

Ashburton and Moorland Team

TRINITY 1



¶ The Gathering

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

Hymn – There's a wideness in God's mercy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jq6NdOsCdOU>

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in his justice
which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven;
there is no place where earth's failings
have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
than the measure of man's mind;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own;
and we magnify his strictness
with a zeal he will not own.

There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed;
there is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the Head.

If our love were but more simple,
we should take him at his word;
and our lives would see more gladness
in the joy of Christ our Lord.

Frederick Faber
1814 – 1863

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

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,
now and for ever.

Amen.

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

Isaiah 65.1-9

The word of the Lord through the prophet:

I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask,
to be found by those who did not seek me.

I said, 'Here I am, here I am',
to a nation that did not call on my name.

I held out my hands all day long

to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices;

a people who provoke me
to my face continually,

sacrificing in gardens
and offering incense on bricks;

who sit inside tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;

who eat swine's flesh,
with broth of abominable things in their vessels;

who say, 'Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.'

These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all day long.

See, it is written before me:

I will not keep silent, but I will repay;
I will indeed repay into their laps
their iniquities and their ancestors' iniquities together,
says the Lord;
because they offered incense on the mountains
and reviled me on the hills,
I will measure into their laps
full payment for their actions.

Thus says the Lord:

As the wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, 'Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it',
so I will do for my servants' sake,
and not destroy them all.
I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;
my chosen shall inherit it,
and my servants shall settle there.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Galatians 3.23-29

Before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Jesus shall reign where'er the sun

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5U4IMtvp6bg>

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does his successive journeys run,
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of every tongue
dwell on his love with sweetest song,
and infant voices shall proclaim
their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns:
the prisoners leap to lose their chains;
the weary find eternal rest,
and all who suffer want are blest.

To him shall endless prayer be made,
and praises throng to crown his head;
his name like incense shall rise
with every morning sacrifice.

Let every creature rise and bring
the highest honours to our King,
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud amen.

Issac Watts
1674 – 1748

Gospel Reading

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord.

Luke 8.26-39

Jesus and his disciples arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice,

‘What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?’

‘I beg you, do not torment me’— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ He said, ‘Legion’; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ‘Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.’ So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

I must admit that the Old Testament reading is quite hard to interpret, but I sense it’s about God wanting to include all peoples into his care.

God is fretting that so many tribes are going off down the wrong track, despite the fact that he “held out his hands all day long to a rebellious people who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices.”

And because they reviled God, he was tempted to destroy them.

But Isaiah is recording that God instead decided to accept that difference between peoples is something to be valued rather than destroyed. To be appreciated rather than condemned.

“As the wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, ‘Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it’,
so I will do for my servants’ sake,
and not destroy them all.”

Putin’s desire to destroy people that are different is, tragically, being played out in Ukraine at present by the Russian army. That’s an extreme example.

But even in this country there are many minorities who are attacked for being different – different race, different sexuality, different political views. Social media is full of hate and bullying, with “trolls” attacking anyone who stands out. Accepting diversity is an issue that needs to be addressed.

I was delighted to be asked by the Head of Widecombe School to run an assembly on Diversity this week – so at Monday lunchtime I set off to school carrying a bible and a new candle!

The candle was lit by a pupil, and the assembly started with me asking if anyone knew what Diversity was?

And several pupils explained very clearly that it was about differences, how people are different from each other, so we began to explore the range of diversity in the school.

On the face of it most children there come from similar roots and backgrounds, but some lived in towns, some in villages, some insisted that they lived in hamlets, and a few lived in isolated houses.

How did they get to school – bus, car, walk, pony, bicycle? In turn I asked “Did they have a dog?” A cat, a hamster, a tortoise, chickens, a guinea pig – there was a great variety. Almost all had at least one pet but a few homes had no pets at all.

“Do you like sport or dislike sport?”, and a few really disliked it. Did they enjoy dancing (a large majority). “Which out of maths, art or reading did they like best?” – and it was about a third each!

And so on, and so on – it turned out, of course, that everyone was different, that each had a unique combination of characteristics.

What really struck me was that there was no sense whatsoever of anyone being singled out or laughed at for being different – quite the opposite, they were incredibly supportive of each other.

Which is quite a contrast to some of the people in today’s gospel story.

We have a very disturbed man whom the community cannot cope with. The strategy of keeping him under guard and bound with chains didn’t work – he still broke free. They couldn’t settle him in a house so he lived in the tombs. He wouldn’t wear clothes and I guess he was miserable and lonely.

And then we have a group of social outcasts whom the local Jews would have nothing to do with – pigmen, or swineherds. Jews were forbidden to eat pork or to have anything to do with pigs. So the pigmen would also live outside the town and have a tough existence beyond all the comforts of society, providing pork for the non-Jewish community.

Incidentally, a few years ago I was in Israel with my daughter and, wanting a quick meal, we went to a MacDonalds – where pork burgers were on the menu – I really wasn’t expecting that!

The thing about Diversity is that all people, however different they are, should all be treated equally. So in our story we have Jesus showing such sympathy to the man with the thousand demons that he cures him, and Jesus clearly then becomes a hero in the community.

But you might like to consider the unfortunate, but perhaps unavoidable, consequence that the pigmen were left without a job! All their pigs had drowned in the Sea of Galilee. Mind you, it sounds as though they really enjoyed telling all the locals about the incident, as they were made famous for a few days.

In Israel's society in Jesus' time, the consequence of being different was to attract scorn or abuse. Outcasts were common – like lepers being forced out of town, beggars on the streets, women treated as chattels. It was an unfair society, where your social status determined your fate.

So, Jesus standing up for the underdog, such as when he interfered with the stoning of the woman taken in adultery, was remarkable and impressive, but deeply unpopular with the authorities.

But Jesus' message was clear – God cared for everyone equally, all were welcome into his kingdom.

And this was echoed by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. Our reading today happens to contain the bible verse I used to end my school assembly:

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one....”

When that is true everywhere, God's Kingdom will indeed have come and the world will live in peace.

We pray for such peace to come throughout the world.

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.**

**// 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

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 – God forgave my sin in Jesus' name

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

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his love as he told me to.

He said:

*'Freely, freely you have received;
freely, freely give.*

*Go in my name and because you believe,
others will know that I live.'*

All power is given in Jesus' name,
in earth and heaven in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his power as he told me to.

He said...

God gives us life in Jesus' name,
He lives in us in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his peace as he told me to.

He said ...

George Briggs
1875 – 1959

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit let us pray to the Father
through Christ the saviour of the world.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For forgiveness for the many times we have denied Jesus,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For grace to seek out those habits of sin
which mean spiritual death,
and by prayer and self-discipline to overcome them,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For Christian people,
that through the suffering of disunity
there may grow a rich union in Christ,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who make laws, interpret them
and administer them,
that our common life may be ordered in justice and mercy,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who still make Jerusalem and other cities a battleground,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have the courage and honesty
to work openly for justice and peace,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those caught up in the violence of war,
that they may find support and encouragement,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who, weighed down with hardship,
failure, illness or sorrow,
and feel that God is far from them,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who are tempted to give up the way of the cross,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we, with those who have died in faith,
may find mercy in the day of Christ,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy

**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 – Thou 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.

Edward Plumptre
1821 – 1991

¶ Ending

**Eternal Father,
we thank you for nourishing us throughout our life:
may our fellowship strengthen us in faith,
build us up in hope,
and make us grow in love;
for the sake 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.