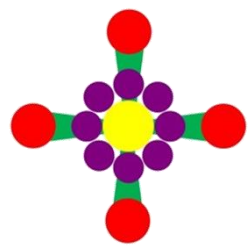


The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
Sunday 16 May 2021  
The Seventh Sunday of Easter



*Our Worship today is led by Robert Priestley*

Call to Worship

You who are passing through hard times:

**Come!**

You who need strength to support those who are suffering:

**Come!**

You who are full of happiness:

**Come!**

You who are burdened and busy:

**Come!**

**Come!**

Let us unite in worship of the one who offers us protection, comfort and joy.

Gathering Prayer

We come to you, Lord,  
Ready to worship, ready to learn, ready for prayer, ready for action.  
May our worship here spill out into our every day. **Amen.**

Prayer of Penitence.

Forgive us, gracious God, when we have turned away from your word  
And immersed ourselves in the distractions of the world.  
Forgive us, when we have sought to belong to the world  
And compromised your truth to fit in.  
Forgive us, when we have bickered among ourselves  
And not shown the world that we are one.  
Forgive us when we have distanced ourselves  
From those you have called us to serve.  
Forgive us, O God; protect us and unite us.  
In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## Absolution

Gracious God,  
We thank you for the enduring prayer of Jesus for his disciples  
Which reaches and reassures us today as we walk in their footsteps,  
Reminding us that we are not alone  
But protected, empowered and forgiven,  
And surrounded by your grace every step of the way. **Amen.**

## The Collect

O God the King of glory,  
You have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
With great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
We beseech you, leave us not comfortless,  
But send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us  
And exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

### First Reading

#### **Acts 1:15-end**

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, ‘Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.’ (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ‘For it is written in the book of Psalms, “Let his homestead become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it”; and “Let another take his position of overseer.”’

So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with

us to his resurrection.’ So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.’ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

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

**Second Reading**

**John 17:6-19**

Jesus said ‘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. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

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

## Reflection by Robert Smith

### Jesus prays for his Disciples

In the gospel reading for today, we are with Jesus on Maundy Thursday, following supper and the washing of feet, he is preparing the disciples for his departure and the trip to the Garden of Gethsemane. We have recorded for us by John, one of the longest prayers of Jesus, a prayer to God the Father in the presence of the disciples, for his disciples, to prepare them for the difficult road ahead, Jesus speaks to his Father of his deep concerns and his desire to protect them.

John was writing at a time when the church was suffering severe hardship and persecution and he is concerned that Jesus's followers remain united, he shows them that Jesus intercedes for his disciples. This prayer can be seen as part of the final preparation, they are ready, Jesus has completed all he set out to do.

He has passed on God's message and has made God known and now Jesus hands on his mission to the disciples and by extension, to all who would follow.

Truth, belief and belonging are the key themes. The prayer shows Jesus' intimate relationship with God the Father. There is a strong sense that the world is a difficult place for the disciples: a place where people don't share the disciples' faith. The disciples dwell here, but they do not belong. So Jesus sends them into the world to share the truth they have found.

Jesus prays that they may be one, as he is one with the Father. He has passed on God's message and made God known to his followers. He asks that they may be protected in the uncertain times they face, that their lives will be shaped by God's word; that they may display such unity among themselves that the world will be shaken out of its disbelief; and that they may, in the end, go to be with him and see his glory for themselves.

This prayer is both exciting and encouraging because in it Jesus prays not only for those in the room with him, but for you and me. We know that we belong to Jesus, we are reminded of the Love of God and that we are protected,

Coming away from Maundy Thursday we can hear these words coming from the crucified and Risen Christ. How Jesus prays helps us to understand the potential and power of prayer, this should be an ongoing conversation and a relationship with God that helps to inform and shape everything that we are and everything that we do.

We do not ask for escape from hardships  
That we know are part of life in this world.  
Rather we ask:  
Protect us from evil,  
Make us one,  
and be with us through your Spirit.  
Show us your truth  
And guide us as we go out in your name. **Amen.**

### Affirmation of Faith

We believe and know  
That Jesus is the Holy One of God.  
We believe that he is the Christ,  
The Son of God,  
who was to come into the world.  
We believe that he is in the Father  
And the Father is in him.  
We believe that Jesus is the Christ,  
The Son of God,  
And that by believing  
We have life in his name. **Amen.**

### Prayers of Intercession led by Debbie Child

Rejoicing that Jesus has ascended into heaven, let us pray in confidence to God our Father

Father we give thanks that, although now hidden from our sight, Jesus lives forever, and in him, we too can live the Resurrection life here on earth.

We pray now for the Church, the Body of Christ that we may live your way, do your will and serve one another in love, displaying your truth and your mercy in

everything we do and say. We pray for Nick our Bishop and for all who lead us, for Richard, Liz, Ian and Mavis, and for all those involved in the ministry of our churches. Grant each of them wisdom in all their decisions, humility to listen to others, courage to stand up for what is right, and a determination always to work for justice and peace.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Father we pray for your world and give thanks for all that is good in human life, for the uniqueness of every individual made in your image and for the whole family of human kind. We pray for those whose humanity is abused and exploited, victims of violence, abuse, slavery, war and terrorism; for all those people living under corrupt and oppressive regimes, thinking especially of the women of Afghanistan, who are denied the right to education and whose opportunities are limited at all times. We pray for an end to such behaviour and an understanding among the leaders of such countries. We pray for those whose humanity is diminished through the lack of care and assistance; those who are homeless, those without money or work. We come before you Lord, asking your help to reach out to those who need us.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for the people of India and the problems with the pandemic. We pray for Governments to understand the seriousness of Covid 19 and the need to prioritise vaccinations. We pray for a sharing of expertise and resources with those countries who struggle to fend for themselves. We pray once again for the problems in Israel and Palestine and for all those caught up in the conflict. We ask Lord for help to find a resolution to a problem so deep seated and complex, that it feels impossible to see a way through.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

In mental health awareness week, we pray for all those who are struggling in silence, those cannot voice their concerns or are afraid to do so. We pray for those who have no help and no understanding of their problems and who in

their own eyes have no value in this life. Father we pray that they may have the help they need, that more time and resources may go to helping those with mental health issues and that we may all be aware of the needs of others, even when the problems are not immediately obvious. We pray for all those who are ill, those in hospital, those who have lost loved ones and for those who mourn, remembering all those we know who have died recently. In silence we remember those we know in need of our prayers.....

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Father we give thanks for all the love in our lives, for family and friends, for love and for friendship, for sunshine and the rain, but above all for your grace in our lives.

Merciful Father,

**Accept these prayers for the sake of your son,**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father,**

**Who art in heaven,**

**Hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come,**

**Thy will be done**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread**

**Forgive us our trespasses**

**As we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation**

**But deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**The power and the glory**

**For ever and ever. Amen.**

## CONCLUSION

### Final Prayer

As we come to the end our service, Lord,  
May our prayers be just beginning.  
May our worship, our time today,  
What we have learned and what we have discovered,  
Lead us into action and lives full of worship  
Every hour of every day.  
We ask in the name of Jesus,  
Whose whole life was an offering of worship to you. **Amen.**

### Blessing

May the blessing of God almighty  
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
Be amongst us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

### Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## NEXT SUNDAY IS PENTECOST SUNDAY

We will be joining together for a United Service on Zoom.  
The service will be “Zoomed” from St Saviour’s in Harden  
We will begin at 10.30am.

