

### A brief history of Somerville Chapel

When Somerville opened its doors in 1879 it was founded as a 'non-denominational' institution, meaning there would be no religious tests for admission. Non-denominational Christian prayers were said informally in College from the outset, and from 1912 in the Dining Hall. In 1935 the Chapel was opened, following a generous donation from a former student, Emily Georgina Kemp. Kemp was an adventurer, writer and artist, and came from a wealthy Baptist family. Through her extensive travels she had developed an interest in the world's religions and a wide, inclusive vision of Christianity. It was her intention that the Chapel, although ostensibly a Christian place of worship, would be a welcoming space for members of all religious and secular traditions. The Greek inscription above the main door may be translated as "A House of Prayer for All Peoples" - a verse from the Book of Isaiah, referred to by Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. In keeping with its non-denominational tradition, the College does not have a chaplain, but a 'Chapel Director,' who, along with the Organ Scholar, Choral Scholars and Director of Music, arranges events and services throughout the year designed to reflect Somerville's own characteristically broad range of religious tastes and perspectives.

### Sunday talks

In recent years we have moved away from using the Chapel solely as a place for worship and re-modelled it as a space for visiting scholars, commentators and faith leaders to share reflections on a range of social, political, theological, historical and philosophical subjects. Each term a selection of speakers present on a common topic on Sunday evenings as detailed in this termcard. The topic of these talks varies from term to term and where possible we try to include a wide range of religious and non-religious perspectives. After the talk and accompanying music the speaker will usually join us for dinner in hall, which presents an opportunity for follow-up questions and discussions – do consider staying for dinner and taking part in the conversation. The great majority of Sunday evening events are also open to members of other colleges and to the general public.

Chapel Director: Brian McMahon [brian.mcmahon@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:brian.mcmahon@some.ox.ac.uk)  
Director of Music: Benjamin Goodson [benjamin.goodson@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:benjamin.goodson@some.ox.ac.uk)  
Organ Scholar: Nick Machin



## Somerville College Chapel

### Termcard



Trinity Term 2016

“Religion and Conflict”

## Weekly Sunday Talks

### 6pm in the Chapel

Somerville Chapel is a non-denominational and inclusive space. Every Sunday evening during term we host a speaker who gives a short talk accompanied by readings and music from the Somerville College Choir. The programme for this term's talks is entitled "Religion and Conflict" and includes the following speakers:

1st Week, Sunday 24th April

**Sally Lessiter** (First Church of Christ, Scientist)  
"Thinking About Christian Science"

2nd Week, Sunday 1st May

**Dr Carly Crouch** (University of Nottingham)  
"Worrying about War in the Bible"

3rd Week, Sunday 8th May

**Sam Settle** (Prison Phoenix Trust)

"The Work of the Prison Phoenix Trust in Offering Meditation and Yoga to People Behind Bars "

4th Week, Sunday 15th May

**Dr Caroline Tee** (St Edmund's College, Cambridge)  
"The Challenges of Human Evolution in Christianity and Islam"

5th Week, Sunday 22nd May

**Professor Nigel Biggar** (Christ Church)  
"Can War be Justified?"

6th Week, Sunday 29th May

**TBC**

7th Week, Sunday 5th June

**Dr Alison Lutton** (Somerville)  
"Modern Literature, Religion and the Conflicted Self"

8th Week, Sunday 12th June

**Leavers' Service**

## Other Chapel Events in Trinity Term

In addition to the 6pm Sunday gatherings, this term the following events are taking place:

- **Catholic Mass.** There will be a Catholic mass on Tuesday of 3<sup>rd</sup> Week (10<sup>th</sup> May) at 6:00pm, open to all. This will be a short service led by one of the University's Catholic chaplains. All welcome – do join us for formal hall afterwards.
- **Daily Quiet Time**, each morning from 9:00-9:30am the Chapel will be open for quiet prayer and reflection.
- **Rosary Group.** Meeting on Tuesday mornings at 8:30am to say the Rosary together. Although this is generally considered to be a Catholic and High Anglican tradition, all comers are very welcome either to join in the prayers or sit in quiet reflection.
- **Friday Evening Prayers.** Fridays, 1st-8th Week, 5:45-6pm in the Chapel. An opportunity to share intentions for the coming week, and to explore ways of praying drawn from different faith traditions.
- **Christian Union Meetings.** Somerville has an active and thriving Christian Union which runs its own events year-round. If you are interested in getting involved, contact Ayo-Oreoluwa Smith ([ayo-oreoluwa.smith@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ayo-oreoluwa.smith@some.ox.ac.uk))
- **Another Gaze.** This film club meets in the Chapel at 8pm on Wednesday evenings during term for screenings of feminist and LGBTQIA+ related films and discussion. All welcome.
- **Somerville Orchestra Concert.** Saturday 4th June (6<sup>th</sup> Week) at 7:30pm in Chapel. Further details of the programme will be announced nearer the time.
- **Termly Choir Concert.** This term the Somerville College Choir will perform sections of their repertoire in Chapel on the evening of Thursday 26th May (5th Week). Further details of the programme will be announced nearer the time.

The Chapel also has an events group, which helps to arrange the Sunday talks series and suggests which speakers to invite. If you are interested in getting involved, please speak to the Chapel Director.