil, pain, suffering and death will be gone.

**Affirmation of Faith**

We proclaim the Church's faith in Jesus Christ.

**We believe and declare that our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Son of God, is both divine and human.**

God, of the being of the Father;  
the only Son from before time began;  
human from the being of his mother, born in the world;  
**fully God and fully human;**  
**human in both mind and body.**

As God he is equal to the Father,  
as human he is less than the Father.  
**Although he is both divine and human**  
**he is not two beings but one Christ.**

One, not by turning God into flesh,  
but by taking humanity into God;  
**truly one, not by mixing humanity with Godhead,**  
**but by being one person.**

For as mind and body form one human being  
so the one Christ is both divine and human.  
**The Word became flesh and lived among us;**  
**we have seen his glory,**  
**the glory of the only Son from the Father,**  
**full of grace and truth.**

*(from the Athanasian creed)*

**Prayers from Janice**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
We remember today how so many looked forward to your coming but we  
remember also how it became harder to keep faith as the years went by. How  
hope started to fade and dreams began to die until finally you came –  
We remember how you brought hope throughout your ministry, a sense of  
purpose to those for whom life seemed pointless; the poor, sick, outcasts and  
broken hearted – light shining in their darkness, new beginnings in what had  
seemed like the end

**Lord of all, bring hope to your world today.**

Hear our prayer for those caught today in the grip of despair – those for whom the future seems bleak, optimism seems foolish and trust seems futile. Reach out in love and may light shine into their darkness.

**Lord of all, bring hope to your world today.**

Hear our prayers for those whose goals in life have been thwarted, whose dreams have been shattered, who have grown weary, cynical and disillusioned. Reach out in love and rekindle their faith in the future.

**Lord of all, bring hope to your world today.**

Hear our prayer for those who mourn, who wrestle with illness or who watch loved ones suffer. Reach out in love and grant them your strength and comfort.

**Lord of all, bring hope to your world today.**

Hear our prayer for those whose lives are blighted by injustice, crushed by oppression, poverty, hunger and encourage all those who work against the odds to build a better world. Reach out in love and grant the assurance of your coming Kingdom

**Lord of all, bring hope to your world today.**

Remind us Lord that we can be the answer to our own prayers, change us from within and may we be your hands and feet as we recall the Hope that you alone can bring. As we remember your promise to come again in glory, may that conviction bring new faith, new vision and new purpose wherever life seems hopeless.

**Lord of all, bring hope to your world today. Amen**

**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.**

Acclamation

O Lord, we call to you: come to us quickly  
**Hear us when we cry to you.**

With Love and compassion: **Come, Lord Jesus**

With judgement and mercy: **Come, Lord Jesus**

In power and glory: **Come, Lord Jesus**

In wisdom and truth: **Come, Lord Jesus**

The Blessing

May God himself, the God of peace, make you perfect and holy;  
and keep you all safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body,  
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless you, and preserve you from all evil,  
and keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ,

**Thanks be to God.**