

Ashburton and Moorland Team

TRINITY 6

11th July 2021



¶ The Gathering

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Hymn – Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfIkL1mY5Bs>

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea.
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing
if our God our Father be.

Saviour! breathe forgiveness o'er us,
all our weakness thou dost know.
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe;
lone and dreary, faint and weary,
through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy.
Love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy!

Prayer of Preparation

**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.**

Prayers of Penitence

The Summary of the Law

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Confession

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.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,

confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us 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

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
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.

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

Amos 7:7-15

This is what he showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, 'Amos, what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb-line.'

Then the Lord said,

'See, I am setting a plumb-line

in the midst of my people Israel;

I will never again pass them by;

the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,

and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,

and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.'

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, 'Amos has conspired against you in the very centre of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said,

"Jeroboam shall die by the sword,

and Israel must go into exile

away from his land." '

And Amaziah said to Amos, 'O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.'

Then Amos answered Amaziah, 'I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Hymn – God moves in a mysterious way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d04rK-OljW8>

God moves in a mysterious way
his wonders to perform:
he plants His footsteps in the sea,
and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
of never-failing skill,
he treasures up his bright designs,
and works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds ye so much dread
are big with mercy, and shall break
in blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
but trust him for his grace;
behind a frowning providence
he hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding every hour:
the bud may have a bitter taste,
but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
and scan his work in vain;
God is his own Interpreter,
and he will make it plain.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark
Glory to you, O Lord.

Mark 6:14-29

King Herod heard of the healings and other miracles, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.'

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.'

And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the baptizer.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

There's a new ABC in schools these days. I'm not suggesting it's replacing the alphabet, but it's become a powerful acronym with a key message for children.

ABC – Actions Bring Consequences. A simple message that children can be taught from a very early age. So, for example, Toddler One snatches a toy from Toddler Two, and what happens? Toddler Two bursts into tears. Toddler One hugs the toy to their chest, perhaps knowing that an adult is going to ask them to give it back, and wanting to retain possession.

The Action is clear. The Consequences for Toddler One could range from a reprimand, a negotiation involving the concepts of sharing and taking turns, or no action, in which case they may learn that snatching toys is ok.

Toddler Two's tears may bring a variety of consequences for them. Sympathy and comfort, no-one noticing, or adult advice along the lines of "Go on, snatch it back." And so gradually we all learnt that "Actions Bring Consequences." Perhaps the advantage of knowing this is that it helps us decide whether to act or not.

I might add that "Inaction also brings consequences". Doing nothing can cause even more consequences than doing something. Not dealing with Toddler One's theft could, possibly, (though not really)

lead them into the path of criminality and jail!

The consequences for John the Baptist in our gruesome gospel story flowed from his decision to speak out against Herod for marrying Herodias, his brother's wife. John had a choice – to speak out, saying this was illegal, or to stay silent. John bravely spoke out.

In speaking out, John was not just making a legal point, but also a moral one about changing behaviour – just as when he called on the crowds to repent. John was called by God to this ministry, and his actions brought consequences.

Mainly, the consequences were incredibly positive – hundreds or even thousands of Jerusalem citizens were baptised and John, like Jesus, taught and nurtured a team of disciples who shared his ministry. John's message was so respected that Jesus came to affirm it by being baptised himself.

Another good consequence was that John intrigued Herod. Rather like Pilate who was dealing with Jesus, Herod was fascinated by John. "Herod liked to listen to him". Herod clearly felt that there was more than a grain of truth in John's message and John made him feel a bit guilty.

But Herod acted, and imprisoned John at his wife's insistence. The (unintended) consequence of this was that John had a whole new opportunity to talk to Herod – perhaps we can imagine Herod wandering down to the cell, and chatting away, safely out of earshot of his wife. Maybe Herod was pleased that he was getting the best of both worlds – satisfying Herodias' desire that John should be in prison, and he himself enjoying their conversations.

But then came the Birthday Party, and Herod's fateful promise – 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And the consequences of that don't need spelling out.

John the Baptist accepted the consequences of his own actions – and bore the price. He stood firm and unwavering, just like one of his prophetic predecessors, Amos.

"Amos was a herdsman and a dresser of Sycamore trees".
Herdsman I can understand, but what is a dresser of Sycomores? I

looked it up and it turns out that a Sycamore is also known as a Mulberry Fig. “This tree produces a small fruit - edible, but not known for having a great taste. The job of the dresser was to puncture the fruit days before it was to be gathered to help with the ripening process.” So now we know! I guess he also pruned them, planted them and generally maintained something like an orchard. And the main consequence of his actions would have been a good harvest.

But there was another consequence – God spotted that Amos’ faithful carrying out of his duties was straight and true – with the wonderful image of Amos being as straight as a plumbline – like a vertical wall. These days we might say he was “straight as a die.” So, like John the Baptist, God called Amos to be a prophet.

We don’t know how Amos’ life ended, but God set him a task just as hard as John’s – tell the people of Israel that because they had disobeyed God, their land would be destroyed – the act of disobeying God brings enormous consequences – ABC.

Later, though, he told them that when they had mended their ways, “I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.”

Amos, John the Baptist, Jesus, St Paul all spoke the same message. Wrong actions bring consequences. ABC. But right actions will bring delightful and far-reaching consequences and blessings. Turning to Christ and setting out to follow his way is an action that Christians make – and the consequences are infinite. St Paul sums it up – “when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; to the praise of his glory.”

Every time we turn to God for his support or forgiveness, the consequence is that he is once again enabled to fill us with his love and joy.; with the fruit of the Spirit; with the peace which passes all understanding; with the knowledge that we have found the way to true life.

For these consequences, thanks be to God. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

***I / We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.***

***I / We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.***

***For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven***

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

***He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.***

***I / We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.***

I / We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

I / We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

***I / We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.***

Amen.

The Peace

We are the body of Christ.
In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.
Let us then pursue all that makes for peace
and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with us.

Hymn – O God of earth and altar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFG-CqYXyOo>

O God of earth and altar,
bow down and hear our cry,
our earthly rulers falter,
our people drift and die;
the walls of gold entomb us,
the swords of scorn divide,
take not thy thunder from us,
but take away our pride.

From all that terror teaches,
from lies of tongue and pen,
from all the easy speeches
that comfort cruel men,
from sale and profanation
of honour and the sword,
from sleep and from damnation,
deliver us, good Lord!

Tie in a living tether
the prince and priest and thrall,
bind all our lives together,
smite us and save us all;
in ire and exultation
aflame with faith, and free,
lift up a living nation,
a single sword to thee.

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Lord God, as we thank you for your love,
we bring before you the needs of others and of ourselves.
Help us now to bring to mind all the concerns on our hearts
and to lay them before you,

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Lord, in days of uncertainty, make us quiet and prayerful;
in days of challenge, make us stronger in you;
in days of emptiness, take possession of us;
in days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of your cross.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Lord God, we pray for the leaders of nations
as they decide on strategies for tackling waves of Covid,
and as they balance the need
for future prosperity against current caution,

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, the lonely, the exhausted,
and to assure the isolated of our love and of your love,
for your name's sake.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy, strength and resilience

to all who are caring for the sick.
We pray for those who are distressed and exhausted.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill or afraid,
and especially the people we know
who are suffering from anxiety or stress
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father

We thank you for the lives of those we love but see no longer,
who now rest in your heavenly kingdom.

We pray for those mourning the loss of loved ones
that you may bring them comfort and peace.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

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

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Silence is kept.

Hymn – Thy hand, O God, has guided

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLQk7m7Edzg>

Thy hand, O God, has guided
thy flock, from age to age;
their wondrous tale is written,
full clear, on every page;
our fathers owned thy goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both of this bear witness;
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings
to greatest as to least;
they bade men rise, and hasten
to share the great King's feast;
and this was all their teaching,
in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Through many a day of darkness,
through many a scene of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely,
to guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
sin pardoned, man restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

And we, shall we be faithless?
shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
shall we evade the conflict,
and cast away our crown?
Not so: in God's deep counsels
some better thing is stored;
we will maintain, unflinching,
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
nor leave thy work undone;
with thy right hand to help us,
thy victory shall be won;
and then, by all creation,
thy name shall be adored,
and this shall be their anthem:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

¶ Ending

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Blessing

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.