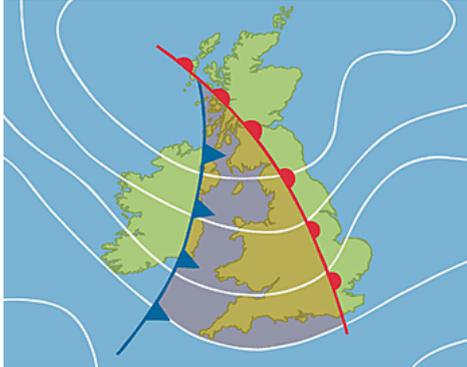




Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

### **John 3: 5-9 'The Spirit Blows Where She Chooses'**

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?'



How I wish there was space to include this whole chapter! The classic encounter of Jesus meeting Nicodemus. The poor Pharisee confused and misunderstanding; Jesus talking of things far beyond any mortal's reach: matters of Spirit, truth, water and wisdom, and trying to put God's Kingdom within reach of this respected and learned man, yet who is still a beginner in so many ways.

Take a look at this standard weather map. I have looked at these in weather reports all my life without any understanding whatsoever of what all the squiggly lines mean. And even less understanding as to the big blue triangles and red semi-circles. They look quite bold and exciting... are they? I might hazard a guess that the red bits might mean warm weather and blue spikey bits look a bit colder. One day, I'll look it up properly, and then I can concentrate on the forecast and stop wondering when Tomasz Schafernaker's going to get a haircut.

Jesus said to Nicodemus "*The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes*" (3:8). I don't detect though, ANY approbation from Jesus at all in this sentence. Nicodemus is *not* expected to know everything, and certainly not everything about the work of God's Spirit. That's not for him to know fully, and it's not for us to know fully either. Jesus points the way to the Kingdom and to the love his heavenly Father has for all his creation (see John 3:16 for example); the Spirit makes it possible for the human heart and soul to dare to reach to know this, to feel this, and to follow Jesus' way. I wonder if Jesus is even subtly telling Nicodemus that God's Spirit is already in him, prompting him to speak, to ask, to recognize that Jesus cannot be anything other than from God.

We will never know it all, you and I – and if you're hoping to before the end of your earthy life, then get used to disappointment! However, we can know *enough*. By God's grace, and the power of his Holy Spirit, we can dare to face questions about life, death, eternity, the depths of love, the heights of grace, the freedom to live as people who are cherished in spite of all our failings. The wind, the Spirit may be beyond our understanding, but is with us all the way. By God's grace we'll continue to receive glimpses of his kingdom: the one in our midst, and the kingdom to come.

### **Prayer:** (based on Philippians 4:7)

Loving God, in all we know, and in all we long to know,  
may your peace, which surpasses all understanding,  
guard our hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus – Your Son, and our Lord. Amen.