

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

April 2022

News



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From Sonya

I wonder how you feel when you watch the news at the moment? I think for all of us, the events unfolding in Ukraine have shocked and baffled us. Our hearts go out to those who are suffering so profoundly. As we watch the news, we become more discouraged and anxious. We are in need of hope from somewhere.



The Christian hope is not that we are protected or immune from difficult things in this life. But we can have hope even in uncertain times. Our God is a God of loving compassion, and His heart is breaking for all the people who are suffering and dying and having their lives destroyed. In fact, this is why God sent His son Jesus into the world in the first place to die on a cruel cross. Because Jesus died and rose again from the dead, three things were made possible:

1. There is an opportunity for each person to confess their failings and rebellion to God and to be forgiven and receive a brand-new life. This new life can become part of the solution to the problems in the world, as each person follows Jesus' example.
2. Reconciliation between different groups of people is made possible. The Holy Spirit empowers people as agents of this reconciliation.
3. Jesus' death and resurrection promises restoration for the whole created universe.

This Easter let's remember that Jesus' death and resurrection brings real hope to ourselves, to the nations and to the world. And let's keep on praying for the God of hope to move in power in our world today.

Blessings to you all, Sonya.

From the Deacons

The deacons met at Tim's home on 14th March, where we had fellowship, cake, coffee, and laughter. Deacons' meetings are serious affairs, but we still manage to have a chat and a tease. We are good friends but do need others to join the leadership team. Tim told us that he is standing down/retiring as secretary but will stay on as a deacon, at least until the stables are restored.

Sonya gave us a section of Joshua (9:3 - 27) to read and think about. We learnt that Joshua and his leadership team made a mistake by not asking God for advice, being too quick with their decision, but in the end, Joshua did not compound the error by trying to wriggle out of his mistake. He admitted he had erred but kept his promise to the treacherous Gibeonites. Mind you, one has sympathy for the Gibeonites - far better to be treacherous than slaughtered.

We discussed the Stables, the two estimates we have received so far (our kind architect has asked two other firms to quote), what plans we have for the stables and how we might apply for grants. And of course, other maintenance issues - Eunice's damage to the roof, now fixed thanks to Charlie; rot in the vestry cupboard; the soak away; chapel locks; wheelchair access to the Manse.

Fortunately, there was time to talk about our faith, those on our pastoral list, reviews of services and past events, and plans for the future. The meeting ended at 9:30 pm with the Grace.

If anyone is wondering "is becoming a deacon for me?" – please phone Sonya or any of the current deacons or seek them out for an informal chat after church. You may be thinking leadership is not for you or you have nothing to offer but please seek God's guidance since we never quite know how God wishes to use us!

Resurrection People

Do you find that we spend a lot of time in Lent preparing for Easter and then Easter goes by like a flash? The resurrection of Jesus is not something we should zoom past on our way to somewhere else. The resurrection changes everything. This year we are going to take some time in our services from Easter Sunday onwards to really reflect on what difference the resurrection makes and what it means for us to be resurrection people.

Alongside the Resurrection People sermon series, there is a personal devotions book available which contains 5 reflections for each week. There are things to reflect on and pray about, questions to answer and links to some videos to watch. You could either receive the book as a physical book or as an electronic download. Books are £6 each and downloads are £3 each. Please let Sonya know if you would like one and then we can order them.

CHARITY LUNCHES

Annette Gage has started organising the monthly charity lunches again and would be delighted to be contacted (01823 490297) should anyone be interested in hosting a lunch for their favourite charity. The lunches are held on the last Monday of the month and is a lovely way to raise money and enjoy good company.

A recent charity lunch was held for the RNLI with 24 people attending and £179 being raised!



Author Review

Philip Yancey

He trained as a journalist at first for a youngish readership. But time and life experiences like marriage, interesting and sometimes difficult friendships, doubts about aspects of Christian faith, as well as some amazing accounts of other Christians and their lives, has given him material for many books exploring what it means to follow the Lord Jesus at every time of life.

The layout of his books is not only by subject chapter, but within the chapter he usually has breaks where a comment has been presented and the following material goes on a step further. He researches widely and quotes from a vast array of sources, old and more recent. Some might find his material challenging but always informative; not the sort of teaching that one would get from a sermon.

His long friendship with the British surgeon who revolutionised leprosy treatment, Paul Brand, is an inspiring study of the life of a Christian whose encounter with the Lord Jesus led him to a lifetime of dedication of his medical ability to God.

The book that I am currently reading is “Reaching For The Invisible God” but I started with “What’s So Amazing About Grace?” Where will you start with Philip Yancey...?

Thank you to Peter Malindine who kindly got in touch recently and sent this review of his favourite author. Peter’s words have inspired me to revisit a couple of Philip Yancey books that I hadn’t looked at for years – “Disappointment With God” and “The Jesus I Never Knew”.

For our Prayers

Ana and Tim Pearce and Joshua
Sue Hembrow
Hannah and Luke, and William
Des and Lesley Perry
Colin and Jan Gorton
Shirley Worgan



Our prayers also go to Joan Thatcher, Mary Strange, Paddy Scott, Sonya Setchell, Julia Spotwood, Judith & David Hincks, Graham & Valerie Board. We pray that the Lord would bless them and heal them.



We continue praying for the people of Ukraine and for the protection of their country. We pray for a peaceful end to the war and for God's protection over the people who have become refugees and are displaced, and for those who remain in Ukraine. We also pray for all the people and agencies who are delivering aid. "Praise be to the Lord, for he showed me the wonders of his love when I was in a city under siege" (Psalm 31:21)

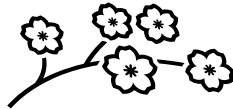
Psalm 31 has become 'the key scripture for all Ukrainians' and there is a profoundly moving video showing people across Ukraine reading aloud verses of this Psalm from their bunkers and shelters. There is a link to the video on the Bible Society's website www.biblesociety.org.uk

BMS Birthday Scheme



We celebrate the birthday this month of Paddy Scott on 11th

We thank her for supporting the scheme and wish her a very happy day.



April Flowers

- 3rd** Ruth Loveridge
- 10th** Kathleen Staple
- 17th** EASTER FLOWERS
- 24th** EASTER FLOWERS

May

- 1st** Liz Hembrow

A little apology...

Unfortunately, we were unable to print off as many paper copies of the March newsletter as would usually be printed. This resulted in some people not receiving their usual paper copy. I would like to apologise for this, and hopefully reassure those who had already kindly contacted me about their preference for receiving a paper copy. "Normal service" should be reinstated from this month onwards! Thank you for your understanding.

Amanda

April 2022 Calendar

Day	Time	Event
Sun 3rd	10.30am	EASTER MESSY CHURCH starting with breakfast at 10am
Weds 6th	12 noon	Luncheon Club in the Schoolroom
	7.30pm	Home Group
Thurs 7th	9.30am-11.30am	TWiGs in the Schoolroom
Sun 10th	10.30am	PALM SUNDAY with COMMUNION
Mon 11th	7.30pm	Deacons Meeting
Weds 13th	7.30pm	Home Group
Fri 15th	2pm	GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE. Joint service at St Gregory's Church
Sun 17th	6am	EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE outside the Baptist church
	10.30am	EASTER DAY SERVICE. Resurrection People 1: Easter Sunday
Weds 20th	12 noon	Luncheon Club in the Schoolroom
	7.30pm	Home Group
Sun 24th	10.30am	FAMILY WORSHIP Service led by Tim Spotswood and the deacons
Thurs 24th	9.30am-11.30am	TWiGs in the Schoolroom

You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance. *Psalm 65:11 (NLT)*