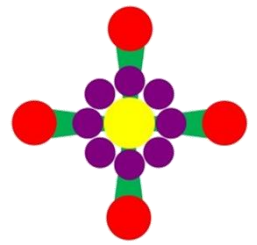


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
7 September 2025
TRINITY 12**



THE GATHERING

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

The Greeting

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Prayer of Preparation

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ
to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven,
and to bring us to eternal life.
Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

Prayers of Penitence

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. **Amen.****

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of 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.**

Epistle: Philemon 1-21

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment.

Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

One thing more—prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow-workers.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Luke 14:25-33

Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, ‘Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.” Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection with Liz

Recently, I went to spend the weekend with friends as we were taking a mutual friend out for a meal to celebrate her birthday. They are both old friends, though I am not sure that they would be very keen on that description. But what I mean is that we have been friends for many years – with one of them since we were at primary school and with the other since we all began secondary school together. And that really is quite a long time ago.

One of the joys of such longstanding friendships is that we share so much history – people we have known, places we have visited, amusing incidents that we have experienced. We share some of the same interests, but even when we don't, we have received support and encouragement from each other as we have found our ways forward on life's paths. We have spent time with each other's families and friends. We have been there for each other through many of the joyful events in our different lives as well as being there for each other in some of the saddest times of our lives. So, as you can imagine there are numerous trips down memory lane when we meet up as well as catching up on what is happening in our lives at this time – and frequently a great deal of laughter. I can certainly echo the words of Thomas Aquinas when he said, "There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship."

Spending time with them has made me reflect on just how blessed I am to have such good friends – and it has also made me think of so many other people who have been blessings in my life. Some I have known for many years, whilst others have only played a part in my life for a short time – or in a certain area in my life. Friends I have trained with at different times and the challenges we shared as we tackled our training. Friends I have worked with, again facing challenges together but also sharing the joy of spotting the ridiculous in certain situations. Friends who have travelled with me on my faith journey and those I have been privileged to accompany on theirs. Good companions who I may not see very often, but when we meet up it is as if we have never been apart and the conversations seem to pick up where they left off previously.

When I think of any of them, I feel a huge sense of gratitude – to them for being there, but also to God as they do all seem to be gifts from God. I wonder if you spend time thinking of those who have been special people in your lives and giving thanks for them. Of course, at times it can be quite difficult as we remember those who are no longer with us, but there is still joy in remembering the good times we have shared.

Maybe it was because I had recently spent time with old friends, but the reading from Paul's letter to Philemon really struck a chord with me as I read part of his opening paragraphs. He addressed Philemon as his friend and then said that as he remembered him in his prayers, he thanked God for him – for the good news that he hears as Philemon serves God and for the love and joy which has been brought to Paul through his work sharing the gospel. Both Philemon and Paul have a deeply held passion for sharing the gospel with those around them and furthering God's kingdom. What an encouragement for Philemon that Paul cares so much about him that he prays for him and thanks God for him.

So, as we ponder on this week's readings, may it encourage us to give thanks for our friends, for the joy and companionship which we share and also to pray for them, remembering them before God with gratitude and with love. As we do, may we also know that we are held in the love of the One who is friend to us all, God's Son. Jesus, our constant companion, has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. A promise of love and friendship for eternity. What a blessing that is for each one of us!

The Creed

Let us declare our faith in God.

**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.**

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in several areas of the world. Be with those who need you in these days of violence and suffering and fear. We pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians. We pray to you O Lord for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, bringing justice and equity to all people. Guide us into your kingdom where everybody is treated with dignity and honour as your children.

We pray for the incredibly brave people of Ukraine, for their armed forces risking their lives whilst fighting an increasingly violent adversary, so that their people can live a free life in a democratic society.

We also bring before you Lord the people who have been affected by the devastating earthquake in Afghanistan and the landslide in Sudan.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

(A moment of quiet)

Father God, we pray for your church throughout the world, for it's leaders and all who minister and proclaim the Gospel. We give thanks for and pray for lay members who visit the sick and lonely to bring them comfort and peace in your name.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Despite the benefits of technology as it marches on at an ever increasing pace we pray for those who feel disconnected because of the technology, from young people who say 'we don't talk any more' to the older generation who have never embraced the technology. We pray that all users of the internet will be protected from the undesirable and dangerous features of some on line content.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord God, we pray for our community, in all we do and say in our lives and with our families, friends and neighbours. Let us as your people show that love that only comes from you. We thank you for the lovely environment that we are privileged to live in, and we pray for and give thanks for our local shops that provide such convenient and friendly service . We pray or our village schools, the teachers and children as they begin a new school year.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father we pray for those in need. For the sick, the lonely, the poor, the unloved and all who are suffering and living in darkness. May they know the presence of your love through the love of those around them, bringing them strength and comfort. We pray for any who are torn by anger and bitterness, who have never known love or have lost the way of loving. Restore their peace and give them new hope.

Let us bring before you any known to us who need your touch at this time.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father, we pray for those who have departed, may they be received in love and joy into your kingdom. We pray, each of us in memory of our family and friends and bring them before you now.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Whatever our individual circumstances as we go forward into a new week, may we be aware of your presence in everything we do and in every encounter that we have with other people, may your peace rest within us always.

Merciful Father

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

The Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.