



**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth,
Denholme
Sunday 6th September 2026
The fourteenth Sunday after Trinity
Our service is taken using liturgy from the Iona
Community**

Opening Prayer

The world belongs to God the earth and all its people
Love and faith come together
Justice and peace join hands
Open our lips O Lord
And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Creating God, Maker of all: be with us this day
Jesus Christ, Servant of the poor, be with us this day
Holy Spirit, Breath of life, be with us this day

Prayers of Penitence

**Lord God, we are sorry
for all the times we have acted on our own,
thinking we could manage without you.
Keep us close beside you
and help us always to do your will.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

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.

Praise response

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel.
He has come to his people and set them free.
Light has sprung up for the righteous
and joyful gladness for those who are faithful.
Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.

The Collect

Merciful God,
Your son came to save us
And bore our sins on the cross:
May we trust in your mercy
And know your love,
Rejoicing in the righteousness
That is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Today's Scripture Readings:

First Reading:

A reading from Romans 13. 8-end

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 18.15-end

If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection by Robert P

I'm pretty certain that everyone will have had arguments or disagreements with others throughout their lives. Disagreements and conflict can be about small things, such as whose turn it is in a game, or life and death matters that lead to violence and war. The Gospel passage speaks to conflict within the faith community. Here, Jesus gives instructions to the developing Early Church and provides a process to be used when resolving disagreements. If we break it down, we see the process as:

1. Local resolution - first trying to resolve the matter between the parties involved.
2. Accountability - explaining the grievances in front of witnesses.
3. Transparency - reporting to the whole church.
4. Risk management – if people refuse to change, separation and transformation.

We might recognise this cycle in schools, for example, where a restorative approach to bullying and conflict involves pupils as well as staff. We see it in our workplaces, where grievance and disciplinary processes have progressive stages, from local resolution to dismissal.

But taking this passage as excluding an individual from church following conflict might seem to contrast previous teachings of Jesus. Indeed, in the preceding parable of the lost sheep it concludes, 'It is not the will of the Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost' (18:14). His point here appears to be that forgiveness is framed as the ultimate aim of disciplinary action, treating those expelled as 'Gentile and tax collector' – those whom we are called to love.

Forgiveness is also framed as something we do not achieve alone or by our own strength, perhaps to ensure that victims do not bear the sole burden of forgiving perpetrators.

So, I wonder how well we all deal with disagreement with our family, our friends and here within our four Benefice churches? Are there spaces where we can safely talk things through and try to find common ground? Do we know where to get expert help, such as mediation, when we need it?

We'll always have to deal with unexpected and challenging things in life. But the Gospel passage ends with the encouragement that when two or three are gathered, Jesus is present. So, as we pray for intercession to resolve conflict and disagreement within our lives, let us listen to God. He will be there. Jesus said so!

Affirmation of faith

We declare our faith in the story of Jesus' resurrection,
Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried; he was raised to life on the third day as the Scriptures declare;
afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles;
this we have received and this we believe.
We believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of intercession with Liz

Heavenly Father, as we gather together, either in our churches or through the written service, we bring our prayers to you. We give you thanks that you are always with us and that we can bring all of our concerns to you, trusting that we place our concerns in the hands of the One who loves and cares for each of us and for all of your creation. However challenging life can be, help us remember that as we journey with you, there is always hope and encouragement. We bring to you now the things that weigh us down, that burden your creation, trusting in the promise that your plans for us are good. We ready ourselves to hear your voice, to follow your call, to place our trust in you.

We pray for your church throughout the world, giving thanks for all those who have encouraged and accompanied us on our journeys of faith. We pray for those who are just growing to know you and pray that we can support them in ways which are helpful.

At this time we pray for groups in our churches which will be restarting in the near future. May this be a time when their relationships with you grow deeper and more meaningful.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for your world, as we hear reports of war and conflict, natural disaster and human greed ravaging the land. We think of the continuing hostilities between America and Iran, Israel and Gaza, Russia and Ukraine and the civil war in Sudan. Strengthen and empower those working for peace. Turn the hearts of those with authority away from violence towards your ways of justice, peace and compassion for all, particularly the most vulnerable. And we pray for areas of conflict which are not on the world stage, but where individuals disagree. May your reconciliation prevail. We ask your blessing on all peacemakers and those who seek to bring aid to innocent victims of oppression and violence. We pray for the many people killed, injured and displaced by the glacial collapse and floods in Nepal, Tibet and China; for those affected by earthquakes and flash flooding in America; and for the disastrous effects of wildfires in Algeria, Indonesia and elsewhere. We pray for your safekeeping for all aid workers, giving thanks for their selfless service, compassion and tenacity as they seek to help others in their distress.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

As parliament reconvenes under a new Prime Minister, we bring our prayers for our own country, asking that you bless all those in positions of power and leadership, both nationally and locally. Guide them into wise decisions and effective policies - fair and in the interests of all - not just the wealthy or influential.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

As we move into September, this is often seen as a time of new beginnings. We pray for the children and young people embarking on a new school year. This can be a time of adjustment, and we pray that you will be with those who feel anxious at this time or even fearful of the uncertainty or change.

May they be held in the calm of your love and may they be supported by those who are familiar with the situation.

We pray also for those moving on to new stages in their life – to further education, new jobs, new locations or those retiring. May they know the reassurance of your presence with them at all times and may they find elements of joy in the newness of their situations.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Grant your love, strength and comfort to those whose life is not going smoothly. We think of those sick in mind, or body or spirit; or finding their independence or quality of life restricted in any way; those who are dealing with financial challenges such as unemployment or redundancy, homelessness or unsatisfactory accommodation, poverty or need; and those whose relationships are not running smoothly or who find themselves isolated and alone. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In a moment of quiet, we bring to you the things that are particularly on our hearts today. Even if we can't find the words, Lord, we pray that you will listen to the concerns of our hearts. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

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 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

God, in whose heart is love and justice,
Increase our hope, inspire our imagination,
and deepen our commitment,
so that our lives may be signs of your kingdom
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The light of Christ be ours today;
The light of Christ shine on our way
And for more light for us we pray
To lead us on, to see us through.

Blessing

On our hearts and on our houses:
the blessing of God.
In our comings and in our goings:
the peace of God.
In our lives and in our seeking:
the love of God.
At our end and new beginning:
the arms of God to welcome us and bring us home.