

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church
May 2021
News



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From Sonya

Thank you for all those who made our Easter willow cross and Easter garden possible. They were beautiful! Many people from our community used them to bring their fears and griefs to the cross and to reflect on what they are hoping for. The resurrection of Jesus brings us great hope because it shows us that there is hope of resurrection life for all those who turn to Jesus from their old lives and trust Him.



During May we celebrate something else which gives us great hope. Fifty days after Easter, the disciples were all together in one place when something amazing happened! They heard a sound like the blowing of a violent wind and saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each one of them. They all began to speak in languages that they had never learnt, and many people came to see what had happened. From this day, the disciples had great boldness to go out and share the good news of Easter with anyone they met. This small group of disciples changed the world, and this message of hope is still being shared today. The good news is that we can also receive the Holy Spirit into our lives to empower us to share God's love with others. The gift is on offer. We only have to ask God in order to receive it. This Pentecost let's ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we will have the courage to share the good news of hope with a world which so desperately needs that hope at this time.

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: Easter Cross & The Empty Tomb (taken by Ian Setchell)

From the Deacons

Our thanks to Amanda, Guest Editor for this issue of the newsletter.

The recent Church Meeting took place on Zoom (we're all becoming used to this method of meeting up now, and can even cope with a local power cut interrupting things mid-way through!)

We started the meeting by listening to Sonya reading three different passages from the Bible and we then thought and prayed about those who still needed our pastoral care – all those still grieving, those recovering from surgery or illness, those still dealing with isolation, financial issues and relationship issues.

There was a useful group discussion about what the “Recovery Phase” for church might look like post Lockdown, and all agreed that it was a process that would require time, care and patience with each other and acknowledgment that people may want to respond at different speeds to any changes. Many were in agreement that we might hold more services outside when weather permitted, especially to encourage families with younger children, and that we should aim to be more imaginative and creative in the ways we hold our services and worship – picnic church in addition to café church perhaps...! All agreed that we wanted to maintain many of the things we used to love sharing together – hymn singing, sharing hospitality after the services, and re-starting groups such as the Luncheon Club, TWiGs, Messy Church etc.

For the time being, future services will continue to be held alternately between Zoom and inside/outside the church. Liz is hoping to continue the format (inspired by Sister Wendy's The Art of Lent) of having a “**Phone Group**” to discuss a picture, poem, bible passage or reflection since people have really appreciated this way of communicating with each other. **Messy Church** will continue online and Sonya reported that the Easter Messy Bags were really appreciated by the 8 families who received one, and on Saturday 22nd May, **MESSTIVAL** will take place - Pentecost Messy Church in a Bag will be available to send out to families, with a You Tube session at 3pm to share in the “Biggest Messy Church Session EVER!”. Sonya will send out further information nearer the time.

The **Thy Kingdom Come** prayer movement has collaborated with the “Cheeky Pandas” and Sonya is liaising with Stoke St Gregory school to share the fun-filled series of videos with them. This will be a great initiative to focus on the nurturing of children in their faith and to get children excited about the Bible and prayer.

The much loved **Strawberry Tea** is provisionally planned for Saturday 26th June and some ideas were shared to see if we could make the day extra special by including an opportunity for people to share examples of what they may have created during the Lockdown period, such as a painting, some needlework, a piece of writing, baking bread etc.

Monthly “**WorkTeams**” will start from Saturday April 24th, meeting at 10am outside the church, thereafter meeting up on the last Saturday of each month, to tackle any small maintenance jobs needed in the church building or in the grounds, such as clearing ivy and weeds, or touching up paintwork etc. All are welcome to join a “Work Team” and a task list will be available so people can determine what sort of clothing or equipment they might need on the day to help out.

The next meeting will be our **AGM on Monday 24th May at 7.30pm**. Whether we meet via Zoom or in person will be confirmed nearer the time.

Junior Church Alumni – Where are they now...?

Our regular Junior Church has sadly not been able to meet during these times of Lockdown, but I know that the Junior Church leaders are very much looking forward to being able to welcome back our lovely young members as soon as we're able to again.

When we started attending Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church in 2003, Junior Church (or Sunday School as it was known back then!) was a very important part of our family life when our children were younger, and lifelong friendships were made during the years that our children attended. Here are some updates from a few of the now young adults that attended Junior Church together...
Amanda



I am currently working as a Trainee Solicitor in a Commercial Dispute Resolution firm in London. I am currently living in Hither Green (South East London)

Unfortunately, my memories of Junior Church are very hazy but I can most recall doing the performances in front of the main church (nativity etc) which were always fun!

Rosanna Barnes



I've been living in Australia for the past 2 years and am currently in Sydney. I am working as a Mental Health Nurse as part of the Australian Government's Pandemic Response Plan, mainly supporting returning travellers who have to quarantine in designated hotels. In my spare time I like to travel and see as much of Australia as I can! I'm hoping to return to the UK in August and plan to relocate back to Manchester.

My favourite memories of Junior Church were doing arts and crafts with Ruth and putting on the plays.

Amelia Saunders



I am currently living in Preston finishing off the final year of my degree. I only have 4 weeks left before I finish it completely which is a very strange feeling. I have just signed a contract for a new job working in the Greater Manchester Police Force, positioned in Oldham which I am looking forward to, so hopefully I'll be moving to Manchester more permanently soon.

My favourite memories of Junior Church are at Easter when we would make the Easter gardens using moss, greenery and stones. As well, of course, climbing the big tree in the grounds after the service!

Alice Marriott



Do you have any Wrens in your family?

I'm not referring to the tiny, feathered variety in the garden but the indomitable ladies who joined the Women's Royal Naval Service. Specifically, ladies who joined up between 1946 and 1981 and did their basic training at Training Depot Burghfield/HMTE Burghfield/HMTE Dauntless/HMS Dauntless/Reading.

Dauntless Divisional Photos is a nationwide project, in collaboration with the Association of Wrens, to gather divisional photographs and memories from those training days but also to reunite ladies with old friends, share anecdotes and relive exciting moments.

So if you, your mum, granny, aunt, godmother or even next door neighbour donned a blue suit and aimed for a life on the ocean wave, please get in touch on either ddpwrens@gmail.com or 07765 435295/0771 990 9844.



Joe and Lois Ovenden (our BMS Link Missionaries) will be returning briefly from Gulu in Northern Uganda to the UK on home assignment and we are lucky enough to have them with us for our Morning Service and Communion on 2nd May (albeit via Zoom). Lois was a Speech & Language Therapist and Joe worked for the British Red Cross before they

started their missionary work in Zimbabwe and latterly in Uganda. They work alongside local communities, helping to rebuild livelihoods through development programmes and improve family life through communication therapy. Through her work, Lois also supports many children with Down Syndrome and their mothers (disability still has a stigma attached to it in Uganda). If you would like to support the work of BMS World Mission and the work of the Owendens you can make a donation online via the church (add BMS/Owendens as a reference) or use the donate button on the BMS website (www.bmsworldmission.org)

For our Prayers

Helen and Simon Gittins, Edith,
George and Bertie
Peter and Sue Nicholas
Anne Jackson
Jean Pimm
John and Paddy Scott
Shirley Worgan
Messy Church and all who enjoy this ministry.



Please pray for ... Those who have been shielding and others who have felt particularly isolated, for confidence, reassurance and encouragement as they venture out.

All children and young people returning to classrooms for this term, their teachers and support staff, as they continue to cope with new ways of doing things and fill missing gaps due to the pandemic.

Those who have ongoing medical concerns, their families who support, and their medical teams.

Her Majesty the Queen and her family.

We continue to hold in our prayers Anne M and family, Freda and family, Katie, Tim Pike, Kay and Alan Chedzoy and family and Colin.

Happy news

We rejoice with Janine and John on the birth of Alfie Jack William Parfitt, a brother for Archie, a fantastic big brother! We look forward to meeting Alfie when TWiGs can be up and running again.

BMS Birthday Scheme

Our thanks to Joan, our birthday scheme secretary, as she faithfully sends out cards to all who contribute to the scheme – never missing, and always on time! This month, Joan along with Anne Gadsby, celebrate their birthdays on the 1st and 20th May.

We wish them both a happy day.





In a bag



Some lovely pictures from the Moore family, showing their amazing creations from the Easter Messy Church in a bag.

May Calendar

2nd	10.30am	Morning Service & Holy Communion with Joe & Lois Ovenden (BMS Missionaries)	Zoom
9th	10.30am	'Picnic Church'!	Outside chapel
16th	10.30am 11.30am	Baptist Union Assembly Online Worship, address by Shane Claiborne	Zoom
22nd	3.00pm	MESSTIVAL	Zoom
23rd	10.30am	Pentecost Service	Inside/Outside chapel
24th	7.30pm	Church AGM	Zoom/chapel
29th	10.00am	Working Group meet at the church	Outside chapel
30th	10.30am	Morning Service	Zoom