

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church October 2020 News & Annual Report

Minister:

Rev. Sonya Setchell
01823 490975
07485 004486

Secretary:

Tim Spotswood
01823 490142



www.ssgbaptist.com



From Sonya

Looking back over the last year, it truly has been an unprecedented year of ministry! It's almost hard to remember what life was like before Covid 19! Many aspects of church life were going really well before lockdown hit. Lunch Club and Twigs were both thriving, we had just relaunched Messy Church and our ministry within the school with SUPA club, Open the Book and assemblies was much appreciated. A new homegroup had started and the first one was going well. Our community life together was a joy to be part of.



Then lockdown came and everything had to change. We adapted well, putting in place new pastoral care systems to make sure no-one was missed out, and learning to use Zoom for services, homegroup, prayer meetings and deacons' meetings. We also sent out weekly reflections for those unable to access Zoom, and supported people in finding ways of worshipping which worked for them. That is not to say that it hasn't been a difficult time for all of us. We learned how much our church family means to us and how much we miss being together, and we were able to re-evaluate what is most important to us.

Looking forward, life is still uncertain, and we don't know how things are going to pan out. We are not sure what mission and ministry are going to look like here in the long-term. We need to give God the things that we can do at this time and look to Him to multiply their effectiveness. We also need to listen to God and continue to adapt as government restrictions change over time. But we can move forward together, one day at a time, trusting that our God will bring good things out of this season and will continue to lead us forward.

Blessings to you all, *Sonya*

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."

Church Annual Meeting

Monday 12th October

7.30pm

The Church Annual Meeting will be in a different format this year – it will be by Zoom.

The Deacons thought long and hard about the situation and concluded that some members would not be comfortable coming

out to mingle with others, even if we are spaced at 2m. We realise that not everyone has access to a computer. If you would like to take part in the meeting but cannot get online, please speak to Sonya or one of the deacons and we will try to make alternative arrangements for you. It follows that the elections of deacons will be a different process.

Voting forms will be emailed or posted to you. These need to be emailed back to Sonya or you can phone her with your vote.

We usually hear reports from the different church activities at our meeting. This year they have been collated for you in this newsletter.

If you have any queries about any of these activities, please feel free to raise them at the meeting.

One thing will not change – as well as reporting on the past we will be looking forward to see what the future holds for us. This year more than ever your prayers and discernment will be needed to enable us to face the challenges before us.

Church Annual Meeting – Reports

People in 2019

During the meeting we usually stop to reflect on the people who have come or gone in the year. The big event of 2019 was the arrival of Sonya and Ian. Sonya was formally welcomed as our minister in April. In March we said goodbye to Ron Woodland, who had served the church faithfully for many years taking care of our grounds, which were never less than immaculate.

Tim Guernsey died in November. Not a member of our church, he audited our accounts for many years and was always very thorough. We remember them in our prayers.

Deacons' meetings

The deacons met regularly during the year; in lockdown they met via Zoom. Discussions centered on pastoral care of the fellowship and communities, how we foresee the change in the church post lockdown, and our finances. The chapel has been used regularly on Mondays for open prayer, outdoor services commenced on Sunday 23rd August. Four church meetings were held since the last AGM, the last being on 16th March 2020. There have been no indoor services during lockdown. This was minuted in the deacons' minutes. *Tim*

Finance

Summary of accounts for the year ended 31st December 2019:

Ordinary Income		39194
Funds raised for other causes		<u>1386</u>
Total Income		40580
Expenses	44252	
Grants	<u>3186</u>	<u>47438</u>
Deficit		<u>-6858</u>

A fuller version of these figures will be sent to members with the agenda for the Church Annual Meeting. Many thanks to Rob Ellis, who has audited the accounts.

I am very grateful to those who contribute to the church by regular direct debit. There will not be an offering taken up during worship for the foreseeable future. Please contact me if you would like bank details so you can make a bank transfer or set up a DD. If you cannot bank online then you can bring or post a cheque to me. *Liz*

Junior Church

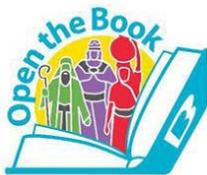
No one could predict what could happen to all of us this year and it's so sad that we haven't been able to run Junior Church since March. We do so miss the children. Last year's Junior Church year started as normal each Sunday morning except for Café Church days. The children did very well at the Christmas Service under the directorship of Jamie. Having stopped our group sessions and not used our annual resources since March, we haven't bought any new ones but it's sad for the people who produce them (Roots) that, like other Churches, we are

not taking their new productions and jobs must be affected. We pray for our children going through such difficult times with their school lives at the moment - that their future will be more settled and we will be back to normal again as soon as we can. *Ruth*

Supaclub

SupaClub met every Thursday in the First term and the Spring term until the beginning of 'lockdown' when the schools were closed.

There was a regular attendance of 8 - 9 children who listened to themes from the Old Testament in the first term and themes from Luke and Mark in the Spring Term. Sadly due to the pandemic the sessions had to stop in the middle of March due to Covid-19 and we were unable to say formally a big thank you to Anne Jackson who provided the wonderful SupaClub teas for over 20 years. She is retiring from supplying our teas to take on other voluntary work. The children and organisers are very grateful to all she has done and wish her well. *Tim*



The **Open the Book** ministry continued to be taken into Stoke St Gregory and North Curry Schools regularly throughout the second half of 2019 and into February this year.

The activity involving a team of eight story-tellers from our local church families, has the full support of Head Teachers, Mrs Moorsom and Mrs Morley

and enthusiastic participation by pupils.

The decision was taken at the end of 2019 to explore 'Christian Values' with a new set of Bob Hartman OtB stories. So following the Journey of the Wise Men, in January, the new series began in February with the story of the Widow of Zarepheth, aptly illustrating the value of compassion.

By March, the coronavirus took over and OtB was put on hold as well as much of the schools' programme. It is strange not to be preparing our Open the Book stories for the new term. Our local team keeps in

touch with OtB and looks forward to being with our children in North Curry and Stoke St Gregory schools when it is deemed safe by all concerned. *Alison W*

TWiGs

We sent cards to all current TWiG members and have been very pleased to hear how much these were appreciated.

As yet we have no plans to start up but as soon as we do we will share our plan with you via social media, newsletter etc.

Meanwhile we would love to hear how you are all coping. If there are any families who would like particular help, whatever it might be, please contact us through Facebook page, email or phone. We have heard of some new families with preschoolers so we would especially like to hear from you and hope to meet you very soon. There are contact numbers in this newsletter and you can contact me on gill.yaskin@gmail.com or phone 01823490010

It seems a very long time since we've enjoyed a TWiGs session. We do miss you all and hope you are all well.



Messy Church

During the last year we've been working on the best way to relaunch Messy Church, including finding a day and time which works both for helpers and for the families who come. We relaunched on Sunday 8th March starting with breakfast at 10am. It was a fun time with several families joining our church family on this occasion. As usual, we enjoyed doing crafts together based on a theme, sharing food, and participating in a celebration time including songs and a Bible story. Unfortunately, just after this, lockdown began and so we have been unable to continue. We miss the families who come and will start again as soon as we can.
Sonya

Tuesday Home Group

A number of our church friends have taken part in the Tuesday evening "home group ". Sonya has led this and we have followed the Bible society "Lyfe" series. This is free to register at biblesociety.org.uk/lyfe Each week we have a theme. The Still Lyfe sessions encouraged us in prayer, silence, solitude, observation, listening and slowing down to help us to recognise God's presence in our daily lives. The session often includes a short video, time for discussion and a bible reading followed by a couple of questions to explore together. It is good to hear each other's reflections. There is often a challenge for the week helping us to remind us to pray for a few seconds or take time to listen to our friends and community or to become more environmentally aware and active. We finish by praying for one another. Until March we met in Sonya and Ian's home and more recently on zoom. It has been a chance to get to know each other a little more and help us to take small steps to meet with God in the everyday. To find out more do come and join in. *Jan*

Wednesday Home Group

At the beginning of the year the home group continued to meet on a Wednesday afternoon. It proved to be more convenient to meet in the schoolroom particularly on luncheon club days

We always start with tea and biscuits which gives us time to hear news and it also gives us the opportunity to get to know each other better.

We have used a number of study courses for small groups and these have given us openings for discussion on a variety of topics. We have thought about the challenges of our beliefs, about prayer and impact of our faith on our daily lives. We all have questions and seek answers and sometimes just talking together can be a good way of clarifying our own thoughts. We still quite often get side-tracked and wander off the original subject but even that adds to the discussion. We are so grateful to Tim for all the time he spends in preparation and for the encouragement he gives to us all.

The last time we met together was at North Curry Parish Church. The churchyard was a picture with a carpet of primroses, Anemone blanda and the last of the snowdrops. This seemed so appropriate as we were looking at our concept of God, at creation, at what history tells us and then at Jesus himself. Rev. Tyler is a great teacher with the ability to both explain and bring things alive and relevant for life today. This time

of lockdown has given us plenty of time to think about our impact on this beautiful world. When we can meet again there will be lots to discuss and it would be lovely to see you if you are able to join us. *Mary*

Lunch Club

We have enjoyed a growing number of friends joining us for lunch club during 2019, and have offered a varied menu. During the summer we tried a buffet style with quiche, cold meats and home made salads, Rob's coleslaw went down a storm as did the choice of desserts. For the Harvest meal and Christmas meal we invited guests from church and the whole team worked hard to make these very enjoyable events. I am very grateful to all who offer their time and talents to help, from those who provide flowers for the table, or offer to transport people, help clear and serve as well as the cooks. It is very rewarding to hear the chatter and complements as we



gather the clean plates. It has been hard since lockdown to be unable to provide this service as we know how much these meals are appreciated by the community and look forward to when we can restart. *Dianne.*

Newsletter

Alison and I have been compiling the newsletter for a number of years now and were starting to think that it was time for us to hand over to someone with fresh ideas and something new to say - then came lockdown. We decided from the start to continue producing and distributing the newsletter because we felt that more than ever people would want to keep in touch. We have been moved by the kind words of appreciation which makes us feel that the newsletter has indeed met a need at this time. We have also been very grateful to all the contributors who shared their experiences with us.

Although there have been few events to report on, we have had little difficulty in filling the eight pages every month. Indeed, you may have noticed that the picture has vanished from the front page. We still feel that it's time for someone new to take on the newsletter, so if you feel that this is something you could do, please contact Alison or me. *Liz.*

Website

www.ssqbaptists.com

The website is up and running. I have managed to eliminate our old website and the issues of medications and drugs being sold on the old church website by parties unknown. We have an excellent designer who takes time to help on the website for no charge thus far. I have renewed our domains registrations recently and insurance to cover protection of the domain we use and others we may want to use in the future.

Updating the website is a challenge. Doing the updates and calendar updates are not always forwarded in a fashion that allows me to make updates that are meaningful or accurate. This is something the Deacons need to work on to keep the site useful and viable. If members of the church see something on the website, they would like changed or added, if they contact me, I will do my best to help once the Deacons have reviewed. Regardless, any submissions will have a response whether the change is made or not.

The website is our window to the world we do not have contact with on a regular basis. People may read it and decide whether our is a church they want to attend or not. It gives us visibility and can help the church grow if it is used properly. *Anthony Yaskin*

Local Mission Work at Musgrove Hospital

A bit of mission work I loved the most has been at a standstill since March due to COVID-19. No volunteers have been allowed in the hospital since then and, based on our last ZOOM meeting about 10 days ago, nothing will change in the foreseeable future.

I have always found it a vastly rewarding experience through which I connect faith with patients and sometimes their families and loved ones for a few precious moments in the hospital wards. The volunteering involves visiting various wards and meeting people who have asked for a visit, a talk, just some time, a prayer, a bedside communion and on Sundays going to the chapel service. I never knew who I would meet, nor the patient's concerns, their faith, or what the patient or family and I may discuss but the time is special. Sometimes just sitting with a patient who may not even know I am there, hold their hand and say a quiet prayer is all one can do.

My work in the hospital is important and I look forward to being able to go there again. Unlike being in church, you are alone and only your faith can carry you through some of the issues you come across and help those who may have no one else left in the world. It is so simple but so complex at the same time. *Anthony Yaskin*

From the Deacons

The deacons met in September after a break in August. We were conscious that we had some difficult decisions to make about our activities and our worship in the next few months. We were mindful of the fact that infections are increasing and with winter coming on it will not be possible to meet outside or leave doors and windows open. We were also anticipating a government announcement tightening restrictions on how many people can meet together.

Services outside seem to have been a success, offering us the chance to see each other and worship together as Christians have always done. Our harvest service will take place in the church, after that our services will be by Zoom unless we let you know otherwise.

Harvest There will be a small display, thanks to Anne Coate.

Collection for BMS – There will be an opportunity to give to the **BMS Harvest appeal** which is focussed on a hospital which they support in Chad. The easiest way to contribute to this is to give to the church online with 'BMS' in the subject line and Liz will send our gifts on. Envelopes will be available for those who prefer to give by cheque or cash.

The Food Bank is in more need than ever. They particularly welcome tins containing protein – meat, fish. They have plenty of pasta and tins of tomatoes.

Quiet Prayer It has been suggested that once a week is too often to open the church for prayer. However we decided to continue for the time being as long as the church is closed for worship.



We have been asked to make Christmas shoeboxes again – the need is even more urgent this year. Sonya has leaflets or details can be found online at www.samaritans-purse.org.uk . If you are unable to go shopping you can pack a virtual shoebox. See “Shoebox Online” on their website.

Sonya has been invited to become a school governor at Stoke school. There is a lot of work involved in being a governor but she has decided to accept as it is another way of getting to know the teachers, their pupils and parents.

For our Prayers

John and Karen Barnes
Alan and Kay Chedzoy
Nicola and Roger Edwards
Adrian and Louise Grinter,
Charlotte,
Matt, Laura and Hannah
Ian and Sonya Setchell
Our Church Annual Meeting

As well as our school children, we pray now for our young people starting or continuing college and university courses, Alice, Eleanor, Toby and Rory, as the pandemic poses such uncertainty. We pray for resilience and peace of mind for all pupils, students, their teachers and families at all levels of the education system.



Our love and prayers are with folk we know are poorly, have complications of ongoing health issues, or waiting for test results or diagnosis; also those struggling with mental, physical and economic effects of the corona virus. We pray for healing and comfort for all these friends and families. Please pray for Ron and Freda, Anne J, Anne M, Joan Upham, James, Sonya's Dad and their families and all who love them.

BMS Birthday Scheme

Thank you, Joan, for faithfully sending out cards to all who have signed up to the scheme! Celebrating birthdays this month are Alison White on the 14th, Gill Yaskin on 27th and Ron Gadsby on the 29th. Happy birthday to you all.

"Share your birthday with people all over the world by giving a gift though the scheme".



Congratulations

To Georgie and Luke, who were married at East Lambrook Church on 5th September. We wish them every happiness in their future lives together.

Thank you to Des Perry, who is retiring as deacon. He has served for a number of years, including during the time



of pastoral vacancy. He has helped to take responsibility for maintenance. We will miss his quiet thoughtfulness.



Thank you also to Tony Yaskin, who is retiring as deacon. Tony has been responsible for setting up the new website and maintaining it. He has been a bracing presence at deacons' meetings, having a concern for the deteriorating stable block and a business eye on our finances. Tony is hoping to get back to the hospital ministry that he loves and the work of Pastor Gilbert in Uganda.

Services in October Will be by Zoom – for the time being.

October 4th	Whole Life worship 5: Worshipping focusses our wavering hearts (with communion) - Sonya
October 11th	Cafe church: John 6:16-24 Jesus walking on the water - Sonya
October 18th	Church: Called to be an inclusive community - Sonya
October 25th	Church: Called to be a prophetic community - Ian