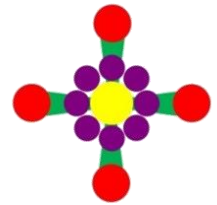


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 7 June 2026
The First Sunday after Trinity**



The Gathering

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

The Greeting

**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.**

Prayer of Preparation

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ
to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven,
and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

Prayers of Penitence

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

God of truth,
help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son.
Amen.

First Reading: Hosea 5:15-6:6

The Lord says:

I will return again to my place

until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face.

In their distress they will beg my favour:

‘Come, let us return to the LORD;

for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;

he has struck down, and he will bind us up.

After two days he will revive us;

on the third day he will raise us up,

that we may live before him.

Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD;

his appearing is as sure as the dawn;

he will come to us like the showers,

like the spring rains that water the earth.’

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?

What shall I do with you, O Judah?

Your love is like a morning cloud,

like the dew that goes away early.

Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,

I have killed them by the words of my mouth,

and my judgement goes forth as the light.

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,

the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 9:9-13,

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard this, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, 'My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.' And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.' Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, 'Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection by Robert Smith

Today's reading presents three distinct yet connected moments in Jesus' ministry: the calling of an outcast and two miraculous healings that reveal his power over sickness and death. Together, they show the transforming power of acceptance, restoration, and renewal.

Matthew's call differed from that of the fishermen. Fishing was an accepted trade, but tax collecting was despised. Local tax collectors worked for the Romans and often charged more than required for personal gain, growing wealthy at the expense of their own people. They were regarded as unclean, barred from worship in the synagogue, and treated little better than robbers or murderers. Yet when Jesus called him, Matthew immediately left behind his former life and companions—a remarkable act of faith.

Matthew then hosted a dinner where many tax collectors and other social outsiders ate with Jesus.

The Pharisees quickly criticised him for associating with such people. Jesus replied that the healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick do. He then quoted the prophet Hosea: “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.” It was a direct challenge to the Pharisees, who failed to see that status and strict law-keeping did nothing to relieve the suffering of the people.

The meal is then interrupted by a synagogue leader whose daughter is dying. Though he is a man of status, he sets that aside, kneels before Jesus, and declares that a touch of Jesus’ hand can restore her to life. Again, another remarkable act of faith.

On the way to the leader’s house, Jesus is approached by a woman who has suffered from bleeding for twelve years. She too is considered unclean, marginalised, and unable to worship in the synagogue. Yet she shares the same faith as the leader, trusting that even the slightest touch of Jesus will bring healing. Jesus says, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” She is healed at once—another remarkable act of faith.

When Jesus arrives at the house, he dismisses the mourners and says the girl is only “sleeping.” Though they laugh at him, he takes her by the hand, and she rises.

Each story shows how simple faith and action open the way to new life, wholeness, and purpose. Because of Jesus, everything changed for these people; may it be so for us as well.

Jesus brings hope to those in need, regardless of their place in society. He offers love and acceptance to those who seem beyond hope. How might we live in such a way that no one feels beyond that hope?

Jesus restores those in need of repentance, forgiveness, and new life. This is the power of acceptance, restoration, and renewal.

Almighty and eternal God, we praise and thank You for Your unfailing love. When we wander from Your ways, You do not abandon us but call us back to Yourself with mercy and compassion. We thank You that in Jesus Christ You came among us, not to condemn but to save, offering forgiveness, healing and new life to all who turn to You.

Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for Your Church throughout the world. Strengthen all who seek to follow Christ faithfully and help us to be known not merely by our words or traditions, but by lives marked by love, mercy and compassion. We give thanks for all who serve in this Benefice, for our clergy, readers, churchwardens and volunteers. Bless and sustain them in their ministry.

We remember our brothers and sisters who face persecution because of their faith. Grant them courage, protection and hope. We pray especially for Christians living amid conflict and uncertainty in Sudan, Ukraine and other troubled parts of the world. Guide the leaders of nations and inspire all who work for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord of compassion, we pray for all who suffer through poverty, hunger, disease or displacement. We remember those who lack access to healthcare and those working through charities, medical missions and aid agencies to bring healing and relief. Bless the work of Christian Aid, the Leprosy Mission and all organisations seeking to restore dignity and opportunity to vulnerable communities.

Open our hearts to the needs of others and teach us to be generous in spirit, remembering that You desire mercy and loving kindness above all else.

Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for our own nation and community. Grant wisdom, integrity and compassion to those in authority. We remember those struggling with the rising cost of living, those seeking employment, those waiting for medical treatment, and those who face uncertainty about housing or care.

We pray for homes where there is anxiety, loneliness, violence or fear. May Your peace dwell there. Bless all who work in healthcare, education, social services and voluntary organisations, supporting those who are vulnerable or in need.

Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Loving Lord, in today's Gospel we see Jesus bringing healing to the suffering woman and life to a grieving family. We therefore pray for all who are sick in body, mind or spirit. We remember before You those known to us personally who need Your healing touch. Bring comfort to the anxious, strength to the weary and hope to those who feel forgotten.

We pray for all who mourn, especially those whose grief is recent or overwhelming. May they know the presence of Christ walking beside them and the promise that nothing can separate us from Your love.

Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Finally, Lord, we pray for ourselves. Help us to hear Your call as Matthew heard it and to respond with willing hearts. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit, that our faith may be expressed not only in worship but in acts of mercy, kindness and love. Teach us to trust in Your power to bring hope where there is despair, healing where there is brokenness, and life where all seems lost.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Blessing

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
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.