

## Darlington District Worship

### Bible Month Week Two: Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> of June

So in love let us pray for all migrants in this country, thanking God for the enrichment they bring and, especially at present, the contribution that they make. May God bless them and help them to feel truly wanted and at home.

In love let us pray for all refugees across the world, that they may be well treated in their host countries and, where possible, soon be allowed to return home.

In love let us pray for God's church that, like Boaz, we may practice what we preach and with sacrificial generosity care for all in need. May God's church be an inclusive community that works for the common good.

*Here you may add prayers using the Prayer Handbook, prayer sheet or prayer requests from your own church community.*

We pray together our Lord's Prayer : **Our Father....**

Offering and prayer of dedication. *As you are able, please set aside your usual offering so that the work and mission of the Church may continue.*

**Lord, you have blessed us abundantly. We offer ourselves that we may be a blessing to others.**

Hymn StF 713: **Show me how to stand for justice / H&P 804 The Church of Christ**

#### The Blessing

May the eyes of the Creator behold you,

May the hands of the Saviour uphold you,

May the arms of the Spirit enfold you.

*(Traditional Irish Blessing)*

*Our worship sheet this week was prepared by Revd David Wood with alternative hymns added by the worship resources group.*



Praise the Lord, all you nations! Extol him, all you peoples!

For great is his steadfast love toward us,

and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

Praise the Lord!

*Psalm 117 (NRSV)*

Hymn StF 88 H&P 16: **Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation**

Glory to you, God beyond us:

You are holy and mysterious, beyond all thought and imagining.

Glory to you, God beside us:

You walk with us and share all of our life.

Glory to you, God within us:

You assure us of forgiveness and form the life of Christ in our hearts.

**Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Hymn StF 6: **Father we love you / H&P 3: Father in heaven**

Lord our God, as we turn to read your word, send your Holy Spirit.

Speak with us and help us to listen.

*We are invited to read our two lessons slowly and attentively.*

Readings: [Ruth 2 : 1-23](#)

[Matthew 5 : 43-48.](#)

There are three characters in our story today. Ruth we have already met. In this chapter she is a migrant, vulnerable, insecure and unwelcome to many. But she is also determined – one of the Bible’s “wise women”. By her wisdom she secures a future for herself, for Naomi, and indeed for Israel! This involves real sacrifice.

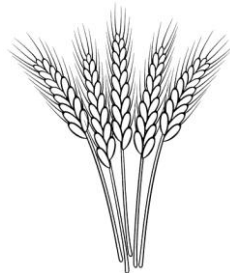
*Pause and ponder : Try to imagine what life is like for migrants in our country today. How can the Church help to make them feel secure, welcome and at home?*

Hymn StF 716: **There are no strangers to God’s love** (*We don’t have a recording of this hymn. As an alternative you may like to watch [God of Justice](#) by Tim Hughes or read H&P 402 **For the healing of the nations**)*

A new character appears in chapter 2 – Boaz! What do you make of him? He is portrayed as a man of integrity. He dutifully obeys God’s law in caring for the widow, the orphan and the stranger. But he also goes the extra mile. He exhibits a sacrificial generosity in his concern for Ruth and Naomi. As such he is someone who helps to build an inclusive community, who is concerned for the common good. He lives up to the meaning of his name: “In him is strength”.

Yet, if we read carefully, we note that sometimes he needs to be nudged, even pushed, into action – by Ruth the outsider! Happily he is attentive to God’s voice wherever it is heard.

*Pause and ponder : What contribution can today’s church make in building an inclusive society?*



### Prayers of confession

For our lack of integrity and the mismatch between our beliefs and actions:  
**Lord, forgive us.**

For our lack of generosity in the use of our time, talents and treasures :  
**Lord, forgive us.**

For our lack of concern for the common good and our wider world : **Lord, forgive us.**

For our lack of initiative and our slowness to act:  
**Lord, forgive us.**

***Lord, with you is found forgiveness and for this we revere you.  
Our sins are forgiven!***

There is a third and final character in our story – God herself! God plays no direct role, yet is present throughout, hidden but not absent. Do you sense the God behind the scenes, guiding and directing all that happens? How true to life! Ultimately the Book of Ruth is a story of redemption through sacrifice. At the heart of the universe lies the sacrificial love of God, shown in the cross, for friend and enemy alike. May we become perfect as He is perfect!

Thanks be to God

Hymn [StF 611](#): **Brother, sister, let me serve you** / H&P 436: **Father hear the prayer we offer**

### Prayers for others

Who has not found the heaven below

Will fail of it above.

God’s residence is next to mine

His furniture is love.

*(Emily Dickinson : 1830 – 1886)*