

## Order for worship on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### Preparation:

1. The readings set this Sunday are: **Acts 17:22-31 • Psalm 66:8-20 • 1 Peter 3:13-22 • John 14:15-21**. You may want to read some or all of these readings before starting your worship – or include them after the first prayer.
2. When preparing for this worship, find a place and time where you can be comfortable for half an hour, preferably where you cannot be disturbed. (Turn off the TV!).
3. Place something that speaks to you of God’s presence and God’s comfort – in a place where you can focus on it.
4. For the hymns, you can sing them if you are able, or you can read the words out loud – or silently if that seems better – or you may be able to find them on YouTube or elsewhere in the internet.
5. Here is a YouTube introduction to worship on 17<sup>th</sup> May, <https://youtu.be/AXB RNxyPuRE> if you have access to YouTube.
6. When you are ready, light a candle/tea light if it helps you to focus. This can mean many things to you but maybe bear in mind the words of the psalmist: “Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard,” Then, sit down, relax your body and your breathing.



**Traditional Cross from Mashpee Indian Meeting House**

*With wood, shells and feathers*

## **Worship with the People of God at Coventry Central Hall**

*Notes for preparation are on the other side of this sheet.*

**Sing** or say an Alleluia!

### **Call to worship:**

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you." John 14:18

**Hymn 726:** Come to us, creative spirit

**Prayer:** Risen Christ, you promised the disciples that you would not abandon them. Remind me that your Holy Spirit is always close by and will never let us be alone. By your spirit you set us free from anything which holds us back from being fully yours. Comfort us with your Spirit's forgiveness, peace and love, and assure us that we are not abandoned and we are not left all alone. Amen

### **Gospel reading from John 14**

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. *Verses 19-20*

### **Reflection**

The reading from Acts shows how Paul, faced with a culture and a religious life different from his own, does not despair and does not hide away in a comfortable religious place. No, the opposite happens, he starts chatting with the philosophers and the other religious people around him in Athens. Paul says that he had "looked carefully at the objects of [their] worship," He learned about the people he was staying with and eventually they decided they wanted to hear him out. So he gets a hearing and he is listened to. Paul turns to local poetry and looks at the local expressions of faith, and then he starts to explain how he believes that his faith in Christ, and the God of Israel, is sufficient for anyone.

Paul has a relationship with Christ and understands the nature of God through that relationship. He is not afraid that another culture or religion

might lead him away from his faith. He faces the religion and poetry of Athens head on and offers a new understanding, a new possibility to those who hear him. Paul doesn't condemn his hearers and say, "you've been wrong all the time," rather, he speaks of the Christ who is risen and has become his saviour and is there for all people..

Paul's experiences may not seem a million miles from our own experiences of today's world. So how does he turn things around? Well, he respects his listeners and he holds onto his relationship with the living Christ who met him on the Damascus Road. The Christ who met him there, through his resurrection, his love and his commandments to love, reveals the heart of the Creator.

Our reading from John echoes the importance of that loving relationship with Christ in whom our Creator is known. Jesus says, "You will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you". It is that knowledge which makes it possible for Paul to reveal God, who he has met in Christ, to the people of Athens.

**Hymn 351:** In Christ alone

**Pray** (silently, or out loud)

- For all who need to forgive, or be forgiven
- For people risking their lives so that others may live
- For our church as we wait until we can meet again in person
- For the churches in Coventry and throughout the world

**Christ, send your Spirit: comfort and restore us.**

**Lord's prayer**

**Hymn 340:** Ye servants of God

**Blessing:**

Risen Christ we look to you, as Pentecost approaches, to give us the comfort and the love we need to live life fully. Bless us, keep us, shine your face upon us and be gracious to us this day and always. **Amen**