

Reading: [Micah 6: 1-8](#)

Justice

How might God be challenging us today?

Climate change is very much in our news as the summit meets in Glasgow. We lament that it is often the poorest who bear the worst of the impacts and who have least with which to respond.

Reflect and Pray

The sea and the bells by Pablo Neruda

If each day falls inside each night, there exists a well where clarity is imprisoned.	We need to sit on the rim of the well of darkness and fish for fallen light with patience.
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What one step can we take to care for our planet?

How can we keep caring when the focus moves on?

As the clocks turn back, we pray with thanksgiving for all the gifts we have enjoyed, friendships we have shared, the family who have cared.

We thank God, for the gifts of scientists, the protection of the vaccine and pray for justice in sharing vaccines around the world.

As our young people meet at 3Generate we thank God for their enthusiasm, vision and courage. May we hear their voices.

As world leaders gather in Glasgow for Cop26 we pray for wisdom and courage in the decisions taken on behalf of the whole earth, recognising that the poorest are often the first to be affected.

We pray for those who speak truth to those in power and pray for our own courage to take the next steps as we fish for fallen light.

Hymn: StF 746 **For all the saints who showed your love**

May we each go in peace: walking lightly on our precious planet, watching carefully for others, speaking kindly, acting bravely, in your name, loving Jesus. **Amen**

Darlington District
Worship at Home
Sunday 31st October 2021



As we move into November with All Saints Day, All Souls and Remembrance Days we offer this worship sheet as an opportunity for reflection on the journey we have travelled over the last two years. You may like to use this as one service or you could use the sections separately over a few days.

Prepared by Charity Hamilton, Jean Hudson, Tricia Mitchell, David Wood

O Lord, all my longing is known to you;
my sighing is not hidden from you.
My heart throbs, my strength fails me;
as for the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me.

But it is for you, O LORD, that I wait;
it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.

(Psalm 38: 9, 10, 15)

Prayer

In a moment of silence we hold out our hands to God, recognising that sometimes words are inadequate, but trusting God to know what is on our hearts.

We hold out our pandemic experiences to the One who holds us.

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. Blessed is he whose hope is in the Lord his God, the maker of heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them – the Lord who remains faithful forever. Psalm 146:5-6.

Hymn: StF 733 **God, hold us, enfold us, through desolate loss**

Reading: [Ruth 1: 1-18](#)

Loss

At a crisis point in their lives three bereaved women, Naomi, Orpah and Ruth seek a new beginning against a backdrop of pain and loss. Daughters in law Orpah and Ruth choose different paths. Orpah does as she is instructed and returns to her familiar context. Ruth will not be persuaded to do the same and she continues with Naomi to Bethlehem and in due course bears a son, a family line which leads to David ([Ruth 4: 13-22](#)) and on to Joseph ([Matthew 1: 1-18](#)).

From intense loss came new life, an earthly and a heavenly King.

Reflect and Pray

We have witnessed so many losses. Lost lives, loss of memory and recognition, loss of employment and homes, lost opportunities and so much more. Do we, like Naomi, feel bitter (Ruth 1: 13, 20) or like Ruth seek God (Ruth 1:16)?

God, my father and mother,
what should I take from this moment?
Are you calling me to resume the familiar,
or to step out into the unknown?
Give me courage to bear your image
as I go where you call.

If you are in a place of loss or grief you may wish to take a simple action to acknowledge your hurt. e.g. lighting a candle or writing the words you feel near or around a cross.

Brother Christ who bore all on the cross,
pain bearer, you are with me in my grief.
In this action I choose to let you take my pain.

Hymn: StF475 / H&P442 **O God of Bethel by whose hand**

Prayer: **The Lord's Prayer**

Reading: [Mark 12: 28-34](#)

A Contemporary Psalm

In this passage Jesus gives a clear answer: 1. "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" and 2. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Reflect and Pray

How easy has it been to show your love to God this year? Do you find it easier to turn to God in the good times or in difficult ones?

How can I praise you when so many have suffered?
How can I praise you while families mourn?
Loved ones no longer recognise their next of kin,
and children grow up without a parent,
lost employment means lost self-respect,
and families choose between food and heat.
Where are you, O God, where are you?

Were you there in the self-giving of carers
living-in at work to protect patients and family?
Were you there in the home-schooling, in the dedication
of teachers, key workers and delivery drivers?
Were you there in the protests and the furlough?
Were you there in the kindness of neighbours,
in a smile shared on a walk?

You were there at the crematorium
when no mourners attended.
You were there in the care taken to stay at 2 metres.
You were there in the phone calls, the zooms and the texts.
You were there in your word with new meaning in lockdown.
You were there when I cried, when I laughed, when I listened.
You are here and I *will* praise you.

(A psalm for 2021 inspired by Ken Howcroft's March 2020 lockdown psalm)

Hymn: StF289 / H&P183 **When my love for Christ grows weak**