

**Ashburton and Moorland Team**

**Christ the King**

**20<sup>th</sup> November 2022**



## ¶ The Gathering

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

### ***Hymn – O worship the King***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjwsYu3Tx6A>

O worship the King all glorious above;  
O gratefully sing his power and his love:  
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,  
Pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.

O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,  
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form,  
And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

This earth, with its store of wonders untold,  
Almighty, thy power hath founded of old;  
Hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree,  
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;  
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
And sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
In thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;  
Thy mercies how tender! How firm to the end!  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

O measureless Might, ineffable Love,  
While Angels delight to hymn thee above,  
Thy humbler creation, though feeble their lays,  
With true adoration shall sing to thy praise.

Robert Grant  
(1779-1838)

## ***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***

Eternal Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he  
might rule over all things as Lord and King:  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;  
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**

### ***Old Testament Reading***

*Jeremiah 23.1-6*

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## ***New Testament Reading***

### *Colossians 1.11-20*

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### ***Hymn – You are the King of Glory***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKvyZq0Qfgw>

You are the King of Glory,  
you are the Prince of Peace,  
you are the Lord of heaven and earth,  
you're the Son of righteousness.  
Angels bow down before You  
worship and adore, for  
you have the words of eternal life,  
you are Jesus Christ the Lord.

Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Hosanna to the King of Kings!  
Glory in the highest heaven,  
for Jesus the Messiah reigns. (repeat)

## ***Gospel Reading***

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

*Luke 23.33-43*

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## ***The Sermon***

Jeremiah doesn't foretell Jesus coming as King, but in today's first reading he instead foretells the coming of a wise and good Shepherd. He's drawing on his knowledge of dedicated shepherds as the role was well known to him, and indeed to us.

Perhaps the biggest change in a shepherd's life since Jeremiah's time is the arrival of Quad Bikes. Mind you, I was talking to a Dartmoor shepherd this week who still rides out on horseback to keep an eye on his flock scattered over the common.

But Quad Bikes are the thing for the modern shepherd – get around quickly, speed in and speed out in the almost endless task of caring for the sheep, keeping an eye on them, checking they are OK.

So why is it that sheep (and indeed cattle and ponies) need looking after? Why are shepherds so important?

It's because sheep really aren't very good at looking after themselves – they get foot rot, they get caught in brambles, they get stuck behind fences.

One I met a couple of weeks ago had somehow got into a very narrow gap between a fence and a stone wall – it had churned the ground around it into mud, and couldn't turn and couldn't climb up – until we came along, when the sight of a dog and two people energised it so much that it scrambled up the wall, ran along the top for a couple of yards and then leapt over the fence to freedom.

On their own, sheep are pretty helpless – and so the role of shepherd came into existence. A good shepherd will care for and look after their sheep – but Jeremiah describes a dreadful sort of shepherd that “destroys and scatters the sheep of my pasture.” Irresponsible behaviour causing damage, suffering and loss.

Jeremiah is comparing the need for sheep to have a shepherd to the need for people to have a shepherd who makes them feel safe and who supports them in their troubles. He was clearly unimpressed with his country's leaders at the time!

So he sees God as coming to take care of them - “Then I, God, will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.”

Without a good leader (who sets out standards of good behaviour, and models good behaviour themselves), there are so many things that can hurt and damage people, even destroy and scatter them.

People know when they are being treated badly, when they suffer abuse, thus losing their dignity and self-respect. Jeremiah uses the word “evil” to describe actions and words that are destructive and damaging, rather than kind and good.



Evil is a strong word, but it's a useful short-hand for the things that hurt us when we suffer wrong in our lives.

I guess everyone here can think of a time when they felt upset or hurt by someone else's behaviour. It shouldn't happen, but it does – all too frequently, and the result is damaged relationships or even people damaged for their whole life.

Jeremiah was spelling out how society goes wrong. Then, a few hundred years later, Jesus spent his life in spelling out the importance of good behaviour. He spelt out the difference between right and wrong, between hypocrisy and honesty, between kind and caring behaviour or destructive, bad behaviour.

And Jesus' clear-sighted distinctions set the framework of all of our lives today. They have been incorporated into law, they are taught in schools, they make up the fabric of our society.

We know when they are broken – whether we are reading about MPs bullying Civil Servants, the illegal and destructive invasion of Ukraine, knife crime, sexual abuse, domestic abuse or whatever. People behaving badly is still, sadly, far too common.

I wonder, though, whether in their hearts such perpetrators know when they are behaving badly, but are sort of trapped by it. One of the criminals being executed alongside Jesus said: "We indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."

So it's at the heart of the Christian gospel to help people acknowledge their behaviour, and to deal with the consequences of their bad behaviour:

- By apologising when we get something wrong
- By seeking forgiveness when we've upset someone
- By rebuilding relationships when they are damaged
- By caring for and loving our neighbours

These values, set out so clearly in the bible, are the foundation of Christianity and the Christian way of life, and have been around so long that they are embedded in our legal system, our culture, our daily lives.

So, for example, the phrase “going the extra mile” is part of Jesus’ advice on how to build a relationship with someone who is making unreasonable demands.

It’s in this context that we can rejoice that God’s Son, Jesus, is our Shepherd. And that we can be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power – meaning that when we feel loved, we find it easier to be loving.

In particular Jesus showed his love for all lost sheep, all the embittered, struggling people, and he made them feel welcomed and valued. Just as good parents love their children, and make them feel welcomed and valued.

Yes, even when children drive their parents (or grandparents!) to despair or frustration, because even children have the capacity to be hurtful, selfish or unkind, just as we as adults have the capacity to get things wrong.

When we’ve sorted it, I’m sure you’ve felt that wave of relief after you’ve apologised to someone by saying “I’m sorry I got that wrong”, and they say “That’s ok – thank you for saying that.”

We can see how St Paul’s language echoes this theme “God has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Jesus as our Shepherd.

With his example to follow, just imagine if everyone apologised and made up relationships and sought to comfort people who are struggling... We wouldn’t even need a Safeguarding Policy!

But of course society is not there yet, and terrible behaviour can still be found in every part of society. The chances are that many of us will have experienced abusive behaviour at some point in our lives, possibly even from fellow Christians. That’s hard to understand.

Yet, by following Jesus as our Shepherd, and, on a bigger scale, seeing him as King of all, by trusting him and bringing our hurts to him, we can reach out and feel his love.

To know we are loved is to experience security and peace. Indeed, to have a foretaste of God’s Kingdom. 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***

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 – Christ triumphant***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r3EogSdfPU>

Christ triumphant, ever reigning,  
Saviour, Master, King.  
Lord of heav'n our lives sustaining  
hear us as we sing:  
Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name!

Word incarnate, truth revealing,  
Son of Man on earth!  
Pow'r and majesty concealing  
by your humble birth:  
Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name.

Suffering Servant scorned, ill-treated,  
victim, crucified!  
Death is though the cross defeated,  
sinners justified:  
Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name.

Priestly King, enthroned forever  
high in heaven above!  
Sin and death and hell shall never  
Stifle hymns of love:  
Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name.

So, our heart and voices raising  
Through the ages long,  
ceaselessly upon You gazing,  
this shall be our song:  
Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name.

Words: Michael Saward  
© 1996 Michael Saward/Jubilee Hymns

## ***Prayers of Intercession***

We pray to God our Eternal Father  
through our Saviour Jesus  
who is both Christ the King and the Good Shepherd  
and who understands our needs and the needs of this world.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

Eternal Father,  
we pray for your church,  
of which your Son is King.  
We pray that you will draw us together  
and unite us in the love of Christ  
that we may proclaim with one voice  
your justice and righteousness in a broken world.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

Eternal Father,  
we pray for your world,  
of which your Son is King.  
We pray for peace, reconciliation and healing  
in the places of war and hatred.  
We pray that the nations of this world  
may be united and subject to the rule of Christ the King,  
through whom and for whom all things were created.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

Eternal Father,  
we pray for our communities  
of which your Son is King.  
We pray for the communities of our friends and families,  
our church and our places of work and study.  
Help us to know the people around us  
as our brothers and sisters in Christ  
and to serve them as Christ the King would serve them.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

Eternal Father,  
we pray for all those who suffer,  
among whom your Son is King.  
We pray that they will know  
the presence of the Son of Man alongside them  
and the power of Christ the King within them  
bringing peace and healing according to their needs.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

Eternal Father,  
we give thanks to you for all that you do in our lives.  
We commend to you all those for whom we have prayed  
and ask that you use us and our prayers  
to make a difference in their lives  
for we ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,  
our Saviour and King.

**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.**

## Hymn – Lord enthroned in heavenly splendour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV9wUIZJFAA>

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour,  
first begotten from the dead,  
thou alone, our strong defender,  
liftest up thy people's head.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Jesus, true and living bread!

Here our humblest homage pay we;  
here in loving reverence bow;  
here for Faith's discernment, pray we  
lest we fail to know thee now,  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Thou art here, we ask not how.

Though the lowliest form doth veil Thee,  
as of old in Bethlehem,  
here as there Thine Angels hail Thee,  
branch and flower of Jesse's stem.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
We in worship join with them.

Paschal Lamb, Thy offering, finished  
once for all when Thou wast slain,  
in its fullness undiminished  
shall for evermore remain,  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Cleansing souls from every stain.

Life imparting Heavenly manna,  
stricken rock with streaming side,  
heaven and earth with loud hosanna  
worship Thee, the Lamb who died,  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Risen, ascended, glorified!

Words: George Hugh Bourne  
(1840-1925)

## **¶ *Ending***

Stir up, O Lord,  
the wills of your faithful people;  
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works,  
may by you be plenteously rewarded;  
through 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.**