

“Within these walls let no-one be a stranger”

Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 17th 2020

Call to Worship and Approach to God. *You are invited to light a candle.*

Bless our God, O peoples,
let the sound of his praise be heard,
who has kept us among the living,
and has not let our feet slip.

**We went through fire and through water;
yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.**

Psalm 66: v.8-9,12

❖ **Hymn** (Psalm 46)

1 God is our refuge and our strength,
in straits a present aid;
therefore, although the earth remove,
we will not be afraid:

3 A river is, whose streams make glad
the city of our God;
the holy place, wherein the Lord
most high hath his abode.

2 Though hills amidst the seas be cast;
though waters roaring make,
and troubled be; yea, though the hills
by swelling seas do shake.

4 God in the midst of her doth dwell;
nothing shall her remove:
The Lord to her an helper will,
and that right early, prove.

❖ **Prayer of approach** ending with the Lord's Prayer:

(say this in whichever language or version you prefer.)

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Word of God

❖ **Children's address**

❖ **Holy Scripture:** Acts 17:16-31

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace^[a] every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) ¹⁹ So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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, ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ From one ancestor^[a] 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, ²⁷ so that they would search for God^[b] and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ 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.'

²⁹ 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. ³⁰ While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ 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."

Music in worship: *To God Alone on High Be Glory* - J.S. Bach

❖ **Sermon:** *followed by pause for reflection*

Response to God's Word

Hymn

1. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose,
hidden now in mystery;
Nature bursts with joyful promise,
ripe with what is yet to be.
In a wealth of rich invention,
still the work of art unfolds -
barely have we seen, and faintly,
what God's great salvation holds.
2. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose
making Jesus seen and heard.
Every age of God's creation
grasps new meanings from the Word.
Show us, Holy Spirit, show us
your new work begun today;
eyes and ears and hearts are open,
teach us what to do and say.
3. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose
all God's children brought to birth,
freed from hunger, fear and evil
every corner of the earth.
And a million million voices
speak with joy the Saviour's name;
every face reflects his image,
never any two the same.
4. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose
nothing shall be left to chance.
All that lives will be united
in the everlasting dance.
All fulfilled and all perfected,
each uniquely loved and known,
Christ in glory unimagined
once for all receives his own.

❖ Prayers of Intercession

❖ Offering and dedication

Please note that in the absence of an offering of money in this service you are invited to use the PayPal donation opportunity on the church's webpage.

**Gracious God,
maker of the world and everything in it,
giver of life and breath,
we offer ourselves to you,
that we may bear witness to your kingdom
established in the resurrection
of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

❖ Hymn

- 1 'For my sake and the gospel's, go
and tell redemption's story';
his heralds answer, 'Be it so,
and thine, Lord, all the glory!'
They preach his birth, his life, his cross,
the love of his atonement,
for whom they count the world but loss,
his Easter, his enthronement.
- 2 Hark! hark! the trump of jubilee
proclaims to every nation,
from pole to pole, by land and sea,
glad tidings of salvation:
Still on and on the anthems spread
of alleluia voices;
in concert with the holy dead,
the warrior Church rejoices.
- 3 He comes, whose advent trumpet drowns
the last of time's evangels,
Immanuel, crowned with many crowns,
the Lord of saints and angels.
O Life, Light, Love, the great I AM,
Triune, who changest never,
the throne of God and of the Lamb
is thine, and thine for ever.

Blessing:

Go in peace to love and to serve God;
**and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us and unite us, now and always. Amen. *Threefold Amen***