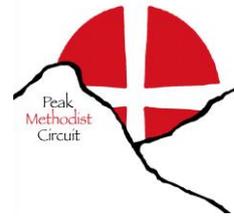


'Staying Connected'
Worship and Pastoral Resources
For Week Beginning
19th April 2020



First Sunday after Easter

Dear Friends,

This week's edition, I am taking the opportunity to share with you some encouraging stories and pictures from around the Circuit about how the "lock down" is providing opportunities to be and do church differently. What is clear to me is that even though our buildings may be closed, the work of God continues and He is providing some great opportunities for us reach out to our communities in different ways.

Deacon David

Tideswell & Bamford

The family Easter celebration on Zoom Easter morning lasted 1.5 hours! We had 7 families - a total of 26 people (16 children and 10 adults) plus myself and Jennifer fox. Four families were from Tideswell, and 3 from Bamford. It was lovely to bring them all together. There was a little Lego film about the first Easter morning that Karen and Isabel made, by way of introducing the theme of joy. The families then took it in turns to do a show and tell with their creations which ranged from singing, playing instruments, bell ringing, artwork, photography, crafts, baking and Lego. We have some talented families! We then talked about how we could bring joy to others in the coming week (taking into account social distancing), followed by a time of prayer. I then showed a music video (O happy day), and we finished by sharing the Grace together. They then asked when the next one was so I think it went well.

Karen Perry

Litton



Litton started thinking about how to celebrate Holy week and Easter and be the good news in the community. The idea of playing the Wesley hymn "Christ the Lord is Risen today" outside was suggested. It seemed a fantastic idea, but with not much technology behind them in the small congregation, the idea seemed as if it may fail until a friend in the village said: 'You can use my Rock band PA system. I'll play your chosen version through that.'

On Easter Day there was a sense of excitement as the cross was adorned with an orb of yellow flowers, and in the centre a notice saying: 'Christ is Alive'. "Christ the Lord is Risen today", in this spectacular version, was played to the village and enthusiastically applauded by the residents all around the village green. It was heard from one end to the other and estimated at least 50 people stood and worshipped on their doorsteps. Two cyclists and a car or two stopped to listen.

Rowsley



For Fran & Graham Johnson, living on a small estate of 42 houses in Rowsley presented the challenge of how they could share the Easter good news of God's love for all, in this unprecedented time. To put up a cross in the centre of the estate for Holy week was very much the heart of the decision. Made from a tree washed down the river in the recent floods here in Rowsley, it was erected on Palm Sunday, with thorns gathered from the riverbank that formed the crown that adorned the cross. A leaflet was delivered to every house explaining its significance for Holy week, but also as a sign of hope for this present day and time.

An invitation was given to use the colourful labels to share a message, write a prayer, remember a loved one, or draw an Easter picture. These grew as the week progressed, but so did so many conversations with neighbours and many questions "I've seen the cross – what's it all about?" People stood and looked, painted eggs were brought to the foot of the cross, a small colourful twig cross bound in wool, and remembrances of loved ones were written. The cross was transformed in the early hours of Easter Day with flowers and more messages appeared. The proclamation "Christ is Risen" was a sign of hope that much more will be done in the days that lie ahead as new relationships and friendships are developed.

Other pictures from around the circuit taken on Easter Day



For reflection and prayer

(Based on resources from Roots on the Web www.rootsontheweb.com)

Bible readings: John Chapter 20 verses 19-31
Acts 2 verses 14a, 22-32 and 1 Peter 1 verses 3-9

Hymns: All I once held dear STF489 SofF646
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r8XfE_VNb0&list=PLu8mfQRMKrc7FPINXxBoll7FicqejfThU&index=7&t=0s

The day of resurrection STF 311, H&P 208
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=The+day+of+resurrection&&view=detail&mid=535893A8AB31014F18BC535893A8AB31014F18BC&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DThe%2Bday%2Bof%2Bresurrection%26FORM%3DHDRSC4>

A prayer of confession

Prince of peace, we are sorry
That we choose not to forgive but to hold grudges
That we doubt you and do not trust;
That we rely so often on our own resources and not on you;
That we believe only when we have proof.
Help us to forgive more readily, and to trust more willingly.

Thought for the day

Peace be with you is a greeting that is used on several occasions throughout the Gospels. Usually, it is before some great news is about to be shared, and often when the recipients of the great news are feeling anything but at peace!

I can imagine that the disciples were wondering what was going on, and even shaking with fear, as Jesus appeared to them behind locked doors on that first Easter evening before He said those words “Peace be with you”.

The peace which Jesus offers, is not one of quiet relaxation, you may experience sitting or walking by a river on a warm summers day. No, this is a disruptive yet reassuring peace that comes because Jesus is risen from the dead; it is a realisation that all the things from the past which were thought to be normal are now things from the past. This was the beginning of something new.

I have been involved in a number of conversations in recent days when we have said it is our wish that we do not go back to doing church as we have done in the past, because we can see God moving in new and different ways during this lockdown period, as can be seen in the first part of this document. Like those first disciples, the things that were normal in the past, remains in the past, because God is doing new things, we will never be the same.

The message given that first Easter Sunday, reaches down over the centuries to us, because as John writes as he nears the end of his Gospel – the things he has written down are so that we may believe in Jesus. Jesus has risen – things will never be the same again.
Hallelujah!

A prayer for others

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the places in the world that need your peace:
places where the ongoing pandemic threatens the stability of nations;
places where war and violence continues to cause so much pain and destruction;
places where homes, livelihoods and families have been destroyed and lives lost.
Give wisdom to world leaders - to presidents and prime ministers, to politicians of all persuasions - that they may strive for lasting peace and true justice, not putting personal ambitions before the needs of their people, especially in this time of global crisis.
We pray for those who need peace of mind: those weighed down by the stresses and strains of life, or who suffer with anxiety, or are oppressed by worry and fear in the difficult times; for those who find it hard to let go of things and simply trust in you.

Amen

A prayer for ourselves

Let me feel the touch of peace and life,
The touch of the risen Lord beside me, and before me all the days of my life.
Amen.

Video link:

Here is a link to a video of Deacon David leading morning prayer using some of these resources shared above <https://youtu.be/xfqrbUSXijA> you may wish to use this as part of your Sunday morning worship at home time.

Resources/Suggestions for Worship at Home

In recent weeks we have shared a variety of resources, and rather than overload you with even more "good ideas, please refer back those already shared.

Julie Letts has written:

The 15 minute devotional, youtube link below, is really relevant for us today. There have been conversations lately with church folk about sharing our faith; and for some of us that might seem a hard thing to do. The message below may well give us courage. Perhaps you could find 15 minutes to watch and perhaps 5 minutes to rest with what you hear. It certainly helped me. I hope and pray it will do so for you too.

[Devotional 2 - Wednesday - Pete Greig and Cathy Burton - Unleashing Courage in a Time of Containment](#)

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