

## Prayers of Intercession

Lord, who created order from the chaos, **bring light to darkness.**

In places of war and conflict, where there is famine and suffering, where we struggle to see how we can make a difference, **bring light to darkness.**

In our own communities, for those who are poor, for the homeless and hungry, for the lonely and the prisoner, **bring light to darkness.**

In those whose lives are made harder by illness ..., and those who search for peace and cannot find it, **bring light to darkness.**

In the lives of those who are grieving ..., **bring light to darkness.**

In the lives of those we live with, those we work with and those we play with, and for ourselves, **bring light to darkness.**

**Amen**

## **The Lord's Prayer.**

Hymn: StF 371      **Breathe on me, spirit of Jesus**

May the God of new beginnings give you courage to face each new challenge, joy in each new day, and friends to journey with you through this new week.

And may God's grace bless you and keep you in all that you do.

**Amen**

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### Acknowledgements:

Reflection inspired by Jane Williams *Lectionary Reflections, Iona and Roots*; Prayers - *Roots*. This resource is taken from [rootsontheweb.com](http://rootsontheweb.com) and is copyright © ROOTS for Churches Ltd. Reproduced with permission.

NRSV - New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. (Spelling Anglicised.)

## **Darlington District Worship at Home Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

*Prepared by Diane Coleman, Castle Eden Circuit. Thank you, Diane.*

Come, let us honour the powerful glory of our Creator God.  
Let us worship God's majesty in the splendour of holiness.

Hymn: StF 272      **From heaven you came, helpless babe**

## Prayers

Lord God, giver of light and life, by your word you bring everything into being – the far-flung galaxies and the tiniest atomic particle.

You have given us a world to enjoy and to care for. Give us compassion in the use of its resources, wisdom in our stewardship of your gifts, and reverence for all that you have made – for Jesus' sake.

*(You may wish to dedicate your weekly offering at this point.)*

Lord, when you came into the world, things changed. When we came into a relationship with you, things changed. Life became filled with a new sense of purpose and peace.

But sometimes we let you down by doing wrong things or failing to do right things. Through pride, stubbornness or fear we build barriers and keep others at arm's length – even you.

At times we give in to our weaknesses and temptations, failing to draw on your strength.

At times we are troubled by difficult situations and find it hard to trust you. Help us to turn such things around and turn to you.

O God, when Jesus was baptised, you spoke of your love for him. You showed your love for us through Jesus' death and resurrection. By the power of the cross, the darkness of our wrongdoing is banished by the light of your loving forgiveness.

Help us to learn from the past and, drawing on your strength and peace, make a better future.

**Amen.**

Genesis 1:1-5 (NRSV)

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Mark 1:4-11 (NRSV)

John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Hymn: StF 233

**When Jesus came to Jordan**

Reflection

The Lion Storyteller Bible<sup>1</sup> begins the creation story like this:

"At first there wasn't anything at all. Nothing! So God set to work. But he didn't use his hands or a special machine. He spoke, that's all. He said 'I'd like some light.' And there was light. Brighter than a summer morning or a thousand Christmas candles."

(Bob Hartmann's description, for children, of the nothingness before creation.)

<sup>1</sup> The Lion Storyteller Bible, Lion Hudson plc, Oxford, 2008

Even the author of Genesis struggles with words: formless, void, dark, trying to describe a sense of absence. Without God there is nothing. Then God begins to create the world out of nothingness, using, and making it, part of his own language. Like a newborn baby, God talks to it and brings it into community with him, part of his family. (*Jane Williams*)

The whole Gospel passage centres on new beginnings. The first sentence spells out the way in which the world is entirely changed, now that Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, is present.

John's ministry reaches its climax with the announcement of the one who will baptise with water and the Holy Spirit – and Jesus appears.

And at Jesus's baptism, the voice of God expresses pleasure and affirms his son. Jesus's life is changed as he accepts his ministry by the symbolic act of baptism. Another seemingly ordinary person went into the water, but when he emerged God's word is again spoken.

The word of God that brought light, symbol of understanding and clarity, continues the work of creation by offering us his son, the incarnate Word, and the world is changed.

We too are offered the opportunity for a fresh start. We pray that this new year, this time of change in both political and health settings will be one of benefit to all. This is the time of year when many of us attend Covenant services, when we recommit ourselves to following God's will in our lives. A reminder that is stronger than most new year resolutions, and scary for some, is in the promises of the Covenant Prayer, with words of total commitment to God: 'I am no longer my own, but yours'. God continues his creation in us and through us, speaking words of love and challenge.

If this is the Word of God, which is meant to change our lives, how will our lives change in the next few days having heard it? (*Iona*)<sup>2</sup>

*(pause for personal reflection)*

<sup>2</sup> A Wee Worship Book, Fifth Incarnation, Wild Goose Resource Group, 2015