

Parishes of St Saviour's Harden and St Matthew's Wilsden

IN THE BENEFICE OF HARDEN AND WILSDEN, CULLINGWORTH AND DENHOLME

Newsletter for 29th March 2020 Passion Sunday

While we are not able to meet together at church for worship we hope that you will all join together in this act of worship your own homes on Sunday morning at 10.30am, don't worry if you can't keep to that time, still join us in your own time.

*Take a moment to be still. Perhaps light a candle or hold a cross.
Be aware that others will be saying these same words and prayers.
We are united in prayer and worship.*

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end.

Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me under the shadow of your wings.

O Lord open our lips;
and our hearts shall proclaim your praise.

The night has passed and a new day lies open before us;
we pray with one heart and mind.

Pause for reflection as you offer this day to God.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
as we reflect on our Lord's Passion,
and as we appreciate afresh your great love for us,
set our hearts on fire with love for you and our neighbour. Amen.

As we carry in our hearts our own anxieties and very real fears may we carry those anxieties and fears with us as we walk with Jesus the way of the cross, and thus, know them transformed.

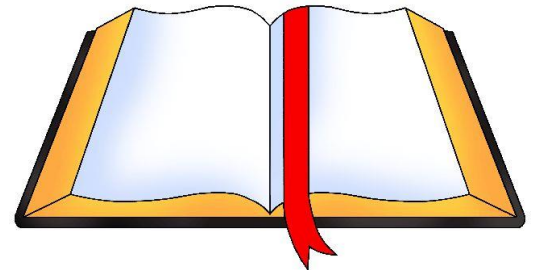
Generous God,

you have set us in families and in the family of the church.

As we join in heart and mind with those we usually meet with Sunday by Sunday, in these difficult days, fill all our hearts with love, compassion and generosity and hope, as we come together in worship. Amen.

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus, says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'



So, I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus, says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word

Second Reading: John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So, the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly

disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word

Chris leads us this morning in our Reflection

Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passiontide Begins)

This Sunday Passiontide begins. We travel with Jesus as he makes his final journey to Jerusalem and his inevitable destiny. This year Lent has taken on an entirely different aspect. Our normal rhythm of life and activities has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of us are having to stay at home and avoid personal contact in an attempt to stem the inexorable progress of this silent killer.

However, it has also brought to the surface the worst in people as we have seen scenes of panic buying and a selfishness not seen before in my lifetime. It has also seen an incredible wellspring of community spirit and support. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those on the front line of dealing with the pandemic. Our Doctors and nurses, the key workers keeping the infrastructure going and providing food and essential supplies and those with responsibility for keeping everyday life going.

As Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem, he receives news that one of his best friends is dying. Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha has been taken seriously ill and is at death's door.

It is entirely natural that they should turn to their friend for his help in their time of desperate need.

Everybody needs friends in times such as these - even Jesus. In Bethany he had three special friends. Their house had remained open to him when many other houses were being closed against him. When Lazarus fell ill, they sent an urgent message to Jesus. It was couched in language calculated to appeal to his heart. It simply said "Lord, he whom you love is ill". Their hope was that he would drop everything and come and cure him.

But surprisingly Jesus didn't drop everything and rush to the bedside of his dying friend. Instead he stayed put where he was for two whole days. We don't know why. You can imagine the heartbreak felt by the sisters at this delay. Right in front of their eyes their brother's life was ebbing away. And the one they believed could do something about it wasn't there.

Well, Lazarus died. The Gospel shows the utter desolation his death caused to Martha and Mary. Of the two, Mary seems to have been the worst affected. She wouldn't leave the house. While they had sympathetic people around them, the one they most wanted to be with them was not there. And when he finally came, they suggested that he could have prevented his death. Martha greeted Jesus with the words: 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

At this time many families are experiencing the desolation experienced by Mary and Martha. And when something bad happens to us or to a loved one, we can't help thinking that if God really cared about us, if he really loved us, then he wouldn't have allowed this thing to happen. We feel abandoned by God. We feel he has left us alone.

In an interview, this week, the Archbishop of Canterbury was asked by the interviewer: "Where is God in all of this". His answer was words to the effect that God is right in the middle of all this with us, feeling our pain and anxiety. He is alongside us supporting and loving us and caring for us.

So in all of this what can we do? We must try to imitate Martha. This story presents her as a model of faith. In her hour of grief, she ran to the Lord and poured out her sorrow to him. And when he challenged her to believe, she made a wonderful profession of faith. When Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, 'Yes, Lord I believe that you are the messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

What we have to do then is to turn to God. We have to go on praying, to go on believing in God. Neither a good life, nor a close relationship with God, will necessarily save a person from a tragic death. In the face of our pain all we can do is commend ourselves to God, and abandon ourselves to his care.

When we suffer it seems as though God is absent, but when we pray, we come to realise that God is not absent, but is present in our suffering. God is with us as our hope in adversity, and our strength in weakness.

The story shows Jesus as a faithful friend. It shows that even in death we are not beyond the reach of his help. He didn't leave Mary and Martha to grieve alone. He came at the height of their grief, shared their sorrow, and gave them hope by announcing eternal life to those who believe in him.

At this difficult time for all of us, not just in this country but around the world, he does not leave us alone either. He surrounds us with the love and support of the community. He challenges us to have faith in himself. To believe doesn't mean that we know all the answers.

Jesus understands the anguish caused by death. He experienced it himself. He overcame death, not by avoiding it, but by undergoing it and overcoming it. Thus, he has become a pathfinder and a beacon of hope for us.

I would like to finish with this reflection which I came upon this week called "Seeds of Consolation".

What can I say to you, my friend,
in your hour of grief?

Just a word from my heart.

In the midst of your sorrow seeds are being sown –
seeds of consolation, hope, resignation, and even gratitude.

This winter will pass,
and spring will again visit the garden of your heart.

You will see these seeds grow, blossom, and bear fruit.

Then your sorrow will turn to joy,
a joy no one will be able to take from you.



Jasmin leads us in our prayers:

Heavenly Father, in these troubling times we bring to you our concerns for the world and all those we love.

Come, Lord, to refresh and renew your Church, which without you is dull and dry.
Fill the people with your power giving presence and give them the power to proclaim the resurrection to eternal life. Lord, renew our faith in you.
Give to your people a new sense of mission and outreach.
Bless all ministers of the sacraments with the joy of the Good news.

Silence Come Lord, revive us. Renew your people.

Come Lord be known in all who share your saving purpose.
We remember doctors and nurses, ambulance workers and paramedics and all who work in the NHS, and all who risk their lives in the care and service of others, particularly during the coronavirus outbreak.
We pray for all who are carers within our communities

Silence Come Lord, revive us. Renew your people.

Come, Lord, let your presence be known in our homes and in our lives.
Bless us in all our relationships and dealings with others, particularly with our physical distancing.
Come, Lord, with your light and love to lives that are struggling with poverty and debt, with bad housing and broken-down communities.

Silence Come Lord, revive us. Renew your people.

Come, Lord, to all whose hope is gone, the lost, the despairing and the deeply depressed.
We remember the overworked, the world weary, the exhausted and the worn out.
We ask for your blessing upon those who feel wrung out and dry, all who feel numb and those whose senses are deadened.
We pray for those suffering from deep stress or trauma.

Silence Come Lord, revive us. Renew your people.

We give thanks for the hope in life eternal.
We remember in your presence our friends and loved ones departed.
May we all come to know the joys of your kingdom and the fullness of life eternal.

Silence

And finally, a prayer for ourselves; may we stay firm in our faith and in full knowledge that you are always with us, wherever we are and that when we stumble or fall you hold us up with your love.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

And we draw all of our prayers together in the words of 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.

As we draw our shared Act of Worship to a close, we commit ourselves to God's service and we offer one another a blessing.

In the light of your great love for us, O Lord,
we offer ourselves to your service.
In these difficult times,
through small acts of kindness,
and words of encouragement,
to loved ones and neighbours,
may we reflect compassion and hope,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us bless one another with the words of the Grace, aware that, although we are scattered, we are one in Christ.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



The Archbishops of York and Canterbury asked people to place a candle in one of the windows of their home at 7 pm on Mothering Sunday.

It is such a good idea we have decided to do it every night at 7 pm. Make sure you light it safely! If you have a 'pretend' candle that would be even better.

"It will be a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished"



If anyone is in need of assistance, support, food or medicine deliveries or just a chat please ring Rev'd Richard on 01535 273758 or Rev'd Suzy on 01535 270687.

Please follow our Facebook page: If you are on Facebook search for:
'Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme Benefice'.

Note especially Richard leading Morning Prayer at 8am and Evening Prayer at 5pm.

There are lots of uplifting things in our Facebook community and there will be more regular features in this time when we cannot meet as we normally do!

Mission Support

For many years our main fund-raising event for the Church Mission Society has been the Lent Lunch, with CMS collecting boxes also available during this period. This year the lunch had to be cancelled and there has been little opportunity to offer the boxes. If you would like to make a contribution to the work of CMS, and our mission partner in particular, this can be done through the church bank account or by sending a cheque made out to St Matthew's or St Saviour's to your church treasurer. Please add a note that this is for CMS. All that is given during Lent can then be sent to CMS in the usual way.

In her latest newsletter, Awais describes her call "To share the good news and work for social justice, especially for the vulnerable and marginalised, and the empowerment of women."

A reminder of her role in Leeds - "I help asylum seekers and refugees with language skills, connect with women from different cultural and faith backgrounds, and support local churches sharing the gospel."

Church Finances: If you do not usually give your offerings electronically, but can do so during this time when we are not able to meet in church, it would really help our cash flow. Thank you.

Prayer Requests: We have set up an email address to which anyone can send prayer requests. We will be advertising it in all our communications. Do let people know that they can send any requests to us and we will respond and pray for everyone.

The email address is: say14me@hotmail.com

Prayer Chains at St. Matthew's and St. Saviour's.

St. Matthew's: Margaret Harrison 272305. (Reserve is Dorothy 01274 497898)

St. Saviour's: June Thompson 273787. (Reserve is Hazel 274234)

Please pray for:

Beatrice Waddington, Bob and Suzanne Evans, Malcolm and Di Halliday, Linda White

Prayers for the week beginning Sunday 29th March

Because of print deadlines this prayer diary cannot respond quickly to breaking news. In addition to the suggested topics, please keep in prayer national and international events as you learn of them.

Sun	29-Mar	Pray for all those with whom you would have shared the peace of the Lord in church this morning.
Mon	30-Mar	Pray for head teachers of our village schools as they work out ways of caring for those children for whom attendance is still possible.
Tue	31-Mar	Pray for families struggling to arrange care for children not now at school.
Wed	01-Apr	Pray for our Christian partners in Sudan where conditions make coping with infection very difficult. Pray for church leaders there, doing their best to help those in need.
Thu	02-Apr	Pray for troubled and war-torn parts of the world, for refugees and displaced people and for an end to violence and destruction.
Fri	03-Apr	As we focus our thoughts on our commitment to CMS, pray for our mission partner Awais and her work with refugees.
Sat	04-Apr	Pray for the clergy and readers of the Hewenden Benefice. Give thanks for the ways they are finding to offer support and to lead worship.

Please give contributions for the next newsletter to Pauline - Tel: 01535 273814
email: pstern155@gmail.com (and copy to David Haigh: david@haigh.demon.co.uk and to Helen Ludkin) **Copy Deadline:** 12.00h on the **WEDNESDAY** before publication

Please note we can only mention people, by name, in the newsletter with their consent.

Websites:	www.stmatthewswilsden.org.uk	www.stsavioursharden.org.uk
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Deputy Warden	<i>St Saviour's – Chris Bendle</i>	<i>07903 713018</i>

Donations or regular giving may be done by sending your gift to:

Account name	Sort Code	Account Number
St Saviour's Church Harden PCC	05-02-42	32488873
Parish of St Matthews, Wilsden	40-23-05	42128918

Please include your name as a reference or we will be unable to thank you. We are wholly dependent on your generosity.

Clergy Days Off: Liz – Monday & Thursday, Suzy – Tuesday, Richard - Saturday