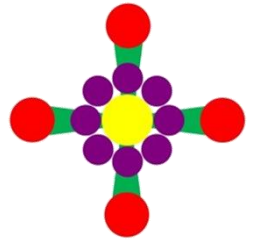


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
11th January 2026
Baptism of Christ.**



Today's Liturgy prepared by Liz

Opening prayers

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

Lord Jesus, thank you that you welcome us,
no matter how we feel.
Draw us to together; draw us to you.
Help us to forget about ourselves for a while
and to focus on you.
Fill us deeply with a desire to worship you,
our living Lord.
Amen.

Father of all,
who created the heavens and the earth,
thank you that we are your beloved.
Your Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove.
May your Spirit meet us where we are today.
May your Spirit breathe new life into us today.
May you hold us with your righteous right hand.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.

God our Father,
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,

You create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism.

You do not turn your face from us,
nor cast us aside.

We confess that we have sinned
against you and our neighbour.

We have wounded your love and marred your image in us.
Restore us for the sake of your son,
and bring us to heavenly joy,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Assurance of God's forgiveness

Almighty God
who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins,
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Praise response

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, for your gift of water in creation

we give you thanks and praise.

For your Spirit, sweeping over the waters, bringing light and life

we give you thanks and praise.

For your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, baptized in the river Jordan

we give you thanks and praise.

For your new creation, brought to birth by water and the Spirit

we give you thanks and praise.

For your grace bestowed upon us your children, washing away our sins

we give you thanks and praise.

Collect

Heavenly Father,

at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:

may we recognize him as our Lord

and know ourselves to be your beloved children;

through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen

The Readings

First reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,

my chosen, in whom my soul delights;

I have put my spirit upon him;

he will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry or lift up his voice,

or make it heard in the street;

a bruised reed he will not break,

and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;

he will faithfully bring forth justice.

He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.
Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
I am the Lord, that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.
See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

Second reading: Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

I am really glad of the peace and quiet January brings. December was joyful, but it was also busy and noisy, full of events, voices, music, activity, and movement. Now things have slowed down, there is a sense of relief in the stillness. Space to breathe again. Space to listen. Perhaps you're feeling that too?

That change of pace helps us hear Isaiah's words in a new way:

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight."

This Sunday, as we remember the Baptism of Christ, we see these words come to life. At the Jordan, Jesus steps quietly into the water, not with spectacle or force, but in humility and closeness.

"He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets."

Jesus doesn't push himself forward or force his way in. He doesn't dominate or overwhelm. His authority is quiet. His strength is gentle. His justice is shaped by humility, faithfulness, and love.

And then come these tender words that stay with us:

"A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out."

They feel especially close to home right now. With snow and ice around, many of us are moving more carefully, aware of how easy it is to slip, fall, break a bone, or be badly bruised. It doesn't take much to remind us how fragile we are, does it?

Isaiah tells us that God pays special attention to that fragility. If you feel bruised, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, you are not a problem to be fixed or a weakness to be dismissed. If your light feels low and you're just getting through the days, that is not failure.

You are upheld, you are chosen, you are delighted in.

At Jesus' baptism, the voice from heaven names him as God's beloved Son. That same love surrounds us still. Jesus shows us a different kind of power, one that steadies rather than pushes, that protects rather than exploits.

This is the servant God delights in. This is the way of Christ. And it is good news, especially for anyone who feels bruised, cautious, or weary today.

Amen

**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.**

Prayers of Intercessions with Astrid

Throughout this period of Epiphany, at the start of our church year, we are reminded how the Gospel message came for all who would hear it. In the light of your promise, the love you show us and the hope you give us, we bring our prayers to you.

We hold before you the people who are suffering still from war and the aftermath of war in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and the many other troubled places we hear little about. We pray for all who respond to calls for aid, and put themselves at risk to help strangers in war zones or after natural disasters. We pray for the people of Venezuela and Iran living through such worrying and unsettled times. Lord, we pray for the leaders of nations and those who advise them, that truth, justice and right may prevail. Lord may your saving power be known among the nations and lead us all into the ways of peace.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for our own country, for those in government, nationally and locally, that all may work for the common good. We pray for the many in our society who struggle with high costs and inequalities, for those who rely on food banks, for those on long waiting lists for medical treatment, for families in inadequate housing, and at this coldest time of year for those with nowhere to call home and those who work to help them.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

Let us pray for our own communities, for friends and neighbours who help and support us and for those we are able to help. Lord, we hold before you those among us in special need at this time through illness, worries or loss and we pray for those who now live in sheltered accommodation or care homes, and we give thanks for all who support and care for them. We thank you, Lord for the life and work of our village churches and for our clergy and lay ministers, and we pray for the person who will hear and respond to your call to serve as Team Rector for Hewenden Benefice.

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

We are the body of Christ.

In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Let us then pursue all that makes for peace
and builds up our common life.

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.

Lord of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May God, who in Christ gives us a spring of water
welling up to eternal life,
perfect in us the image of his glory;
and the blessing of God almighty
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

As Jesus came to the river
to do what God wanted,
the Spirit came upon him
to show that God loved him.
Send us out from here
as your beloved children,
filled with the right attitude
to share your love with all the world.
Amen.