



May 2021

Together in Wotton

Christians worshipping, working and social distancing together in Wotton under Edge



The Easter Sunrise Service which was broadcast live from Coombe Hill at 7am on Easter Sunday. Five people and a dog, socially distanced - especially the dog who had wandered off by this time. If you missed it, see the WBC Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=828983044493540&ref=search>

Later on Easter morning the Baptist Church met up for worship with outdoor singing - half in person and half on Zoom



Reopening the church buildings

Little by little, the churches of Wotton are opening their doors for worship.

Of course, all the below is 'subject to change' - you may wish to check individual churches' noticeboards, websites and Facebook pages

The Oliver Memorial Chapel held their first service on Sunday 18 April and plan to do so at 10.15am on the first and third Sunday of each month.

Holy Cross Catholic Church is now having regular Masses on Saturday at 4.30pm (Vigil Mass for Sunday) and on Thursday at 9.15am. They are grateful to Fr George for saying these Masses. Booking is essential because currently only 10 people are allowed in the church.

Regarding services **at the Baptist Church**, Tom writes: "we're in the process of transitioning back toward meeting together on Sundays. We started on 18 April and are meeting in the graveyard with pre-registered households spaced 2m apart and the band inside the building. It's lovely to meet outdoors because we can sing although we don't have sufficient space for the whole church, so half still join in by zoom. We'll also be exploring meeting off-site in larger venues and trying to find a way to hold a baptism service."

The **United Church** has taken recommendations from the Methodist and United Reformed Churches and will reopen at Pentecost, 23 May, 10.15am.

St. Mary's will now be open for Private Prayer every Wednesday (10am - 4pm) Come and sit quietly in the beautiful church.

Morning Prayer will recommence every Monday and Friday from Monday 26 April and will last no more than 20 minutes. It will be at 8am during April but the time is subject to change; it will be up to date on our website.

Sunday Services – From Sunday 2nd May, there will be 2 services at St. Mary's

9.30am – a reflective service for everyone

4pm – an All Age service (again open to everyone)

On the 4th Sunday of the month instead of the all age service at 4pm, there will be a Choral Evensong at 6pm.

St. Martin's in North Nibley, St. Kenelm's in Alderley and The Chapel of Ease in Tresham are (hopefully) reopening their doors from the beginning of June.

Dear Friends

For many believers, the Bible can be a complicated book; some parts such as the New Testament seem reasonably straight forward, mostly focussed on Jesus and his immediate followers.

The Old Testament in contrast can seem obscure; it speaks of a God who appears to bear little in common with the Jesus of the New Testament; it can seem full of archaic practices and irrelevant rules for living Its God can seem vengeful, and as for those historic figures who believed in Him.....? In fact many would say 'what's the point of the Old Testament; can we trust the whole Bible; how do we come to have it as it is today and how should we read it?'.

Well, following a most successful first run of the Bible Society's online '**The Bible Course**', we are planning to repeat the 8 session course via Zoom, beginning late April/early May, either weekly or fortnightly as suits, and discover some answers to the above and other questions. Each session will comprise a very watchable video, with discussion opportunities during our time together.

The course should be of particular help to new believers, those who have been discouraged in their attempts to get to grips with the written word of God, and for any who have not given up but are still confused! It is also a great follow on from The Alpha Course.

If you think this is for you or have a friend who you think might would like to consider this, do please get in touch with either Chris via chrisalowther@yahoo.co.uk or Andy via williams-andy@hotmail.com

Below is a one minute long taster video to whet your appetite!.

Warm Regards from Chris Lowther

[The Bible Course – see what the course covers](#)



From the Vicar:

Friday 9 April 2021. Whilst we, as a nation heard about the sad death of HRH Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh, it was also a day when I re-attested (or re-joined) back into the military. This time I have joined as a reservist. It did cross my mind, as I took the Oath of Allegiance to Queen and Country that it was such a privilege to do so (again) when Prince Phillip himself had served so diligently and would have taken the same oath to serve the (then) sovereign and their successors.



Whilst I am 'back in blue' and will be working closely with 614 Squadron in Glamorgan, I am still serving here in Tyndale of course and I am really blessed to be able to work in 'two camps' (no pun intended!). Being military where you put 'service before self' is very much akin to being a priest and indeed serving in the Christian church in general regardless of whether or not you wear a dog collar.

As we come out of lockdown, I am really excited to get to know you all and hope you will drop in, when able, for coffee with Cookie.

Change of address

Please note change of email address for St Mary's Office.

It is now office@tyndalebenefice.co.uk



How did Blue Coat celebrate Easter?

Our Easter Celebration is live on YouTube.

Please follow the link below to view our iSingPop Service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hfhyfybbl2k>

Pupils also took part in the Diocesan 'Reflections on Faith' schools' art/RE competition. This was an invitation for the children to express their spirituality, to **wonder** about life's '**Wows**' (things that are amazing) and '**Ows**' (things that bring us up short) and '**nows**' (the here and now), experiencing the Diocesan vision of Life in all its Fullness.

Here are a few of the entries with words directly from the young artists themselves!



"It's called Good Friday because Jesus comes alive. This is so important to Christians – it makes them happy. I would say thank you to the angels for bringing Jesus alive and thank you to God for creating him in the first place. I feel proud of how I drew Jesus' hair."

Rupert: Year 2

“My picture shows the Easter story. Jesus was crucified on the big cross in the middle. The story doesn’t end there because on Sunday Jesus comes alive again. My picture is the Sunday because Jesus is not on the cross anymore. Flowers and butterflies show it is a happy time.”

Maddy: Year 2



“In heaven you just need a duvet and a pillow, because clouds are lovely and soft and comfy, so you wouldn’t need a bed. When you go to heaven, God gives you a telescope because it is a long way up to the clouds and that way your Granny can see you back down on earth. Mummy’s Grampy is there too.”

Toby: Reception

These ‘golden glue’ moments make the world of teaching and learning so incredibly precious.

As we enter into the Summer Term and appreciate new life springing up around us, we thank God for Life in all its Fullness.

Jane Blaken



The Easter Church Trail gave everyone the chance to walk from church to church, singly or in family groups, with suggested readings and prayers at each stop. The garden at the Chapel in Synwell became the garden of Gethsemane thanks to Ann Young and her

team, and had a very special atmosphere. At St Mary's Tower door it was easy to picture Peter and



others warming themselves at the brazier - and wondering how often we



too deny Jesus. Holy Cross showed us the bowl, soap and towel as we remembered Pilate

washing his hands of the situation, then the

starkness of the cross at the Baptist Church made the crucifixion a painful reality. Also,

Hallelujah! the reality of the resurrection at the empty tomb at the United Church.



Thank you to all those who worked to put-together this Easter witness.



* **New mum? Got questions?** *

* **Need company?** *

* **Join our new mums support group** *

* **Thursdays 9:30-11am (term-time)** *

* **Wotton Baptist Church** *



* **For new mums and under 2s to meet and support one another.** *

* Unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions and limits on numbers, we can only accept babies and toddlers who are not already in a childcare bubble such as a nursery. *

* **Pre-booking is required via <http://bit.ly/NewMumsSupport>** *

* **Email admin@wottonbaptist.org.uk or leave a message on 01453 844726 for more info.** *

Socially-distanced Mums at the Baptist Church





We live in a world where too many people don't engage with the Bible.

In some parts of the world, the Scriptures are difficult to access or are simply unavailable. In this country, the Bible is readily available but has lost its significance and its value is unrecognised by millions.

The Bible Society is working hard here at home and in key areas across the world to change this. They take the Bible and find ways to translate and distribute it, create digital formats, advocate for its place in society and help people relate to and make sense of it in their everyday lives.

It's not so many years since Wotton had its own Bible Society group which sadly folded when new leaders could not be found. Our Rowland Hill was a great supporter of the then 'British and Foreign Bible Society' and was there at its inception in 1802, when it was born out of the Religious Tract Society.

Open the Book is a part of the Bible Society, although it has not been possible to take the Bible Stories into schools since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is humbling to see how much receipt of a Bible is valued in some countries and communities, and over 22,000 people are part of the Bible A Month scheme. For £10 a month, two people can receive the gift of a Bible. Imagine, every month you could effectively be handing a copy of this most precious book to two people who might otherwise have no access to it. In return donors receive regular information about the work of the Society around the world.

Most recently this has included Egypt where work is pressing ahead to produce a new Arabic Study Bible, while in the Central African Republic, the poorest and most unstable of African countries, the leader of the Bible Society's work praises God that their headquarters have been able to remain open and that all the staff and their families have been kept safe.

More information about the Bible Society can be found on their website: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/>

Praying for the Churches

In May it's the Baptist Church's turn. Please pray for them as they go through the process of transitioning back toward meeting together on Sundays. Currently they are meeting in the graveyard with pre-registered households spaced 2m apart and the band inside the building. (See details in the 'Opening the Churches' section) Being outdoors they are able to sing but there's insufficient space for the whole church, so half still join on Zoom. As regulations change through the summer we'll be exploring meeting off-site in larger venues and trying to find a way to hold a baptism service.

Meanwhile there is the need of some repair and (hopefully with the permission of the listed buildings committee) renovation work on the church hall. The failure of the heating system in the hall has led to an exploration of the roof

space / thermal properties / leaks and structural issues to be addressed. Hopefully all of this will be done and dusted by the end of the summer when activities will restart in earnest.

The Church has taken the decision not to hold a holiday club this year, but are hoping to be back with a bang in summer 2022.

Tom says: "There have been lots of encouragements through this strange time. Online Bible, prayer and Alpha courses have been well attended and new folks have joined in with zoom services, youth and children's activities. At the moment I'm urging patience and flexibility as various support groups used reduced operating space on the church premises and we all wait to see what the next round of regulations will bring."



As you may already know, we have taken the decision to close Wotton Area Mutual Aid (WAMA). This is partly due to the relaxing of lockdown restrictions and the ending of shielding for many clinically extremely vulnerable people, but mainly because we are now ready to launch our fantastic new Community Hub in Wotton

to serve the town and surrounding areas.

We have a new website here: <https://www.thekeepers.org.uk/>

We can't say exactly what will be on offer at the Community Hub, as we are still in the process of analysing the 700 community surveys that we've received in the last month or so, but we are aiming for the Hub to be a place where people feel welcomed, connected and supported.

Although it is sad when good things come to an end, we are really excited to be launching something more permanent that will meet the needs of our community in the long term.

If anyone would like to be on the mailing list of the Community Hub to receive updates of services and how to stay involved, they can complete a simple online form via : <http://bit.ly/Keepersmailinglist>

We will also be recruiting some Community Hub volunteers. This will be for a mixture of regular tasks, but also for helping out on a one-off basis for specific projects. If anyone would like to be on our volunteer lists, they can complete the section at the bottom of the online form mentioned above.

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported WAMA over the past 12 months - in so many different ways!

Celebrating Easter

It's good to hear how our communities celebrate Easter, Mary George writes: 'We did not do anything great at Dryleaze House and Court over Easter. We put small vases of flowers in the corridors where there was a suitable window shelf or alcove and popped mini chicks and rabbits among books or flower pots. One of the residents put up an "Egg Tree", a clutch of brightly coloured woolly knitted eggs hanging from a large tree shaped branch. There were also some baskets of Easter favours - plastic and chocolate eggs, painted pebbles, little bags of mini eggs and so on for residents to pick what they liked. Some posters too wishing everyone a Happy Easter'.

Lois Etherington, pastor at Synwell lives near Taunton and tells us: "Down here Easter was celebrated in a similar way (to Wotton) by having a trail around the churches and using the lovely angels made for Christmas which were on TV: only this time they were decorated with flowers"

Did you see the cross and the Wayside Pulpit poster on the corner of Tabernacle pitch? Christ is alive in Wotton under Edge.

St Mary's Prayer Trail

In conjunction with St Mary's opening for private prayer on Wednesdays, from 10am until 4pm, there is a prayer trail round the churchyard for adults based on Psalm 23. There is also a trail which is suitable for children. You can pick up trail leaflets from the holder on the main notice board which is opposite the Parish Room. The trail directs you to five areas of the churchyard, where you can sit and reflect, and ends by a tree to which prayer cards may be tied (strung cards provided).



The Singles Space, hosted by Wotton Baptist Church

A new social group for single people. During lockdown, this will be via Zoom.

The purpose is to provide a forum for us to gather and to have a bit of fun.

Post lockdown, the world's our oyster. Zoom coffee chats could expand into walks, coffee shop meetings, Saturday brunches, cinema trips - ideas will be led by the group.

It's an inclusive group which means ALL single people are welcome - church-goers or not, tall or short, contacts or glasses, widowed and divorced, single by choice or by chance - we'd love to welcome you all.

Come and test us out, and then maybe invite a friend too.

Contacts: Judy Breavington and Louisa Lockwood via
admin@wottonbaptist.org.uk

First Saturday of each month:

Saturday 1 May - Saturday 5 June - Saturday 3 July - Saturday 7 August



Christian Aid Week 10 - 16 May 2021

As we are unable to hold any fundraising events indoors this year, the Christian Aid Committee will be organising a sale of plants, cakes and books/jigsaws (no clothes or bric a brac!) outside the Baptist Church for two days during Christian Aid Week. We will be there from 9 am until 1 pm on Monday, 10 May and Tuesday, 11 May. Further details about donating goods will come from your church representative in due course. We have also arranged a Justgiving page, which proved very successful last year. The link for that is printed below:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Wotton-under-EdgeCAGroupOR342902

We do appreciate how difficult it has been for many people over the last year, but if you are able to support Christian Aid in any way, we would be extremely grateful. Many thanks.

Alison Sutton

'together in Wotton' is produced on behalf of all the Wotton under Edge Churches. Items and comments are welcome and should be sent to the Editor, Judy Mills judy.mills@live.co.uk