

Preparation:

1. Readings set are: **Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 23, 1 Peter 2:19-25, John 10:1-10** you may want to read some or all of these readings before starting your worship – or include them after the first prayer.
2. **Sunday 9am** – there will be a short Zoom live act of worship including the **breaking of bread**. A Zoom invitation will be available on Friday – If you want to participate please contact me direct by Friday midday at stephen.willey@live.co.uk
3. 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!). A five minute introduction to this worship will be available and can be found on our website on Sunday at <http://centralhall.info/resources/>
4. Place something that speaks to you of fellowship in a place where you can focus on it.
5. 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 Psalm: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me.
6. For the hymns, you can sing them if 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.
7. When you are ready, sit down and notice your breathing. Begin this Sunday – we are still in the season of Easter – with a familiar Alleluia! Eg. The chorus of “Seek ye first” (StF 254)

Order for worship on 3rd May 2020



Worship with the People of God in Coventry Central Hall

Sing: **Alleluia!**

Call to worship:

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Hymn 297: Christ is alive

Prayer: Risen Christ, you know my name better than anyone else, and you love me. I am not always someone who lives up to your name or your love for me. Forgive me when I have behaved like someone else, or have gone another way even though I knew you were calling me to your better way. Go ahead of me once more and do not let me become lost.

Gospel: John 10:1-10

[The shepherd] calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. (verse3b-4)

Reflection

The shepherds of the Old Testament were their leaders – This is seen in Jeremiah and also in Ezekiel, where we hear prophesies against the shepherds of Israel, with the promise that a good shepherd will take care of the sheep (Ezekiel 34).

We know the Good Shepherd Ezekiel spoke of to be Jesus. But in John's gospel, Jesus says not only that he is the good shepherd, but also that he is the gate for the sheep. He is the one who leads the sheep by name. But he doesn't only lead the sheep, he becomes the way for them to follow. He becomes the gate. The gate! What does he mean? The risen Christ: shepherd, way, door, and gate.

At this time of the year we often reflect on Jesus' journey through death, to the life of the resurrection. Which of us does not know the names of the first person to climb Everest (Edmund Hillary) the first person to run a four minute mile (Roger Bannister) and the first person to walk on the moon (Neil Armstrong)? These people prepared a way for others to repeat their achievements, but heroes don't know our names. Contrast this with

the first person to travel through death to everlasting life. We know his name was Jesus, but he knows our names too, and he calls us to follow him on our life's journey. Jesus took the road that passes from life, through death, to everlasting life. Thus he has prepared a way. He has opened the gate into God's loving presence. He is the door into life eternal. Through Christ all people can rest in green pastures (Psalm 23).

By Christ's resurrection the gate is flung wide for us all! He opened up new possibilities for his disciples and for us too. As a result, we can meet, as they did, in fellowship and prayer, and share in the breaking of the bread (Acts 2:42-47).

Today each news bulletin seems to begin and end with the Covid crisis. We may feel, because of the lockdown, our fellowship is broken and our sharing in prayer and in the breaking of bread is denied us. But God's resurrection life is more powerful than the doubts and fears of disciples, who had seen him die, or fears evoked in us by the coronavirus. This Sunday, let us call to mind Peter's words about Jesus, "By his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls." (1 Peter 2:24,25)

Hymn 480 (or 481): The Lord's my shepherd (and I will trust)

Pray (silently, or out loud)

- For **people who long to belong to the church family but don't know how to start.**
- For **people risking their lives so that others may live, for and those who are grieving** in so many countries.
- For **our church** as we wait until we can meet again and the **churches we are connected with** locally and throughout the world.
- That Christ will lead us out fear and loneliness into green pastures.

Pray the Lord's prayer (in your mother tongue).

Hymn 314: This joyful Eastertide

Blessing: Risen Christ continue to lead us on in these days of Easter. Bless us and keep us, shine your face upon us and be gracious to us. Saviour of the world, grant us your peace.