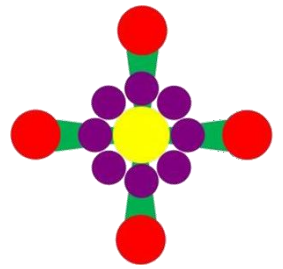


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
16th August 2023
Trinity 11**



Opening Prayer

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ.

Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

let us sing to God with thankful hearts.

Open our lips, Lord:

and we shall praise your name.

Faithful one, whose word is life:
come with saving power
to free our praise,
inspire our prayer
and shape our lives
for the kingdom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

The word of God is living and active.
It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him
to whom we give account.
Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
who in his great mercy
has promised forgiveness of sins
to all those who with heartfelt repentance and true faith
turn to him:
have mercy on *us*,
pardon and deliver *us* from all *our* sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and bring *us* to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Praise response

We give thanks to God for all his gifts to us.

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For birth and life and strength of body,
for safety and shelter and food,
we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

For sight and hearing and the beauty of nature,
for words and music and the power of thought,
we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

For work and leisure and the joy of achieving,
for conscience and will and depth of feeling,
we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

For grace and truth in Jesus Christ,
for the gifts of the Spirit and the hope of heaven,
we give you thanks:

we praise your holy name.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

God of glory, the end of our searching,
Help us to lay aside
all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom,
and to give all that we have
to gain the pearl beyond price,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Today's Scripture Readings:

First Reading: Romans 11.1-2a, 29-32

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His word.

Gospel reading: Matthew 15.10-20, 21-28

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, 'Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.' Then the disciples approached and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees took offence when they heard what you said?' He answered, 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.' But Peter said to him, 'Explain this parable to us.' Then he said, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.'

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

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

Reflection by Alison

Have you a friend who turns up no matter what? The one who stays in touch when life is difficult, who doesn't disappear when you make mistakes, and who refuses to give up on you. Those friends are precious because they reflect something of God's own faithfulness.

In this Sunday's reading from Romans, Paul reminds us that "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable". God does not withdraw his love or abandon his people. His mercy remains constant, even when we are not.

In the Gospel, a Canaanite woman refuses to give up hope. She comes to Jesus seeking healing for her daughter and persists despite the obstacles she faces. Her faith and determination are rewarded, and Jesus grants her request.

Over the years, I have met people who believe that God has given up on them, often because others have. They have been judged, rejected, or made to feel that they no longer belong. Yet today's readings offer a powerful reassurance. Where people may turn away, God does not. His mercy reaches further than our failures, our doubts, and the opinions of others.

This week, let us remember that God is the friend who never gives up on us. And may we show that same faithfulness and mercy to those around us.

Affirmation of faith

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession prepared by Joan

What a beautiful name it is,
What a beautiful name it is,
The name of Jesus Christ my King.
What a powerful name it is
What a powerful name it is
The name of Jesus Christ my King.
Nothing compares to this.
There is no rival, there is no equal
Yours is the name above all names.

So, we come this morning, in the beautiful name of Jesus with our prayers.

Thank you, Lord, for your amazing grace that allows every believer to come forgiven into the presence of God. We pray for our walk with you, both as individuals and as a church, that we would allow your Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us in your perfect will.

We pray for our leaders of all the churches who preach, teach, and encourage us in your word. Would you please guide them with your Holy Spirit.

Father, we lift our farmers to you, as if the lack of rain for their crops isn't enough, they now have a deadly virus attacking their sheep with blue tongue caused by midges. We pray Lord for their anxiety because they don't know enough about the disease as its new to Britain. So, we pray for the vets and scientists who are looking into an effective vaccine – Your Kingdom come – Your will be done.

We thank you for summer holidays and we lift our children to you during the summer break from school, asking if you will protect them from danger. Also, for the results of A level and GCSE exams. We rejoice with those who have achieved their target results, but we also lift to you those who are disappointed and pray for comfort for them.

Jesus, we lift the government to you as they take their summer recess and pray that you will refresh and restore them ready for when they return to Parliament in September. And that you would lead and guide them as they tussle with many problems. Please give them wisdom to overcome for the greater good of our nation.

Especially Lord, please will you raise people with exceptional abilities and clear vision to initiate effective reforms to our social care system, strengthening links with the NHS, disability charities, and other stake holders, ensuring these vital services really work for the benefit of those who need them.

We praise and thank you Lord for C.A.P and for its founder John Kirkby as they celebrate 30 years of helping people out of poverty. We lift all those who advise and pray with people who are depressed and feeling hopeless because of what dept can do to a person and pray that you will lift and restore people who are in this situation. Thank you for this organisation Lord and ask that you will continue to bless their work.

We lift the war-torn areas of the world to you Lord and pray for peace. We also pray for talks between Trump and Iran for a solution to the conflict and a way though the straits of Hormuz.

We pray for all the areas of the world who have recently suffered from natural disasters, that you would be with all the relief workers as they endeavor to save lives.

Compassionate Lord, we lift to you those who are sick, waiting for hospital appointments to see consultants, or waiting for treatments. We pray that you will bless them with peace, comfort, and healing.

Lord, we praise and thank you for who you are and that you have given your people faith to walk with you. Thank you for continuing to work your purpose out in our lives and in the world around us.

We love you Lord. Thank you. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
On earth as it is 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.**

Closing Prayer

Gracious God,
you have given us much today;
grant us also a thankful spirit.
Into your hands we commend ourselves
and those we love.
Stay with us,
and when we take our rest
renew us for the service of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Blessing

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with us evermore. **Amen**

Sending Out

Let us bless the Lord:
thanks be to God.
Blessing, honour and glory be yours,
here and everywhere,
now and for ever.
Amen.