

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church
December 2023
News



Minister:

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From Sonya

As we look around at all that is going on in our world today, we can become despondent. We see so much war and destruction and suffering. In Advent we remember those who first waited for hundreds and hundreds of years for the king whose just and good reign over the world would last forever. In the midst of their suffering, they waited with a firm hope that God would keep His promises. More than ever this year, we need to be reminded that Advent for us involves looking forward to when this King is going to return and bring in His Kingdom rule in all its fullness. We look forward to the day when there will be no more war, no more mourning, no more suffering, no more crying, no more pain.



Our world longs today for wise and just leadership, which works for the good of all people and all creation. The good news is that in Jesus, the new king that the world has been waiting for has already come. The unexpected, upside-down Kingdom of Jesus has burst into our world, this Kingdom where Jesus said that: the first are last, the poor are blessed, outcasts are welcomed, light shines from darkness, life comes out of death, and victory comes through sacrifice. God wants to use us to bring glimpses of this Kingdom into reality today, through things like setting the oppressed free, restoring outcasts to community, healing the sick and rescuing people from evil.

So, whatever is going on in our lives and in the world this Advent, let's make this prayer, "Come Lord Jesus," the centre of our Advent, as we learn what it means to live with expectation and hope for the coming Kingdom of God in our world.

Blessings to you all at this time, *Sonya*

Thank You

The Baptist Church has been in receipt of many blessings recently, including those of a financial nature! We are so grateful to Watchet Baptist Church for their incredibly kind and generous donation to our church funds.

Our monthly giving has been slowly increasing, for which we are also very grateful.

Many will be aware of the financial difficulties our church has been facing, and that an application to South West Baptist Association had been made for a Home Mission Grant. We received the very good news at the end of November that the grant had been awarded to us.

We give thanks to God for making these gifts possible!



We are very grateful to Tony Yaskin for his dedication to maintaining the church website. It is important to have up to date content on our website and it is often the first place people will look at if they want to discover what we're about!

Please take the time to look at our website every so often (www.ssgbaptist.org.uk) and if you think that there's something that you'd like to see on there, perhaps you could email your contribution to Tony via the church email ssgbaptists@gmail.com or talk to Sonya or one of the deacons. It's also always so helpful to share any photos of church or village events that have taken place – these can be shared on

our website as well as in the newsletters so please feel free to forward any relevant photos and/or content to Tony or Amanda.



A big thank you to Rachel for regularly playing the piano in church. It's always so lovely having live accompaniment to our singing and I know many are grateful to Rachel for sharing her musical gifts with us.

We're also very thankful to Simon, Will and Thomas for their sound and technological expertise at the back of the church during services – not easy when having to deal with an ancient computer..!

Charity



A Charity Lunch took place in the Schoolroom on the 27th of November. Thank you to Liz Hembrow for taking this photograph. The sum of £120 was raised for the Farming Community Network.



Thank you to those who have already donated some Christmas food items for the Taunton Foodbank – the basket at the front of the church has already had to be emptied to make more space. Hopefully there will be more donations before the deadline, and with other donations to collect from the Village Shop and the Willow Set, we can drop off an abundance of lovely Christmassy food donations to the Foodbank at the start of December. Any last minute ideas needed - here's a list of some items that have been suggested:



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

CHRISTMAS

There is **LOTS** going on over the weeks leading up to Christmas!
Starting off with:



We welcome our local families plus younger and older members of our congregation to Messy Church on **Sunday 3rd December**. Join us for breakfast from 10am followed by fun Christmas crafts, songs and activities.

The children from the Primary School will hold their School Christingle at the Baptist Church on **Wednesday 6th December at 10am** and the children from The Willow Set will meet there on **Friday 8th** to take part in their Nativity.

Nativity Experience in The Stable



We will be holding a “Nativity Experience” in the Stables at The Baptist Church on **Thursday 14th December at 6pm**. This is an event for our local community so all are very welcome!

Please join The Reverends Sonya, Simon and Martin to share in singing carols and to share in

the experience of the Nativity (sadly we can't promise a donkey, sheep or lowing cattle but hopefully the setting will help bring alive the miraculous events that took place in a stable all those years ago). Please dress warmly and bring a torch. Mince pies and Mulled Cider afterwards.



A Joint Carol Service will be held on **Sunday 17th December at 6.30pm** at St Gregory's Church. A lovely service of carols and readings. Refreshments afterwards in the Church Room.



On **Thursday 21st December at 6.30pm** there will be the annual Carols In The Square in the village. Join in singing traditional carols (bring a torch so you can see the words on the song-sheets!) and afterwards there might be a visit from Father Christmas on his trusty tractor!



Sunday 24th December at 6pm is when our Christingle Service takes place at the Baptist Church. This is always a lovely way to celebrate Christmas Eve.

There will be a short Christmas Day service at the Baptist Church at **10am on Monday 25th December** You are welcome to wear your Christmas outfits and bring along your favourite present to show (if you've managed to open any by then!)

For our Prayers

Please keep the following people in your prayers - Anne Jackson, Mary Strange, Chris and LaDonna Pitman, Sue Luxton. All those who find this time of year a challenge.



We are thinking of Betty Woodland following the loss of her brother, Percy Feare, whose funeral recently took place in Tintinhull. We also pray that Betty would find healing for her ongoing health issues.

We join with Jan and Colin Gorton in giving thanks as they celebrate the birth of their grandson, Sebastian, to David and Dani.

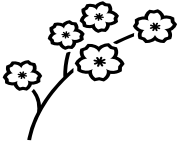
We were delighted to welcome Jean Pimm last month into membership of the church. She has been part of our church community for many years and will be a real blessing to us as our newest member.

BMS Birthday Scheme



We celebrate the birthday this month of Julia Spotswod on 15th.

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



December Flowers

- 3rd** Messy Church
- 10th** Alison Katte
- 17th** Christmas Flowers
- 24th** Christingle Service
- 25th** Christmas Day Service
- 31st** Covenant Service
- 7th January** No service

A heartfelt thank you to Alison White for putting together the flower rota each month, ensuring our church always has beautiful flowers each Sunday ready to be given to someone in our community after the service.

December 2023 Calendar

Day	Time	Event
Sun 3rd	10.00pm	MESSY CHURCH starting with breakfast at 10am
Weds 6th	10.00am 7.30pm	Christingle for SSG Primary School at the Baptist Chapel Homegroup
Thurs 7th	9.30am-11.30am 7.30pm	TWiGs in the Schoolroom Deacons Meeting
Fri 8th	6.00pm	Willow Set Pre-school Nativity at the Baptist Chapel
Sun 10th	10.30am	FAMILY SERVICE with COMMUNION

Weds 13th	12 noon 7.30pm	Luncheon Club in the Schoolroom Homegroup
Thurs 14th	9.30am-11.30am 6.00pm	TWiGs in the Schoolroom NATIVITY EXPERIENCE in the Stable at the Baptist Church followed by refreshments afterwards
Sun 17th	10.30am 6.30pm	FAMILY SERVICE JOINT VILLAGE CAROL SERVICE at St Gregory's Church
Thurs 21st	6.00pm	Carols in The Square (soup afterwards in the Church Rooms)
Sun 24th	6.00pm	*NO MORNING SERVICE* CHRISTINGLE SERVICE
Mon 25th	10.00am	CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE
Sun 31st	10.30am	COVENANT SERVICE with COMMUNION
JANUARY Sun 7th		*No service today due to the Stoke Stampede*

A Christmas Eve prayer

Gracious God:

for children who wait excitedly for the morning, we pray joy;

for children separated from those they love, we pray comfort;

for children in hospital, we pray healing;

for children in places of violence, we pray safety;

for children who are hungry, we pray sustenance.

For all children, Lord Jesus, child of hope and light of the world;

we pray new blessings,

this Christmas and always. Amen