

Stoke St Gregory  
Baptist Church  
NEWS  
April 2020



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## From Sonya

**Proverbs 3:5+6** “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.”



I am writing to you at a time where everything in our daily lives is changing and there is a lot of fear and anxiety around. This is a difficult time. Everything that felt solid in our lives is shifting. I want to encourage you to fix your eyes on Jesus and trust in Him with all your heart. The God that we serve has not changed. He loves the world He created with a passionate love and He cares for each person and all that we are concerned about. **1 Peter 5:7** says, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” God is with us through these challenging times and longs for us to turn to Him and ask for His help.

Whilst we are unable to meet together on a Sunday, we are still called to be the church in the places where we are. I encourage you to continue to praise God where you are, for Who He is. God is still worthy of our praise, however we are feeling. Continue to seek to connect with our church family by email, phone, and in other ways which support and encourage, but don't put anyone at risk. Look out for those that you know in the wider community who are isolated or struggling in some other way. Listen to their fears and concerns and only after you have listened well, maybe share something of the love of God if you sense it is the right thing to do at that time. Keep on following the advice from the government on how to keep each other safe.

I am praying for you all. If you or someone you know would like someone to talk to, or to pray with you over the phone, please contact me.

Blessings,

Sonya

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Amen.**

The Athelney Benefice has put together a booklet of prayers, readings and ways of praying with others. If you'd like a copy printed out for you, please contact Tim or Liz.

## **Easter**

Sonya is working on ways for us to stay connected as a church community. She is hoping that we will be able to join in virtual Easter services together. More details to follow.

## **Practical needs**

If you, or someone you know, would like someone to talk to or to pray with you over the phone, please contact Sonya.

If you, or someone that you know, has a practical need, like shopping or collecting prescriptions, please contact Tim and he will co-ordinate this.

If you are able to help in practical ways, please also contact Tim and then he will know who he can ask to help.

## **Studying the Bible together**

The homegroup which meets on a Tuesday evening are starting a study which is produced by the Bible Society and can be downloaded free from their website. It has 6 different themes: prayer and stillness, the Holy Spirit, justice, the Bible, how faith affects real life, and whole life discipleship. If you are interested in studying along with us, please contact Sonya and she will give you more details. We are going to look at these studies in our own homes and hope to connect online to discuss together.

**Prayer broadcasts** from the Baptist Union can be viewed on their website. On Wednesday Ken Benjamin reflected on Paul's prison letters; "Paul's world was wider than his walls, his spiritual journey continued when his physical journey was limited". There is a regular broadcast that can be followed at [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk).

## Finance

The church is closed at present with no services, home groups or other activities. This means that our income is reduced because we have no weekly offering and are not receiving any rent for use of the schoolroom. I know times are very difficult and worrying, but we need to realise that although the chapel is closed our running costs don't reduce in any way. So please bear this in mind and if you don't already direct debit your giving to the church please consider setting up one now. The church's bank account is as follows:

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

Lloyds Bank

Sort code                    30 - 98 - 45

Account number        00604544

Consider prayerfully what we give to the church, how important is church life to you!

We also realise that some of you will have your own financial difficulties, especially if you are self-employed, and understand that you may have to reduce your offering for the time being. We pray that all will be well.

*Front cover – picture taken by Alison Katte at a willow cross workshop 5 years' ago.*



### *Our verse for 2020*

*Colossians 2:6-7 "And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."*



## For our prayers

Colin and Jan Gorton  
Sue Hembrow  
Ana and Tim Pearce and Joshua  
Des and Lesley Perry  
Hannah and Luke and William  
Christine Poulson  
Our neighbours



As we face the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, we think of many who specially need our love and prayers at this time...

...families living all day together under one roof,  
...folk finding isolation lonely and feeling out of touch,  
...those known to us who are poorly and feeling out of sorts  
...all the caring neighbours who are focussing on others' needs  
...the working population and those whose work is put on hold  
...medical and support staff of the NHS  
...many anxious about distant elderly and unwell relatives  
...many anxious about their jobs and financial situation.

## Let us Celebrate....

....with Jan and Colin, their daughter Mary's marriage to Dan Aresti on 22<sup>nd</sup> February at Governor's Bay, Christchurch, New Zealand. We wish them happiness in their future together.  
....with Gill and Tony Yaskin and Janice and Hugh Pearce, the birth of a grandson, Barnaby Ernie Hugh on 5<sup>th</sup> March. A son for Ben and Katie Pike and a brother for Evelyn.



.....with Paddy as she is so much more herself following her spell in hospital over Christmas and commemorates her 91st birthday on 11 April.

## Flower ministry

Anne Coate is still running the flower ministry during this time. If you normally contribute flowers to the church, please give Anne a small donation (£4 or £5). She will get and arrange flowers and they will be distributed to people in our local community who are dealing with a lot at the moment and would appreciate a gift of love from the church. If you would like to suggest anyone to receive flowers, please contact Sonya or Anne.

## Mothering Sunday Service online



In these strange times we need to get a bit inventive with our worship and this is where technology comes into its own. On Mothering Sunday I sat down with my coffee, Bible, communion wine, (ribena), and bread at the ready. Church attendees received an email from Sonya on the 21st which had a link in it

(starting <https://youtu.be>). If you have YouTube on your smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer, you just need to click (or tap, on phones or tablets), on the link and it takes you to YouTube where you can click on the picture to join in.

After a few technical issues, Matt from Creech Baptist Church came online from his home. It was a lovely service and he was helped by his children with actions to "Our God is a great big God", which was a

joy to watch and join in with and no one can see you jumping around your living room! Matt included a children's slot, as well as his sermon, prayers and communion. Matt is hoping the live broadcast will become slicker over the next few weeks, the words for the songs coming up the right way round rather than in mirror image! I'll be tuning in. Hope you can too. *Alison K*

## April Diary

As we will not be able to meet over Easter, here are some of the readings you might like to follow over the season so that we are joined in our prayers even if we are not together.



April 5<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday  
Matthew 21.1 – 11

April 6<sup>th</sup> – Monday  
John 12. 1 – 11      Mary washes Jesus' feet

April 7<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday  
John 12.20 – 26      The entry into Jerusalem

April 8<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday  
John 13. 21 – 32      Jesus predicts his betrayal

April 9<sup>th</sup> – Maundy Thursday  
John 13. 1 – 17, 31 – 35      Jesus washed his disciples' feet

April 10<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday  
John 18.1 – 19.42      The Way of the Cross

April 11<sup>th</sup> – Easter Eve  
John 19. 38 – 42      The Burial of Jesus

April 12<sup>th</sup> - Easter Sunday  
John 20. 1 – 18      Mary at the Empty Tomb

April 19<sup>th</sup> – The Second Sunday of Easter  
John 20. 19 – 31      Jesus appears to his disciples

April 26<sup>th</sup> – The Third Sunday of Easter  
Luke 24. 13 – 35      The Road to Emmaus



Halleluia!

Jesus is  
risen!

He is risen  
indeed!

## Learning a new skill

What to do in enforced isolation? Learn something that needs time, perseverance and patience perhaps. I have been interested in making Sourdough bread for a long time because of the many Biblical references to leaven and yeast. Yeast is sometimes referred to as evil, and at other times as good. Passover is followed by seven days of the Feast of unleavened bread. In fact before the mid 1800s all bread was made with natural yeast trapped in the organic bread flour.

My first attempt was an absolute disaster and not even the birds could get their beaks into it, but thanks to the wretched virus I have had time to try again. Second and third attempts were very much better although



the crust is still too hard. I make my own starter, using water (tap water which has been sitting in a bottle for 24 hours) and organic bread flour in which there is natural yeast and after five days of feeding (there are good methods on various websites) I put it in the fridge and forget about it until needed.

The secret with Sourdough is to be patient, (a loaf takes over two days to make from start to finish), be gentle with the kneading, and persevere. It is fun, the result is so much healthier than shop bread, and very therapeutic.

*Tim.*

Perhaps you have learned a new skill, made new friends or encountered some other unexpected blessing in this time of isolation. If so, we'd love to hear about it. A member of our fellowship has just sent out an e card with a cheering spring scene.