

# Knightrider Street News



FEBRUARY 2025

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**

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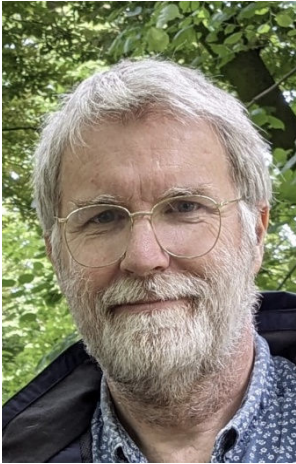
*Views and opinions expressed in KSN articles are those of individual contributors,  
and are not necessarily those of the Church leadership or editor.*

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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.



I'm not much of an artist. If I go around an art gallery there are many paintings on the walls, and they vary enormously. Some I appreciate hugely, and some I can't make out what the artist is trying to represent. Some I would happily hang on a wall at home, while some are not likely to make it past the front door! But for each of the artists I imagine that in their mind's eye, they knew what it was that they wanted to create on their canvas. They had a vision and set out to achieve it, and we should probably applaud them for attempting to bring that mind's eye picture to reality.

Our Bible verse for the year is Genesis 1:31 “***God saw all he had made, and it was very good.***” In the beginning, God had an amazing vision, and we are, each and every one of us, part of that vision - we are made by God. And v31 tells us plainly that in God's eyes we are not just good, but **very** good. Wow!! That's really quite awesome and humbling isn't it? God, as the ‘artist’ had an image of you in his mind way before you were even created. You were, and are, meant to be. You are part of the masterpiece that is God's Creation. And God has placed you in this church fellowship.

As a church we are blessed with a diverse mixture of ages, races, cultures, languages, backgrounds, looks, skills and much more. Yet God created us, brought us all together in this one place, at this time. I am really encouraged and excited by what God is doing in Maidstone Baptist Church. God has a great vision for this church, and I would encourage you all to join together in prayer as we seek to align ourselves with that heavenly plan. And as you pray, ask yourself how you believe God wants to see our church grow and move forwards - and how you might be part of that.

***God saw all he had made, and it was very good.*** Creation has always been amazing, and God calls us to work with Him.

*Nigel*

## **ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS AND DEACONS 2025**

At the Church Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March there will be an election to fill vacancies for church officers and deacons.

Nominations for these vacancies will open on 9<sup>th</sup> February, and close on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, and profiles of those nominated will be displayed in church on the Notice Board by the office as soon after that as possible. Nomination forms will be available from the Church Secretary from 9<sup>th</sup> February.

### ***There will be two Officer vacancies:***

Church Secretary: Sheila Smith is standing down after serving in this position since May 2018.

Assistant Church Secretary: this position continues to be vacant.

### ***There will be 4 Deacon vacancies:***

Keith Burgess-Clements has completed one three-year term as a Deacon and is therefore able to stand again for a further term, if nominated and if he wishes to stand.

The other three vacancies have remained unfilled from previous years.

The maximum number of church Trustees given in our Constitution is 12, plus our Senior Minister. Continuing Trustees will be: Senior Minister (Rev. Nigel Riley), Church Treasurer (Barbara Williams), and 5 deacons (Rachel Flemons, Neil Sherry, Anne Swannell, Gwyneth Tozer and Nic Weller).

We ask all members to consider prayerfully each of the vacancies; who they might wish to nominate to stand for election from within the fellowship and also whether they themselves are being called to the privilege of serving God and the fellowship in this way. For anyone wishing to find out more about the roles of being an Officer or Deacon,



## Being a Church Secretary

I have found it an exciting privilege being the Church Secretary over a number of years, serving at the heart of a growing church, and learning so much! Who knew in 2018 that our then minister would soon leave, that a pandemic was coming, and that we would have four years without a minister before the arrival of our new one to ably lead us forward.

Now that I am standing down, I am confident there is one of our members who can take on this responsibility, and find they enjoy it much more than they thought they would. Like all of our Deacons, you would need to be a church member and regularly attend church meetings.

So I wanted to explain some of the roles of this leadership opportunity, as I am sure there are many misconceptions about it!

What needs to happen .....

- ❖ General liaison with the ministers and treasurer
- ❖ Liaising with the Office Administrator
- ❖ Briefly completing an Annual Return for the Baptist Union each January
- ❖ Ensuring admin is done for Church and Deacons meetings (dates, agendas, minutes). The minutes are actually taken by others.
- ❖ Some record keeping.

There is also a ridiculous suggestion of doing anything else that is necessary – but don't we all do that as we serve in so many different ways in the fellowship!

As Church Secretary, you would be a Trustee (as are most of those in Church Leadership). You would also be at the heart of helping this growing church to expand and consolidate, becoming aware of what our amazing God is doing here in Maidstone and feeling a real part of it.

So have courage – who might you nominate ... or might you yourself feel God would help you to step into a new adventure ....?

*Sheila*

## Reflections on Winter

The cold .... a struggle to keep warm, to balance the cost of heating with our ability to function

The darkness .... getting light too late and dark too early, needing a torch at hand for walking home

The isolation .... staying in so you don't slip on the ice, or risk expecting others to do the same

The January blues .... anticlimax after Christmas festivities, and a reduced bank balance

The difficulty .... lack of sunshine, fear of heavy snow, and less motivation to go forward

But the joy .... of celebrating the birth of Jesus

The privilege .... of being around to enter the adventure of a new year

The challenge .... of working out our hopes and dreams as we imagine what God may do in and through us and others

The certainty .... that God holds us day by day, hour by hour

The gratitude .... for faith, fellowship, family and friends

And the knowledge that even in our winter seasons

The sun still shines on some days

The fog disperses

The snow and frost are beautiful

Our heavenly Father embraces us with His redeeming love.

*Sheila 12/1/25*



# Prayer Points

*February 2025*

- Sat 1<sup>st</sup> As we start a new month, perhaps with thoughts in our minds about a new chapter in the life due to circumstances, pray for that journey ahead; new job; new relationship; sickness; loss; fear or grief.
- Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> Let us pray for our world leaders at this most turbulent time as we do not know what lies ahead. Pray for those who are making decisions over in the States with the new president and the political unrest there.
- Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> As we come to this part of February remember those who are benefiting from the winter shelter scheme for the homeless here in Maidstone; for those organising it and running it each night.
- Tue 4<sup>th</sup> Some of our members are suffering ill health at this time and maybe feeling so low in spirit that sometimes it is even hard to pray. Ask that God will bear us up as the days unfold, praying for comfort and peace as we continue to battle through the winter flu virus and infections of all kinds.
- Wed 5<sup>th</sup> Pray for the national security and terrorist risk that is always around us that we will be daily shielded according to the will of the Father. We remember the constant threat of violence on a daily basis as a direct result of the situation in the Middle East.



Thur 6<sup>th</sup> As we are still hearing of the situations in Los Angeles with the recent fires, pray that those affected will be restored to some kind of normality.

Fri 7<sup>th</sup> Remember in prayer church leaders in Maidstone and surrounding districts who try to maintain comfort to many at this time of uncertainty.

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> May we pray for our youth at this time as they face big challenges ahead; for guidance in their decision making as some go on to new career pathways and new direction in their lives.

Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Pray for the children and those who are appointed to lead and direct them.

Mon 10<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for our elderly members who find life so difficult at times. Pray for the pain of those who may be bereaved and lonely, with struggles that seem to be eternal. The loss of their loved ones is always before them.

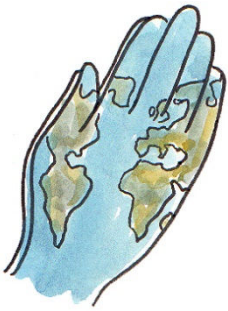


Tue 11<sup>th</sup> May we pray for our local health service and those at the front line working endless hours in the fight to save lives in this winter period.

Wed 12<sup>th</sup> Pray for those suffering persecution because of their faith in this country and abroad.

Thur 13<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for our government under Sir Kier Starmer that the right decisions will be made as he continues to lead, with advice from the right advisers. Pray for all the members of Parliament on both sides of the Houses, that they will support each other and

work together in the whole national interest trying to maintain peace here and abroad.



Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Pray for those living on their own who feel so alone at times; pray that they will be comforted in a way that only Jesus can give.

Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for all those who are depressed or down in spirit and finding it hard to smile or feel good in themselves for all kinds of reasons that only God knows.

Sun 16<sup>th</sup> Pray for Alastair and Nigel as they continue to lead services each week, that when times become difficult and shaky occasionally they will be strengthened, guided and supported.

Mon 17<sup>th</sup> May we today pray for our elderly folks living in nursing or residential care who cannot get out due to frailty or ill health.

Tue 18<sup>th</sup> Pray for all those who are struggling in their Christian life burdened with daily pitfalls. Pray that the cross with all its meaning will be forever before us each day.

Wed 19<sup>th</sup> Pray for our Street Pastors as they continue to support people in the town each weekend night.

Thur 20<sup>th</sup> As we go about our business today, ask God that those who see us will see the light of Jesus in the words we speak and the things we do. When we are in the workplace, let the light shine in all situations.

Fri 21<sup>st</sup> Let us pray for all world leaders at this time when they are making major decisions both locally and abroad, particularly the continuing unrest in the Middle East, Russia and Ukraine.

Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Pray for those who are involved in the weekly coffee mornings as they provide for local people as they pass by. Let us also pray for the 5 and 2 lunch service outreach, led by Elaine, which has been greatly appreciated over the past few years.

Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> Let us pray for anyone who have been victims of crime or injustice in whatever form. We particularly remember victims right here in Maidstone.

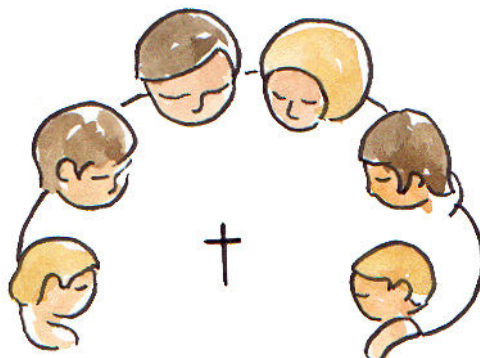
Mon 24<sup>th</sup> Pray for our Boys' and Girls' brigades as they support each other in whatever way they can at this awful time for young people.

Tue 25<sup>th</sup> Remember our members who are undergoing hospital operations at this time; pray for a full and speedy recovery.

Wed 26<sup>th</sup> Pray for local schools and colleges as they continue to guide children and young people at a time when being at school is such a challenge with the various issues faced by families such as housing and cost of living.

Thur 27<sup>th</sup> Pray for all those who are out of work at the moment and struggling to find work. Heeding the words 'I will supply all your needs according to the riches of my glory.'

Fri 28<sup>th</sup> Pray today for anyone who is being bullied or harassed in the workplace, finding that they are victims in various forms, such that they need support from counselling. Pray that the 'Wonderful Counsellor' will attend to them.





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



Despite the rather challenging weather we started back at Brigade for the new session as planned on 8<sup>th</sup> January. Our youngest group focussed on the story of the 'The Lost Sheep' with games, a memory verse and some crafts. The Juniors started to think about the topic of Respect and the older groups did some challenges, some planning and enjoyed their games time.

Just a reminder that Boys' Brigade & Girls' Brigade are Christian uniformed youth organisations, open to all children and young people aged 5 – 18 years. They provide opportunities for children and young people to learn, grow, discover, gain awards, make friends and have fun in a safe, fun and caring environment.

We meet weekly during term times on a Wednesday evening in the Main Hall and hold special events throughout the year, the highlight of which is our annual weekend camp and fun day.

If you know of any children / young people aged between 5 – 18 years who would like to join us, or you would just like to find out a little more about Boys' / Girls' Brigade or what we do here you can take a look at our national websites :-

<https://boys-brigade.org.uk> / <https://www.girlsbrigadeministries.org.uk>

or get in touch with Al ([youth@maidstonebaptist.net](mailto:youth@maidstonebaptist.net)) or myself.

We are always pleased to chat through what we do and would love to welcome new members in to any of our groups.

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

## *Persecuted Church*

### **WORLD WATCH LIST 2025 Bulletin**



If you escaped the darkest place on earth...  
...what would make you go back?

It wasn't the first time that Joo Min\* had crossed the border between North Korea and the neighbouring country. She knew that the river was deep and treacherous. Guards patrolled the riverbank, holding machine guns. If anybody discovered her, she'd be arrested and hauled to a North Korean labour camp, where conditions are unimaginably bad.

Last time Joo Min made this dangerous journey, she was escaping starvation and an oppressive regime in North Korea.

This time, she was choosing to go back.

### **A NORTH KOREAN CHILDHOOD**

Joo Min was born and raised in North Korea. In school, Joo Min was taught that North Korea was the greatest country in the world, and that the ruling Kim family were to be gratefully obeyed and even worshipped. She did hear about Christians – and how they were to be feared. “I was told to stay away from missionaries,” she remembers. “They said missionaries were like wolves pretending to be sheep.” Her school textbook said the same thing, telling stories of American spies pretending to be missionaries. These spies – so the textbook claimed – were sent to North Korea to kidnap children and sell them into slavery.

### **SEVERE FOOD SHORTAGES**

Despite what she was taught about life being wonderful in North Korea, Joo Min's actual experience didn't match up. Her family was desperately short of food. Her father started abusing alcohol, meaning he couldn't afford even the meagre amount of food available on the black market. “My

father told me I had to provide for our family,” says Joo Min. “Driven by the need to provide, I crossed the border in search of work.” Joo Min was one of tens of thousands of North Koreans who crossed the border looking for sources of food and income. While it’s illegal for North Koreans to leave the country, the authorities are less vigilant in stopping them during periods of severe food insecurity. If Joo Min had been caught, the punishment would have been dire – but the border crossing wasn’t as heavily guarded as it is at other times. Joo Min hoped to find a way to survive when she reached the other side of the border. She found so much more than that.

## **HEARING THE GOSPEL**

At first, after reaching the other side of the river, Joo Min wasn’t sure what to do. Soon, she met someone who said they could help her, and take her to a safe place. Unknowingly, she had met the first Christian she’d ever known. She’d met a secret Open Doors fieldworker. The fieldworker took Joo Min to one of the safe houses for North Korean refugees run by Open Doors underground networks, where she found herself part of a community of people who’d made the same difficult journey as her. At the safe houses, these local fieldworkers provide food and help people find jobs. More than that – they tell people about Jesus. “In the safe house, I heard the gospel for the first time,” says Joo Min. At first, she was very resistant. Not only had her schooling taught her that Christians were evil – she knew what she’d face if she were discovered and deported back to North Korea. If you’re found even to have met a Christian while outside the country, you are targeted for particularly harsh punishments.

## **“GO BACK TO NORTH KOREA”**

Even with the extreme risks, Joo Min couldn’t help wanting to know more about Jesus. The Christians she met weren’t like the sadistic missionaries in her North Korean textbook: they were kind, loving and offered her help without asking anything in return. “Despite what I was told as a child, I accepted Jesus as my Saviour,” she says. “I started attending

Bible studies and training every week.” Eventually, Joo Min chose to be baptised.

After a long period of biblical teaching and persecution survival training from Open Doors fieldworkers, Joo Min felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit. She knew God had a plan for her – and it would require extraordinary courage.

“I felt like God was telling me: ‘Go back to North Korea,’” she says. “I felt a calling to share everything I’ve learned in my homeland.”

And that’s what brought Joo Min back to the border, and to the dangerous crossing into North Korea. As she walked into the water and made her way across, this time it wasn’t because of financial necessity or hunger – it was because her life had been turned upside down by the hope and love of Jesus.

## **SMUGGLING LIGHT**

Today, Joo Min is still serving as a leader in the underground church. “I know the risks involved,” she says. “If I am caught, I could end up in a labour camp, paying a heavy price for being a Christian now.” Yet, by the power of the Holy Spirit and with the help of the training she received from Open Doors fieldworkers, she continues her ministry.

The light she found in the safe house is what she now smuggles into North Korea and nothing – not food shortages, the danger of imprisonment, or even the seemingly all-powerful Kim dynasty – can stop the light from shining brightly in the darkness. “Please pray for me,” she asks. “Pray for protection and courage, so that I can be like salt and light in a land overshadowed by darkness.”

## **YOU CAN HELP NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIANS**

Joo Min’s story is a little different from many stories you’ll read from countries on the Open Doors World Watch List. She hasn’t been attacked

or imprisoned – but she risks extreme persecution every day. At any moment, she could be seized by the authorities. But she is determined to continue her ministry.

With your help, other North Korean refugees can encounter the gospel at Open Doors safe houses outside the country – and receive the vital training that enables them to return home and share the gospel in the darkest place on earth.

You almost certainly won't ever be called on to cross the border into North Korea. But, with your support and prayers, you can stand shoulder to shoulder with believers like Joo Min as they courageously smuggle light into darkness.

## **PLEASE GIVE**

Your gift will go to believers from North Korea and other countries in the World Watch List top 10. You can give at [opendoorsuk.org](http://opendoorsuk.org)

- Every £20 could give Bibles to two adults in a country where God's Word is not easy to access.
- Every £38 could help provide six months of safe housing and relief aid to a family of North Korean refugees fleeing extreme persecution.
- Every £45 could help give persecution survival and evangelism training to a Christian who has fled extreme persecution.

## ***PLEASE PRAY :-***

- For God's strength and inspiration for believers from North Korea and other countries where Christians face extreme persecution
- For Open Doors fieldworkers at safe houses to receive God's wisdom and protection as they carry out His work
- That the darkest places on earth in which to follow Jesus would be filled with His light.



\*Joo Min’s story is taken from accounts of two North Korean believers. As the real people are currently living and ministering in North Korea, some details have been combined or omitted to protect their identities.

*Reproduced from 'Open Doors Magazine', January/February 2025*

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Mozambique post-election violence: Tearfund calls for peace



**Post-election violence in Mozambique has forced thousands to flee their homes to seek safety in Malawi and Eswatini.**

Ongoing violence has plagued Mozambique since the country’s disputed elections on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024. But, since the final results were announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 confirming the ruling party presidential candidate, Daniel Chapo, as winner, the situation has got significantly worse.

Adding to the risk of insecurity, on Christmas Day the Police Commander announced that more than 1,534 prisoners had escaped from a maximum security prison in the capital city, Maputo.

With reports of violence, deaths and looting across the country, thousands of Mozambicans have fled over the borders, desperately seeking safety in neighbouring Malawi and Eswatini (previously Swaziland).

**‘On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the Mozambique Christian Council and the Mozambique Evangelical Association joined Christian leaders in Matola City to pray for peace and reconciliation in Mozambique.’**

*Judas Massingue, Tearfund Country Director for Mozambique and Zimbabwe*

## **Violence hampering relief efforts after Cyclone Chido**

It's only a few weeks since Cyclone Chido caused mass destruction and loss for so many people in the region, and the escalation in violence is making it even harder for people to receive the support that they urgently need in the wake of the disaster.

For those in the northern parts of Mozambique, this all comes on top of an ongoing context of attacks by armed groups which have displaced hundreds of thousands of people in Cabo Delgado since 2017.

## **Impact on neighbouring Malawi**

In neighbouring Malawi, more than 5 million people already require humanitarian support due to the drought in the last farming season. Now, an influx of thousands of people arriving from Mozambique in need of shelter, food, water and access to medical provision, is placing further pressure on already stretched resources.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports: 'Many walked long distances... Among them are pregnant women, the elderly and children who have had little food to eat... Shelters are overcrowded, sanitation facilities are inadequate, and access to food and clean water is insufficient. Over 1,000 people are sharing a single latrine at some sites, significantly increasing the risk of disease.'

Landlocked Malawi also relies on the ports in Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania for transportation of goods. The violence in Mozambique has meant disruption to supply chains, including for fuel, which saw filling stations in Malawi running dry for some days over the festive period.

## **Tearfund and the church in Mozambique calling for peace**

Judas Massingue, who heads up Tearfund's work in Mozambique, spoke to us about Tearfund's response to the situation. He says: 'God has been faithful and granted protection to Tearfund's team and partners in Mozambique. However, we stand in solidarity with the team at World Vision whose office in one of the districts in Nampula province was vandalised.'

‘Tearfund in Mozambique has been supporting the Mozambique Christian Council and the Mozambique Evangelical Association in their efforts to help restore peace in Mozambique.

‘So far, meetings have been held with the Head of State as well as with the main parties that participated in the elections to discuss pathways for restoration of peace.

‘Early in December 2024, the Mozambique Christian Council and the Mozambique Evangelical Association wrote a letter to the leadership of the Africa Christian Transformation Forum to request their support, experience and wisdom to help the process of finding peace in Mozambique.

‘Prior to the announcement of final results, the Mozambique Christian Council and the Mozambique Evangelical Association issued a statement entitled *Mozambique First* calling on all Mozambicans to prioritise dialogue to address the existing electoral dispute, and asking them to do their best to ensure that no more Mozambicans die because of the election.

‘On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the Mozambique Christian Council and the Mozambique Evangelical Association joined Christian leaders in Matola City to pray for peace and reconciliation in Mozambique.

‘Please will you join us as we continue to pray for Mozambique and for all those affected.’

### ***Pray for Mozambique –***

- Pray for the post-election violence to end in Mozambique and for peace to be restored.
- Pray for the Mozambican church's peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts to be successful.
- Pray for all those who have lost their loved ones in the violence to find comfort and hope in the Lord.
- Pray for those who have fled Mozambique to find adequate shelter and provision for their basic needs by God's grace.

*Written by Tarryn Pegna | 07 Jan 2025. Tearfund website.*

## 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.