



The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
Sunday 4 July 2021

## The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Responding to God's Call



### THE GREETING

May the grace, mercy and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all

God our Father, Lord of all the world,  
through your Son you have called us  
into the fellowship of your universal Church;  
hear our prayer for your faithful people  
that in their vocation and ministry  
each may be an instrument of your love,  
and give to each the needful gifts of grace;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

### The Collect

### A Prayer to respond to God's Call

God our Father, you call the Church of your Son to proclaim the message of  
salvation to the world. We thank you that you call each of us to be part of this  
mission. Send your Holy Spirit upon us, that through the life of your Church here  
your kingdom may be advanced and your name be glorified; through Jesus Christ  
our Lord.

**Amen.**

### OLD TESTAMENT READING

Ezekiel 2:1-5

He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

**Thanks be to God for the gif of his word**

### NEW TESTAMENT READING

Mark 6:1-13

He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off

the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.’ So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

## **Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word**

### **Reflection from Liz Moy**

“Ready or not, here I come!” I remember hearing that cry so often as a child when playing hide and seek with my friends. The person who was “on” would count to 100 and then would call out to us, “ready or not, here I come” before endeavouring to find the rest of us. We knew that there would be no extra time for hiding. Once that final number was heard, the search would begin and we had to be safely hidden away. We needed to be ready.

For some of us, it can be a similar sort of feeling as adults when we are expecting guests. We try to get everything ready for their visit, maybe even the final flicking around of the duster or making the last batch of scones. At least, when we know the estimated time of their arrival, it is easier to plan and to get ready. But when the guests arrive, we need to be ready for welcoming them and offering hospitality.

Hospitality is so much more than providing a meal or a dust-free environment for a visitor. It’s about being welcoming to a person and, as Henri Nouwen once explained, giving them the space to be who they really are without imposing expectations upon them. It’s a way of being open to the gifts which they bring to a relationship. It’s a way of being generous of oneself in giving time and empathy.

In the reading from Mark’s gospel, Jesus is seen as a visitor. Strange really as he was brought up in that town, but having been away for some time, teaching and engaging in his earthly ministry in the wider area, he has returned to his home town. For many, he is still seen as the young man who was brought up locally. His mother, brothers and sisters still live there. Many people saw him as they remembered him and their eyes were blinkered against the way his life had opened out in service of his heavenly Father. So, instead of being open to the

possibilities of the gospel message which he brought, they were unable to see past their early encounters with him.

I wonder how Jesus would have felt in that situation, not being accepted or welcomed in his home town by many of his contemporaries. It cannot have been a pleasant experience. But the writer does give a clue as to how he felt. He was amazed at their unbelief. For Jesus, the message he was bringing of God's love for all and the promise of his kingdom was such a vibrant and exciting message, that he was amazed that those around him could not see past their previous perception of him to this new, wonderful truth of the gospel message. They were not open to hear the good news he brought. They were not ready to receive it. We can only imagine how disappointed he felt.

It was quite a contrast to how Jesus met with others. In so many of the accounts we read we see how he welcomes people with that generous hospitality which is non-judgemental and accepting. He takes them as they are and cares about them. That regard and respect for others is for all people, especially those who are most vulnerable or who may have been marginalised by society in general. He shows that he is ready to receive others at any time, not just on a particular date on the calendar, taking them as they are. But as he is open to welcoming them, he also shows that he is ready to share with them, the most precious gift which he can give them - the good news of the gospel.

Such openness and generosity are not limited to material things but are an offering of oneself. Are we ready to follow his example? Maybe that can feel like rather a challenge, especially to those who are naturally more reserved by nature, but we are not called to do this in our own strength. It is merely an overflowing of the love of God which has filled our lives – a love which is so special that it needs to be shared.

Like those early disciples, we are called to not only be open to receiving the good news of the gospel but also to be ready to share it with others. As Jesus acknowledged to his disciples, not everyone will be ready or open to receiving the good news, but the disciples' task is to try. Our task is the same. And as we are reminded in the passage from Ezekiel, even those who do not respond will be

aware that the person who spoke to them is representing God. Their lives will reflect the presence of the love of God.

Each and every day, God loves us and welcomes us through the love of his son, Jesus.

So, are we ready?

Are we ready to open our hearts day by day to the love of God?

Are we ready to live as his people, following Jesus' example, reflecting his love in our lives and relationships?

Are we ready to share the gospel message with those around us, strengthened by the Holy Spirit?

May our response be, "Lord, we are ready. Here we come!"

## **THE COMMISSION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

We who seek to follow Christ now recommit themselves in the service of God and neighbour, in the power of the Holy Spirit, that the good news of salvation may be known in our lives, our homes and our communities.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers?

**With the help of God, we will**

Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

**With the help of God, we will**

Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

**With the help of God, we will**

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbour as yourself?

**With the help of God, we will**

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society, by prayer for the world and its leaders, by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

**With the help of God, we will**

May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith, that we may be rooted and grounded in love and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. **Amen**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION LED BY ANNA**

Loving God,

You have given us hands and feet, voices and strength, minds and hearts to put into your service. Teach us how to use our lives to share your love with the world and to work for the coming of your kingdom.

We pray for our Churches, that they will reflect your love out into the communities in which we live. Show us how to be places of welcome and of nurture and we ask that all who meet here are filled with the Holy Spirit, so that we might make Christ known in the world. We ask you to show us how to build your church and to inspire us to be creative and energetic in our mission to the people around us. Bless Bishop Nick, Bishop Toby, Archdeacon Andy and Richard and all who lead and minister, that they may be faithful servants of you and the church. We pray for our own vocations and ask that you will teach us how to grow in faith, serve the church and each other so that we can be built up as the body of Christ.

We pray for the world and call to mind those places struggling with conflict and injustice. We bring to you those countries overwhelmed by the pandemic and those where people are suffering and hopeless. Flood the world, loving God, with your justice, mercy and peace, and teach us how to bring fairness, hope and peace to all places. Give our leaders wisdom and courage to make decisions that benefit all people and show us how we can make a difference in the world.

We pray for our own communities and the places where we live and work. We bring to you our hospitals and doctors' surgeries, giving thanks for those who work there and asking for your blessing and encouragement on them when it is hard: we bring to you our schools, their teachers and young people, asking for your blessing on them as they try to stay positive in challenging times: we bring to you those on the margins; the lonely, addicted, homeless and those who feel that they don't

belong. Pour out your blessings on all in need of your love and make yourself known to them so that they may be encouraged by you.

We pray for all who are ill and suffering in body, mind or spirit. We commend especially to you all in hospital and all who are in pain. We ask you to place your hands upon them to soothe and comfort them and that they will feel the peace your love will bring. We pray for all struggling with their mental health and those in the midst of depression that you will calm troubled minds and heal unquiet souls. Bring hope and healing to all that they may grow and flourish as children of God.

We remember all who have died, those known to us and those far away. Be with all who grieve and mourn and help us to remember that God will wipe away all tears when we are united with him.

And let us pray for ourselves: that you will breathe your Spirit into our lives so that we may truly know the forgiveness, joy, hope and peace that comes from opening our hearts and lives to you.

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.**

## COMMITMENT TO SHARED MINISTRY

St Paul says of the ascended Christ: the gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, some teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ.

People of God in this place, will you encourage one another's gifts and ministries, build up your common life and serve Christ here?

**We will**

We share together the Holy Scriptures: we study and share God's Word.

**Together, by God's grace, we go to receive and proclaim his holy Gospel.**

We share together that all are called to repent and be baptised in obedience to our Lord's command.

**Together, by God's grace, we go to receive and proclaim the salvation of Christ.**

We share together when we break the bread and bless the cup until Christ comes again.

**Together, by God's grace, we go to proclaim the Lord's death and resurrection until he comes in glory.**

## THE SENDING OUT

Our help is in the name of the Lord  
**who has made heaven and earth.**

Blessed be the name of the Lord  
**now and for ever. Amen.**

Go out into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted, honour everyone; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**