

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church April 2021 News



Minister:

Rev. Sonya Setchell

01823 490975

07485 004486

Secretary:

Tim Spotswood

01823 490142

www.ssgbaptist.com



From Sonya

The last year has been a very strange one for all of us. None of us could have foreseen what the last year has been like and all that has changed. I wonder how you are feeling now? Maybe you are hopeful for the future but not quite sure what it will look like. Maybe you are finding the ongoing uncertainty difficult. Maybe you have anxieties about the future.



There is an opportunity for us to bring to Jesus everything that we are feeling this Easter in a particular way. On Palm Sunday, a large willow Easter cross will be set up outside the front of the chapel. Everyone is encouraged to collect 2 labels from a box next to the cross sometime during Holy Week. On the blue edged one, write a word or phrase or draw something which represents your fears or griefs at this time. Bring it back and tie it on the cross in time for Good Friday, remembering that Jesus knows what it is like to experience suffering and He cares about us. We can safely trust Him with our struggles.

On the yellow edged label, write or draw something which represents your hopes or your joys at this time. Tie these to the cross in time for Easter Sunday. We know we can have hope because Jesus rose again from the dead and won the ultimate victory over sin and death and separation from God. Flowers will also be added to the cross on Easter Sunday to represent the new life that Jesus brings to all who believe in Him.

We hope this cross helps us to reflect and to draw closer to God this Easter.

Blessings to you all, Sonya.

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

Front cover: Too many Easter Eggs.

From the Deacons

We have just passed a milestone – the first anniversary of the first lockdown. This had a major impact on all our daily lives and the life of the church. In last year's April newsletter Sonya wrote, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart'...everything in our daily lives is changing and there is a lot of fear and anxiety around".

The Mothering Sunday service was held online, coming from Creech Baptist Church using Youtube. It was the first of many online services. Ian was one of the first to get to grips with Zoom and led a Homegroup study on Habbakuk. Soon we were having Sunday worship by Zoom and then Deacons' meetings, which were also attended by various cats and dogs. The church annual meeting was postponed until October and hosted by Zoom. This was well attended – it is convenient to attend a meeting in the comfort of your own home with a cup of coffee, on the other hand we are mindful of those who dislike virtual meetings or cannot get online at all.

All church activities ceased: Luncheon Club, TWiGs, Supaclub ... Messy Church had just held a Sunday service, starting at 10.00am with a cooked breakfast. Technology is a wonderful thing but it cannot replicate the smell of frying bacon. Now Messy Church is delivered to families in a bag.

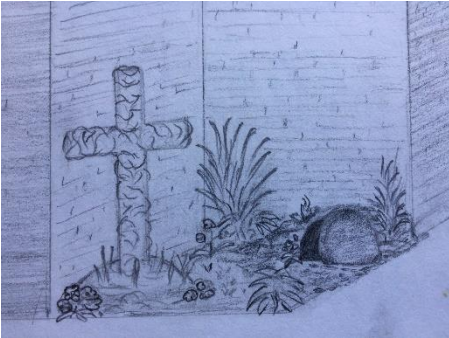
We were learning new skills – sourdough bread, art and craft projects, people were wonderfully inventive. We were also blessed with fine weather and took the opportunity to enjoy our gardens and nature during our enforced inactivity. We hope to hold a service to celebrate this later in the year.

At the same time we became aware of people who were lonely and struggling, vital medical appointments were postponed. There were deaths in our community and where once we would have gone in person to pay our respects to the dead and comfort their relatives, this was no longer possible. Celebrations were muted, golden wedding anniversaries, significant birthdays, new arrivals – all passed without the gatherings that would normally have honoured them.

Now that more of us have been vaccinated and the disease appears to be in retreat, we are starting to look cautiously to the future, mindful of the fact that there could still be a third wave with a new variant.

Some innovations were a success – the outdoor services were popular and we hope to repeat them. Online giving has been very helpful and

we may replace the offertory plate with a box and envelopes by the door. Zoom meetings and services may still play a part in our lives. Above all I think we have become more aware of the importance of community, we all have a part to play in helping and supporting each other. The kindness of strangers has been overwhelming.



As we look back over the past year, its high points and the lows, we can bring our thoughts and prayers to God. A beautiful cross, made at the Willows and Wetlands, will be outside the front door of the church together with an Easter garden. It is there for anyone in the community who would like to come and reflect and pray. There will be labels in a box

for you to write down your fears and griefs and fix them to the cross. There are also labels for hopes and joys. The school children have already written their labels.

Please come and add yours.



in a bag!

Messy Church has not been able to meet for over a year now – so it has been delivered in a bag!

It includes three crafts, a story, a prayer and a little extra something. It goes with the good wishes of all the church family.

We look forward to seeing some of the creations.



Lent Study Groups

As a life-long Anglican I am very pleased to find that ecumenism is alive and well in North Curry and Stoke St Gregory.

Sonya and Ian of the Baptist Church have welcomed me to their Home Group for some months now, and it has become a weekly event I look forward to for the fellowship, humour and Christian support which we've all been in need of these last 12 months.

As part of our Lenten worship we have been following a course on prayer provided by 24/7 Prayer, which includes a lively video on an aspect of prayer each week. This helps us all to evaluate our own attitudes and prayer life – and I have to admit my personal shortcomings!



A good starting point is the Lord's Prayer, beginning with Adoration – the acknowledgment of God as our heavenly Father and Creator and how we can and should incorporate worship into our daily lives.

Following this is Petition; a conversation with our Father for our daily needs, both material and spiritual. Other topics will follow – we await to find out how we are challenged and encouraged to improve both individually and in fellowship through our lively discussions and the help of the Holy Spirit!

Olivia Spall

Liz had the idea that, as we were all Locked Down and unable to meet, we should read 'The Art of Lent by Sister Wendy Beckett' at home.



Baby in a Red Chair
1810-30 unknown
artist.

We took it in turns to phone or be phoned by a different member of the group each week to discuss the pictures Sister Wendy had chosen to illustrate her thoughts. Every week had a theme, eg. Repentance, Contemplation, Peace. It has been a great Joy – one of the themes - to catch up with people that we have not seen for over a year. It was a very good idea!

Of course, we have talked about many other things too, and we all agree that it has been one of the highlights of our week during this time of isolation. No one so far has found Sister Wendy's thoughts easy; her interpretation of the pictures and themes was often different from ours and our opinions differed too. Some artists

were new to us and we found new meanings in paintings we thought we knew. Theologically we have had time to put into words our thoughts and ideas about difficult concepts and learnt new ideas from others.

Thank you Liz for giving us the opportunity to share this Lenten Time.

Judith Hincks

Ron Gadsby

Ron's family came to Somerset at the beginning of the war; they had connections with the willow industry. So began a long and happy life in the county. At first the family attended Burrowbridge Baptist Church and then Stoke, where he met Freda while carol singing. They married five years later and were together for 64 years. They had two daughters, Anne and Christine.

He went to Leicester University and then moved to Keynsham, where he taught maths. He spent 20 years of his teaching career at Churchill Comprehensive, where he was head of department and also set up the careers department.

When he retired from teaching the family moved to Kewstoke, where they had a hardware store. They finally retired to Stathe.

Ron was interested in many sports; was keen on cricket, playing for Burrowbridge, enjoyed tennis and supported Leicester City FC.

Most of all, Freda says, they enjoyed the simple pleasures; cycling and walking in the countryside. They had a dormobile and had holidays in Ireland and Scotland.

He had a long connection with our church. He audited the accounts for many years. He wrote the Red Book, a history of our church, compiled from the memories of older people that he interviewed and many hours of research. He was part of the Search team after John Courtie left.

He had a strong Christian faith. Most of all we will remember his kind smile and gentle ways. He was always putting other people first.

He will be much missed and our prayers are with Freda and the family.

Freda, Anne and Christine and family would like to express their thanks for the many cards and messages received during recent weeks. They have taken comfort in the fact that so many people have remembered Ron and themselves in their thoughts and prayers. This has been very much appreciated.

For our Prayers

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



On the anniversary of the beginning of the lockdown, we remember all who have lost loved ones during this past year, those who died from Covid 19 and those from other causes, sadly also coping with the stress of the stringent measures in place restricting visits and funeral services. We pray for those currently affected by the coronavirus including Michelle, Tony's sister in the US and give thanks for those in our community who are well on their way to recovery. We pray for those working long hours at home in difficult circumstances.

We continue to hold in our prayers... Katie, who is recovering from surgery, Catherine, who dislocated her knee while attending a ewe on Exmoor, Kathy D attending her father's funeral. Please pray too for Tim Pike who is undergoing back surgery in Christchurch, New Zealand. We pray for the medical team, and support for Ellie and the girls, and Gill and Tony who feel so far away. Eric Venn, Andy House and David A who are not well.

Happy news

We rejoice with friends who have welcomed new babies into their families:

Betty Woodland became a great grandmother with the birth of Arthur Stephen Ronald on 27 February, a son for David and Jade, and grandson for Suzanne.

Joan Thatcher recently celebrated the Christening service of her great granddaughter Hollie Louise at the Church of the Holy Cross Middlezoy. Hollie is the daughter of Sam and Lisa, a sister for Kai. A happy occasion for all including grandparents Sarah and Rob, and Lisa's parents in Ireland, who shared the service via Zoom.

Thank you

Anne Jackson writes: I would just like to say a big thank you to all who so kindly sent me cards, flowers, etc, following the death of my dear sister, Janet, who had been suffering from cancer on and off for a number of years. What was very important to me and my family, who she loved dearly, were your prayers and they also want to send their heartfelt thanks to you all. I particularly felt surrounded by the love of your prayers on the day of her funeral. We all miss her dreadfully but know she is at peace with God and her loved ones.

BMS Birthday Scheme

Paddy will be commemorating her 92nd birthday on 11th April. We wish her a happy day and thank her for all the years she has supported the scheme.

We look forward to welcoming our Link Missionaries on 2nd May

April Calendar

1st	2.00 – 4.00pm 7.30 – 9.00pm	Maundy Thursday Easter prayer stations	Church
2nd	10.30am	Good Friday service	Zoom
4th	6.30am	Easter Sunrise service	Outside chapel
	10.30am	Easter Sunday service with communion	Zoom
11th	10.30am	Morning worship	Church
12th	10am – 1.00pm 7.30pm	Church open for quiet prayer Church Meeting	Zoom
18th	10.30am	Morning worship – café church Fruits of the Spirit – Joy	Zoom
25th	10.30am	Morning worship	Church
26th	10am – 1.00pm	Church open for Quiet prayer	
May 2nd	10.30am	Morning worship with the Owendens	Church
16th		Baptist Union Assembly Online Worship	

Happy Easter to all of you
from Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church!