

Kingswood Baptist Church,  
Codenhall Straight,  
Kingswood,  
Basildon,  
Essex,  
SS16 5DH.



**Telephone:** 01268 271707

**Email:** [admin@kingswoodbaptistchurch.co.uk](mailto:admin@kingswoodbaptistchurch.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.kingswoodbaptistchurch.co.uk](http://www.kingswoodbaptistchurch.co.uk)

**Registered Charity:** 1131656

**Senior Minister:** Stuart Elmes  
**Associate Minister:** Nick Braithwaite

Letters to the Church during COVID-19: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020

To the Church Family at KBC,

I hope this finds you well and keeping safe! If you have been following these letters weekly for encouragement then you will know we have been reflecting on passages of Scripture, in the context of lockdown, and exploring how God's Word may be encouraging us in this season. This week's passage is Isaiah 40, all of it and it is beautiful. Take a moment to open your Bible and read Isaiah 40 - take your time and don't rush but allow the words and pictures they conjure up in your mind to linger a bit. So, what is God saying to you through these ancient words?

They were first spoken to the people of Israel during lockdown, in Babylon. It wasn't a short period of weeks; they had been there 70 years. But now God was bringing them back to Jerusalem and there is a note of tenderness in the prophet's voice. 'Comfort, comfort my people' conveys the idea of real gentleness, like that of a mother comforting a child who has been disciplined. I believe this passage speaks a note of comfort and hope to us as well in this season for a whole variety of reasons.

The first encouragement is to note that this lockdown, although it is going to go on a while, will not last forever. There is going to come a time when we will begin to emerge from lockdown, and we will be able to start meeting together again in person. It will of course be with restrictions to begin with but over time these too will come to an end. For now, though, we are able to draw near to the One who is present, is our help and longs to comfort us through the Holy Spirit.

However, we shouldn't forget that the people of God were in 'lockdown' in Babylon because they had rebelled against God and their 'lockdown' was His judgement against them. They were warned by the prophets to amend their ways, but they refused and so were conquered as a nation and carried off into captivity. Now I am not suggesting COVID19 is God's judgement against His people, but I do think that He is using it to prune us and allow us space to reflect on our lives. Have we truly been living to please Him or have we drifted? What changes does God want to make in our lives so that we can be even more fruitful? This has been a persistent message I have been bringing through various means of communication, but I wonder if you are listening? The truth is, God wants, even longs to comfort you but you must repent and return to Him with your whole heart.

The second encouragement comes in vs.12-26 and is the powerful reminder that the Lord is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. Just read these verses again and see if they don't magnify and amplify the magnificence and glory of the Lord in your mind and heart. In a sense the whole universe is dwarfed as we read this poem. The encouragement back then was not to trust in idols made of wood and metal but to trust in the Lord and it is the same encouragement for us today...keep trusting! When we see the grandeur of God clearly our doubts and flagging faith must give way to steadfast hoping and trusting, because the Lord is AWESOME!

Then the third encouragement is in vs.27-31 as we are reminded that the Lord is the everlasting God, He does not grow tired and weary, He is all wise and sees everything. We must not complain that our way is hidden from the Lord or our cause disregarded by God (vs.27) because he is our very present help and He is armed with the promise that, 'those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength'. May you wait upon Him, gaze upon Him, delight in Him, find comfort in Him and may all His favour be upon you this week in everything you do.

Grace be yours in abundance!

Stu

#KeepTrusting #KeepConnected #Call4Support

### **Notices and Upcoming events on Zoom:**

**Stu's on holiday:** Please note that Stu is on holiday until **Saturday 30 May**, for anything urgent during this period please contact an Elder.

Friday: Children and Youth on line for those aged 11+ at 7pm.

Sunday: 10:30am, Sunday Morning Service (we will open the room at 10am for people to gather to chat and leave it open after the service for people to chat as well).

Sunday: 7pm, there will be a time of worship until about 8.30pm led by a few of us from the music group. It's very informal, but an opportunity to worship God in song.

**KBC YouTube channel:** Here you will find our new daily mini devotional series 'Therefore..' and back copies of Stu's daily devotional series 'You are....' and our sermons each week. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0lqZEJkxDYGSeCQCw6onJw/featured>

**Resources:** Do not forget to check out our resources page on our website, which is constantly being updated, including resources for families and activities for children and youth: <https://kingswoodbaptistchurch.co.uk/resources/>