

Perhaps you are able to walk around a garden, field or park and simply enjoy what is around you. Feel free to choose something which helps you enter into prayer. Spend some time giving thanks to God for the gifts of creation and discerning how God's Spirit is calling you to care for creation now.

### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern

Lord, it is you who stretched out the heavens like a curtain and spread them like a tent for us to live in; **we offer you our praise.**

It is you who, when the leaders of the nations fail their people, will bring them to naught; **we long for your justice.**

You are the Holy One, who can compare with your glory; **we offer you our faith.**

You call your people by name and ensure no one is missing; **we long for your mercy.**

You are the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth; **we offer you our creativity.**

You give power to the faint and strengthen the powerless; **we long for your grace.**

You cause young and old to rise up on wings like eagles; **we offer you our weakness.**

In faith and longing, we pray for your world, remembering that you hold all creation in your care. **Amen**

*(Michaela Youngson based on Isaiah 40:22-31) - Methodist Prayer Handbook 2020*

The Lord's Prayer Our Father...

Singing the Faith 116: Sing for God's glory that colours the dawn of creation

### Closing responses:

Source of life and blessing, of garden, orchard, field:  
Root us in obedience to you and nourish us by your ever-flowing Spirit that, perceiving only the good we might do,  
our lives may be fruitful, our labour productive,  
and our service useful, in communion with Jesus, our brother. **Amen.**

God's power working in us,  
**does more than we can imagine:**  
**Glory to God!**

## Darlington District Worship 27 September 2020.



### The Earth is the Lord's (Psalm 24.1)

In this final week of District Worship Resources, as local churches begin to re-open and circuits provide local resources, we focus on a theme for Harvest – 'the earth is the Lord's'. We give thanks for God's creation, for the abundance of gifts which the earth imparts, and remember our responsibility for God's world. We also draw upon some of the worship from the September District Synod.

### Call to Worship:

O God, you summon the day to dawn,  
you teach the morning to waken the earth.  
**GREAT IS YOUR NAME, GREAT IS YOUR LOVE.**

For you the valleys shall sing for joy,  
the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
**GREAT IS YOUR NAME, GREAT IS YOUR LOVE.**

For you the monarchs of the earth shall bow,  
the poor and persecuted shall shout for joy.  
**GREAT IS YOUR NAME, GREAT IS YOUR LOVE.**

Your love and mercy shall last for ever,  
fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise.  
**GREAT IS YOUR NAME, GREAT IS YOUR LOVE.**

*© 1999 Wild Goose Resource Group Wee Worship Book*

Singing the Faith 102: For the beauty of the earth

### Prayer:

Everything that has breath shout, 'Praise the Lord!'  
All creatures lift your voice and shout, 'Praise the Lord!'  
Rise up to the furthest shore and shout, 'Praise the Lord!'  
Travel to the nearest hill and shout, 'Praise the Lord!'  
Heaven and earth shall shout, 'Praise the Lord!'  
*Chris Stand – Methodist Prayer Handbook 2020*

*Worship sheet created by Revd Richard Andrew*

### A prayer of confession:

Gracious God, We confess that we have been slow to recognise how carelessly we have treated your precious gift of Creation. Our addictive lifestyles have encouraged us to take, use and cast aside. We have plundered finite resources, with little thought for poorer communities and future generations. We acknowledge our guilt and ask you to change our hearts. May we glimpse the possibilities of a new, shared, wholesome and more just way of living. May we know your forgiveness, and act upon it, so that we may receive your fullness of life, and know lasting contentment.

*Hope in God's Future (Methodist Conference 2009)*

### Ministry of the Word beginning with the Prayer of Approach to Scripture:

Creating God, your reign of love makes all things new: plant seeds of confidence and gladness in our hearts so that, trusting in your word, we may live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and was raised for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 65:5-13

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

**By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might.**

You silence the roaring of the seas,  
the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.

**Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.**

You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.

**You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening its showers, and blessing its growth.**

You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy,

**the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.**

### Readings: Genesis 2:4a-9, 15, 18-20; Matthew 6:26-29

Hymn: Singing the Faith 130: We plough the fields and scatter

### Reflection:

One of the focuses at the Darlington District September Synod was on creation and, in particular, the impact of human beings upon God's creation, biodiversity and climate change. In our closing worship, we reflected in a time of silence on the question:

*'At this hour, how is God calling us to care for creation?'*

How would you answer that question? The Bible pictures creation as a gift, a place where God is present, a theatre, as some theologians call it, of God's glory. Human beings, in particular, are pictured as playing a role as stewards, partners in God's creation. The creation can be appreciated just for its wonder and beauty but it is also a place of abundance bringing forth its fruits in due season – the source of our celebration of harvest and thanksgiving for God's good gifts. At the same time the creation is inter-dependent, every living thing is connected in a delicate eco-system. The breakdown of ecosystems, of biodiversity and the threat of climate change impacts every living creature including human beings.



I took this picture towards the end of lockdown wandering by the River Tees just outside Darlington between Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent. The wild cornflowers in the foreground are set against a field of ripening wheat, some months before harvesting. It reminds me of the inter-relationship of all things.

You may wish to use the photograph as the basis for a short time of reflection. Alternatively you may have an object around you which speaks to you and enables you to pray and reflect on what God is calling you to be thankful for in creation and how you are being called to care for it. It might be a photo or a postcard; a vase of flowers or a bowl of fruit;