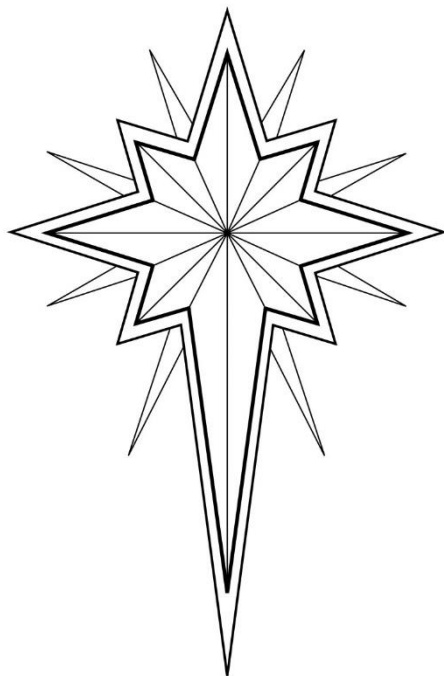


Ashburton and Moorland Team

Epiphany 2

15th January 2022



¶ The Gathering

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

Hymn – Come, let us join our cheerful songs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3ZgQcVIMTE>

Come, let us join our cheerful songs
with angels round the throne;
ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
but all their joys are one.

'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,
'to be exalted thus';
'Worthy the Lamb,' our lips reply,
'for he was slain for us.'

Jesus is worthy to receive
honour and power divine;
and blessings, more than we can give,
be, Lord, for ever thine.

Let all that dwell above the sky,
and air, and earth, and seas,
conspire to lift thy glories high,
and speak thine endless praise.

The whole creation joins in one
to bless the sacred name
of him that sits upon the throne,
and to adore the Lamb.

Isaac Watts
(1674 - 1748)

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 49.1-7

Listen to me, O coastlands,
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The Lord called me before I was born,
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
And he said to me, 'You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'
But I said, 'I have laboured in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the Lord,
and my reward with my God.'
And now the Lord says,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord,
and my God has become my strength—
he says, 'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'
Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
'Kings shall see and stand up,
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

1 Corinthians 1.1-9

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind

— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you — so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – O let the son of God enfold you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llmF3xc2vKM&t=106s>

O let the Son of God enfold you
with His Spirit and His love,
let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.
O let Him have the things that hold you
and His Spirit like a dove
will descend upon your life and make you whole.

Jesus, O Jesus
come and fill Your lambs.

Jesus, O Jesus
come and fill Your lambs.

O come and sing this song with gladness
as your hearts are filled with joy,
lift your hands in sweet surrender to His name.
O give Him all your tears and sadness,
give Him all your years of pain,
and you'll enter into life in Jesus' name.

Jesus, O Jesus
come and fill Your lambs.
Jesus, O Jesus
come and fill Your lambs.

John Wimber
(1933 - 1997)

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 1.29-42

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.'

They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" says John the Baptist, who recognises that Jesus is the Messiah, the one who will save the world.

By calling Jesus "the Lamb of God", John is drawing a strong connection with the Old Testament tradition of making a sacrifice to atone for a sin, to pay for it. When you had done something wrong, you had to pay for it by sacrificing a lamb. This was costly – it involved giving up a precious resource that would otherwise mature into a valuable sheep.

It sort of worked as a system, but it was based on the assumption that punishment will make people behave better; and of course it does, up to a point, but this was the Old Testament way, and not Jesus' way.

So I think there's a danger of over-emphasising the sacrificial nature of Jesus' death – it might lead us to feel that God needs us to suffer too. I don't see it like this at all. Jesus' way was a better way.

It seems to me that everyone gets things wrong. Everyone. Whatever else Jesus' death and resurrection achieved, it didn't stop people from getting things wrong, making mistakes, sinning. I do, we all do I guess.... I found this out as a child.

I also found out that when I got something wrong, the result could be one of two totally different experiences when it was my various relations who found out. In caricature it went like this – firstly the negative experience:

When staying with a particular aunt, I felt I was fairly frequently “told-off” – for not finishing my meals, for making too much noise, for disturbing her when she was resting. I couldn’t relax and I was quite frightened of getting something else wrong.

She assumed, I suppose, that I would be “good” all the time – and yet that’s impossible for any child! And the consequence for misbehaviour was to be punished, to have to sacrifice something, normally my freedom.

“You can’t go out and play until you’ve finished eating your meal.”

“You must go quietly to your bed and stay there until I tell you it’s getting up time.”

It’s a caricature, but it felt rather scary and oppressive staying with that aunt.

By contrast we sometimes stayed with my grandparents in Bovey. My grandfather was a delight. He was always showing me things to hold my interest, explaining where they came from or how they worked. He would tell stories, and listen to my stories. He was warm-hearted and friendly.

I don’t ever remember him telling me off or being upset, I just felt accepted and happy.

Of course I still got things wrong – I probably broke something in the house, I may have kept Granny awake, I may not have finished my food – but it really didn’t matter – I was just accepted.

As a result I wanted to please my grandfather, I wanted to be a friend to him, I wanted to be good, knowing I would be forgiven.

Can you see the difference?

One undermined my self-confidence, the other affirmed it. To over simplify – it was the difference between an Old Testament approach requiring sacrifices, and a New Testament approach offering love.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus befriended people, supported them, gave them endless fresh starts when they got things wrong, and most importantly, helped them to grow in awareness of things they really hadn’t realised they were getting wrong.

He also freed people from the misery of feeling they had failed and were being punished by their own sense of failure – a feeling that can lead to years of depression.

People like Zacchaeus, or the Prodigal Son, or the woman taken in adultery. Who were accepted despite their mistakes and were forgiven.

I found this out for myself in a group of teenagers who were Christians. They accepted me for who I was. They showed me that by being accepted, I was more likely to tune in to the people around me, and to understand more why some things that I did upset them. I wanted to put that right. As a result, I wanted to become responsible for my own actions – I never wanted to be “told-off” again!

Almost unconsciously I gravitated towards people who accepted me for who I am, people who I feel behaved like Jesus, who showed love and compassion. And made it easy to apologise and be freed from guilt.

It was this sort of community that St Paul was writing to, people he described as those “who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.... because of the grace of God that has been given them in Christ Jesus, for in every way they have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind.”

They were all sinners, just as we are, but they felt accepted by God, free to be themselves. Realising that when they got things wrong they were letting Jesus down, and, in a sense, that hurt Jesus.

A community of such people will make everyone welcome and allow them to be themselves, helping them grow in confidence.

To my mind, the mark of a good community is one where saints and sinners feel equally valued and welcome. Where genuine mistakes are made nothing of, where people feel safe to share their problems. Where trust and confidence grow. There are many such communities around, and quite often, thankfully, they are Christian!

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

**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 – Crown him with many crowns

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d_4vM

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne,
while heaven's eternal anthem drowns
all music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died to be
your saviour and your matchless king
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life
triumphant from the grave,
who rose victorious from the strife
for those he came to save:
his glories now we sing
who died and reigns on high;
he died eternal life to bring
and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of peace
his kingdom is at hand;
from pole to pole let warfare cease
and Christ rule every land!
A city stands on high,
his glory it displays,
and there the nations 'Holy' cry
in joyful hymns of praise.

Crown him the Lord of years,
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres
in majesty sublime:
all hail, Redeemer, hail,
for you have died for me;
your praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity!

Matthew Bridges
1800-1894

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, in your 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, in your 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, in your 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, in your 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, in your 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, in your 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, in your 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, in your 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 – Will you come and follow me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnXOEUS7BBM>

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John Bell (b1949)
Graham Maule (b1958)

¶ 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.