

Stanton-upon-Hine Heath News – February 2016

Scarcely have the echoes of Carol Services faded – when among other favourites we might have sung ‘*Love came down at Christmas*’ – when you hear people saying ‘Well, Christmas is over now’. Metaphorically, you sense them rolling up their sleeves to bash on regardless!

Hang on a minute! Love isn’t over, thank God. Christians have a few gems of wisdom to share with anyone who’s willing to listen. As February dawns Christians celebrate the way love can establish itself in human lives. They celebrate Jesus Christ’s sharing our life with us, teaching us the ways of love, listening to people, healing them – and in the end dying for them. They rejoice in all acts of love that are seen in human affairs – people putting themselves out one way or another to help others – and they contrast that generous, self-giving urge in people with the cruelty and greed and hardness of heart which we hear about in the news and maybe see for ourselves where we live or work.

Wednesday, 10 February will be Ash Wednesday. In the Old Testament ashes are seen as a sign of sorrow for our unlovely actions, words and thoughts. On Ash Wednesday Christians receive a sign of a cross on their foreheads made in ash as a sign of sorrow for the times when they have acted, thought or spoken without love, and they pray for God’s grace to make better, more loving choices – to grow more Christ-like. We can all change if we open ourselves to the love of God, recognising that if we accept love we can become bearers of love to others.

Ash Wednesday leads into the 40 days of Lent, ending with the celebration of Easter. The word Lent is a shortening of the word ‘lengthening’ – the season when the days grow longer with the return of light after winter darkness.

Once a week during Lent I will be leading an exploration of how we can see Christ’s love at work in the Gospel – the Good News – and reflecting on how we can be open to letting what we read in the Gospel touch us and grow in us.

If you’d like to come for a taster - in the Dairy in Church Street, Shawbury - please let me know on l.r.hayes@btinternet.com or ring 01743 244668. Time and dates: 1930 on Wednesday 17 and 24 February, Monday 29 February, Wednesday 9 and 16 March.

Love isn’t over – as long as we don’t just bash on with no hope of change.

Richard Hayes (Revd)