

Prayers for our world, our neighbourhood and ourselves

Lord, I pray for all the countries of our world as they struggle in the dark night of a global pandemic. May your spirit help and inspire people to work together to seek a way forward for all, including the poorest and most vulnerable.

Lord, I pray for my own country, that those in positions of power may be guided to make the right decisions that will protect both lives and livelihoods.

Lord, I pray for those around me in my neighbourhood, my family and friends and any known to me who are particularly suffering at this time. I ask that you would reach out your loving hand to support them.

Lord, I pray for your churches as they try to work out a way of doing your work in a world that has so quickly changed so much.

And finally I pray for myself as I struggle on the sea of my own life.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Hymn Lord of Creation, to you be all praise [StF 449/H&P 699](#)

Benediction and Commitment

Gracious God,
You call us to let go of the things we cling to and step out in faith, trusting in your love and provision.

Give me courage to step out boldly and sufficient faith to follow without fear.

As I move forward into the next week, may I know the presence of Jesus with me every step of the way.

May the Spirit fill my life and use me to accomplish more than I could possibly imagine, so that, in a small way, your kingdom might come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

This worship sheet was created by Maureen Baker, Local Preacher

Darlington District Worship

Sunday 9th August 2020



Lord, I come before you to worship,
You come to us when we least expect it,
You call us out of the safety of our ordered lives
and invite us to join you in the adventure of faith.
Help me to know your presence with me now.
Amen

Hymn **Jesus calls us o'er the tumult** [StF 250/H&P 141](#)

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Confession

Father God, help me now to worship you, to take a time away from the things of my everyday life to focus my thoughts on you and your will for me.

Creator Father, I thank you for the beauty of the world around me, thinking in particular of all the moments in the past week when I have been cheered by the beauty of the natural world.

Loving Father, I thank you that you care for all your creation. I thank you for all the good things that you have given to me and for your continued support, even if times seem hard at the moment.

Yet Father God, I come to worship aware that so often I fall short of being the person you would want me to be. I am hesitant in following and reluctant to take up new challenges. I know that sometimes I have made mistakes or fallen into the temptation of doing things I knew were wrong.

Forgive me and grant me a new start in life.

The Lord's Prayer

Bible Reading: [Matthew 14:22 – 33](#)

Jesus Walks on the Water

I went to school not far from the banks of the River Tyne. So I remember learning the words of the old folk song 'The Waters of Tyne' in the school choir.

'I cannot get to my love if I would die;
The waters of Tyne run between him and me
And here I must stand with a tear in my 'ee,
Both sighing and sickly, my sweetheart to see'

In recent months it has not been the waters of Tyne that have been keeping people apart. Yet we must all have felt at times separated from family, friends and colleagues. With churches closed, we have probably also felt separated from the fellowship of other Christians. Unable to worship in our usual way, we may have even felt separated from Jesus. This week's Bible reading reminds us that there have never been any barriers for Jesus. Deep water, in this case the waters of Lake Galilee, were not a barrier to Jesus then - and now we can be sure of his presence with us, wherever we are and whatever we are doing.

In the Bible story the disciples had left Jesus on dry land to spend some time alone in prayer while they set off in a small boat across to the other side of the lake. However, as night came on, the wind was blowing against them and the boat was soon being tossed about by the waves. Then, in the early hours of the morning, when the disciples were struggling in the darkness and probably feeling very separated from Jesus left back on the shore, Jesus came to them, walking on the water. Jesus came to them when they needed him but least expected him – as he can be with us even in isolation and lock-down.

But in the Bible story Peter, ever the rather impulsive one, got out of the boat. At first, with his eyes fixed on Jesus, he too managed to walk on the water. However, when he noticed the waves and his concentration slipped away from Jesus, then he began to sink. Jesus stretched out his hand to Peter and helped him back into the boat.

At this time many churches are struggling to work out how and when they will be able to re-open. How can they meet all the new regulations about one-way systems, hand sanitising, social distancing, no singing etc.? How can we manage to do God's work, worshipping and caring pastorally for our members, maintaining the fellowship and reaching out to the wider community, in a world that has changed so radically in only a few months? It might feel as if we are being asked to walk on water – to do the impossible, except that it was not impossible for Jesus.

Things might seem difficult for us but we need to learn from Peter. First, like him, we need to fix our eyes on Jesus. What does Jesus want us to do in this situation? How is he calling his church to move forward out of the safety of the 'boat' and onto new uncharted territory?

Then of course we can't do it on our own. Neither could Peter. He had to reach out and grab Jesus' hand offered to him. It is the same for us. When we feel overwhelmed by the task ahead and all the difficulties of the current situation, then we need to reach out in prayer and 'take the hand of Jesus' to keep us from sinking.

The world at this time might seem like a stormy sea on a black night with the wind blowing strongly against us but one thing we can be sure of is that Jesus is there walking beside us and ever offering his hand in support.

Amen