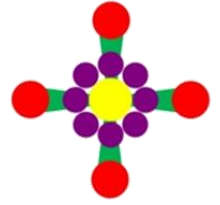


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
21 June 2026
Trinity 3 Sunday**



Praise the name of the Lord;
ascribe greatness to our God.

Lord, open our lips
and we shall praise your name.

The Spirit of God hovered over the water
and brought life to all creation.

Come Holy Spirit
and renew the face of the earth.

**Almighty God,
to 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.**

We reflect on the sinfulness of human beings

Human sin disfigures the whole creation,
which groans with eager longing for God's redemption.
We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

We confess to you our lack of care for the world you have given us.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

We confess to you our selfishness in not sharing the earth's bounty fairly.

Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

We confess to you our failure to protect resources for others.

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy.

We give glory to God who forgives us and redeems us

The Collect

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts
whereby we call you Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,
that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
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.**

Readings

First Reading: Romans 6:1-11

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his holy word

Second Reading: Matthew 10:24-39

‘A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! ‘So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. ‘Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. ‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word

Whether we are football supporters or not, I expect that we have all noticed that there is a World Cup competition being held at the moment. No doubt members of some households will be glued to their televisions watching every match that they possibly can, whereas others will be avoiding any programs which are showing the beautiful game – and others may be watching specially selected matches. As we see supporters of different teams in images in the papers or on our television screens, it is usually very easy to identify who they are supporting by the clothes they wear in their favourite team's colours, the flags or scarves they wave, the songs they sing, even the way they paint their faces.

I confess that I do not watch football games as avidly as I used to – partly because I seem to become engrossed in other things and partly because I no longer need to keep up to date with all that is going on in the world of football so that I have some hope of taking part in conversations with some of my closest relatives. However, I still hold some admiration for those who steadfastly follow teams, however they are performing and whatever their results – especially those who continue to support teams which seem to be struggling in the league or in competitions like the present World Cup. They seem to show a commitment to following their chosen team, regardless of the trophies they gain or their position at the end of the season or competition. I remember my brother saying that when such teams won matches it truly was a reason to celebrate whereas it was commonplace for those teams who continually performed to a high standard. As he supported Darlington for many years, he certainly spoke from experience!

The tenacity and faithfulness of supporters who stick with their teams through good and bad times, going out in all types of weather does deserve some admiration. We know that they can face opposition from supporters of the other teams, both vocal and sadly, sometimes physical – but there is also a shared comradeship as they meet with fellow supporters. And frequently, a shared humour and banter as they gather to watch their chosen team and then relive the action and discuss it after the match.

They can be a support network for each other, encouraging each other as they navigate the highs and lows of the seasons or championships.

Whether we are devoted football supporters, occasional football supporters or have little interest in the game, we have all been called to be a different type of supporter – supporters of Jesus, part of his team! And there's the first amazing factor about his team – it's not just restricted to eleven players and the odd substitute or the backup team of physios, groundsmen, trainers etc. Each one of us is called to play a part in the team and each part is vital to the wellbeing of the whole team.

Our reading from Matthew's gospel gives us some ideas of what being Jesus' supporters entails. We are called to speak out about our faith, sharing the message which Jesus first shared with his followers – and we are called to do so without being afraid. After all, it's an amazing message of love and hope – and like those football supporters, we can share Jesus' message in a variety of ways – by proclaiming it loudly or sharing it in quiet conversations, by the ways in which we act as a group or individually, by living in a way which reflects the example given to us by Jesus.

Can we be like those other supporters, being steadfast in the way we follow Jesus, being faithful to him in both good times and in difficult times? Are we prepared to acknowledge that others may have differing views, but as we treat them with respect, do we remain true to the One we follow? Maybe we will even have to be prepared to forgo certain things in our life because following Jesus is our greatest priority. These are all elements which we need to consider as Jesus' followers. But as we are reminded in the reading from Matthew, those who do follow in Jesus' way gain more than a trophy which will tarnish over the years. They will find their life, a life in all its fullness. We are promised a life which holds hope and the love of God for each one of us. God knows you so well that he knows how many hairs are on your head! I can't imagine any football manager being able to claim that!

And as supporters of Jesus' team, we are not alone. We are there for each other. There to support and encourage each other when life is joyful or challenging, in the good times or the bad.

A support network which is more than a group of people with similar interests, because we are all part of God's family. So, as we support and encourage one another – and try to live our lives following Jesus' example, may we always be aware that we are held in God's love. Surely, that makes us all winners!

Our Prayers today are led by Janice

Heavenly Father there are so many places and people who need your love and care. Create in us a humility which enables us to answer your call to reach out to others in need.

You have called us to serve you, you have called us to heal, you have called us to love. Bless the work of your Church in places of neglect and deprivation.

We pray for all who work in the healing ministry, especially those who place themselves at risk in war zones and places of conflict; carrying out surgery so often without the most basic equipment taken for granted in the NHS.

We pray for all who work in the world of commerce; for bankers, tax collectors, insurance brokers.

We remember all who are deeply in debt and cannot repay. We pray for countries where the national debt is crippling.

We pray for homes where there is chronic illness, broken hearts and broken spirits. We pray for all who find themselves in desperate situations; those who are anxious about their health or the health of a loved one.

We give thanks for all who have been restored by your touch and all those you have raised from the point of death.

We place before you all those known to us individually and those known only to yourself.

Finally Lord, we place before you the needs of our group of four churches as we await the licensing of Revd Daniel. We ask that he, and his family, be surrounded with your grace as he prepares for his new role within our Benefice. We remember the needs of each individual parish; may the schools, businesses and health centres be beacons of hope for those who work, study and visit.

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.**

Concluding Prayer

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

May God who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds of the sky,
Who leads the lambs to pasture and the deer to water,
who multiplied loaves and fishes and changed water into wine,
lead us, feed us, multiply us,
and change us to reflect the glory of our Creator
now and through all eternity;
and the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be upon us and remain with us
now and always. **Amen.**

“We have been baptised into Christ” (Romans 6:3)

For this I have Jesus by Graham Kendrick

For the joys and for the sorrows
The best and worst of times
For this moment, for tomorrow
For all that lies behind
Fears that crowd around me
For the failure of my plans
For the dreams of all I hope to be
The truth of what I am

For this I have Jesus

For this I have Jesus

For this I have Jesus, I have Jesus

For the tears that flow in secret
In the broken times
For the moments of elation
Or the troubled mind
For all the disappointments
Or the sting of old regrets
All my prayers and longings
That seem unanswered yet.

For the weakness of my body
The burdens of each day
For the nights of doubt and worry
When sleep has fled away
Needing reassurance
And the will to start again
A steely-eyed endurance
The strength to fight and win.