

Knightrider Street News

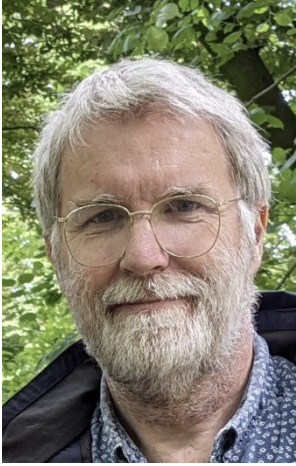


OCTOBER 2024

MAIDSTONE
BAPTIST CHURCH



Taking the Good News of Jesus into our lives and into God's World
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Autumn is upon us, a season of change. In our parks and gardens the leaves are changing colour and falling to the ground. You probably started to dig out jumpers and think about cosy nights in. What does autumn mean to you? Do you dread the winter that is approaching? Or do you rejoice in the cooler days and the changing colours?

The leaves that fall may be dead, but do you see how they dance in the wind? Do you see the children gathering leaves, conkers, acorns – making pictures with them, learning about them, recognising where they came from. Sometimes it is easy for us to focus on the negative things, but life is so much brighter if we shift our focus. Yes, many of those trees will soon have very few leaves on them. But we also know that deep within, something new is already growing, ready for the next spring. Autumn leaves remind us that change can be beautiful and that it can be good to let some things go.

So it is within our own lives. Many of us feel that we may be in our autumn season, physically or spiritually. Some of you may feel that you have nothing useful left to offer. But, like the children gathering and learning from the fallen leaves, think of all the experiences and knowledge you have to share with others. Even the goodness of leaves that are on the compost heap provide goodness and nourishment for the rest of the garden! You may feel that you are like the tree and that you have let go of or lost all that is good. Maybe you've lost your way a bit, maybe your faith feels a bit shaky, maybe you feel a bit stripped and empty, maybe you're unsure about the future. But like the autumn trees, there is new life already growing deep inside ready for a new season to transform you.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17

The earth is constantly living and dying, transforming and renewing, laying dormant and regrowing. I pray that, for each of us as individuals and for us collectively as a church, we may rejoice in the transformation, renewal and re-growth that comes through a relationship with God.

Nigel

Make Lunch

Thank you to everyone who provided empty water bottles for Make Lunch a few weeks ago. We cut off the bottoms of each bottle to make pot holders. The children painted and decorated them. Notcutts very kindly gave us some small succulent plants which the children then re-potted and put into their pot holder. I think you will agree they turned out really well. The children enjoyed working on them, and taking their plants home.

We now have finished Make Lunch for the summer and will start planning for the next one. This will be at half term on Wednesday October 30th.

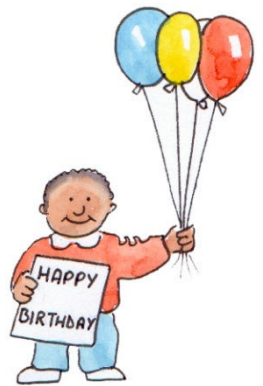
Thank you again for your support.

Jane, Lee-Anne & Barbara



BMS Birthday Scheme.

October 2nd Tommy Small
October 15th Barry Tucker
October 16th Barbara Williams



Happy Birthday to you all!

I wonder if there is a secret fountain of youth in Knightrider Street, although I haven't found it yet! It appears that many of the congregation never have a birthday, as the birthday scheme currently has only 32 members and although I am no maths genius, I am pretty sure there are more than that number of adults in the church building on Sundays.

For those who were present at the Harvest Festival service (last Sunday as I write this) you will have seen a video about a BMS project in Bangladesh. This showed the work of a couple on a Tea Plantation, helping the workers improve yields of the crop whilst also sharing the love of Jesus with them in a country where only 0.3% of the population are Christian.

The purpose of the BMS Birthday scheme is for you to celebrate YOUR birthday thanking God for what you have, by GIVING to BMS to help them support others in many different countries and projects around the world.

The birthday scheme in this church has raised £555 for BMS between September 2023 and August 2024.

You will receive a card on your birthday from the scheme, and be invited to send a gift in return. There is no set amount you are committed to give, but as they say 'every little helps' - so come on folks, let's see a considerable increase in the birthday scheme membership, and when you thank God for another year passed in your own life, bless those in need with a financial gift, however small.

Barbara Williams, our church treasurer, is also the birthday scheme secretary – please contact her to join or for more information. (Ed)

Update from Philip and Jane Webb.

Unfortunately Philip's recent treatment has not been effective and at the moment they are testing him for a very new form of treatment that has proved successful for some people. We would value your prayers for the doctors and for us at this stage.

Thank you

Every blessing

Jane and Philip

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*It has been a concern to have no news from **Ann Bothamley** but Shekinah, one of her hostel children but now a closest friend, has forwarded to us the following message from Ann:*

"The recent surgery I have had to reconstruct my spine went very well. I've had some parts of my spine removed, and in other parts of my spine, some gaps have been plugged with chips of bone. After surgery, I spent about a week in the hospital. Everyone in the hospital was so good to me, and took great care of me. After this I was discharged, and I have been staying with Dr Kenny and his family and then with Dr Chandrasingh and his family and I am now staying with Dr Arun and family on the Bagayam campus. All of them have been so good to me and have been helping me recover. I am hoping to get back to my flat once I am able to move around more freely. At the moment the pain has been quite severe, and I am up twice or thrice at night because of this. My surgeon Dr Kenny says that it will take time for me to recover and that I must not avoid taking my pain medication. I am usually reluctant to take such medication but I have been persuaded that I must keep taking this until I feel better.

I still have a long way to go before I am back to normal. I watched some of the Olympics and it was inspiring to see how they persevered and took all of the challenges in their stride in order to achieve what they did. I am trying to be as resilient as these athletes and hoping that my path to recovery will be short. Please continue to pray for me, and I hope to be in touch again soon."

Please keep Ann in your prayers for her continued recovery.



Prayer Points

October 2024

- Tue 1st May we thank God for his continued leadership in our lives as we reach the end of the summer months. Let us remember in prayer those many people who are suffering as a result of the war in Gaza and Ukraine.
- Wed 2nd Let us pray that our heavenly comforter will be with all who are mourning the loss of family in this country.
- Thur 3rd Remember the church's role at this turbulent time when so much is going on and uncertainty is always before us with the global instability.
- Fri 4th Pray for our Boys' and Girls' brigade as they start another autumn of programs and projects alongside their educational commitments. Pray for their leaders as they plan each session.
- Sat 5th Remember our young people who have started schools and colleges this autumn and who may have been feeling apprehensive or fearful. Pray for them that they will be settling alright. Also those who may not have achieved the school of choice.
- Sun 6th Pray for a return to experience the beauty of holiness and the joy of salvation as it were to be reset as only God can do.
- Mon 7th May we pray today for people who are still trying to escape from

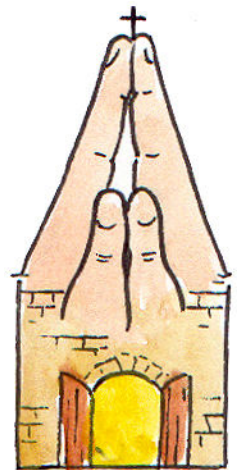
violent countries such as Libya, Iraq and Yemen that governments will show mercy when they arrive at their borders; also mercy from the British Government under the leadership Sir Kier Starmer.

Tue 8th Remember those in our church who are suffering ill health in all forms and who are under special medical management from the hospital on various treatments. Remember the terminally sick and those who are receiving palliative care in hospice or home.

Wed 9th Let us pray for our elderly members in church and outside that they will get the care and support they need, particularly those with mental health problems and especially as we approach the winter months.

Thur 10th Pray for our minister Nigel as he leads the church here in Maidstone.

Fri 11th May we pray today for those of our church who are in nursing homes and care centres receiving care 24 hours a day and remember the social services department.



Sat 12th Pray for our church leadership team and all the deacons who are involved with planning; for guidance in their decision making for the church's future.

Sun 13th Pray for our local hospitals and emergency services as they prepare for a busy Winter ahead. Remember the accident and emergency department when the winter pressures begin.

Mon 14th Pray for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted in this country and abroad because of their Christian beliefs.

Tue 15th Let us pray for all those near us who feel unfulfilled and desperate about their life and who may be discouraged on their journey due to personal failures or issues with close family members.

Wed 16th Remember the organisers of the Street Pastors and those who go out each week. Pray for their safety.

Thur 17th Pray for our relationships within our neighbourhood and friends as we try to shine Jesus light to them in this dark world.

Fri 18th Pray for our government leaders and for all the leaders of other parties.



Sat 19th Pray for all those who have recently lost loved ones and are now bereaved, both young and old, inside and outside the church.

Sun 20th Let us pray for our youth club and all the youth and the supporting teams involved in their management.

Mon 21st Pray for all our members who are finding things difficult at work either because of bullying, victimisation or overwork. Ask God to grant a quiet time for refreshment and recuperation as he sees fit.

Tue 22nd Pray for all those who are commencing new careers or starting new jobs.

Wed 23rd May we pray today for a closer walk with God in these troublesome times, when it can be challenging to be a Christian.

- Thur 24th Pray today for young families in and outside church who have children to guide in these difficult times.
- Fri 25th Let us pray for those of our members who are not able to get out each week to church, that their spiritual needs will be met.
- Sat 26th May we pray for wisdom as we speak to our friends and colleagues in the workplace so that it will reflect the love of Jesus.
- Sun 27th Pray for our pastoral area coordinators who give support and encouragement to all who need it at various times.
- Mon 28th Pray for a closer walk with Jesus as we go into our individual place of work, school, college, office, hospital or board meeting.
- Tue 29th Let us pray for all those who are sleeping rough and are homeless here in Maidstone, who were once helped by the winter shelter project.
- Wed 30th Pray for our social services here in Kent as they are often overwhelmed with demand for emergency support, especially with the children of families arriving as refugees from war torn countries.
- Thur 31st Remember the church family here in Maidstone as we are all one in the Spirit, that we will deliver a consistent message when we witness daily. Pray for those who feel like giving up because the fight is just too hard: ask Jesus to look deep into their hearts because he can see the real issues.



Persecuted Church

***MILLIONS OF AFRICAN CHRISTIANS ARE
DISPLACED BY VIOLENCE. NOBODY IS
TALKING ABOUT IT.***



As Pastor Barnabas walks through the camp where he lives, he points out the makeshift tents in every direction. There are hundreds of them with people huddled inside, seeking refuge from the sun. These are the women, men and children he pastors. Thousands of people live here: an informal camp for internally displaced people (IDPs) in Benue State, northern Nigeria. “Each and every one you are seeing here, we are all Christians,” says Pastor Barnabas. “We are displaced because of violence.” You can see the compassion register on his face as he talks, but there is something else, too: an authority that comes from a righteous anger that he and his church family have ended up in a camp like this. It’s one of many similar IDP camps across sub-Saharan Africa, where 16.2 million Christians have been forcibly displaced by violence and conflict. It’s an astounding number. But most of the world doesn’t even know it’s happening. “Millions of Christians are displaced, here in Nigeria,” says Pastor Barnabas. “Millions of Christians are displaced in Africa. The news doesn’t care about it, politicians don’t talk about it, governments don’t talk about it, global politics don’t talk about it. Nobody talks about it.” That’s why Open Doors’ Arise Africa campaign is so desperately needed.

“A TERRIBLE PLACE TO LIVE”

Pastor Barnabas gets to his tent, and stoops down to show it. Even though he and his family have lived in the camp for almost five years, their home is made of whatever materials were available – mostly palm leaves and mosquito nets. “It’s smaller than a double mattress,” Pastor Barnabas says. It’s far too small for a large family of eight. “The IDP camp is a terrible place to live,” says Pastor Barnabas bluntly. “We don’t have good hygiene, we don’t have water, we don’t have toilets. Many people are dying. Only

last week, as I am talking, we lost eight people in this IDP camp.” People wouldn’t live in a camp like this if they had any other choice. They only live here because it’s too dangerous outside the camps. Because of the horrendous persecution that has displaced them.

A HORRENDOUS ATTACK

Last year, and for many years, more Christians were killed for their faith in Nigeria than in the rest of the world combined. The same violent persecution is quickly spreading across other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, as Islamic extremist ideology spreads: as well as these murders, huge numbers of believers are injured, abducted, sexually assaulted or forced to flee from their homes. Pastor Barnabas can easily empathise with the people in the camp who have faced this violence. He’s been through exactly the same experience himself. “I was on the farm with my brother, Everen, and his wife, Friday,” he remembers. “We heard shooting. We saw people running in different directions. We didn’t know what was happening.”

The community was being attacked by Fulani militants, a group of Islamic extremists who are responsible for many of the violent attacks in north central and central Nigeria. Pastor Barnabas and his family tried to run, but Everen and Friday didn’t manage to escape. “My brother was shot by the militants, and my brother’s wife was also shot and then macheted and killed by the militants,” he says. It’s been almost five years, but the pain of loss is still raw.

LASTING INJURIES

The attack kept going. Pastor Barnabas couldn’t stop to help his brother and sister-in-law, or even to retrieve their bodies. “I kept running,” he remembers. “Then the militants divided themselves and one of them followed me.” This man tried to attack Pastor Barnabas with a machete, but accidentally dropped it. “He proceeded to remove his stick and hit me on my hand, and my hand was badly broken.” Years later, he is still affected

by these injuries every day. The attack caused long term damage and, while he managed to gather enough money to pay for initial surgery, he can't afford to have the metal in his hand removed. Without a second operation, he can't use his hand properly. It's a daily reminder of the horror he experienced at the hands of the militants. Despite the ordeal, Pastor Barnabas is grateful to God that his life was saved. "If not for God's intervention, if not for God's love, I wouldn't be where I am today," he says.

WHY WERE THEY ATTACKED?

The motive of Islamic militant violence like this is clear: to destroy as many Christians and Christian communities as possible. "This attack is because we are Christians," says Pastor Barnabas. "When they come to attack us, they call us 'capari'. It means you don't have any religion." The militants don't value their lives, because they are considered infidels. "In this camp, many people are affected, many are injured, many are killed or their loved ones have been killed," he says. "This affected not only my family, not only in the particular IDP camp I'm living, but there are millions of Nigerians that are being displaced. And it is not only in Nigeria these things are happening. They are happening in the whole of Africa."

The effects of this persecution are long-lasting. As well as the terrible loss of life, it removes any means of getting an income, or future opportunities for the children of affected believers. It threatens the future of the church. "Now, I have lost everything that I had. Everything in my home and village was burned," says Pastor Barnabas. "I cannot take care of my children. I cannot feed them. Most of the men go looking for work to do, in order to get daily food. But yet, it will not be enough for one meal."

DESPERATE HUNGER

"If you are hungry, you will lose your confidence in God," he says. "If you are sick, if you are not strong, you may lose your confidence in God."

As a pastor in the camp, he sees many believers struggle to remain faithful to God, because they don't know where their next meal is coming from and have to watch their children suffer. He has even seen some women in the IDP camp turn to prostitution, in order to get money to feed their families. Pastor Barnabas is desperate to help believers in his camp. "I don't have anything to give them," he says. "We can only pray together and share the Word of God together. How can you preach to someone who is hungry, and tell them that God will provide, when you cannot take a step to help them? How will they be encouraged?"

Persecution remains a real danger. Every day, Pastor Barnabas sees the men in the camp weigh up a terrible choice. "This hunger leads many of them to go in search of food to eat where they are being attacked by the militants," he says. "They have no option, they have to go back there again – and when they go, they are attacked again." Even while he was speaking with Open Doors partners, Pastor Barnabas heard the terrible news that Ifa, another of his brothers, had been attacked by Fulani militants while trying to gather food. The militant struck him on the head with a machete, and he suffered terrible injuries. It's a stark reminder of the constant dangers facing Pastor Barnabas and the other Christians in this camp – and millions of other believers like them throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

ARISE AFRICA

The African church is calling on their global church family to stand with them against this persecution. It seems to them that nobody is talking about it – and that's why the global Arise Africa campaign is so crucial. You can join with Christians in sub-Saharan Africa today. With your help, Open Doors local partners can continue providing emergency food and aid to Pastor Barnabas's IDP camp, and many more like it. "Brothers and sisters, you have been very supportive in the area of food, particularly in this IDP camp," he says. "We have been starving. If not for the help of your

ministry, I don't think it would be easy for us to live. But you assist us. We are very grateful."

Arise Africa isn't just meeting people's physical needs – it is helping believers persevere spiritually too, giving confidence that God hasn't abandoned them when He uses local Open Doors partners as His hands and feet. Local partners are also planning to provide skills training and trauma care, to support long-term resilience and self-sufficiency. They've also helped with Ifa's urgent medical bills, and are paying for Pastor Barnabas's operation on his hand.

Open Doors magazine September/October 2024

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**SOUTH SUDAN FLOODING:
WADING WAIST DEEP TO BRING
HELP**

**After flooding in South Sudan affects more than 3,000 people,
Tearfund is providing emergency support for those in need.**

Heavy rainfall in Pochalla, South Sudan, has recently caused significant flooding, affecting more than 3,000 people. Whole communities have been displaced as they try to escape the rising waters. Homes and other infrastructure have been destroyed and land used for farming has been lost. Many displaced families are struggling to access food, clean water and medical care, and with the harvesting season fast approaching, the loss of crops is a particular blow to food security. This raises fears of a worsening hunger crisis in the coming months.

Unusually high floodwaters

Although seasonal flooding is expected in the region between August and October, over the past few years the level of this flooding has been

abnormally high. As a result, each year almost a million people across South Sudan have been forced from their homes.

In a country where more than two-thirds of the population is already in need of some form of humanitarian aid, around 2.7 million people live in areas that have a high risk of being affected by flooding. Along with the loss and destruction of property, food and livelihoods, the floodwaters often bring waterborne diseases as toilets and sanitation facilities are damaged or submerged. These preventable diseases, such as cholera and malaria, can be fatal – particularly for children who are already undernourished.

Nutrition, food security...and walking through floodwater

Tearfund has been working with communities in Pochalla to help improve their nutrition, food security and livelihoods. Even though the flooding has impacted this work, our staff have carried on, walking up to chest deep at times through floodwaters with their kit held on their backs or above their heads. Tearfund staff have made sure they continue carrying out screenings to identify potential nutritional deficiencies among children under five years of age and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

Erickson Bisetsa, who heads up Tearfund's work in South Sudan, describes how our staff are working together with community leaders – including church leaders from across seven denominations – to make sure that people most at risk of malnutrition receive the emergency nutritional support they need.

Information that saves lives

He also tells us, 'Floodwaters in Pochalla and the surrounding area have already cut off many villages, making relief efforts extremely challenging. To get ahead of the rising flood water, Tearfund has been broadcasting radio messages with information about which rivers are likely to burst their banks and how people can avoid worst-case scenarios by preparing to move their livestock and loved ones to higher ground. 'We are increasing public

awareness through radio talks shows and adverts, but accessing areas cut off by the floodwater can be extremely challenging and we need more resources to offer temporaryshelter, clean water and food supplies for people forced out of their homes by the floodwater.’

Pray for South Sudan

- Pray for all those affected by the flooding. Ask God for protection and provision as they rebuild their homes and livelihoods.
- Ask God for protection from waterborne diseases – particularly for children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers at risk of malnutrition because of ongoing hunger who are most vulnerable to dying from these diseases.
- Pray for the difficult humanitarian situation in South Sudan. Ask God to bring solutions and healing to the country. Pray for our local staff and partners as they work to help communities overcome the most challenging situations.

Tearfund website Tarryn Pegna 30.8.24

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Deadline for November Knightrider Street News:

Sunday October 13th

Please e-mail contributions to the address on inside front cover

No later than 20.00hrs on this date

Regular Sunday Meetings.

Every Sunday: 10.30hrs In-person Worship at Knightrider Street

Services also streamed via Zoom and Facebook when possible.



Would you like to join our Street or Prayer Pastor Team? We are always looking for volunteers to join us.

Please email: maidstone@streetpastors.org.uk for more information



If you would like to make a donation to our work, please scan this code.