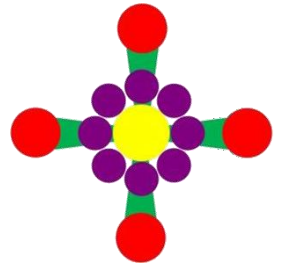


The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 4 October 2026
Our Harvest Festival



Call To Worship

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you
And also with you
We meet in the presence of God
Who brought life to all creation
Creator God, You make us welcome.
We are the work of your hand.
You give us life in all its fulness.
May our hearts and our minds,
our prayers and our actions,
be shaped by your will and inspired by your love.
Amen.

Invitation To Confession

We confess our sin, and the sins of our society,
in the misuse of God's creation.

Confession

God our Father,
we are sorry for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly and acted
ungratefully.
Hear our prayer, and in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.
We enjoy the fruits of the harvest but sometimes forget that you have given
them to us.
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**
We belong to a people who are full and satisfied but ignore the cry of the
hungry.
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

We are thoughtless, and do not care enough for the world you have made.
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**
We store up goods for ourselves alone, as if there were no God and no heaven.
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

May God who loved the world so much
That he sent his Son to be our Saviour
Forgive us our sins
And make us holy to serve him in the world,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

Collect

Eternal God,
you crown the year with your goodness
and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season:
grant that we may use them to your glory,
for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being;
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

Philippians 3:4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 21:33-46

‘Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.” So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’ They said to him, ‘He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.’

Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures:

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes”?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.’

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Reflection with Chris W

As I sit down to write this reflection I am taken back to the 1950s and 60s when, as a Choir Boy, Harvest Festival was taken seriously in our church. It was a time when produce was seasonal we had cabbages in winter and oranges and peaches in summer. For weeks before hand we were preparing for our celebratory Harvest Service. Apples and pears were gathered, oranges and the occasional Pomegranate were carefully put aside, tins of peas and carrots were collected. A sense of both excitement and gratitude inspired us to do better than the previous year. And then the day arrived. Hardly a horizontal surface be it shelf or window ledge was not covered with neat rows of fruit and vegetables. The pulpit was resplendent with flowers and even our brass eagle lectern had a bunch of grapes suspended from its beak. But the highlight was the magnificent sheaf of corn loaf positioned in the centre of the altar.

At the service itself we brought yet more produce to placed in front of the altar as tokens of our gratitude for the bounty God had provided during the past year. Much of the fruit and veg was from members of the congregation, grown in their gardens or allotments. Much of the rest was provided by our farmers. After the evening service us Choir Boys were given the responsibility of distributing the harvest gifts to those folk in the parish who would most appreciate this simple gift from the church. I sometimes wondered what some of them would do with Asparagus or Aubergines.

Today our Harvest Celebrations are quite different in many respects. Few of us grow our own fruit and vegetables. We rely on the vast array of produce displayed on our Supermarket shelves. Produce that, in many cases, has travelled several hundred, if not thousands of miles to reach said shelves. We probably pay little heed to the conditions in which they were grown or whether the importer paid a fair price.

Harvest and Creation are inextricably linked. The Old Testament writers in the Book of Genesis painted an idyllic picture of the world after God had created the Garden of Eden. In verses 20 to 29 God sets out the conditions for a productive and satisfying world. He entrusts its care and welfare into the hands of humankind. Regrettably consistently since then humankind has set about destroying God's creation.

As technology has advanced, with the need to extract more and more minerals from the earth more of the earth's natural environment has been destroyed.

The rainforests are slashed and burned to create land for rearing cattle or producing biofuel. The seas are polluted with plastics and oil killing fish and coral. Agricultural land is over cultivated, creating vast dust bowls.

Perhaps worst of all is what we are doing to our climate. We are systematically creating an environment where our weather is changing dramatically as global warming continues to increase year on year.

God has given us the responsibility of caring for his world, his creation. If we do just that he will continue to control the seasons. He will provide the seedtime and the harvest, the Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. So, this Harvest Festival season let us take time out to consider what part we can play in caring for God's creation and pray for all those who depend on him to provide for the necessities of life.

A short poem by Nick Burden

21st-Century Harvest

Lord, we give thanks for the changing of the seasons,
for autumn, the fullness of harvest
and the promise of rebirth and renewal,
for the fulfilment of our work

for goals achieved

for targets met and projects delivered.

Help us to celebrate what we have achieved,

give us discipline to review our efforts

and the wisdom to learn from our mistakes.

inspire us to plan ahead.

We ask this in the sure knowledge of the resurrection,

the transformation of death to new life,

and the building of your kingdom. Amen.

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 led by Chris W

Creator God, you made a wonderful world and filled it with glorious content – landscapes and oceans, trees, shrubs and flowers, colours and textures, animals, birds and fish and it was to us your children to whom you entrusted stewardship of all that you have made and are making.

You call us to be faithful custodians of our planet and so we lay before you our concerns about our changing climate.

Change our attitudes that we may show our concern for the future. May our commitment mean that we are willing to pay more now to ensure the future of our planet.

God who trusts us

May we respond faithfully to your trust.

Creator God, you made us creatures of community to support and be supported by each other; to see the needs of our neighbours whether we know their name or have to look their home town on a map.

We pray for our communities of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth and Denholme that we may our part in caring for our neighbours especially as winter draws nearer.

We thrive because others care for us and so we pray that you will help and support those recovering from floods and landslides in Nepal and Tibet, Japan and the Philippines and for those overwhelmed by the wars between Ukraine and Russia, USA and Iran, North and South Sudan, Israel and Gaza and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Help us to feed the hungry and welcome the stranger

In our midst.

God who trusts us

May we respond faithfully to your trust.

Creator God, your gift to your people is the Church, a global community of people who acknowledge your Kingship and seek to do your will.

We thank you for our part of the church;

for those with whom we worship week by week in our various parishes. We pray for them that they may be strengthened by the power of your Spirit.

We pray for our churches and all those involved in leading worship and pastoral care. Especially we pray for Daniel and Alison, for Liz and our Lay Minister and Lay Worship Leaders.

You know your church's strengths; you know its needs. May we all play our part in enabling your word to be proclaimed and your love to be shared that the Church may welcome more and more disciples desiring to serve the God who made them.

God who trusts us

May we respond faithfully to your trust.

Creator God, we bring to you our needs and the needs of those we know. We bring to you especially all who are sick, those with mental health issues, those who grieve the loss of a loved one and those who are facing challenges in their lives.

Show us the way to make a difference; challenge us to express your love in practical ways; may those we pray for, know that we care and that you love them and may that knowledge bring comfort and peace.

God who trusts us

May we respond faithfully to your trust.

Creator God, you made us in your image and gave us the capacity to love as we are loved.

Help us to rejoice in that love; to proclaim that love; to share that love. For through you we have the power to make a difference. Show us how.

God who trust us

May we respond faithfully to your trust.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers for the sake
of your Son, 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 forever.
Amen**

Closing Prayer

God, we thank you for the gifts that spring forth all around us
bursting up from the soil, flowing from our fellowship,
growing from our actions in your name.
Inspire us with your Spirit, encourage us to seek new ways to stand up to
injustice and speak up for those in need.
Send us out replenished that we may do the work of your kingdom.
We ask this in your name, Lord.
Amen

Blessing

May God the Father, who created the world,
give us grace to be wise stewards of his creation.
Amen.
May God the Son, who redeemed the world,
inspire us to go out as labourers into his harvest.
Amen.
May God the Holy Spirit, whose breath fills the whole of creation, help us to
bear his fruits of love, joy, and peace.
Amen.

Sending Out

Freely you have received, freely give.
Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.