

Prayers of Intercession:

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair, Lord, in your suffering world this is our prayer. Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace... as we reflect on the words we just sang let us pray..

Loving God, we hold before you all those who don't have enough to eat, for the families who are struggling to feed their children and worrying about the longer school holidays ahead. For families finding they need to access food banks and struggling with all the emotions of inadequacy, shame, embarrassment and anger that comes with needing to ask for help. Lord we thank you for everyone who sees their need and seeks to help, and for those who rise to the injustice and speak out.

We pray for those in this world who have the power to make decisions which affect people lives, we pray that they would know your love, your compassion, and make just, fair decisions for the good of all.

Lord Jesus, we hold before you those who are lonely and sad, those who remember the ones they have loved, we pray that they will know your peace, know your hope, told to us in the gospel and told again and again down the ages as your faithful people have held the light of their faith against the darkness, to light the path for us as we await your return.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer. Amen.**

Hymn: [StF 405](#) Great is the darkness that covers the earth

Blessing:

We have been gathered in by you, God, the source of all wisdom and wonder. In your infinite kindness, you show goodness to all. May we, who have been nurtured by your consolation and welcome, share consolation and welcome with all we meet, knowing that from your great goodness, all goodnesses flow. **Amen.**

Prayer from Roots

Worship at Home 8th November 2020

Compiled by Deacon Annabel Terry

Opening Prayer:

Come, let us turn to God, who is with us in all our sorrows, who weeps with us as we weep, who binds our wounds, and who lifts our eyes towards the eternal horizon. God is with us: let us turn to God and be people of praise in the story of our lives. **Amen.**

Prayer from Roots

Hymn: StF 168 Come, Lord Jesus, come

Prayer:

God of consolation, in all the stories of our lives, you are with us. As we turn to each other, and turn to you, may we give and find all the comfort that we need, knowing that it is in such shelter that we hear the echoes of your great kindness.

God, your wisdom draws us in. It is the bright sun in the morning, and the soft moon of night. Your wisdom is the dawn and the dusk, the kind opening and gentle closing. We praise you for all your wisdom gives: strength for continuation; hope for consolation; courage for perseverance; joy for the journey, and love for all time. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession: O God, we have held parties when you desired purity. We have held festivals when you desired friendship. We have made noise when silence was what was needed. Turn us towards you, who waits for us, in hope – in a hope that will not die. Turn us towards you in hope. **Amen.**

Prayers from Roots

Offering: *You may choose to dedicate your weekly offering at this point, in response to God's unfailing generosity and grace.*

Lord's Prayer...

Readings: [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) & [Matthew 25:1-13](#)

Reflection:

I'm fairly sure we've all of us experienced the death of someone we love, at some time in our lives. Whether we have faith in God, or not, our human grief is as real and raw as it is for everyone. Mostly we don't talk about death, about those who are closest to us dying and going out of our lives. We almost pretend it won't happen, even though we all know it will. Then when it happens, we are thrown into the depths of a painful grief as the loss hits us. That feeling is as gut wrenchingly real for those of us who know of God's promise and love as it is to those who don't. It hurts us all the same.

Paul is telling the folk in Thessalonica that there is a hope, that although people have died since he told them about Jesus, there is hope for those who have died and there is hope for the listeners, as there is hope for us today. We are all still waiting for Jesus' return, for those who die in Christ, believing in the gospel, they are 'sleeping', a death that is not the end but merely waiting for Jesus return, *"then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever."* v.17

I'll be honest with you, the more I read this passage, and every commentary I can lay my hands on, the less I understand it all. There is much to discover in Paul's words, much to understand, too much for the space I have here, I encourage you to look at a commentary or three and do some more reading!

No matter how strong my faith is, at times, the pain of losing someone you love is sometimes unbearable. It doesn't matter how much I believe that all will be well, and eternal life awaits us, there is still a deep, empty hole where those people used to be in my life. I think we can understand how those early Thessalonian people were feeling, as Paul wrote them this letter.

But thank goodness we DO have hope, that Jesus lived and died and rose again. That he promised to return.

Matthew 25:1-13 tells of the bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom's return. They don't know when he is due back, and Jesus says we don't know when he will return, but like those bridesmaids we have to remain ready. We have to remain hopeful. So that when he does come, we are ready for him!

Paul tells the Thessalonians that they don't have to grieve in the same way as others who have no hope in Jesus, their grief not only echoes the loss of their loved one, but the empty ache that they are lost forever, that there is nothing more. A Christian's grief, however, while still mourning the loss of their loved one from their earthly life, is tempered by the promise of Jesus that they are 'just sleeping', a death that is not forever, that we will be reunited when Jesus does return – no matter how long we have to wait. What a hope!

This week, on Wednesday, we have Remembrance Day. The country remembers those who died in conflict, and lots of people have different feelings and reactions to this, I know. Last week we had All Souls and then All Saints Day. It is the season for remembering those who have gone before us, those we have loved, those we are thankful for, those who have taught us and encouraged us in our faith. Those who have passed the baton on to us. Whoever it is that we remember, whoever it is that we loved and lost, let's remember with hope, let's continue to hold the lamp to light the darkness as we wait, and to pass on that lamp to others as we wait with hope.

Hymn: [StF 693](#) Beauty for brokenness