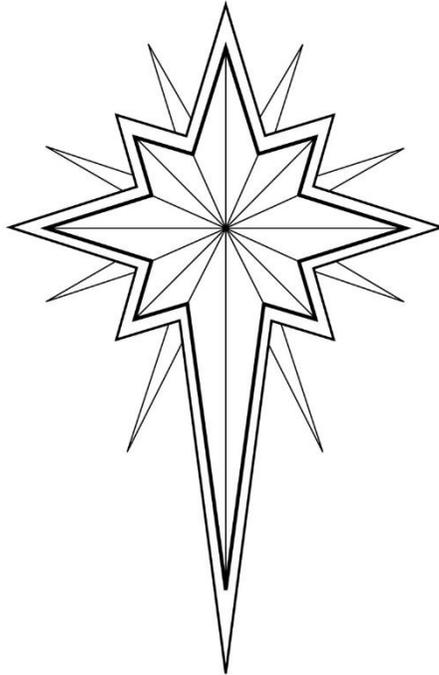


Ashburton and Moorland Team

Epiphany 2

16th January 2022



¶ The Gathering

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

Amen.

Hymn – Love divine, all loves excelling

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSi14Gsf1C4>

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve you as your hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
Changed from glory into glory
till in heaven we take our place,
'til we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley
(1707-1788)

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

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us
to purify a people as his own.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed
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 lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. 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

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your heavenly glory;
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

Isaiah 62. 1-5

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate;
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married.

For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your builder marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

1 Corinthians 12.1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Rejoice in the Lord always

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9YW74MDkaA>

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice!
Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice!
Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice!
Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice!

Repeat...

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations
and believed in throughout the world.

Alleluia

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

John 2.1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'

And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.'

His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it.

When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him,

‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.’ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

One of the great things about the Christmas and Epiphany season is that we see a whole variety of different people being themselves, as they encounter the child who is to be the Messiah.

We encounter a harassed Inn-keeper who can't squeeze another guest in, however much he would like to extend his hospitality. There must be a kind farmer who welcomes the mother-with-child into his stable. There are humble shepherds who are overawed by the angels, but who make the journey to the stable out of curiosity and obedience. There are three high status kings who assume it's their right to question King Herod. Not forgetting Mary and Joseph – trusting God to guide them through.

And, at least in all the Nativity plays I have seen, there is a crowd of other people who are just enjoying something unusual and exciting, wanting to be there and see everything that happens.

All these people were leading their own lives, being themselves, when along comes this amazing event. They came from very different communities and social status, but they were all simply being human, being themselves. They had a wonderful and unforgettable time.

Just as the bride and bridegroom getting married in our gospel story were doing what was natural to them – they fell in love and they wanted to get married, so they saw the Rabbi to fix up their wedding, and invited their family and friends for the ceremony. And the wedding went down in history! Talked about two thousand years later, because Jesus and his mother had been invited.

I see all these people as being naturally good, apart from King Herod, of course, who is the villain of the story (though even Herod probably had some good points!)

Don't we all feel that goodness is winning when a baby is born, or when friends get married? We want the world to be good and other people to be happy, and we celebrate when that's what we find.

Curiously, it's also people's natural goodness that kicks in at times of sadness and loss – leading them to give generous support to people affected by Covid, and give warmth and care when someone dies.

This theme of people being good, is the theme of the reading from Isaiah who is longing for the good times to return. In some verses just before today's ones, we learn that God is speaking, and enthusing about goodness:

For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

And in today's reading:

and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

God created a world where goodness can flourish so that we can delight in it and he can delight in it and delight in us – for who we are.

And yet the Herods are out there, people who need to denigrate or even destroy goodness, and who bolster their self-esteem by belittling others. There is much evil in the world, but that doesn't mean that people are not fundamentally good.

Jesus affirmed this in the crowd of guests at the wedding – he provided quality wine for everyone – even though I guess there were probably some rogues amongst them!

Perhaps, as Christians, one of the hardest things to do is follow Jesus' command to love everyone, see the good in them, think well

of them. Sadly many Christians fall into the trap of condemning others rather than affirming their goodness.

Other Christians fall into the opposite trap of thinking they are not good enough; useless and unloved, feeling condemned. And that feeling might well be enhanced by misapplying Paul's words to the Corinthians. It's easy to feel discouraged if we don't feel we have been given any of these gifts of the Spirit:

- wisdom
- knowledge
- faith
- gifts of healing
- the working of miracles
- the discernment of spirits
- various kinds of tongues
- the interpretation of tongues

But what Paul was doing was celebrating his experience that some Christians had found the Holy Spirit bringing one of these gifts into their lives. Seeing these gifts in someone else is a cause of celebration, but we are not to fret if they're not for us.

What really, really matters is that we simply grow in love for those around us – caring ever more deeply for those in distress, and rejoicing with others at all the goodness we encounter.

May you find much to celebrate in your life.

Amen.

The Nicene Creed

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

***// 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.**

***// 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.***

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

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

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

Amen.

The Peace

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace
there shall be no end.

The peace of the Lord be always with us.

Hymn – We have a gospel to proclaim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2FX0-kS7wA>

We have a gospel to proclaim
good news for all throughout the earth;
the gospel of a Saviour's name:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Tell of his birth at Bethlehem,
not in a royal house or hall
but in a stable dark and dim:
the word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of his death at Calvary,
hated by those he came to save;
In lonely suffering on the cross
for all he loved his life he gave.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
empty the tomb, for he was free.
he broke the power of death and hell
that we might share his victory.

Tell of His reign at God's right hand,
by all creation glorified;
he sends his Spirit on his Church
to live for him, the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel message we proclaim:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Edward Joseph Burns
(b.1938)

Prayers of Intercession

United in the company of all the faithful
let us offer our prayers to God,
the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord,
strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit,
that we may live as a royal priesthood and a holy nation
to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Bless Robert our bishop, and all ministers of your Church,
that by faithful proclamation of your word
we may be built on the foundation of the apostles
and prophets
into a holy temple in the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Empower us by the gift of your holy and life-giving Spirit,
that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ
from glory to glory.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Give to the world and its peoples
the peace that comes from above,
that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love in the
service of the poor and needy;
all those who minister to the sick and dying;
and all who bring light to those in darkness.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin
or disfigured by pain,
that, raised from death to life in Christ,
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us,
who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity;
preserve in your faith your servants on earth,
guide us to your kingdom,
and grant us your peace at all times.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Hasten the day when many will come
from east and west, from north and south,
and sit at table in your kingdom.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks
for the whole company of your saints in glory,
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;
by your grace may we, like them,
be made perfect in your love.

**Blessing and glory and wisdom,
thanksgiving and honour and power,
be to our God for ever and ever. 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.**

Hymn – The church's one foundation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHCqXL3mCwU>

The church's one Foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is His new creation,
by water and the Word;
from heav'n He came and sought her
to be His holy bride;
with His own blood He bought her,
and for her life He died.

Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation,
one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy Name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with ev'ry grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore;
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious
shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
with God the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
like them, the meek and lowly,
on high may dwell with Thee.

Samuel John Stone
(1839-1900)

¶ Ending

God of glory,
you nourish us with your Word
who is the bread of life:
fill us with your Holy Spirit
that through us the light of your glory
may shine in all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Blessing

Christ the Son of God perfect in us
the image of his glory
and gladden our hearts
with the news of his kingdom:
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**