

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

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News



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From Sonya

Happy New Year! A new year is a good time to look back and learn from the past year and to choose to enter the new year having learnt those lessons and looking forward to growing in new ways.



As you look back over the last year, what blessings are you grateful for? We all have so much to be thankful to God for.

What is the greatest lesson you have learnt in the past year? What has helped you flourish and how will you continue to make that part of your life?

As you look forward to a new year, how do you feel? Hopeful or uncertain? Positive or fearful? Take time to speak with God about how you feel. He is completely trustworthy.

What one thing would you like to do differently in the coming year? Ask for God's help to make this change.

As we move into a new year, not knowing what it will hold for each of us, know that God will be with you and you can turn to Him at any time.

Many blessings to you all for the coming year,

Sonya

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

CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

There were some wonderful services and celebrations over the Christmas period, and it was lovely to be able to share so many of them with our friends from St Gregory's and visitors. Here are a few pictures from the Christmas Luncheon Club, the Nativity Experience, Christmas Messy Church, and our Christingle Service held on Christmas Eve.



A **HUGE** thank you to everyone who donated items for the Christmas collection for the Taunton Food Bank. A wonderfully large selection of Christmas treats was dropped off to the Food Bank on the Belvedere Trading Estate. It was lovely to see so many people from the village getting involved in donating items, and a special thank you to Jo and Mandy for organising alternative drop off places to the chapel.



Sam Sharpe and The Christmas Rebellion

Every year, in honour of Sam Sharpe, the Baptist Union sponsors a lecture by an eminent theologian. The Sam Sharpe lectures seek to broaden and advance the legacy of Sam Sharpe by exploring subjects in mission, race, class, and injustice. The lecture for 2023 was titled 'From Sam Sharpe to Black Lives Matter: The Continued Struggle for Black Agency and Self-Determination' and was delivered by Professor Anthony Reddie. There have been lectures given annually since 2013 and many of them can be read or listened to on the Baptist Union website www.baptist.org.uk if you search for the Sam Sharpe Project.

Tim Spotswood has kindly written a little about Sam Sharpe to explain who he was:

So who was Sam Sharpe?

Samuel Sharpe (1801 – 23 May 1832) was an enslaved Jamaican and a leader of the widespread 1831–32 Baptist War slave rebellion (also known as the Christmas Rebellion) in Jamaica.

He was proclaimed a National Hero of Jamaica in 1975.

Sam was educated, unusual for a slave, and became a well-known preacher, leader and missionary in the Baptist Church, which had long welcomed the enslaved as members and recognized them as preachers. Sharpe spent most of his time travelling to different parishes in Jamaica, educating the enslaved about Christianity, which he believed promised freedom.

Where possible, the slaves closely followed the British Parliament's discussions surrounding the abolition of slavery. In the mistaken belief that emancipation had already been granted by the British Parliament, in December 1831, Sharpe organized a peaceful general strike across many estates in western Jamaica to protest working conditions. This took place during the harvest of sugar cane, a critical time for the

plantation owners: generally the workforce had to work overtime to process the cane quickly at its peak. And so the he Christmas Rebellion (Baptist War) began on 27 December 1831. Reprisals by the plantation owners led to the rebels burning the sugar cane crops.

Sharpe's initial peaceful protest turned into Jamaica's largest slave rebellion which lasted for 10 days and spread throughout the entire island. As many as 60,000 of Jamaica's enslaved population went on general strike and downed tools. The colonial government took only two weeks to put down the rebellion by armed force. 14 whites were killed by armed slave battalions, but more than 200 slaves were killed by troops. Afterwards, more reprisals followed. The government tried, convicted, and hanged many of the ringleaders, including Sharpe, in 1832. Over 300 slaves were executed, many for only property offences such as theft of livestock.

The Jamaican government's severe reprisals in the aftermath of the rebellion are believed to have contributed to the passing by the British Parliament of the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act and final abolition of slavery across the British Empire in 1838.



For our Prayers

Please keep the following people in your prayers - Anne Jackson and Mary Strange. Please also continue to pray for longlasting peace in Ukraine and The Holy Land.

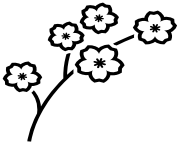


During the week of 18th to 25th January, we offer our prayers alongside our fellow Christians for Christian Unity and praying around the verse from Luke 10 v27 'You shall love the Lord your God.....and your neighbour as yourself.'

BMS Birthday Scheme



We celebrate the birthdays this month of Tony Yaskin on 27th and Freda Gadsby on 28th . We thank them for supporting the scheme and wish them a joyful day.



January Flowers

- 7th** No service (Stoke Stampede)
- 14th** Alison White
- 21st** Service at St Gregory's for Christian Unity
- 28th** Alison Katte

4th February *Messy Church*

January 2024 Calendar

Day	Time	Event
Thurs 4th	9.30am-11.30am	TWiGs in the Schoolroom
Sun 7th		No service today due to the Stoke Stampede
Tues 9th	2.00pm	Open the Book planning meeting
Weds 10th	12 noon 7.30pm	Luncheon Club in the Schoolroom Homegroup
Thurs 11th	9.30am-11.30am	TWiGs in the Schoolroom
Sun 14th	10.30am	FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE
Weds 17th	7.30pm	Homegroup
Thurs 18th	9.30am-11.30am 7.30pm	TWiGs in the Schoolroom Deacons Meeting
Sun 21st	11.00am	SERVICE AT ST GREGORY'S CHURCH – week of prayer for Christian Unity
Weds 24th	12 noon	Luncheon Club in the Schoolroom
Thurs 25th	9.30am-11.30am	TWiGs in the Schoolroom
Sun 28th	10.30am	FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE
Weds 31st	7.30pm	Homegroup
FEBRUARY Sun 4th	10.00am	MESSY CHURCH starting with breakfast at 10am