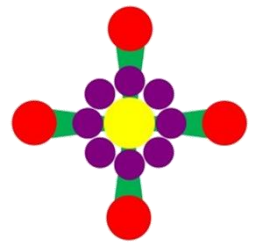


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
19th October 2025
TRINITY 18**



Preparation

CALL TO WORSHIP

The God who hears our cries invites us to pray and not lose heart.

Lift up your voices in hope!

Let those who seek justice rejoice in the Lord.

Come, faithful ones—

Let us worship the God who answers with mercy and acts with love.

The Lord is here

His Spirit is with us.

Prayers of Penitence

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of mercy, We confess that, like the disciples, We set our minds not on divine things but on human things. Doubting your loving care, we grab for more than we need. Doubting your loving purposes, we shrink from living as your followers. Doubting your loving plan, we become stumbling blocks in your creation. Forgive us that we may gain new life in you, for we pray in Jesus' forgiving name. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Jesus took up his cross for our salvation. In return for our old life of sin, he promises a new life of grace. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind
and reaching out to that which is before,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
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.

The Readings

The First Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Gospel Reading: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

“For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection with Liz

Over the years, I have assembled a number of pieces of flatpack furniture. Mostly bookcases, I admit but there have been drawers and cupboards too. And occasionally, I have wondered whether the furniture would ever turn out to be as the original picture showed. Either I have struggled to make out the complicated instructions and have been unable to identify piece A, B, or C – or which screws are H or N – even, in some cases which way up the piece of wood should go. Or, I have found that I have not been able to secure two pieces together tightly enough for them to be as firm a structure as I would have liked. But I must admit that I do always follow the instructions, step by step. (well, usually!) I have found that, in the long run, that does make things more straightforward, and I do not usually end up with a piece left over!

Probably that says something about my character, but I do like the security of following instructions, whether it is for assembling flatpack furniture or for using a new piece of household or gardening equipment. I find it helpful to read the operating manual or listen to constructive advice from family or friends who have used the objects previously. Of course it doesn't always work out, even with the most basic of equipment. On one occasion, I was washing up at a friend's house. The pestle and mortar were waiting to be washed, but as they were made of some unusual stone-like material, I asked if they could be washed. Yes, she said, but at the end. So, taking her remark literally, I stood there twiddling the end of the pestle in the soapy water! What she had meant was, wash the pestle and mortar after everything else so that the garlic does not taint the rest of the washing up! Another learning experience! But generally, it can be helpful to follow the instructions rather than to experiment and try to work out for oneself how to assemble or operate something.

I wonder whether you like to follow the instructions for assembling or operating something – or do you prefer to set off on your own voyage of discovery and try to fathom out how best to operate a new piece of equipment or puzzle out how to join the pieces of a flatpack together without having any left over? Or do you set off in your own way, but eventually resort to using the instructions when frustration or irritation overcomes you? The instructions are intended to be helpful and to give us a more satisfying experience of using the equipment or making the furniture.

Of course, life is not always as straightforward as using a new food mixer for example. For each one of us it can be quite different, and those differences can depend on a huge variety of factors, from where we live, to our families and backgrounds, our health and a wide range of other circumstances. None of us is born with a self-help guide or an operator's manual. But at times, I am sure that many of us feel that such a thing would be very helpful. Well, one of our readings today, points out to us that there is something which has stood the test of time, and which can continue to help us as we navigate the ups and downs of life – and that is the Bible. It can help us in so many ways, by showing us how Jesus dealt with certain situations and how he taught his disciples to live. It can challenge us so that we work out how we need to act or to treat other people. It can bring solace and comfort when we are finding that life is difficult or distressing.

The tricky thing is that there is not always an index which tells us which page to consult if we are struggling in some way. But as we spend more time in reading and studying the Bible, we can build up resources in our own minds which will help us when we need that help.

So, maybe in the coming weeks, this could be the time for spending more time with the Bible, God's manual for our lives. And as we explore it, may we discover for ourselves some of the many treasures it holds and allow ourselves to be helped by its riches.

Affirmation of Faith

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession with Robert

Lord God and Heavenly Father, we know that you are always with us, looking out for us, comforting us and caring for all who seek your help. You are ever faithful, ever forgiving and ever loving. We ask that you be with all of those all around our world. Let them know that help is always at hand through friends, through neighbours, through official authorities and of course through you.

And so, this autumn, as the leaves change colour, we remember all those people who are facing change. We remember those getting used to being away from home at college and university, and adjusting to new lives in new places. We remember those who prefer the light and warmth of the summer, and fear the cold and darkness of this season. We remember those who are searching, displaced, lost, or feeling that they have no hope and no purpose. We remember all those for whom this is a difficult time, and we seek your help for them.

Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord.

This autumn, as the guns and sirens of the Middle East are quieter, we remember those caught up in that conflict. We remember those in Gaza who have returned to their homes to find nothing but wreckage and destruction. We remember those who mourn the death of loved ones, and those who have been subject to imprisonment and cruel handling. We remember all the pain and anguish that thousands of people have and will continue to feel. We remember this tentative ceasefire, and we seek your peace for the future.

Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord.

This autumn, as we gather as the people of God, we remember all those that help us to learn and to worship. We remember those who give their time to serve you in children's and youth work, sharing the gospel with the young. We remember our church leaders, ministers, and key volunteers who seek to make the joy of faith alive and real for our congregations. We remember all of the people who quietly serve as

Martha served your son Jesus, doing practical things and helping others feel welcomed and valued. We remember that you have given us your Word to learn, to live by, and to cherish. We remember all those who serve us, and seek your strength for them in all they do.

Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord.

This autumn, as parliament has just returned after their long break, we remember all those in power and opposition. We remember those who aim to make the lives of others better, and who are motivated by their love for you. We remember those who make big and important decisions, and whose words can affect the lives of all people in our country. We remember those who seek fame and influence for the wrong reasons, and ask that they may be filled with wisdom and caution. We remember all in local and national politics, and seek your guidance for them.

Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord.

This autumn, as another season passes, we remember all those facing sadness, sickness, and fear. We remember those who have recently lost family or friends who were close to them, and feel that mourning and emptiness inside. We remember those who are struggling with their health, who are patiently waiting for treatment, or who are facing an uncertain future. We remember those who have heard life-changing news, and are coming to terms with what it means. We remember all in need, and ask for your hope and healing to fill them as we pray.

Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord

We ask all of these things in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Risen Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**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.**

CLOSING PRAYER

Continue in what you have learned, trusting the sacred words that shaped your faith. Let the scriptures breathe wisdom into your days, equipping you for every good work. Proclaim the message—whether the time feels right or not— with patience, courage, and gentle instruction. Stand firm in truth, endure hardship, and carry out your calling with grace.

BLESSING

May the God who inspired every sacred word, who calls you to speak with boldness and live with love, strengthen you to teach, to endure, and to hope. And may Christ, the righteous judge, keep you faithful until his appearing. Amen.

Go in love and peace to serve the Lord **Amen**