

We pray for the world as power struggles bring despotic rule to many; as surges in coronavirus are still happening in a wide variety of countries; as the climate summit is prepared and planned; as aid is sought in many places.

We pray for industries that have cut back, reducing employment, and for the people who are living in poverty; for industries that highlight the need to be welcoming of more workers from Europe and elsewhere, and for asylum seekers and refugees who are being detained here in deplorable circumstances.

We pray for your church, as we continue to consider how to worship together; how to be relevant, compassionate and useful in our communities, revealing Jesus who is already there calling us to join him.

And we pray for ourselves and one another as more and more virus restrictions are lifted; as maybe we struggle with faith, with health both physical and mental; as many still feel lonely and on the edge. May we live as fully as we can, with hope and trust.

Your kingdom come on earth

Your will indeed be done

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father...

HYMN StF 398 / H&P 326 *There's a spirit in the air* Brian Wren

THE BLESSING

Go in peace, for the Lord your God is with you.



Our worship sheet this week was prepared by Rev Jean Hudson.

Darlington District Worship at Home 19 September 2021



CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We are here, God, where you have brought us, through our laughter and our struggling. Loving God our Maker

All: **We are glad to be here with you.**

Leader: We are here, Jesus, where you have drawn us, through our prayer and our listening, Jesus our Saviour and Companion

All: **We are glad to be here with you.**

Leader: We are here, Holy Spirit, where you have led us, through our doubting and our dreaming. Holy Spirit our Comforter and Disturber

All: **We are glad to be here with you.**

HYMN StF 20 *'Be still, for the presence of the Lord'* David Evans
or H&P 17 *'Sing to the Lord a joyful song'* John S. B. Monsell

PRAYER

God of grace and hope, in times past, September would be a month of decisions with a new Methodist year beginning. But this is now and still different, as if we are still waiting for our hopes of freedom and certainty to be fulfilled, to be able to move forward with confidence. However, this is our reality and now is the moment in which to live as your people. Help us, we pray, to trust you in these tentative times, and ready us in your forgiveness and strength to follow Jesus just as we are right now. **Amen.**

READING – [Psalm 23](#)



REFLECTION

September

A month of change as one season dips into another, never an easy transition. Misty mornings, occasional frosts, gleaming sunshine, sharp showers, rainbows, an Indian summer, anything is possible, and we can have it all. Along the railway walk, changes are visible, as flowers diminish in number, and those that still bloom are especially precious – harebells and knapweed, willowherb and comfrey, St John's wort and toadflax, blue and purple and yellow.

Among seed heads of thistles flashing goldfinches circle and settle, fly up and settle again further along the line. Fields where harvests have long since been gathered, are already greening with next year's crops, edged with vivid reds of hips and haws, and black hanging elderberries.

Memories of summer are still sharp and sweet, but another season beckons...

I wrote this reflection a few years ago as I walked the Lanchester Valley Walk every morning with my dog. I wrote it as poetry but have brought it together as prose in the limited space. (I will be using my reflections for October and November in a similar way in the services I prepare.)

September is a month of yearning for summer, but the reality is approaching autumn. A bit like our lives now, as we look back and are fearful of moving forward, still not really knowing what the future will bring or be like. We can live in a fantasy and pretend that everything is normal, but Jesus always had his feet on the ground – living in an occupied country, aware of the gap between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, Israelite and Samaritan or foreigner. It was in these real circumstances that he talked of God, lived compassion, healed and encouraged, loved and laughed. He calls us to be filled with the Spirit's courage, wisdom and energy to do the same in our reality.

As we do it, we will find the beauty and resilience of people who have found a way through loss and illness, poverty, anguish, despair and feeling overwhelmed. They will inspire and encourage us to follow Jesus into our own ministry of compassion so that others will find their way through to the promise and possibility of new life with him.

The colours of September are triumphant blues and purples and yellows – thank God for them and live with hope.

HYMN *StF 481 'The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want' Stuart Townend or H&P 69 'The King of love my Shepherd is' H. Baker*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of all hope, we bring our prayers for people and places in these unsettling times of transition on the earth, in the world, in industry, in the church, in the way we live our lives.

So we pray in this time of red alert climate change for the earth itself and the people who have suffered in raging fires, storm surges and floods, earthquakes, landslides, drought and devastation in the true meaning of that word. You loved and love your creation and we ask to be part of whatever action can be taken to limit or even repair the damage we have caused.