

A brief history

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 Georgiana 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, which is also 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 Director of Chapel Music, arranges events and services throughout the year designed to reflect Somerville's own characteristically broad range of religious and non-religious faiths and perspectives. In 2019, continuing its tradition of progressive values and secular spirit, the college appointed its first Chapel Director of Indian origin. Accommodating necessities of the covid-19 pandemic, the Chapel continued to hold virtual contemplations, which included choral performance from students stranded in different parts of the world.

Choral Contemplation

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. This term we alternate speaker events with themed music and readings. Our Choral Contemplations are not just open to other colleges, but also members of the public.

Booking the Chapel

The Chapel is available to students for use during term, and can be booked for private music practice or for other purposes. To book the Chapel, please send a calendar invite to chapel.booking@some.ox.ac.uk from your Somerville email account.

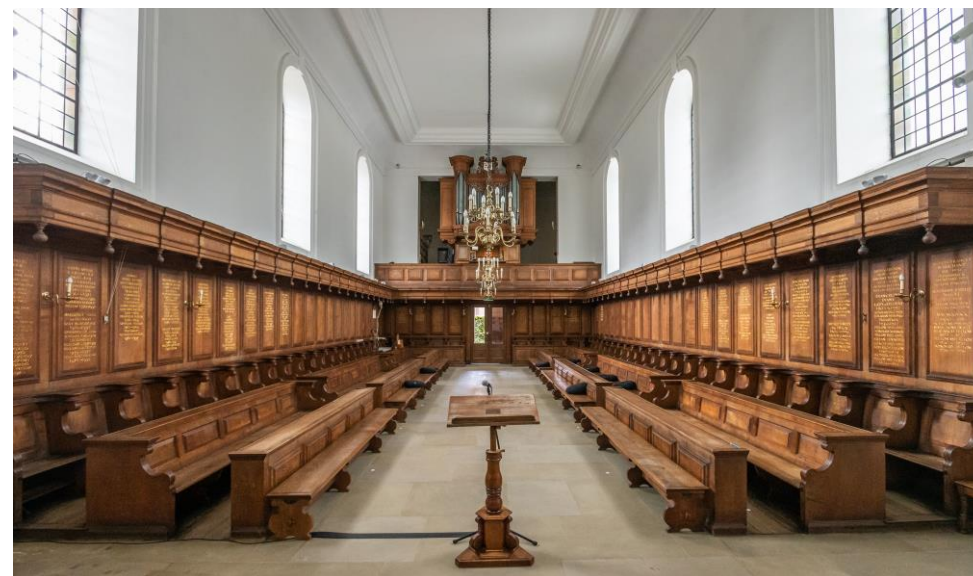
Chapel Director: Monty Sharma
Director of Chapel Music: Will Dawes
Organ Scholars: Annabel Hannan, Luca Morgante
Contact E-mail: chapel.office@some.ox.ac.uk



SOMERVILLE

COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Experience Thyself

Michaelmas Term 2021

Sundays at 5:30pm in the Chapel

Somerville Chapel is a non-denominational and inclusive space. Every Sunday evening during term we host interfaith events, which include talks by speakers, or themed music from the Somerville College Choir, with appropriate readings. The programme for this term's talks includes the following:

1st Week, Sunday 10th October

Welcome & Introduction to the Chapel

Including remarks from the Chapel Director and wellbeing teachers

2nd Week, Sunday 17th October

Rev'd Inderjeet Bhogal – City of Sanctuary

“Golden Rule: Exploring Interfaith Perspectives”

3rd Week, Sunday 24th October

Dr. Jessica Frazier – Researcher in Indian Intellectual Studies

“Radical Truth and Structure of Reality”

4th Week, Sunday 31st October

Music and Readings for Black History Month

5th Week, Sunday 7th November

Ruud Banders – Reiki Master-Teacher Usui Shiki Ryoho & Ch'an-Zen Teacher

“Compassionate Communication”

6th Week, Sunday 14th November

Music and Readings for Remembrance Day

Special Address: Jan Royall, Principal

This evening's contemplation features a complete performance of the Requiem by Gabriel Fauré, complete with instrumental ensemble.

7th Week, Sunday 21st November

Rabbi Michael – Jewish Chaplain

“Jewish Thought & Identity”

8th Week, Sunday 28th November

Christmas Carols

Other Chapel Events in Hilary Term

- **Quiet time:** Each afternoon from 12:00pm-1:00pm the Chapel will be reserved for individual prayer or meditation.
- **Wellbeing Classes:** Recognising the importance of individual wellbeing in a busy and challenging environment, the Chapel offers the following classes –
 - **Mindfulness Meditation** would be taught in the Chapel on Tuesdays at 5:30pm by Zen Master Dr Barbara Gabrys (barbara.gabrys@mpls.ox.ac.uk).
 - **TaiChi QiGong** will be taught in the Chapel on Wednesdays at 5:30PM by Hannah Pack (Hannah.pack@some.ox.ac.uk).
 - **Yoga** will be taught by Mariella De Martini from week 2 onwards, on Mondays at 5:30PM, in the Chapel.
- **Gita Study Group.** Every Tuesday at 5:00pm Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) organises weekly reading sessions for anyone interested in exploring and debating the contents of the Gita. Please contact shaunaka@ochs.org.uk to join.
- **Roman Catholic Mass.** At 6:30pm on 17th November, the University's Catholic Chaplaincy will conduct a Roman Catholic Mass. This will be held in-person, in the college Chapel, but please contact alvea.fernandes@cathchap.ox.ac.uk for details.
- **Somerville-Benet's Christian Union** organise Sunday breakfasts for Somervillians and may be contacted on somervillebenetscu@protonmail.com
- **Vipassana:** Anyone who is already practicing this technique and interested in joining group sittings, should write in to chapel.office@some.ox.ac.uk.
- **Somerville Music Society** (music.soc@some.ox.ac.uk) organise concerts each Friday, of which, the following are particularly noteworthy:
 - 22nd October at 6pm: Freshers concert.
 - 5th November at 6pm: Black History Month concert.
 - 3rd December at 6pm: Oxmas/End of term concert.