

love that is humble and kind;  
love that reaches out to all.

In love, let us pray for ourselves, that love may prevail:  
love that overcomes fear;  
love that brings understanding;  
love that is motivated by the needs of others;  
love that gives everything;  
love that is of God.

Lord, we pray that our love may bear all things, believe all things,  
hope all things, endure all things, so that our lives may be  
reflections of your love and give glory to you.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, *Amen*.

Hymn StF 415 H&P 804 **The Church of Christ, in every age**

### Blessing

May the light of the Risen Christ dispel our shadows;  
May the love of the Risen Christ renew and enable us;  
May the joy of the Risen Christ shine through us,  
that we may walk with him and bring others to him,  
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore.  
**Amen**

#### Acknowledgements:

Bible quotes are from New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 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.

Prayers drawn from a variety of sources including:

<sup>1</sup> Opening Prayers: Iona Community Morning Prayers A.

Other prayers and all reflections written by Rev Tony Buglass, supernumerary minister in the Tynedale Circuit.

## **Darlington Methodist District** **Worship at Home Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

### Gathering in worship

As a family gathered, in all our different homes and places, we gather in the name and in the presence of the living God who makes us one.

Hymn StF 365 H&P 258 **Jesu, the joy of loving hearts**

### Prayers<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning, before time, before people, before the world began, God was.

Here and now, among us, beside us, enlisting the people of earth for the purposes of heaven, God is.

In the future, when we have turned to dust, and all we know has found its fulfilment, God will be.

Not denying the world, but delighting in it; not condemning the world, but redeeming it, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, God was, God is, God will be.

In you, gracious God, the widowed find a carer, the orphaned find a parent, the fearful find a friend.

In you, the wounded find a healer, the penitent find a pardoner, the burdened find a counsellor.

In you, the miserly find a beggar, the despondent find a laughter-maker, the legalists find a rule-breaker.

In you, Jesus Christ, we meet our Maker, and our match.

And if some need to say 'Help me', and if some need to say 'Save me', and if some need to say 'Hold me', and if some need to say 'Forgive me', then let these be said now in confidence by us.

**Amen**

Reading: [John.6:35, 41-51](#)

The Bread of life, the Lifegiver ...

Reading: [Ephesians 4:25-5:2](#)

The right way to live...

Hymn: StF 35 **The trumpets sound, the angels sing**

H&P 611 **I am the bread of life**

Reflection:

Many years ago, I joined a gym, and was offered a special fitness training regime which combined diet and exercise: you started the day with 10 points on your scoresheet, and lost points for every unhealthy thing you ate, but in the other column you started with nothing, but scored up to 10 points a day for doing exercise. If at the end of the week you scored above a certain level, you **were** losing weight and increasing fitness. It did work, but you needed both diet and exercise.

Being a Christian is about being fit to live for God. Jesus said 'Follow me', which not only meant walking with him, but following his example. Ephesians spells out in a bit more detail what kind of lifestyle that could be. At its simplest, it means not being like everybody else, but following Jesus in a new way of life, of integrity and wholesomeness. The Letter sets out a list of does and don'ts, but it's not just about keeping to the rules: 5:2 "live a life of love, just as Christ loves us." In order to meet that demanding lifestyle we need to be fit: all we do in worship and fellowship is the spiritual exercise, which keeps us fit for discipleship.

We also need the proper diet, which is why Jesus offered himself as the Bread of Life. Exercise needs the right kind of fuel: at Wimbledon, we see players snacking on bananas between points, because they contain all the right nutrients for energy, but won't burn off too quickly. We need the right kind of fuel for the task before us: Jesus offers himself. Bread was the staple diet: whatever else

people had, they needed bread. Jesus echoed Moses, giving bread in the wilderness, but where Moses gave the Law, rules to follow with no guarantee of success, Jesus gives himself, living in us and through us to enable us to live the life of love to which he calls us.

Following Jesus is demanding. It demands everything we are and have. But to enable us to do that, to achieve that level of fitness and commitment, Jesus has already given us all he is and has, so that we can become all we need to be. "I am the bread of life: whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never go thirsty."

Intercessions:

Lord, because you love us, we love you, we love your world, we love one another, we love ourselves and we pray that you will so increase our love that the world which we serve may have faith and hope in you.

In love, let us pray for the world, that love may prevail:

love that feeds the hungry;  
love that defends the weak;  
love that loves fairly;  
love that returns right for wrong;  
love that brings peace.

In love let us pray for those who suffer, that love may prevail:

love that heals the sick;  
love that stays with the dying;  
love that comforts the sorrowful;  
love that calms the fearful;  
love that suffers with us.

In love, let us pray for the whole Church of God, that love may prevail:

love that binds all Christians together;  
love that inspires our worship;  
love that is sensitive to need;  
love that is humble and kind;  
love that reaches out to all.