

# Knightrider Street News



## JANUARY

MAIDSTONE  
**BAPTIST CHURCH**



*Taking the Good News of Jesus into our lives and into God's World*  
[www.maidstonebaptist.net](http://www.maidstonebaptist.net)

***Maidstone Baptist Church***  
**Knightrider Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME15 6LU**  
Registered in England as a charity, no. 1128948

*“Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!”*  
*Genesis 1:31a (NLT)*

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**Church publications**

Monthly notice sheet: Information for the notice sheet should be sent to the  
General Administrator, c/o the church office.

Monthly magazine: **Knightrider Street News**  
Editorial Deadline: *Second Sunday of previous month: 20.00hrs by e-mail only*  
*Editor: Paul Tebbutt email: paul.tebbutt2015@gmail.com*

Knightrider Street News Postal Distributor:  
**Mrs Sally Walters** Tel: 01634 818053

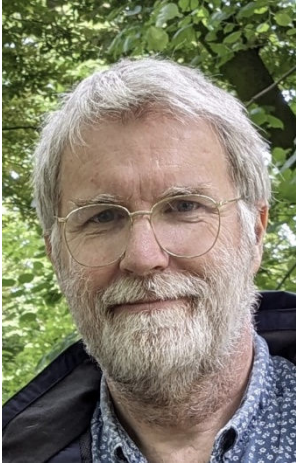
*Views and opinions expressed in KSN articles are those of individual contributors,  
and are not necessarily those of the Church leadership or editor.*

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**Pastoral Visits:**

At Maidstone Baptist Church we are happy to offer pastoral visits - for prayer, communion, or simply a chat. We can meet at church, in your home, or elsewhere, such as in a park or coffee shop.

If you feel this would be helpful, please speak to Nigel or Al, or to your Pastoral Leader.



As you read this, you are probably about to think of packing your Christmas tree decorations away for another year, or you may already have done so. I wonder what thoughts you might have as you push them back into the boxes and cupboards where they will sit until next December?

You are probably familiar with this tale of how Christmas trees came about:

***It was a cold winter's afternoon in the dense German forest. Martin Luther did not notice the sun slowly setting and the sky growing dark. His thoughts were on the sermon he was preparing. The forest soon came alive with the night sounds of owls, wolves, and other wild creatures. Martin Luther shivered. He pulled his cloak tighter around his shoulders. Then he quickened his pace, saying a little prayer for comfort as he went. The forest grew darker. Martin Luther scurried along, continuing to pray that he would not cross paths with a wild animal. He glanced up to see the night sky filled with tiny pricks of light, twinkling blue and silver. What could they be? "Stars!" Martin Luther said suddenly, as he realized what he was seeing. "Lights from Heaven to guide and comfort me, just as a star led the Wise Men to the stable that first Christmas. What a splendid theme for my sermon." Martin Luther smiled up at the twinkling sky. He was no longer afraid.***

Later, it is claimed, Luther took a small fir tree home for his family, which they decorated with candles, as a symbol of Christian hope; and the tradition of brightly decorated Christmas trees continues to this day.

For those of us who live in the UK, Christmas comes at a cold and dark time of year, and traditionally winter has been a time to look forwards. We are aware also of how often **light** in scripture is associated with God, and of the prominent role that light plays in the Christmas story: perhaps we are pleased that Christmas breaks into our winter, and we do well to see that as a powerful image of Jesus breaking into the darkness and confusion of our hurting world. The real challenge of



Christmas is not just to remember - amid turkey and tinsel - to focus on Bethlehem's child, but to retain the joy of His birth and His promise to be with us always, and take that awareness with us into every new season thereafter.

We have little idea what 2025 will bring, but I can guarantee this: 2025 will bring challenges, regrets and sadness, and pleasures and joys, too. 2025 will, like every year, be important in the life of our church, and we shall need renewed joy and prayerful positivity at every step. Jesus is with us always, and supplies a million and more reasons to be confident every day, no matter what the future brings.

***Psalm 18: 28 'You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.'***

A Happy and Blessed New Year to you all.

Nigel



# BMS Birthday Scheme.

January 13<sup>th</sup>  
January 17<sup>th</sup>

Mrs Shirley Collings  
Dr David Jenkins



# Happy Birthday to you both!



**Deadline for February Knightrider Street News:**

**Sunday January 12<sup>th</sup>**

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

***No later than 20.00hrs on this date***



## Beatitudes for Friends of the Deaf.

Blessed are they who seem to know

That lip reading is difficult and slow

Blessed are they who shake my hand

And write notes to help me understand

Blessed are they that know that I long

To hear voices, music and song

Blessed are they who seem to see

When I'm lost in a group of two or three

Blessed are they who take time out

To explain to me what they are talking about

Blessed are they who are patient and kind

That gives me comfort and peace of mind

Blessed are they who have a smile

That makes my life more worthwhile

Blessed are they who make it known

By faith in God's Promise, I'll not walk alone

Blessed are they who understand

As I journey to that city not made with hands.

*Author unknown*



# Prayer Points

## January 2025

Wed 1<sup>st</sup> As we arrive at a new year, give thanks for being a new creation. Pray for guidance in this new year; pray for those who have recently been bereaved; for those who are fearful of what this new year might bring. As we look back over the past year, the ups and downs, the pains and sorrows and the grief, pray for comfort, the comfort that only Jesus can give.



Thur 2<sup>nd</sup> Remember the governments awesome responsibility in dealing with world affairs such as climate change and the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine.

Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> Pray for our church leadership this new year; for our minister Nigel and his wife Margaret with all the challenges ahead. Pray for our worship as we continue seeing new additions come to the church week by week.

Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for our young people and youth as a new year begins that they will be guided in their chosen career pathway as they serve the community. May we remember our elderly in our midst who are vulnerable.

Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Pray today for anyone recovering from major illness or surgery recently and those about to have investigations or awaiting results. Also those who have had surgery cancelled due to shortages of medical or nursing staff.

Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Pray for the issues of global warming and the responsibilities of developed countries.

Tue 7<sup>th</sup> May we pray for those on our streets here in Maidstone who are still sleeping rough with no fixed place of their own. Pray for the support team at the Knightrider center.

Wed 8<sup>th</sup> Pray for our Boys' and Girls' brigade as they prepare for a new year project up and down the country. Pray that the gospel mission will be at the forefront of all plans.

Thur 9<sup>th</sup> Remember in prayer our monthly 5 and 2 lunch service headed by Elaine.

Fri 10<sup>th</sup> May we pray for those who organise the Street Pastor team as they go out each week.

Sat 11<sup>th</sup> Pray for our local health services and emergency services in this period of winter as they are faced with overwhelming pressures to see to the needs of all who come for treatment.

Sun 12<sup>th</sup> Remember all our members who are isolated and cannot get out as before. Also those who are being cared for in residential or nursing homes.

Mon 13<sup>th</sup> We will pray today for all who may be feeling discouraged, downcast or suffering personal failure in their lives. The God who knows all things and has walked this earth knows exactly what we are going through. He knows about the personal things that affect us each day.

Tue 14<sup>th</sup> Pray for those who may have just lost their jobs or may soon be made redundant. Pray for those who may be bullied in the workplace, victimised or harassed.



Wed 15<sup>th</sup> Pray for all those who are struggling in their walk in the Christian life, who may feel that all hope is lost. Pray that we will all be given the strength to hang on in there on the promises of God's saving grace.

Thur 16<sup>th</sup> As we think of those who have been victims of crime, pray for harmony safety and peace.

Fri 17<sup>th</sup> May we pray for peace within our neighbourhoods, streets and towns in these troublesome times.

Sat 18<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted in this country and abroad because of their faith.

Sun 19<sup>th</sup> Pray for refugees who have arrived from war torn countries. Pray for their safety and continued care. Pray for the foreign office and the work they do each day. Remember those who have recently been trying to cross the channel in small boats in dangerous weather.



Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Pray for the local council in the Maidstone area who are responsible for organising the care and support of the many people who have arrived here and who need help so badly.

Tue 21<sup>st</sup> Let us pray again for Sir Kier Starmer our Prime Minister as he has an overwhelming task in leading this country through a new year.

Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> Pray for the young people who attend Sunday School each week, that they will grow in the strength of the Lord.

Thur 23<sup>rd</sup> Pray for those near us who are suffering depression and anxiety of any form, and who are fearful and worried and maybe unable to express their needs and speak for themselves.

Fri 24<sup>th</sup> Pray for our local schools and colleges here in Maidstone as they embark on a new year, new term and new curriculum.

Sat 25<sup>th</sup> May we pray for all the widows and widowers in the church and outside, suffering the pain of loss and grief, that the arms of Jesus will wrap around them.



- Sun 26<sup>th</sup> Pray for all the suffering children and young families who have arrived in this country from places where cruelty is a daily experience. Pray for their safety and care. Even now as people are still trying to escape from the ongoing war in Ukraine, Gaza and many other countries in the world, pray for those who are seeking to bring peace in those places.
- Mon 27<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for children here in Kent who may be at risk of harm or abuse, even from members of their own family.
- Tue 28<sup>th</sup> May we pray today for new parents with young families in Kent that they will be secure and safe.
- Wed 29<sup>th</sup> Pray for our youth and the culture of social media and the internet in these times of cyber crime and threats through these channels.
- Thur 30<sup>th</sup> Pray for Kent County Council and the Medway Authority that they will be guided in the right decision making for the town and county regarding the governments proposed reorganisation of councils and boundary changes.
- Fri 31<sup>st</sup> Pray again for Churches Together in Maidstone that this year will be a year to remember who we are, what we are doing and where we are going.



**Let us pray**

*Rescued from human trafficking  
by the church.*



God created each human in his image. Planned and purposed for good things. Knit together within the wombs of mothers, seen and known before birth (Psalm 139). Bearing unique fingerprints, dental patterns, thought patterns, hopes, dreams and fears. Each of us fearfully and wonderfully made. Precious. Valuable in his sight.

And yet, those who deal in human trafficking turn people into commodities. Saleable objects reduced to a monetary value. Stripped of dignity and personal control.

Human trafficking is a deeply abusive misuse of power – whether by way of physical or financial force or threat, or through abduction, fraud, deception, or the abuse of a position of vulnerability.

It's a global problem which is estimated to affect millions of people worldwide. Trafficking may involve moving a person into another country, but can also take place within the person's own country.

According to a United Nations report, the most common form of human trafficking is sexual exploitation, predominantly of women and girls.

The second most common form is forced labour, and the report states that: 'worldwide, almost 20 per cent of all trafficking victims are children. However, in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region, children are the majority (up to 100 per cent in parts of West Africa).'

**This is the story of Susan who was trafficked to Nigeria**

Susan is around 25 years old now, but when she was brought to Lagos from Benin, she was young enough that she can't clearly recall how old she was. All she remembers is that she was taken from her home by someone

she knew as a family friend and that no one had made it clear to her why she was being moved or where she was going.

At that time, she was called San. And she was one of many children in the region caught in a situation of modern-day slavery. Sometimes, this comes about because poverty compels parents to send children out to work in the hope they will provide for the whole family. In some cases, children pursue the work themselves for the same reason. In other instances, they are deceived by relatives with false promises of a better life. In the end, though, their freedom is sold for money that does not make their way into their own hands. The promise of a way to provide turns out to be a false pretence and they often remain trapped in an abusive situation through various forms of coercion – whether physical or psychological or both.

San was sent to work in the home of a family in Lagos who treated her badly, subjecting her to various forms of domestic abuse.

After that, she was moved and forced to work for another family. She remained trapped with them for seven years – working all the time but never receiving any payment. The family moved around a lot, taking her with them wherever they went and making it impossible for her to contact the people who had brought her from Benin. Susan describes how the family beat her. How she had no one to turn to. How she couldn't find a way to get in touch with her own family. How she cried, asking to be sent back to her parents. How her pleas fell on deaf ears.

Eventually, she managed to run away.

Feeling desperate and with nowhere to go, Susan was in tears by the side of the road when Aishat, a member of one of Tearfund's local church partners, Amazing Destiny Christian Center in Akobo, Ibadan, saw her and stopped to ask what was wrong. Deeply moved by what she heard, Aishat took Susan to see the pastor's wife, who also listened carefully to what she had to say.

When the church pastor heard Susan's story, he immediately sought legal advice on what could be done to help Susan. Then, he took Susan to the immigration department to try to find details of where she'd come from and how she might find her family. Sadly, because the people who had brought her from Benin had not done so legally, there was no trace. The authorities couldn't find anything about Susan, where she had come from or who her family are. What the authorities did manage though, was to arrest the people who had been mistreating Susan!

The pastor tried to find other ways to connect Susan to her family and the embassy carried out searches for information about Susan and her family for eight months, during which time Susan was given a place to stay with Aishat.

Once the embassy had finished making their enquiries and been unable to find any information for Susan, and after receiving legal advice in the matter, the pastor got the authorisation from the legal authorities for the church to adopt Susan – taking on responsibility for caring for her and supporting her and giving her a new, safe home and a new name.

### **Welcomed as a daughter**

Susan was welcomed as a daughter into the home of another church member called Dele – bringing her into a new family, but this time one that would value and help restore her strength and dignity, not cheat her of them as the ones who had kept her trapped in slavery as a child had done.

Susan was enrolled to assist at the school that the church runs so she could have the opportunity to learn how to read and write. She also took part in Tearfund's Transforming Communities programme that the church runs, which encouraged Susan to look for ways to start to build a sustainable income for herself. Through this, she received training to become a hairdresser. Putting what she learnt in the programme into practice, Susan looked around for a way to get some money together to create a small



business. She came up with the idea of selling pastries to earn money while she continues to work on her hairdressing and literacy skills.

As she began to be able to build a new beginning for herself, Susan's confidence started to grow. Now, her life has completely changed and Susan says she is hopeful and praying for a better future.

Tearfund believes in the power of the local church to be the place where transformation starts – both in individual lives and in whole communities.

***Pray with us:***

- ✚ Pray for Susan as she continues to rebuild her life, and lift up all people who have been trafficked around the world. Ask God for freedom and healing for them.
- ✚ Pray for local churches to be places of restoration and healing for people who have faced abuses, such as being trafficked.
- ✚ Pray particularly for women and children, who are most vulnerable to being trafficked. Ask God for their protection and for systems and solutions to be put in place that will bring an end to this terrible criminal activity.

*Written by Tarryn Pegna 6<sup>th</sup> December for Tearfund's One Voice in Prayer*

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## Persecuted Church



### **Barnabas-funded vocational courses give unemployed Nigerian Christians the skills to earn a living**

As part of Barnabas Aid's Opportunity Africa initiative, we are working to empower disadvantaged and often traumatised young Christians in Nigeria by helping them find work and become self-supporting. "This training has given me hope," explains Janet, one of more than 1,700 young Christians who are benefitting from new vocational courses funded by Barnabas Aid in Nigeria. The courses provide intensive instruction in a range of trades, from computing, plumbing and carpentry to solar panel installation, machine knitting and baking. The training is giving disadvantaged believers whose lives have been blighted by violent persecution the skills to make a living, empowering them with new confidence and opportunity. The incomes the students go on to earn enable them to support family members. Many have parents, siblings and other relatives who are suffering from physical and emotional trauma, as well as financial hardship, because of the relentless anti-Christian attacks by Islamists. At least 45,000 believers have been murdered, and 2.5 million forced to flee their homes, farmlands and communities, as a result of attacks by Islamist militants in Middle Belt and northern Nigeria since 2015.

## **Student's father murdered on his doorstep**

Janet's father – the family breadwinner – was killed on the doorstep of their home. He died in one of three attacks by Fulani Islamists on their village in the Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Many other Christian lives were lost in the onslaughts as the attackers set fire to homes and burned or looted food stocks. "It was very painful," says Janet. "We have experienced a lot of hardship." But she adds, "We leave everything to God to judge, and we can see already that He is beginning to answer our prayers with you [Barnabas Aid] coming to our help." Janet thanks God for all she has learned on an intensive two-month tailoring course funded by Barnabas. "Not having anyone to depend on, this training has helped me a lot," she explains. "With it I have the skills to earn money to help my family and support my mother and siblings."

## **Discipleship helps students stay strong in faith**

The emotional and spiritual wellbeing of students is nurtured, too. Our project partners provide the young believers with discipleship and counselling, as well as guidance on financial issues. One young man, Monday, is studying carpentry. His village has suffered several Islamist attacks. "We are constantly under threats," he says, "but the support we are getting will help us, by the grace of God, to remain strong in our faith." Students "thank God for this training," adds Monday, "because it will help us rebuild our lives and also help the community." The training programme is already helping to cut the high rate of

unemployment and poverty among young men and women. At least 1,700 Christian students have, at the time of writing, received training since the programme was launched in Plateau and Kaduna states in August 2024. By God's grace, we hope that thousands more in 2025 will be taught skills that had previously been out of their reach.

### **Keeping hope alive**

All the courses enable students either to set up their own businesses or to find employment. On graduation, some of the students are presented with the tools that they need for work, for example, knitting machines or equipment for solar panel installations. Others are given access to the training centre and its equipment to enable them to carry out their trade in welding, carpentry or computers.

Graduate Domshak, whose brother was killed in an attack by Islamists, is thankful for the help he has received. "This training has shown me that despite all I have gone through, I can keep hope alive," he says. I thank God and Barnabas Aid for this training programme. This training has made me a better person, inside and out.

Sadly, at the beginning of a new year, we know that there will be more disasters and emergencies to come. But there will also be opportunities for service, blessing and growth. Please pray that the Lord will bless our work in the coming 12 months, whether we are building sustainable futures or providing emergency aid.

*Barnabasaid January/February 2025*



## **LEBANON: Christians in Crisis**

Smoke rises behind a church building in Beirut. Many Christians have fled the Lebanese capital to escape the bombardment. "This crisis is one of the heaviest we have experienced so far." This was the assessment of a Barnabas Aid project partner, just days after the ongoing Middle Eastern war burst into Lebanon in full force. Lebanon's Christians are suffering the consequences of a war that they did nothing to start and have no way of ending. At the time of writing, hundreds of thousands have been displaced. Among them are many women, children and other vulnerable people. They have sought refuge in the relative safety of north-western Lebanon. Many have fled the bombardment of Beirut, the Lebanese capital. Many others have made the arduous journey north from the historic Christian villages of the south. These have left behind homes that have been in their families for generations. They have abandoned farmlands and church buildings. Some have chosen to stay behind. They fear the journey will be too dangerous, or else they are determined to protect their lands and their homes from falling into the hands of Islamists. Crucially, they now have no means of supporting themselves. Cold and hunger will follow trauma.

### **"We can rely only on Christians"**

Barnabas Aid has been working through trusted project partners to provide food, warmth and other essentials. Some government-funded aid has been available, but not enough for everybody. Not all of those who fled could find space in official camps and shelters. Even if they could,

Christians are concerned that moving into these spaces would put them in danger from Islamist extremists. Instead they have depended on the help given by churches and other Christian ministries. "We can rely only on Christians," said another Barnabas Aid contact in the country.

Those who have remained in the south can expect no humanitarian assistance from institutions controlled by Hezbollah. They too can look only to their fellow believers. Our brothers and sisters here have endured poverty for many years. Since the Port of Beirut explosion in 2020 the Lebanese economy has collapsed. Food and medicine have become almost unaffordable. Political and social institutions are in disarray. The war has made a grim situation even worse. Their needs remain great.

If you wish to make a donation to the work of Barnabas Aid their address is:

**Barnabas Aid, Unit 23 Ash Industrial Estate, Swindon  
SN2 8UN  
or visit [barnabasaid.org /donate](https://barnabasaid.org/donate)**

*Barnabasaid January/February 2025*





## 2<sup>nd</sup> Maidstone Girls' Brigade & 1<sup>st</sup> Maidstone Boys' Brigade



The final weeks of the term saw all the sections thinking and doing things about advent and the build up to Christmas. We finished the session with fun evenings for all and by getting involved in the Church Carol Service.

We were pleased to be able to prepare and serve a 3 course Christmas lunch for members of the Church fellowship and Brigade families on 8<sup>th</sup> December. With over 100 people sitting down for lunch it was a busy weekend for us all to ensure a great time of fellowship and food. A special thank you to all involved in planning and preparing the hall and the food and to all the young people who came down to help. Thank you to all who supported us by coming along and to those who donated even though they weren't able to attend in person.

As part of this event we once again held a successful Christmas Cake / Yule Log auction for Brigade funds. Many thanks to Kirsty for making and donating the beautiful cakes and to those who generously contributed to the cake auction.

Please continue to remember the Brigade staff and young people in your prayers as they meet week by week – we do really value your support and interest. We start back for the new session on 8<sup>th</sup> January and would love to welcome new members into any of our sections.

**Jane Haslam** [mbc-415@highg.net](mailto:mbc-415@highg.net)

## Regular Sunday Meetings.

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

Services also streamed via Zoom and on YouTube 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](mailto:maidstone@streetpastors.org.uk) for more information



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