

A brief history

When Somerville opened its doors in 1879 it was founded to be 'undenominational.' In other words, while other Oxford colleges generally aligned themselves with Anglicanism or Catholicism, Somerville chose to have no affiliation to any particular church. In 1935 the Chapel was opened, following a generous donation from former student Emily Georgiana Kemp. It was her desire that the Chapel, although dedicated to God, would be a place where members of all nationalities and religions could meet, pray, and discuss philosophical and theological themes. The inscription on the outside of the Chapel in Greek translates as 'A House of Prayer for all People'. This is a verse from the Book of Isaiah, which is referred to by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, and Kemp selected it personally to reflect her vision for the building.

True to its foundation, and in keeping with the college's inclusive tradition, the Chapel today hosts visiting speakers with a range of religious perspectives. The stained-glass window by Reginald Bell presents a landscape symbolizing the gateway to the knowledge of life. The figure of Christ is joined by two female figures, who are depicted wearing chasubles and stoles, and who represent Truth (left, holding a lamp) and Learning (right, holding a mirror). Whilst the Chapel has always been an ecumenical space, Emily Kemp saw the figure of Jesus as important to people of all faiths and none, albeit only the Christians regard him as divine. For her, and the college today, there's no contradiction between installing an overtly Christian image in a building such as this and intending the building to be used by a wide variety of believers and those who do not profess religious faith. Under the stained-glass window is a Theorama – ten panels which represents the nine major religions as well as humanism.

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. We aim to alternate speaker events with themed music and readings. Our Choral Contemplations are not just open to other colleges, but also members of the public, of all faiths and none.

Booking the Chapel

The Chapel is available to students for use during term time, and can be booked for private music practice or for other suitable purposes. To book the Chapel for an approved activity, please send a calendar invite to chapel.booking@some.ox.ac.uk from your Somerville email account. If approval has not been granted beforehand, please contact the Chapel Director before booking a slot on the calendar.

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



SOMERVILLE
COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Trinity Term 2022

Sundays at 5:30pm in the Chapel

1st Week, Sunday 24th April

“To what extent should we protect animals’ rights?”

Prof. Andrew Knight, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, University of Winchester

Choral works by Sham, Roberton, and Taverner

2nd Week, Sunday 1st May

Music and Readings on May Day

Choral works by Morley, Holst, and Walker

2nd Week, Saturday 7th May

“Through the day”

With Bedales School, featuring works by Lauridsen, MacMillan, Finzi, and Rheinberger

3rd Week, Sunday 8th May

“Nature as a sign of God in Islam”

Dr. Talal Al-Azem, Mohammed Noah Fellow - Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies

Choral works by Stanford, Wheeler, and Rheinberger

This special contemplation will be preceded by Eid social in MSR.

4th Week, Sunday 15th May

Music and Readings for Youth Activism

Choral works by Stanford, Cattley, Greene, and Clausen

5th Week, Sunday 22nd May

“Can nature survive climate change?”

Clare Hatcher, Clyde & Co.

Choral works by Lawson, Howells, and Erb

6th Week, Sunday 29th May

“Sustaining a sustainable world”

Prof. Radhika Khosla, School of Geography and Environment

Choral works by Wood, Dove, and Berlin

7th Week, Sunday 5th June

Pride Event

Choral works by Sham, Britten, Copland, and Jones

8th Week, Sunday 12th June

Leavers’ Service

Featuring words from JCR and MCR Presidents, and the College Principal.

Other Chapel Events in Trinity Term

- **Quiet time:** Each afternoon from 12:00pm-1:00pm the Chapel will be reserved for individual prayer or meditation.
- **Multi-faith Events:**
 - Every Tuesday at 5:00pm Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (shaunaka@ochs.org.uk) organise weekly Gita study group.
 - On 16th May at 6:00pm, the University’s Catholic Chaplaincy will conduct a **Roman Catholic Mass** in the Chapel.
 - On 6th May, 20th May, and 10th June at 7:00pm, there will be a **Baha’i Service** in the Chapel, which everyone’s most welcome to attend.
- **Wellbeing Classes:** Recognising the importance of individual wellbeing in a busy and challenging environment, the Chapel offers the following classes –
 - **Yoga** will be taught by Mariella De Martini on Mondays at 5:30PM, in the Chapel.
 - **TaiChi QiGong** will be taught by Isabelle Kandler on Tuesdays at 5:00pm in the Chapel.
 - **Mindfulness Meditation** will be taught in the Chapel on Wednesdays at 5:30pm by Zen Master Dr Barbara Gabrys.
- The Commemoration Service, in which we recall the legacy of Somerville’s benefactors and all the Somervillians who have died in the past year will take place on Saturday 11th June at 2.30pm. If you are interested in attending, please email elizabeth.cooke@some.ox.ac.uk.
- **Somerville Music Society** (music.soc@some.ox.ac.uk) organise concerts each Friday at 6:30pm, of which, the following are particularly noteworthy:
 - **Hindustani Classical Concert** (3rd June), featuring finalist Trina Banerjee, who will be performing her Hindustani classical recital in preparation for her finals performance exam.
 - **The Magic of Flue Concert** (10th June, featuring a performance of a Mozart flute concerto led by Music finalist Franco Lopez as well as performances from our new Flute Choir.
 - **Leavers’ Recital** (17th June), exceptionally starting at 5:45pm, will be a joint event with the college choir.