

We pray for the nations of the world and their leaders, some of which have been harbouring enmities for generations if not millennia, while others struggle to find a better way. We ask that you would empower those who want to establish justice and reconciliation. Holy Spirit,

All: **Please grant us peace**

We pray for your Church, still facing major adjustments after the disruption of Covid-19. Please help us to find our way towards being a loving, inclusive, relevant body of people amongst new and old needs within our fellowships and communities. Holy Spirit

All: **Please grant us kindness**

God of sunshine and shadow

All: **May we trust your love always**

God of changes and challenges

All: **May we trust your love always**

Leader: God of calm and struggle

All: **May we trust your love always**

Leader: God of calling and sending

All: **May we trust your love always**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN: StF 519 / CMP133 **Father, I place into your hands** (Jenny Hewer)

THE BLESSING

This service sheet was prepared by Rev Jean Hudson. Thank you,
Jean. <https://bible.oremus.org/?q|=503882749>

Darlington District Worship at Home Sunday 21st November 2021



CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In autumn's dark, within and without

All: **Jesus, be our light**

Leader: In autumn's wistfulness

All: **Jesus, be our peace**

Leader: In autumn's moments of exquisite beauty

All: **Jesus, be our joy**

Leader: This autumn, as nations count the cost of raging fires

All: **Jesus, be our hope**

HYMN: StF 728 **O God, you search me and you know me**
(Bernadette Farrell - or read [Psalm 139](#) on which the hymn is based)

PRAYER:

Merciful God, in the words of this lovely hymn, we are given insight into your patient understanding and love for us and we rest now, in a moment of silence, to allow your searching love to fill us... Thank you for blessing us just as we are, full of peace or full of distress, asking questions or finding answers, anxious, wishing, yearning, dreaming. Please hold us and keep us in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

READINGS:

[Genesis 9: 13-16;](#)

[Isaiah 65: 17-18;](#)

[Philippians 3: 10-14](#)

REFLECTION: *November*

Another season has now made its presence felt. Some leaves cling on, the rich brown of beech trees and the pale gold of silver birches; but most leaves are underfoot now, scrunchy or squidgy a sign of the cycle of birth and death.

But new birth is already present. Long before leaves have fallen, buds have formed; and catkins, one of the iconic signs of spring, already make their pattern against the sky. Even in this most melancholy of months, hope of something different lifts our spirits.

On frosty mornings, and we've had a few, the sky is still spell-binding – grey and orange and turquoise, red and yellow and pink and cream, you can sing a sunrise, sing a sunrise, sing a sunrise dream.

Blackbirds are more numerous now, noisily squabbling among the leaves, perhaps anticipating the battle for territory to begin in January.

November is a melancholy month, even without the shadow of red-alert climate change, full of memories, the recent or from the distant past. Memory is massively important in determining who we are, our ability to make connections between past and present and to be steadfast in relationships. Annual events like birthdays may not be quite so welcome as we get older, but they make us remember.

And yet, there is also a time for forgetting, not in dementia but while we still have all our faculties, as trees let go of leaves. Too often, holding on to something can warp relationships as much as unwanted memory loss; too often, dwelling on the past gobbles up all our energy, leaving nothing in the tank for being creative in the present or future. The readings reveal God both remembering and forgetting, holding on and letting go. We need to ask for God's wisdom to know when to do the one or the other and his essential help to do it. Forgetting – and forgiving – is rarely instant, and we

need to recognise that for some it may not be possible in this life. But there is certainly grace, in different circumstances, for both remembering and letting go. Have another look at what Paul says, and remember how the fantastic skies of November point to the hope that lies in another day and new birth is never far away.

HYMN: StF 468 **I was on your mind** (Mick Dalton)



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Ever-present God, you search us and you know us, you love us and forgive us. As we wait in your presence, please put a new Spirit within us, for the burdens of these days require all of your Spirit's graces and gifts.

We pray for the earth which you gave to us in trust. The whole creation waits for us to fulfil our responsibilities as your children and we ask for an urgent renewal of our relationship with the planet we call home. Holy Spirit,

All: **Please grant us wisdom**