



The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
17 May 2026



Seventh Sunday of Easter
The Sunday between Ascension & Pentecost

Preparation

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

Give us the joy of your saving help,
and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

Almighty God,
Your Son has opened for us,
a new and living way into your presence.
Give us new hearts and constant wills,
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Call to Confession

What God has prepared for those who love him,
he has revealed to us through the Spirit;
for the Spirit searches everything.
Therefore, let us in penitence open our hearts to the Lord,
who has prepared good things for those who love him.

Confession

Lord Jesus, you suffered a cruel death on the cross for
our redemption,
yet we have forgotten your pain,
and stayed in the realm of the evil you defeated.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you were raised from death to bring us new life,
yet we have preferred the comfort of the familiar,
and the empty promises of a sinful world.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you have ascended to your father, and our father,
your God and our God;
plead there at the right hand of God,
for our forgiveness and entry into the fullness of his presence.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Assurance of Forgiveness

May the God of love and power,
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Responsory

God raised Christ from the dead,
and enthroned him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

God put all things in subjection beneath his feet,
and gave him as head over all things to the Church.

We died, and our life lies hidden with Christ in God.
We set our minds on things above.

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed,
we too will be revealed with him in glory.

Collect

Risen, ascended Lord,
as we rejoice at your triumph,
fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,
that all who are estranged by sin
may find forgiveness and know your peace,
to the glory of God, the Father. **Amen.**

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

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.

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 Holy Word

Reflection with Robert

I am so lucky to have three lovely granddaughters, 10, 12 and 14, who live only a very few miles away and I have been deeply involved in their lives so far and hopefully for many more years to come. As they grew and their mum and dad fancied a little break, either overnight or perhaps a long weekend, Louise and myself would be asked to look after them for a while. Our daughter would pack bags for them including things such as a favourite cuddly toy, any current medicine being administered, suncream in summer and other items that just might be needed in case of emergency. There would usually be a written list of things we needed to know and in more recent years some 'do's and don'ts' for the girls such as homework had to be done, no you tubing on phones and be in bed by certain times. Our daughter was going away. She wouldn't be there, but she was still caring for them. She was doing her best to pre-empt what her children might face in the next day or two. She wanted her wonderful parenting which she had started and was carrying out to be continued in her absence by Louise and myself. Quite a responsibility, but I think we managed. The absence was always a finite period and Laura, and the girls were always happy to be together again. And sometimes we were happy to see our daughter again and our home back to normal again.

In the reading from John, Jesus knows that his disciples will face persecution and difficulties and struggles (he's told them many times directly) and so his prayer in John 17 is that of a parent trying to protect his children when he eventually leaves them. He cares for them but he knows that he must leave them and so he entrusts them to the protection of God the Father. Similar to our daughter entrusting me with her children. Jesus knows that he will be leaving the disciples at a difficult time and that they will need help to do all the things that he has planned for them. Help to carry on with all the good works that Jesus has already started here on earth.

Our daughter gave us a written list to help us carry on her good works but Jesus was to send a 'living' list to help the disciples... the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would guide, advise, correct and comfort them on their task of being his witnesses 'in Jerusalem.....and to the ends of the earth.'

And so that is our task now, to be his witnesses, to spread the good news that Jesus is Lord and to live our lives by good examples of words and deeds. And we also have that very same Holy Spirit with us every step of the way.

However, I always knew how long my daughter would be away and when she would return. In Acts we are told that it is not for us to know the times and dates our Lord 'has set by his own authority'. We are to put that aside and carry on with the Lord's work and further build his Kingdom on earth. Let's get on with it.

Our Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and 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 Intercession with Margaret

Heavenly Father as we come to the end of the special week for raising funds through Christian Aid, we pray – Give us a compassionate heart for all who suffer as a result of natural and human made disasters. Bless those who give their skill to humanitarian relief, who show their love in care and dedication to the poor. May we share your rich bounty with joy and thanksgiving, using our skills to assist development work with rejoicing and gratitude, for all good gifts come from you and we share freely as we have received through Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O God, thinking of all the places in the world suffering from war and violence at this time, we pray – Almighty God, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved son, the king of all, govern the hearts and minds of all in authority and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart to be subject to his just and gentle rule. May all hostility cease. And, Lord be with those victims who are not part of the conflict but are caught in the crossfire and bring them aid.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Following our recent elections we ask God to hear our prayer for all those we have chosen to serve and represent all the people in our local communities. God of justice and truth, you set the standards for leaders to aspire to. Give to those whom we elect honesty in their dealings, dignity which extends to all, and a desire to strive for the common good.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

As we approach the time when many of our young people will be facing forthcoming examinations, we ask our Father to give them all they need to do themselves justice. In preparing give them diligence to focus on the goal ahead. Keep their perspective balanced that the stress may prove no more than needed to be equal to the task and in all things may they know your love for them which is not dependent on performance or grades through Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God we bring to you our worries for all those who are in any kind of need or distress, those known to us and those known only to you, whether through illness, grief, or financial problems, we ask that, through the patience and skill of those who care for others, the sick and suffering be healed and those who are worried be reassured.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, a prayer for ourselves, that we may put all our confidence in you. O Lord, you know that we often fill with fear and foreboding. Give us confidence and deepen our trust. You are the rock that nothing can shatter – on you we can place the whole weight of our lives.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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 for ever. Amen.**

Conclusion

Jesus is risen. **Alleluia.**
Jesus is ascended. **Amen.**
Jesus sent his Spirit. **Alleluia.**
Jesus is here. His Spirit is with us.
Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

Blessing

Eternal God, giver of love and power,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world.
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:
confirm us in this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
through the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with us all today and always. **Amen**

Sending out

Waiting expectantly for the promised Holy Spirit,
go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.