

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

NEWS June 2020

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From Sonya

June seems a long way off as I write this. With everything changing so rapidly and new advice appearing every day, it is hard to know what will be relevant when you read this in June. As I have spoken to some of you recently, many are finding lockdown harder as time goes on. I know I find it difficult not to be able to be with people. I thank God for the technology which allows us to connect in some way, but it is not the same as meeting together physically.



I don't know how you are feeling. Some may be grieving, some anxious about finances or health, some thanking God for the blessings in their lives. What I do know is that God cares about you and about the specific circumstances that you face. He is longing for us to go to Him and pour out our hearts. Don't worry about telling God about your fears, anger or disappointment with unanswered prayers. The Psalmists were extremely honest with God and He wants us to be too. As we make the effort to draw near to Him, He promises that He will draw near to us. (Jeremiah 29:13) If you find it difficult to find the words, look through the Psalms where many have found words to help them express what they feel to God.

And if you would like to have a chat with me, please contact me. I can't promise to have all the answers, but I will listen, pray and walk alongside you.

Blessings, Sonya

“Our buildings may be closed but the Church is alive.”

This is the message from UK Blessing. Churches have come together to sing a blessing over the land. You can watch their inspiring video on Youtube.

There is talk of places of worship opening for private prayer but apart from that, churches remain closed until the beginning of July at the earliest so we continue to connect with each other as best we can with Zoom.

Homegroup@TheManse meet by Zoom on Tuesday evenings. They are looking at the Bible Society's series of Lyfe studies. Please contact Sonya if you'd like a link to the meeting.

Wednesday evening prayer is hosted by Sonya, who sends out links to the meeting beforehand. If you are not receiving these links, do contact her. It is good to get together and talk about mutual concerns before a time of prayer. If you are unable to join in online, you might want to join us in giving thanks to God for his greatness and lifting to him our prayers for the world, our country, our community and those close to us.

We are missing all of you who come to Messy Church and looking forward to the time when we can meet together again to have fun and worship God together. If any of you are interested in some Messy Church sessions which you can have a go at in your own home, please email Sonya on sonyacsetchell@gmail.com and she will send you the



latest Messy Church at Home session.

Ideas for do-it-yourself Messy Church can be found online at

www.messychurch.org.uk/covid-19

There are ideas for games, craft activities, prayers and readings. A session in May based on Philip and the Ethiopian involves making a chariot from a paper cup and lolly sticks. (A good excuse for eating more ice cream!) Crafting with children is a good way of encouraging them to talk. Unfortunately you have to make your own food.



In spite of our own personal and local difficulties it is good to remember that we are part of a wider church. Our new

president, The Revd Yinka Oyekan, has taken “How do we grow from here” as the theme for his presidency. He says, “how do we enable and empower every disciple to be able to bear a personal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to take part in the evangelisation of the world?”



BMS also remind us that the pandemic is a global crisis and requires a global response from Christians:

“The Coronavirus crisis has already touched us all. The worlds we inhabit are shrinking. Borders are closing, international travel has halted, and a large majority of the UK’s population is social distancing and self-isolating. Covid-19 is an international crisis of frightening proportions, and yet it threatens to disrupt instead of strengthen our local and international bonds. As Christians, we must not let that happen.

BMS World Mission has always been about remembering that our neighbours can be anywhere in the world. And as an international charity serving the poorest and least evangelised, we are now, as ever, committed to bringing hope. These are uncertain times, but together, we can trust in a God who goes before us in our mission to make Jesus known and bring life to the full, no matter the circumstances.”

BMS provide practical help: food, soap, temporary hospitals and much more and they are doing this with reduced staff.

You can read more about their work in “Engage”, which is available online or can be delivered to you free of charge.



BMS Birthday Scheme

Our love and best wishes to Gillian Akerman as she celebrates her birthday on 16th.

Meet Kelly

Kelly is the Clerk to the Parish Council. She moved to the village three years' ago and took up the post in 2019. She has two small and lively children and is juggling home schooling with her job. Clerks need a wide range of knowledge: of local government law, finance, record keeping, etc. Now Kelly has been faced with new challenges, acting on behalf of the Council to deal with a wide range of problems. She has been asked to get a pair of broken glasses mended and managed to find an optician willing to do this. As well as helping with food shopping, she has been asked to find some Germolene (remember the smell?) and also some rechargeable batteries for a phone. It's especially important for vulnerable people to keep in contact with the outside world. Kelly says: "Nothing is too small or insignificant, we'll try to help".

Kelly writes:



I hope you are all keeping safe and well during these unprecedented times. The Coronavirus outbreak has meant changes had to be made by the Parish Council and other local activities and we hope the following information will prove useful.

As the situation both locally and at a national level is changing constantly we aim to provide regular updates on the village website at:

www.stokestgregory.org/services/medical-2/coronavirus-information

I have been acting as an information exchange on behalf of the PC during these times. If you need any form of help, or you have any questions, please do contact me by phone or e-mail on;

ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk or phone **07701 053 903**

There has been a truly amazing response from the village, many of our community have risen to the challenge by offering to help their neighbours during these difficult times. We have a fantastic team of local residents who are offering assistance to those who may need it.

Help for those in self-isolation or shielding:

Prescription Collection

Current wait time for prescriptions at North Curry health centre is two working days. We currently collect prescriptions from residents on a Tuesday. On Friday we collect them from North Curry health centre and deliver them to you the same day (safely following social distancing

guidelines). This is flexible, so if you require this service on any other day, please contact myself and either I or a volunteer will happily assist.

Food Donations

We also have many kind residents offering food donations for vulnerable households. These are being distributed either by me or by Rachel Parish from the Willow set. Delivery occurs on Wednesdays – along with the free hot meal delivery service that she is also so kindly providing.

If any of these services would be useful for you or anyone you know; please contact me - in confidence - and I will arrange this for you.

If you would like to donate food for gratefully received food parcels, again please contact me on the details above.

Grocery Deliveries

We are fortunate to have the Community Village Shop who are delivering groceries to residents within the village with the assistance of volunteers. If you wish to utilise this service please contact Jo or Carolyn on: Shop@hotvssg.org or call 07842 992 825

Alternatively; we are currently assisting with supermarket shopping on a Saturday, and also collecting click and collect for people, again – if we can assist you with this please contact me and we can make arrangements to include you in our supermarket visits.

Reeve's Feast

During these unprecedented times there may be some who are experiencing considerable financial hardship.

Our village has a local charity exclusive to Stoke St Gregory which is called 'Reeve's Feast'.

During the March Extraordinary Meeting, the PC ring-fenced a further £2,000 in the event that there be an increase in residents requiring assistance of this nature.

Funds are administered by Gill Yaskin and Heather Venn. Referrals can be made on behalf of others, where there is a reluctance or specific identified need. The management of this is carried out with care and compassion and in absolute confidence.

Gill can be contacted on: 01823 490 010

Should you require assistance or information of any kind please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the support services available.

Stay safe and well,

Kelly de Silva

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council Clerk.

Around the Fellowship

WFH is the latest acronym that those of us lucky enough to be able to do it, can do. (Those of you who are retired, this article is for your information and amusement only). Working From Home has its challenges, poor internet in and around Stoke and North Curry being the first hurdle to overcome. Makeshift offices set up on the kitchen table, in the spare bedroom or like me in the living room. Children and dogs are seen frequently on my Teams or Zoom meetings which bring a bit of lighthearted fun to them. I hadn't even heard of Zoom before lockdown started, (Zoom is a way of joining with a group of friends or colleagues where you can all see and talk to one another, Sonya is using Zoom quite successfully to bring us church services from home). I'm missing not being able to see my colleagues in the flesh and have a chat with them face to face about work or life in general, but there are so many plus points to WFH. No longer do I have to set an alarm in the morning and rush around to get out of the house so I miss the traffic and queues at Creech Castle traffic lights. I'm not spending on fuel, I haven't been to a petrol station since mid-March. I can look out of the window watching the birds on the bird feeder to give my eyes a break from the screen. I can cook for myself at lunch time or go for a walk around the village and see the wildflowers and hedgerows coming into flower rather than popping over to ASDA and putting more into my basket than I actually need. When I need a break I can dance around the living room and do some stretches to ease any back or neck pain from sitting in one place for a long time and not get funny looks from my workmates. I can have the radio on for company. So when the point comes that I can go back to work at the UK Hydrographic Office, will I really want to? The answer is, not really. I'm hoping that I can work for one or two days in the office and the rest of the week from home. I can then enjoy a less stressful work life and I will be using the time I would have been sitting in the car commuting, polluting the air, either in my garden or in the countryside enjoying all the wonders of nature that God has given us.

My thoughts and prayers are with those who are working on the frontline and with their families and also with those whose jobs have not been able to continue during this time. With God's will this time will



pass and we will get back to normality even if it looks a little different to times in the past.

Take care of yourselves. Love Alison K

Jan Gorton writes:

All my activities currently are around Burrowbridge.

Daily walks have really helped just to get outside and enjoy the beautiful spring weather. I have explored more footpaths and droves and have wandered to Stoke St Gregory, Moorland and Middlezoy.

Colin and I have a tidier garden than usual and even some of the “wild areas” have had attention.

My usual art class at Ilminster now meets as a virtual group. I have been drawing and painting to keep busy. It’s always an enjoyable challenge.



Paddy’s daughter, Sarah, has sent this picture of a blanket her mother has been knitting for RAFT. It has taken Paddy a while to recover from her trip to hospital but now she and John are staying with Bill she has felt well enough to

take up her needles again and plans to start another blanket. John is not so well and has carers coming in three times a day but still manages to laugh and joke with ‘the girls’. Like so many families it is difficult for children to visit their parents but remain at a distance: Paddy in the conservatory and Sarah in the garden.

If you are making use of this time to learn a new skill or brush up an old one, please let us know, we’d love to hear from you.

For our Prayers

Ali and Jason Pook, Freddie and Nelly
Geoff Treasure
Jane Fairfax
Leah and Simon Van Looy, Jack and Max
Mike Hutchings
Residents and staff of our care homes



At this time we specially remember the teachers in our church family and our neighbourhoods who are 'back to school' in a different way from 1st June. Without the 'luxury' of a break during the lockdown except for the Easter weekend, our teaching assistants, teachers, head teachers and support staff have been in school every day for the children of front line workers and also getting ready to welcome reception, year 1 and year 6 pupils.

We pray for their strength and well-being as they meet the challenges and anxieties they face as well as those of the parents and children involved. May God bless you all.

We are also aware of friends who are nursing bruises and injuries following falls, those who are home after a stay in hospital, friends and family who have ongoing medical issues. We pray for healing and comfort for these folk.

Sadly there are friends in our community grieving the loss of loved ones. Our thoughts and prayers are with Basil Mann whose wife of more than sixty years, Jo, died peacefully at the end of April, a lovely lady and a huge loss for Basil.

7th June	Trinity Sunday Philippians 3:15 - 4:7 Communion
14 th June	Café Church John 4:46-54 Healing the royal official's son
21 st June	Philippians 4:2-9
28 th June	Philippians 4:10-23