

## Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22-31, 1 Peter 3:13-22, John 14:15-21, Psalm 66:7-18

### Acts 17:22-31

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."

What reading could be more appropriate for the present time?

'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'

In a time of difficult things, it has been particularly difficult not to be together in church – our refuge in times of trouble has, quite rightly, been taken from us.

But church is not a building, and God does not only find His home there. Even the most glorious cathedral could never compare to the world God created for us, so who are we to confine Him to those buildings? Whilst I don't believe God brings about human suffering for His own ends, He is well able to use times of fear and hardship to reach out to His beloved children and draw them to Him – '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.'

As we worship together in new ways, do God's work in our communities and are united in prayer for our whole earth, we are not locked out of church – we are a church set free to take God into the world.

I typed 'church in the world' into google – you know what can up?

Pages and pages of pictures of famous churches, big churches, small churches, beautiful churches, oldest churches....buildings, buildings, buildings.

# YOU are the Church



**(not the building!)**

Heavenly father, who's love for us is beyond our comprehension, lift up our hearts and fill us with your love, so that we might bring you with us into our lives and in so doing, offer you to all those we meet who are searching for the 'unknown god'.

Amen

*Rachel Swatton*