



- Amblecote Wordsley /Wesley Lent in a Box!
- Kingswinford Mothering Sunday Gift bags for RH Hospital
- Brick Bible Ideas for Creative Church
- Charlotte and the last of the snow!
- Overend Goody Bags reaching 47 young people
- The CTC recording live services & Easter DVD (notice Michele on the screen! Part of the team!)

Easter 2021

Letter to the Vale of Stour Churches

Greetings in the name of Christ.

At my desk I find myself blessed by the sun breaking through the clouds at the end of stormy March day to bring a wintry/spring glow to the evening. The days become a little longer, the daffodils, oblivious to Covid, stand tall and proclaim with bright yellow fanfare that Spring is on the way. Hope is near...



Yet, I approach my second Easter here with a touch of sadness as we lament that we will once again, not be able to gather and remember at the Lord's Table, to praise and to sing the great Easter Hymns as we would wish.

But despite this sense of loss God is at work, for nothing can prevent God's grace from flowing and nothing can stop the love of God from moving.

1 John 4:13-15 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God.

Tom Wright comments... In 1 John 4:7-21 the word 'love' in some form appears twenty-seven times. This is the very heart of John's letter. Everything that has gone before leads up to this; everything that follows, in the final chapter rounds it off - 'Love'.

John has just stressed that Jesus, the Messiah, has come in the flesh. Our Christian faith grows directly out of this central belief that in Jesus the Messiah, the one true God has been revealed to be—love incarnate. And those who hold this faith and embrace it as the means of their own hope and life, must themselves reveal the self-same love before the watching world. Love incarnate is the badge that the Christian community wears, the sign not only of who we are but of who God is...

How easy to write, how hard to achieve! Only today I was talking to someone who has been struggling with the reality of church life and how we do not always treat one another as we should. This is perhaps why St Paul and many Christian writers since, have been at pains to insist that the rule of love is not an optional extra, it is of the very essence of what we are about.

God's love is revealed precisely in sending Jesus, the son, into the world to be the sacrifice that would atone for our sins. So this Easter, as we stand at the foot of the cross, gazing up at the length to which God's love has gone for us, as we proclaim glorious resurrection, in our safe spaced short services or online in our homes - my prayer is that we may sense the power and possibilities within that love. This is the force that has changed my life, your life and can still change the world for the better.

I find great comfort and encouragement from realising that even if we can only partially gather, the love of God proclaimed in the cross is completed in us.' And the heart of the Easter season, wherever we may be, is that people don't really know 'God' may see God revealed in the life of Christians.

A scary and humbling thought! What God launched decisively in Jesus, God wants to complete in and through us.

May God bless you and keep safe – Rev Alan Combes

A prayer

Disciples of Jesus, we are called from our homes by the Living God, to worship together as the body of Christ. We come freely and gladly to acknowledge that Christ is Head of the Church, King of Kings, and Lord of our lives. Amen

Circuit News

God is With Us Projects

Following further funding from the district our circuit engaged most enthusiastically and creatively offering six projects for our three slots! We therefore funded the others from the circuit! They included:

- The United Lye Lent challenge envelopes.
- Birch Coppice Youth Group packs for the bereaved and lonely inviting people to nominate someone for prayer support.

- Overend Valentine's Day Goody Bags for local families and children.
- Kingswinford Gift bags sharing God's love with the Maternity Unit at RHH for Mothering Sunday.
- Brierley Hill Tea-Break-Bags for the RHH intensive care staff.
- A Circuit wide DVD project to record and share all the services of the Easter season and give them away...

Well done to all and we pray for those who receive these gifts

Worship Plans

We continue to follow the government roadmap, Churches will be making local decisions about opening, or not, for Holy Week and Easter which will therefore be 'Local Arrangements'. The longer term plan is to aim for churches to consider reopening weekly with an associated circuit wide preaching plan in place from 23 May - Pentecost.

Staff News

This week the circuit meeting approved funding for Claire Biggs - our Children and Families Worker and Martyn Filsak - our Local Lay Pastor to continuing their work and ministry amongst us. Meanwhile, not long after Easter, Rev Michael will be going on sabbatical. We pray for him and Anita, that Covid will not impact their time of refreshing.

Easter Offering

Please give via your church treasurer and note the Dedication Service on Wednesday May 19th at 2.30pm Kinver Methodist Church led by Revd Peter Clarke (Covid permitting).

Haiti Support

We are also raising money to support the Emergency Coronavirus Appeal in Haiti through the Methodist relief and development agency - All We Can. Rev Josephine says an amazing thank you for the £445 that has already been raised... Donations can be made through the link below or by cheque payable to ALL WE CAN, via David Little. Thank you!

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/josephineam-soon

