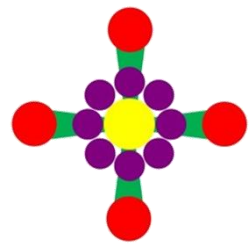


**The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
Sunday 17 January 2021  
The Second Sunday of Epiphany**



Richard leads our Liturgy today

O Lord, open our lips  
**And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Your light springs up for the righteous  
**And all the peoples have seen your glory.**

Blessed are you, Sovereign God,  
King of the nations,  
To you be praise and glory for ever:  
From the rising of the sun to its setting  
Your name is proclaimed in all the world.  
As the Sun of Righteousness dawns in our hearts  
Anoint our lips with the seal of your Spirit  
That we may witness to your gospel  
And sing your praise in all the earth.  
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
**Blessed be God for ever!**

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.**

The gospel calls us to turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.  
As we offer ourselves to him in penitence and faith,  
We renew our confidence and trust in his mercy.

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,  
We have sinned against you and against our neighbour,  
In what we have thought,  
In what we have said and done,  
Through ignorance, through weakness,  
Through our own deliberate fault.  
We have wounded your love,  
And marred your image in us.  
We are sorry and ashamed,  
And repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of Jesus Christ,  
Who died for us,  
Forgive us all that is past;  
And lead us out of darkness  
To walk as children of light. Amen**

The almighty and merciful Lord  
Grant us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins,  
Time for amendment of life,  
And the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Collect

Almighty God,  
In Christ you make all things new:  
Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,  
And in the renewal of our lives  
Make known your heavenly glory;  
Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
Who is alive and reigns with you  
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
One God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10**

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

### **Thanks be to God for the gift of His word**

### **Gospel reading: John 1:43-end**

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

### **Thanks be to God for the gift of His Word**

## Reflection from Liz Moy

One of our local retreat houses reminds visitors that there is only very limited reception for mobile phones. In fact, to get the best reception, it is necessary to lean out of one of the upstairs windows at the front of the building. Of course, in some ways, it is perfect for a retreat because the distractions of frequent messages pinging in and calls coming through do not occur. If our minds are constantly tuned into an electronic device, are they able to hear other things which are going on around them?

In the Spring last year, numerous people mentioned a greater awareness of the sounds of nature - the birds singing, bees humming, animals in the fields, to name a few. It was easier to hear those sounds because they were not blotted out by the noise of traffic and machinery which is usually the backdrop to everyday life around us. They were able to tune in to a different type of sound and that, in turn, led many to a greater appreciation of the natural world and some to deeper reflection on the creator of such beauty.

The reading today illustrates how Samuel had to tune in to the sound of God speaking to him – and it didn't happen instantly. His master was in his room, trying to sleep, whilst Samuel was lying down in the temple. No doubt he was used to the sounds of the building, quite different from the hustle and busyness of the daytime, but no doubt, sounds which were distinctive to that place. Almost as if the building itself was settling down for the night. But then Samuel hears a voice calling him. Thinking that it is his master, he rushes through to him, only to be told to go back to bed because it was not his master calling. This happens once again. Though it was puzzling for Samuel and unsettling for Eli, yet again, Eli tells Samuel to go back to his bed. But the Lord calls Samuel again, and this time when Samuel rushes to Eli, his master realises what is happening. He is able to guide Samuel so that the next time he hears the voice, he can respond to the Lord by saying "Speak for your servant is listening". Samuel is able to tune in to the Lord, thanks to the help of Eli, and then his life took on a greater level of service for God.

God spoke to Samuel in a way that changed his life, but he used Eli to help Samuel recognise who was calling him and to prepare himself to respond to God. There is a reminder for us all in this passage that no matter what age a person is, they still have a role to play in the kingdom of God. Some older

people may feel that they have done their bit and that at their age, there is nothing more that they physically can do. But as God uses Eli, an old man whose eyesight is failing, to recognise his call on a younger person and to encourage that young boy to recognise God for himself, it is a reminder that we can all support others in their journey to and with God through words of encouragement and through our prayers. There is no age limit on that! Often, younger people feel that there is not a place for them – but God’s kingdom is for all and our churches need to reflect that in our welcome and our joy in the growing faith of others, whatever age they may be and by encouraging all people to be people of faith in their words and actions.

The reading shows us that God spoke to Samuel in a voice which he identified as a voice. But at other times God may speak to us in other ways – maybe through the prompting of other people, through words of Scripture, through a beautiful view, an evocative piece of music or through a nudge of the Holy Spirit to our conscience. Our problem may be that if we are only listening for one thing (like the ping which tells us a text has arrived on the phone) then we may fail to recognise God speaking to us in other ways.

Take time to read the following poem, which can be a reminder of how God speaks to us.

### **Not only in words**

Why do you want me to speak?  
Is not my presence sufficient for you?  
The kiss of my love in the sunlight,  
Or the scent of my being on a flower?

Why do you want me to speak,  
When I hug you in the embrace of a friend?  
When I move you by the fall of a song?  
When I show you the scars on my hands?

Why do you ask me to speak,  
When I use other voices not mine?  
For mine is the cry of the stranger,  
The hungry, the prisoner, the poor.

Why do you ask me to speak,  
When I've spoken so often before?  
Heed my world, read my Word  
Seek my Son and then you will hear me.

*(K Gire, Windows of the Soul: Hearing God in the Everyday Moments of Your Life, )*

God speaks in so many ways. Do we listen? Do we make the time to tune in? We do for any other people we love so surely, we need to tune in to what our loving heavenly Father says to us. We need to be more open to God speaking and working in our lives – and at times, we may need to be like Eli, helping others to recognise that God is speaking to them.

So, let's make time in the coming days and weeks to listen to our loving God, to help others as they also seek to draw closer to him – and may we also be prepared to respond to him as we are called.

May God bless you and keep you in the coming week.

### 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**

Blessed are you Lord God, Creator of life. We thank you because we are wonderfully made. You have given us the gift of communication, eyes to see, ears to hear and lips to speak. Teach us not only to speak to you but to listen, to be quiet in your presence and know that you are God.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who listen to you in prayer that they may speak to us in your word. We ask your blessing upon the leaders of our churches, upon our bishops, priests and upon all who are called to listen to the needs and troubles of others.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Guide the leaders of the nations in the ways of justice and peace. Keep our ears open to the cry of the poor and the oppressed; let us always be sensitive to the needs of others. We pray for relief agencies and to all who are working to relieve suffering especially those supporting the needy during this pandemic.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Lord, in our homes help us to listen to each other with undivided attention. Teach us to be sensitive to the various calls for us to share and care for each other. We ask you to protect our homes and loved ones.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We remember before you all whose voices are unheard, people who feel neglected and unwanted. We pray for the lonely and those who have no helpers. We remember also all who are ill at this time at home or in hospital. We give thanks for all who are caring for the ill in hospital or homes. We pray that they will be supported and upheld by your love.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We rejoice that you hear us and offer us eternal life. We pray for our loved ones departed and for all who have served you faithfully on earth. We pray for Di and the family and friends of Malcolm Halliday, for Rose and the family and friends of Roger Johnson, for the family and friends of Eric Firth and we lift before you all who mourn.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

And finally a prayer for ourselves, that we might know more of Christ's love and be inspired by his spirit to live as his people in the world.

Merciful Father:

**accept these prayers for the sake of your son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### The Lord's Prayer

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.**

Jesus, lord of time,

**Hold us in your eternity**

Jesus, image of God

**Travel with us in the life of faith**

Jesus, friend of sinners

**Heal the brokenness of our world**

Jesus, lord of tomorrow,

**Draw us into your future. Amen**

### Blessing

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory

And gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;

And the blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

### Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**