

Prayers of Intercession:

God of love, we hold before you your world and as we do inspire our prayers with your vision and your care for that world in all its variety and complexity.

We pray for those we know and those we do not know in

- o places of conflict, war and tension;
- o places struggling with climate change and natural disaster.

We pray today for people

- o struggling with unemployment;
- o living in abusive and unloving relationships;
- o battling with mental illness, grief and loss.

On this holiday weekend we pray for all

- o who work in the tourist industries in our region; and
- o for those who keep essential services running;

In your mercy, **hear our prayers. Amen**

Hymn StF 662 **Have you heard God's voice**

H&P 777 **O breath of life, come sweeping through us**

Blessing

Looking back we see you with us on our journey;

Resting here, the warmth of your love surrounds us in peace;

Looking ahead you promise to be with us every step of the way;

Praise be to you Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Eternal Trinity, our hope, our comfort and our salvation.

Hallelujah.

Amen

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to Revd Jenny Porterpryde for contributing our service sheet this week.

Bible quotes are from New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



Darlington District Worship at Home Sunday 29th August 2021

Welcome to worship

We meet in worship from many places united in our desire to follow Jesus and seeking to meet with God. The psalmist encourages us to listen for God speaking to us:

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

From [Psalm 85: 1-7](#)

Hymn StF 20 **Be Still for the Presence of the Lord** *or*
H&P 637 **O Lord of life, thy quickening voice awakes**

Prayers

As we pause in the presence of God at the start of our worship we remember with awe the unfathomable depth and breadth of who God is.

~

We pause in the stillness to recall the magnificence of God.

~

Thank you, God for all you are; all you do; all you speak to and through your creation, your people, your world.

~

Eternal God, we recognise that we do not always listen to your voice or follow your way. **Forgive us.**

~

With unfathomable grace and never-ending mercy God forgives us. **Praise be to God.**

You are beyond our comprehension. Too complex for mere human language and too amazing for simple description. Yet we know you as 'love'. You are beyond our understanding and yet our hearts respond to you in a beat. Love beyond boundaries, love which did not count the cost. Love which gives all. Pure love. Thank you, ever-loving God. **Amen**

Hymn StF 444 / H&P 671 **Day by Day, dear Lord...**

Our reading today comes from the final chapter of the book of Jonah. Jonah has been sent to Nineveh for second time. He has a tough message to share and is a reluctant messenger. When he delivers his message 'Nineveh shall be overthrown' the ordinary people and the King respond by fasting and putting on sackcloth. Seeing their response, God is compassionate towards them. Jonah is not so pleased:

Reading [Jonah 4:1-11](#)

Reflection by Jenny Porterpryde

Usually when we think of Jonah, we focus on the earlier part of his story but this curious incident has much to teach us about the nature of God and our relationship with him.

Firstly, we see in Jonah a misunderstanding of his God. In Chapter 2 verse 3, Jonah says 'You hurled me into the deep into the very heart of the seas' yet God did not, at any point say that Jonah must jump from the ship, this was entirely Jonah's own idea.

That same misunderstanding of God's nature is clear here in chapter 4. Jonah was sent by God to Nineveh to 'preach against it.' For God this meant calling them to repentance, and when the population does repent God is moved to forgive them. Jonah however is angry and frustrated because he sees his role as

prophet of doom. He has told Nineveh they are wrong and he expects God to prove him right by punishing them.

In the second part of chapter 4, we see Jonah's anger move from the deep theological issue of Nineveh's forgiveness to a petulant tantrum about a wilting plant.

To his credit, Jonah recognises that he can be totally honest with God as is clear from his statement in verse 9, 'I am angry enough to die', but he is entirely caught up in his personal needs and agendas with no interest in the vast work of God that is taking place around him.

God loves us all. Enough to speak patiently to us one to one. Enough to pardon an entire city overnight. He calls us to enter into the excitement of that love. Jonah could have allowed himself to be amazed at what was happening in Nineveh and could have celebrated with them but instead he wants to keep God to himself expecting justice and punishment for Nineveh yet grace and forgiveness for himself.

God calls us to love everyone and to share God's good news with them. He calls us to put the needs of the world before our own. At times this will be hugely exciting and at others challenging or even painful, but in all our challenges God speaks to each one of us, conversing in love, acknowledging our priorities but inviting us to view the world through his eyes in his strength as he works out his great plan of love through each one of us.



God's love is too great to be confined to any one side of a conflict or to any one religion. *Desmond Tutu*