

# Ashburton and Moorland Team

## EASTER 4



## ¶ The Gathering

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

### ***Hymn – O for a thousand tongues to sing***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbiQ17uulKU>

O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
'tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
he sets the prisoner free;  
his blood can make the foulest clean;  
his blood availed for me.

He speaks, and listening to his voice,  
new life the dead receive;  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,  
the humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,  
your loosened tongues employ;  
ye blind, behold your Saviour come,  
and leap, ye lame, for joy.

Charles Wesley  
1707-1788

## ***The Greeting***

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

## ***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***

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.  
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil  
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

**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,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:  
raise us, who trust in him,  
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,  
that we may seek those things which are above,  
where he reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **¶ The Liturgy of the Word**

### ***Readings***

#### ***Acts 9.36-43***

In Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### ***Revelation 7.9-17***

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.

They cried out in a loud voice, saying,  
'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing,  
'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honour  
and power and might  
be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For this reason they are before the throne of God,  
and worship him day and night within his temple,  
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.  
They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;  
the sun will not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat;  
for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,  
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### ***Hymn - Bright the vision that delighted***

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

Bright the vision that delighted  
once the sight of Judah's seer;  
sweet the countless tongues united  
to entrance the prophet's ear.

Round the Lord in glory seated  
cherubim and seraphim  
filled his temple, and repeated  
each to each the alternate hymn:

'Lord, thy glory fills the heaven;  
earth is with its fullness stored;  
unto thee be glory given,  
holy, holy, holy, Lord.'

Heaven is still with glory ringing,  
earth takes up the angels' cry,  
'Holy, holy, holy,' singing,  
'Lord of hosts, the Lord most high.'

With his seraph train before him,  
with his holy Church below,  
thus unite we to adore him,  
bid we thus our anthem flow:

'Lord, thy glory fills the heaven;  
earth is with its fullness stored;  
unto thee be glory given,  
holy, holy, holy, Lord.'

Richard Mant  
(1776 – 1848)

### ***Gospel Reading***

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

*John 10.22-30*

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe.

The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### ***The Sermon***

The daily images of war and destruction in Ukraine show us almost apocalyptic scenes, scenes that we can't imagine happening here in our towns and villages. Destruction on a massive scale, caused by shelling and bombing. We see ruined houses, ruined hospitals, destroyed bridges, wrecked cars, damaged roads.

These are like scenes from a nightmare, violent and destructive, and then we see images of the people fleeing and seeking safety.

They must be longing for a peaceful and safe future. A world where such violence can never happen again, where sudden death is no more.

We've got used to living in peace in a peaceful country, so we are deeply shocked by what's going on. However in Jesus' lifetime, violent destruction was commonplace – there were uprisings and battles – only 20 years after his death Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed by the Roman Army, the invaders.

This was before the Book of Revelation was written, so in this context, the reading from the book of Revelation written by the visionary St John the Divine is revealing in that it explicitly names such violence, and provides an illustration of how to handle it.

Indeed experts who understand the context say the book contains endless coded references to the Roman invaders (named as the Anti-Christ), condemning them and envisioning their ultimate failure to defeat the power of God in Jesus.



He sets the scene in terms that are scarily familiar to the situation in Ukraine:

“These are they who have come out of the great ordeal” writes John. “They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat.”

This could be a description of the fortunate few civilians escaping from Mariupol. What a terrible ordeal they have had.

Those who have been trapped are struggling with hunger and thirst. Maybe freezing rather than being scorched, but still suffering great physical hardship day after day.

It would be no surprise if people in such situations felt hopeless, felt that there was no good in the world and fell into despair. Where is God, they might ask? Why is this happening to me?

In this context, John The Divine is writing about Jesus as the Messiah – having been killed despite having done nothing wrong, apart from preaching non-violence and peace.

His teaching had attracted a band of loyal followers whom he called his sheep – in today’s Gospel, Jesus is saying “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. They are safe in my hands, no-one can snatch them out – my Father and I will keep them safe.”

Christians have always believed that Jesus perfectly fitted the Old Testament prophets’ visions of the Messiah as the Suffering Servant, the Saviour who conquers death, bringing news of joyful eternal life to those suffering violence – something that no enemy could deprive them of.

John puts this into wonderful visionary language – the story of good overcoming evil, of good triumphing against all the odds.

And so he describes his vision as follows:

“After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

All those people, from every tribe and nation, have come together to bask in the goodness of God, freed from the troubles of life, of living. For everyone has hard times, everyone suffers from time to time, and it was Jesus, the Lamb, who showed that suffering can be transformed into joy, death into resurrection and new life.

So John’s vision grows and grows in it’s splendour:

“And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing,  
‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honour  
and power and might  
be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.’”

Rather than thinking of our own troubles, maybe feeling sorry for ourselves, if we lift our eyes to heaven and in our mind’s eye envisage the vast crowds surrounding and worshipping the Lamb, then our spirits too will be drawn thither.

It’s an invitation to use our imagination to illustrate our belief – picturing God in all his glory – we’ll probably all picture these images differently in our minds – the key is to realise that we are not alone, but part of a timeless multitude. That suffering cannot separate us from God.

For me, when I picture such scenes in my imagination, I find pieces of music adding colour to the visions – maybe snatches from the Messiah or a hymn. So I hope the hymns I’ve chosen for today can help us all to imagine the “New Jerusalem” more vividly and joyously.

“Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honour  
and power and might  
be to our God for ever and ever! 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***

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples  
and said, 'Peace be with you.'  
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

**The peace of the Lord be always with us.**

### ***Hymn – Jerusalem the golden***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFh9P2ahrPU>

Jerusalem the golden,  
with milk and honey blest,  
beneath thy contemplation  
sink heart and voice oppressed:  
I know not, oh, I know not,  
what joys await us there;  
what radiancy of glory,  
what bliss beyond compare!

They stand, those halls of Zion,  
all jubilant with song,  
and bright with many an angel,  
and all the martyr throng:  
the prince is ever in them,  
the daylight is serene;  
the pastures of the blessed  
are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;  
and there, from care released,  
the shout of them that triumph,  
the song of them that feast;  
and they who with their Leader  
have conquered in the fight,  
for ever and for ever  
are clad in robes of white.

Oh, sweet and blessed country,  
the home of God's elect!  
Oh, sweet and blessed country,  
that eager hearts expect!  
Jesus, in mercy bring us  
to that dear land of rest,  
who art, with God the Father,  
and Spirit, ever blest.

John Mason Neale  
(1818- 1866)

### ***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.**

In joy and hope we pray.  
We pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his  
glorious and life-giving resurrection,  
we pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That people across the world who are suffering violence or  
persecution may hold on to God's promise of eternal life and  
salvation,  
we pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That leaders of countries torn apart by war may find the means to  
withstand aggression, and work to bring about a peaceful resolution  
of conflicts,  
we pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That all those receiving refugees may find the resources to keep them safe,  
we pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That agencies and volunteers helping those who lack food, housing or medicine may be strengthened and encouraged in their good work,  
we pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That those who are working in over-stretched medical services may receive the necessary resources, and be kept safe,  
we pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That God may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the weak and the dying,  
to comfort and strengthen them,  
we pray to the Father.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

That God may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people, so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection,  
we pray to the Father.  
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.**

### *Hymn – Glorious things of thee are spoken*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RubiYNXSue8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RubiYNXSue8)

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God;  
he whose word cannot be broken  
formed thee for his own abode.  
On the Rock of Ages founded,  
what can shake thy sure repose?  
With salvation's walls surrounded,  
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters,  
springing from eternal love,  
well supply thy sons and daughters  
and all fear of want remove.  
Who can faint while such a river  
ever flows their thirst to assuage?  
Grace which, like the Lord, the giver,  
never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hov'ring,  
see the cloud and fire appear  
for a glory and a cov'ring,  
showing that the Lord is near.  
Thus they march, the pillar leading  
light by night and shade by day,  
daily on the manna feeding  
which he gives them on their way.

Saviour, since of Zion's city  
I through grace a member am,  
let the world deride or pity,  
I will glory in thy name.  
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,  
boasted pomp and empty show;  
solid joys and lasting treasure  
none but Zion's children know.

John Newton  
1725 - 1807

## ¶ Ending

Merciful Father,  
you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,  
and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again:  
keep us always under his protection,  
and give us grace to follow in his steps;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## *The Blessing*

The God of peace,  
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
that great shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the eternal covenant,  
make us perfect in every good work to do his will,  
working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us and remain with us always.

**Amen.**