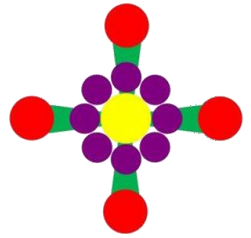


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth,
Denholme
Sunday 13th September 2026
The fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**



Call to Worship

Praise the Lord! Come, praise the Lord!

Everything in heaven and earth, praise God!

Praise the Lord, all creation – sun, moon, and shining stars,

Everything in heaven and earth, praise God!

Praise the Lord, sea and land, animals, birds, and all nature,

Everything in heaven and earth, praise God!

Rulers and nations, young and old together,

Everything everywhere, praise the Lord!

Invitation to Confession

God of all, we come to offer you the best of ourselves:

to take hold of mercy and let go of fear,

to take hold of generosity and to let go of resentment,

to take hold of forgiveness and to let go of sin,

to take hold of gratitude and to let go of grudge,

to take hold of all your very self,

in Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Confession

God our Father,

we come to you in sorrow for our sins.

For turning away from you, and ignoring your will for our lives;

Father, forgive us:

save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,

without thinking of you;

Father, forgive us:

save us and help us.

For failing you by what we do, and think and say;

Father, forgive us:

save us and help us.

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you by temptations
in the world about us;

Father, forgive us:

save us and help us.

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;

Father, forgive us:

save us and help us.

May the God of love bring us back to himself,

forgive us our sins

and assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Creator God, living Saviour, enlivening Spirit,

your generosity far outweighs our deserving.

Your grace is far more beautiful than our imagining.

Your forgiveness far exceeds our understanding.

So, we bow our heads and open our hearts,

as we offer you our lives in adoration and thankfulness.

Amen.

Collect

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit

upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:

grant that your people may be fervent

in the fellowship of the gospel that,

always abiding in you,

they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;

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.

First Reading: Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also, those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God.

For it is written,

‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.’ So then, each of us will be accountable to God. Thanks be to God for the gift of His word

Second Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ‘For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

So, the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.' Thanks be to God for the gift of His Holy Word

Reflection with Daniel

There are not many times when the Christian faith is conditional.

In fact, a big part of being a Christian is a trust that Jesus' credentials are applied to us, and our struggles are taken by Jesus on the cross. This is what all of those early Church councils were busy arguing about.

There is a joke I like which articulates it well. A man dies and gets to the pearly gates, and St Peter is there. He goes up to him and St Peter says, "Sorry you can't come in. When you were a kid you stole a chocolate bar, so we had to take your name off the list". So, the man walks away. A little while later an angel comes to tell St Peter that God wants a word with him. St Peter locks the gate and begins to walk through Heaven to get to the throne room. As he is walking through the crowds of people, he sees the guy who stole the chocolate bar, but the man ducks into the crowd and St Peter can't find him anymore. Anyway, St Peter arrives at the throne and says to God, "It's getting awfully crowded in here".

"That's what I wanted to speak to you about", says God, "You are supposed to be using the list."

"I am" says Peter.

"Well," God says, "Find out what is going on."

So, St Peter goes back to the gate. A little while later, a lady comes up and he says, "Sorry you lied to your mum about smoking, you can't come in" and the lady goes away. But this time St Peter decided to follow her. And, as he goes round the corner, there's Jesus giving her a leg up over the wall.

For the most part, that is the story of Christianity, Jesus giving us a leg over the wall. Jesus vouching for us, and saying that all important, "They are with me" when anyone asks.

There are a few exceptions, however, where how we act can seem to make a real difference to what God is prepared to do for us. For example, did you know that according to 1 Peter 3:7 that if you treat your wife harshly, God won't listen to your prayers (who said God isn't a feminist!). Our parable from Jesus in Matthew 18 seems to be the same. Forgiveness is a two-way streak. If we want to be forgiven, we have to forgive others. The condition is even built into the Lord's prayer, and made even stronger when Jesus explains it in Matthew 6:14-15.

You see, the idea of God who doesn't want a crowded heaven isn't very accurate. The idea we get instead in this parable is of God as an old style King. And part of being a king is having a kingdom. And part of the way you know it is your kingdom is because it follows the rules of the king.

That is why the same Lord's prayer that says forgive others as you are forgiven, tells us to pray for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done. Forgiving people and being forgiven is the same thing as his Kingdom coming.

To forgive is to do God's will. The kingdom looks like the king. That is why refusing to forgive results in us missing out on God's forgiveness. We aren't acting like a citizen of God's community and so we don't get to benefit as a citizen either. If we are in fellowship with God, we act his way. It is in his nature to forgive, to give us a foot over the wall. But he expects us to copy his example, and give others a foot over the wall. That is what Christian means... little Christs. We don't get to be forgiven and then pull the ladder up after us. We would do well to remember Milton Jones great comment on Grace:

"Grace is fantastic when *you* receive it, but can be strangely annoying when you see others benefit from it, especially if they seem to have had more fun than you in the meantime."

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven
and on 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 Diana

Holy Lord, we join together in praising You and in thanking You for the many blessings that we enjoy every day. We come, too, to remember and thank You that we are part of Your church throughout the world, worshipping You today according to different traditions and customs.

We ask Your blessing on those who come to worship in spite of persecution or danger, that You will keep them safe and strong.

As you have invited us to do, we pray for our needs and the needs of the world.

Lord, we bring before You the people of Nepal, devastated by flash floods and landslides. We pray for strength for those now recovering bodies and removing debris in mud-filled villages and tunnels. We ask Your comfort for those who mourn and renewed hope for those who have lost their possessions and their communities. We pray, too, for those still suffering, though out of the news now, from earthquakes and wildfires. We ask Your comfort, Lord, for those who mourn loved ones killed in accidents recently, involving cars, trains, planes and boats. We lift them all to You, loving Lord.

Lord, we pray for those many areas of the world where conflict continues, and lasting peace seems a distant dream.

We pray that You Holy Spirit may inspire leaders and those with influence earnestly to seek compromise and agreement, that power seeking, retaliation, greed, destruction and wanton violence may cease. We pray that people may be able to live without fear, to rebuild and look to the future with hope.

Merciful Lord, may You look on those who are hungry and see their children mal-nourished and those who are sick but far from medical assistance. Bless , we pray, the work of those seeking to bring help, healing and restored dignity. We pray for the safety of those who drive supplies to where they are needed in spite of difficulties and dangers.

As Parliament returns, we pray that You will guide our M.P.s and ministers in their decision making. Grant them discernment and strength of purpose as they wrestle with the many problems that beset our country. We pray, too, for children and teachers returning to school, especially holding up to You, Lord, those in our benefice, those who are starting school for the first time or starting in a new school. We pray for Your blessing on those moving on from school to college and Your guidance for those who have left school but are yet unsure of their future direction. We ask Your blessing, Lord, on activities in our churches that are starting again this autumn.

We hold up to You, Lord, those we know who are unwell or receiving treatment and those caring for them, at home or in hospital. We ask Your comfort and healing for those who are grieving and Your blessing on all who are frail and housebound. Thank You, Lord, for those who work in our villages, providing the services we need; thank You for our councillors; thank You for our friends and families and all that they do with and for us. May Your blessing and Your Holy Spirit rest on them all. We thank You, too, Lord, for our churches and all who give time and energy to their worship and outreach. May they continue to be a source of blessing to the communities they serve.

Merciful and compassionate Lord God, we pray that You will, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, deliver us from resentment, envy and wrongful anger, that our lives may witness to You in kindness, patience , hope and joy.

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 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

May we go out as forgiven people,
forgiving those who hurt, disappoint, or outrage,
not in the world's way of 'anything for a quiet life',
but as disciples of Jesus who forgive from the heart,
offering generously of ourselves, in the cause of God's peace.
Amen.

Blessing

You are called and loved by God the Father
and kept safe by Jesus Christ.
Mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance,
from God the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ.
Amen.