



The Smestow Vale Team Ministry
St Benedict's and the Venerable Bede
Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

Sunday 17th May
The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ
by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples:
help your church to obey your command
and draw the nations to the fire of your love.
To the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Paul debates with the Athenians.

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring." Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

Acts 17:22-31

Jesus promises his disciples a helper.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

John 14:15-21

A Reflection for the Sixth Week of Eastertide.
Revd Sue Watson

Have you noticed how, during every Easter season, we (almost) never read from the Old Testament during our church services? Instead the Lectionary requires us to read from the Acts of the Apostles, which tells of the rapid spread of the Christian message throughout the known world.

The reason for this lies in the church's desire to encourage us – in the light of Jesus' resurrection - to look forward and not backwards: the world is different now.

Acts makes very interesting reading and today we hear St. Paul preaching to a crowd of intellectuals in the very heart of the Greek world- Athens. Paul gets them on his side by complimenting them for their religious enthusiasm, but he then shares with them his understanding of faith in the one, true God, the Creator of all nations, who is not far from anyone. Because we are God's offspring, he says, we must not think of Him as made of gold, wood or stone, nor does he live in shrines made by human hands (See Acts 7:48).

We have often heard it said that 'the church is the people, not the building', just as Paul was saying, and now this is being brought home to us for real. We can't access our buildings, which is indeed sad, but we are hopefully discovering afresh that God is truly not far from us, wherever we are, church building or no church building.

The heart of Paul's message to the Athenians is that the true God is alive and active in our world: he calls us to repent and believe in his appointed Son – whom he has raised to new life and he promises that same life to those who believe in him. In the light of this glorious victory, we look to the future.

Sue Watson

Prayer During the Week

Please remember those who have asked for our prayers Sarah Stephenson, David Kingston, Lisa, Julia McCormick, Morgan, Michael Concannon, Heather Gent, Jean, and Margaret Hatton

Those who have died recently and their families:

Joyce Cort, David Nabbs, Jean Nightingale, Joyce Cort, Edna Tromans, Beryl Allen, Irene Hobbs, Janet Watkiss, Jacqueline Hinton.

Sunday

Pray that we may be channels of the Spirit of Truth for the world. (John 14: 17)

Monday

Pray for our government as they formulate plans to implement the "new normal."

Tuesday

Pray for wisdom and that we may "be alert" as the lockdown conditions start to ease.

Wednesday

Pray for those returning to work this week, that they may be kept safe.

Thursday (Ascension Day)

Pray for patience as we wait in hope in this time of unknowing. (Acts 1: 7)

Friday

Pray for small shopkeepers considering how they can keep social distancing as they reopen.

Saturday

Pray for all who are on a long road to recovery from the virus.

Sunday Worship on Facebook

Thank you to Preb Ben from Penn for all the help with last Sunday's service and to everyone who has made appreciative comments. Don't forget to "like" the service as this encourages other people to listen.

There will be a service led by Paul on Facebook this Sunday from 10.30am.

Sunday Worship by Zoom

I am leading a service at 10am on Sunday mornings by Zoom for the parishes of Swindon and Himley. Having done it three times now we're feeling a little more confident about inviting others to join us! Anyone can join a meeting as long as they download the app and receive a Meeting ID and invitation. I normally send out in advance the service that I will be using that morning so that you can follow it. From this coming Sunday I am going to try and put the service outline on screen so everyone can see it. If you would like some help setting this up then again just include your telephone number then I can put you in touch with Suzie who can talk you through it. We're all new at this and learning together so please don't be put off if you want to give it a try. We'd love to welcome you.

Share the Good News

You are very welcome to share Keeping in Touch with others. If you know of anyone who would like it emailing to them direct please let Maxine know.

Sunday Worship for the sixth Sunday of Easter 10.45am BBC 1

Please join in prayer and worship on Sunday Morning. The Very Reverend Dr Sarah Rowland Jones leads the from St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire, filmed before the closure of all church buildings was announced. With hymns recorded for Songs of Praise in July 2019.

Christian Aid Week.

Don't forget to make your donation to Christian Aid, They are doing important work and there is no house to house collection this year.

