

Thank for the fellowship between us, for how we trust each other and look out for each other. But we pray, too, that we might always be inclusive, aware that people might feel excluded for any number of reasons. It may be that all they need is a face to face invitation: 'Come and see' or 'Come with me'.

**All: Holy Spirit, grant us grace**

Thank you for all our experience of worship, prayer and preaching, for how we have been inspired, comforted, taught and encouraged. But we ask, too, to be open to change in how the message of your love is conveyed, in how we talk of you, how we pray or simply in how our chairs are arranged so that maybe we can see each other.

**All: Holy Spirit, grant us grace**

Thank you for the design and comfort of our buildings and for all through the years who have looked after them, kept them in good repair. But we pray now in these days of climate change, that we might learn how to be 'greener' in how we heat them, how we light them, how we insulate them.

**All: Holy Spirit, grant us grace.**

We pray in the name of Jesus, Head of the Body. **Amen.**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

***HYMN*** StF 608 / H&P 753 'All praise to our redeeming Lord'  
Charles Wesley

**THE BLESSING**

We go in peace seeking to live and work to the glory of God.  
**Amen**

**Darlington District  
Worship at Home  
Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021**



*Our worship sheet was prepared by Rev Jean Hudson. Jean reflects on October in the second in her series reflecting on the autumn months.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: We come together into the presence of God, in the name of Jesus

**All: Drawn by the Spirit into penitence**

Leader: We come together in our common humanity

**All: Drawn by the Spirit into humility**

Leader: We come together to receive the grace of God

**All: Drawn by the Spirit into thankfulness**

***HYMN*** StF 676 / H&P 764 'Christ, from whom all blessings flow'  
Charles Wesley

**PRAYER**

We come, loving God, as members together of the Body of Christ. Whatever our various situations, gathered or scattered, we pray that you will gather us as one in the Spirit, in praise and thankfulness for all that lifts our hearts and makes us glad to be alive. Please help us to encourage one another in love, praying

for each other and being thankful for each other. If we have failed to do this, we ask for your forgiveness, knowing that when we come to you in honesty we will receive this profound blessing. Thank you for all blessings which are ours in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**READINGS** – [John 15: 9-12](#); [1 Corinthians 12: 12-27](#)

## REFLECTION

### October

Dark mornings have arrived and meeting familiar people has become more important. Some are known by name – like Russell and Jean, Annie, Geoff and Duncan, Stuart, Richard and Marjorie. Some are known only by their dogs – Bailey and Barney and Jack. Some are simply familiar faces of walkers and joggers, horse riders and cyclists. All are welcome in the darker mornings.

Skies can be spectacular – spectacularly grey, full of rain present and future; or with streaks of bright orange and red promising wind for later.

Flowers have all gone now, and days grow shorter, as trees begin to welcome autumn with shades reminiscent of crab apple jelly and cranberry sauce, caramel and cinder toffee, chocolate limes and sherbert lemons. But when the sun shines, beech trees stand out from the crowd in their bronzy brilliance.

Birds are back after their sleepy summer – blackbirds and robins, sparrows and collared doves. There are only hints of summer now, but life in human, canine and feathered form is present to be celebrated.

Life lurks almost hidden in other places, too, but more of that next month...

Walking along the old railway line has taught me many things about seasons and cycles, life and death, promise in the bleakest time that life is being nurtured in secret, but most importantly, that people are precious. Forging a bond builds fellowship, mutual confidence and trust and develops a deep delight that we belong.

Church at its best is like this. There is a timeless quality and significance to Paul's description of the Body of Christ. From Jesus he had learned that each person is loved and matters to God; that we each have a place and a purpose in the Body; that we don't have to be bronzy and brilliant but being unobtrusively ourselves is enough; that if anyone is missing or in trouble it hurts the whole. As a minister I really didn't appreciate that many in the congregation felt that the chairs they sat on were 'theirs' and no-one else had a right to sit there! But my goodness, it made it easy from the pulpit to know who was missing so that I could ensure from others that they were all right or if they needed help.

Love one another, says Jesus. Carry one another's burdens, says Paul (elsewhere). Let's take seriously the need always to build up the Body of Christ and find joy in so doing.

**HYMN** *StF 611 'Brother, sister, let me serve you'* Richard A M Gillard or *H&P 280 'Breathe on me breath of God'* Edwin Hatch

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of love and forgiveness, thank you for the huge privilege of being part of the Body of Christ. We come in prayer now to ask how we can be more effective, wanting you to speak to us to reassure but also to call us to be braver in our following of Jesus.