

Bradford North Circuit Worship for Sunday 17th May – Sixth Sunday in Easter

As we prepare for worship, please bring a mirror if you can; you might like also to bring some paper and craft materials to make a poster if you have children with you, or even if you don't.

Take a few moments to be quiet; to recognise that where you are is a holy place, for this is where God chooses to meet you today.

Call to worship:

Lord, we come before you from our separate homes:

We lift our hearts in worship, and all our voices join together as one.

Your Spirit is not limited by distance, but makes us one in you:

So fill us, Lord, with your Spirit, that we might bring you glory.

StF 743/ HP 810 "Come, let us join our cheerful songs,," reminds us that we sing with many more people than we can see or hear.

YouTube suggestion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1a-QWHrF2Q>

Prayer of adoration and confession:

God who created us and formed us, we worship you.

Jesus who lived for us and died for us, we worship you.

Spirit who comes to us and lives in us, we worship you.

God who is above all things, we confess our shortcomings.

Jesus who is perfect love, we confess our lack of love.

Spirit who prompts us, we confess our deafness to your voice.

God who is full of compassion, hold out your hands to us.

Jesus who offered yourself for us, we offer ourselves anew to you.

Spirit who speaks in our hearts, we begin again with you.

Amen.

For the young and the young at heart (idea taken from Roots magazine):



Have you seen people's names up in lights, perhaps at a theatre? Or have you seen posters for films that tell you how good it is? Or have you seen a poster for a band that tells you how great they are?

Gather together your craft materials and make a poster to show that Jesus is great. First plan it out. Where will the name 'Jesus' go? How big will it be? Can you think of any words to describe Jesus

– for example: he's my friend, he forgives people, he looks for lost people. Write these around the name of Jesus. Add colour to make the words stand out. What other decoration might you want to add? Add glitter if you have any, to make it look like Jesus' name is in lights. Please keep your finished poster safe to take into your church when we can go back again.

Read Acts 17:22-31

Imagine you have been sent by your church to a city you have never visited before. Perhaps you might remember your first time visiting a place on holiday that was very different from the UK, and call to mind some of the things you saw that seemed strange to you. Perhaps it might be the other way around, and you are looking back on your first time in the UK and trying to learn the way of life here. Or if you haven't been abroad, think of some of the times you've watched members of the Royal Family on the tv news going to visit foreign places, taking part in dances and other rituals that are different from ours.

In this strange place, you are asked about your faith. These people who have asked you know nothing at all about Jesus, or churches, or the Bible. Take time to think how you might reply. Where would you start? Would it be important for you to include everything, in case you don't get another chance? Or would you be content to say a few sentences and wait for your new friends to take it further if they wish? Paul is taking the Good News to Athens. There they have many idols in the city, and this is distressing to Paul who, of course, sees idols as forbidden. But instead of telling them they are wrong to worship idols, Paul uses the very thing that upsets him, to make a link between his words and their lives. He tells them about the unknown God who has made them and who calls them to turn around and find him, who is actually very close to them.

Spend a moment enjoying God's closeness, and then ask yourself again, what do you need to share with someone who doesn't know God? Can you share something of that closeness?

StF 22 "Come all you people," is an invitation to all people to come and praise God. It begins with words that are not familiar to most of us, because they are from Zimbabwe: Uyai mose, tinamate Mwari (x3)

Uyai mose zvino.

Come, all you people, come and praise your Maker (x3)

Come now and worship the Lord.

Join in as far as you can, praising God with brothers and sisters from different backgrounds. YouTube suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMZJFhhTr0I>



Read John 14:15-21

I've made some recordings of myself reading reflections, and in order to do it, I videoed myself and then passed on the sound recording. When I did the first one, I played back the video to watch myself – this is good practice for preachers as you get to see all your little mannerisms that you otherwise wouldn't know about! But what really surprised me was that when I speak, my mouth looks just like my auntie Margaret when she speaks. In fact if you videoed the two of us and covered everything else up, you would be hard put to tell the difference. Because we are related (she is my late father's sister), a bit of her is 'in' me, and it's clear to those who know us.

As Jesus prepares himself and his disciples for the time of his death, he wants to reassure his disciples that he is not simply abandoning them and going to face what comes; he will be sending them someone to be with them. This Advocate, or Comforter, the Spirit of truth, will be with them for ever, and will help them see that Jesus is 'in' the Father, that they are 'in' Jesus and Jesus is 'in' them. God is not

distant or separate, but in them, loving them, revealing more and more of Jesus to them – indeed, revealing more and more of Godself to them.

Just as my relatives can see my auntie Margaret ‘in’ me, so others can see God ‘in’ us. There will be things that we say, ways that we behave, decisions that we make, that will show others whose children we are.

Might you phone a trusted friend and ask them how they see God in you? This is not something to scare you - you will be surprised at how clearly they will be able to see him. You will be able to take much encouragement away from the conversation.

If that’s your phone ringing, it might be someone calling you to ask where you see Jesus in them!

Prayers

Look at your face in a mirror, and then pray:

Lord Jesus, help me to see you in me, and to know that I can be a blessing to others, sometimes without even knowing it.

Help us to see you in others, near and far.

Help us to see you in the faces of medics, carers, teachers, shop assistants, posties, bin collectors, all those key workers we now realise do so much for us.

Help us to see you in the faces of the down and outs, the drug addicts, the ones we

fear, because they still bear your image, wherever life has taken them.

Help us to see your face in the faces of those from different backgrounds, with different skin colours.

Help us to see your face in those not like us, and those we don’t like, because we are nonetheless sisters and brothers.

Help us to see your face, and in seeing, reach out to those we need and those who need us, that we might all recognise that we are your children; and you draw us all to yourself.

Amen.

Let us join together in the **Lord’s Prayer**.

StF 471/Mission Praise 880/Song of Fellowship 895 “Lord, I come to you” is a song of drawing nearer to God, recognising that he is in us and will bring his work in us to fulfilment.

YouTube suggestion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga6Qtzxd6vk>

We say a blessing together, on ourselves and those who are with us, on those who have joined us from a distance, on friends we know and friends we don’t yet know:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the blessing of the Holy Spirit,

be with us all, evermore,

Amen.

