

Knightrider Street News



APRIL 2025

MAIDSTONE
BAPTIST CHURCH

The logo for Maidstone Baptist Church, featuring a stylized white cross above a white silhouette of a swan, all enclosed within a white semi-circular arch.

Taking the Good News of Jesus into our lives and into God's World
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*

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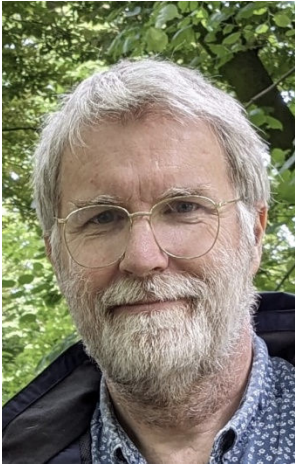
*Views and opinions expressed in KSN articles are those of individual contributors,
and are not necessarily those of the Church leadership or editor.*

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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.



We're in the season of Lent. What does that mean for you? Many of us maybe only acknowledge Lent through our daily Bible readings or perhaps giving up chocolate or TV for a few weeks. Some choose to fast or eat more simply. Many simply see Palm Sunday and the events of Holy Week in the run up to the Crucifixion and then they fast-forward towards Easter Sunday and celebrating His Resurrection. But we are missing out if we do not properly acknowledge all that Lent means.

In the run up to Christmas we see the season of Advent as a time of preparation, a time of excitement leading towards Christ's birthday - Emmanuel: God with us! But Lent, too, is a season of preparation. Advent seems to have a feeling of joyful expectation about it as we wait for a birthday. Lent feels more sombre, quite understandably, as we take on board the enormity of the events that took place. If we're honest, I think we often gloss over Lent because it makes us feel uncomfortable - and so it should. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, overcome with the knowledge of what lies ahead for him, asks his best friends to sit and keep watch (Matthew 26:36-46) and yet they let him down. They let the pressures of their earthly concerns take over from the heavenly needs and instructions of Jesus. How often do we, too, let the burden of daily life get in the way of our relationship with God?

I don't know if you are familiar with the music of the Taizé community? They often use very simple tunes and repeated phrases as a backdrop to their worship. Try looking up some of their music on YouTube and listening to it quietly as you read scripture or pray. During Lent I particularly like their verse:

***Stay with me, Remain here with me  
Watch and pray, Watch and pray!***

The world can seem a troubled and uncertain place, particularly in the current political climate, and it is easy to feel overwhelmed. During the weeks leading up to Easter I encourage you to shift your focus and take time to really pray and ponder all the events of Good Friday and Christ's ultimate sacrifice for us.

*Yet not as I will, but as you will - Matthew 26:39*

Yes, Lent is a sobering time of reflection and preparation for Christ’s death. But it is so much more than that! It is a time of repentance, of saying sorry, of being completely honest with ourselves before God, of humbling ourselves. And then....and then....and then.... beyond the staying, the praying, the watching, the waiting.... we have Easter Day - Hallelujah, Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

Ultimately, Lent is about preparing for the offer of new life, eternal life, forgiveness of sins, love everlasting. Lent is a time for re-evaluating our lives, for beginning or strengthening our relationship with God, for new commitments to worship and serve a loving, living Saviour.

May God bless you during this Lent and Easter season.

*Pastor Nigel*

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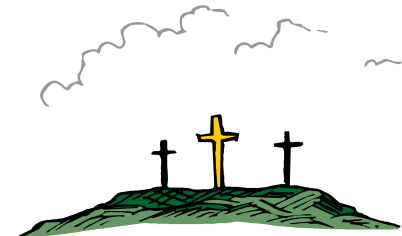
**EASTER EVENTS**

We look forward to celebrating Easter together as a fellowship.

The following are planned:

**Maundy Thursday** – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April:

- 7.00 p.m. at the Church (Large Hall) – gathering for Communion, Drama and Refreshments



**Good Friday** – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April:

- Nothing at our Church, but an invitation to join All Saints church at 7.30 p.m. for their service of Good Friday readings and hymns.

**Easter Sunday** – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April:

- 8.30 a.m Communion Service (Large Hall) followed by breakfast together
- 10.30 a.m. Family Service

**Easter Monday** – Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April:

- Bank holiday walk led by Neil Sherry





Mon 12<sup>th</sup>–Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
7.30pm–9.30pm

Speaker: Dr Chris Wright,

*Theme: 'Jeremiah: Prophet for Today'*

Venue: Maidstone Baptist Church, Knightrider Street

Admission: FREE (A collection will be taken)

Dr Chris Wright is the Global Ambassador of the Langham Partnership International, and author of many books including *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*, *The God I don't Understand*, *The Mission of God*, *The Mission of God's People*, *Salvation belongs to Our God* and *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, as well as several BST commentaries. He was formerly Principal of All Nations Christian College and taught at Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India.

Chris previously spoke at Maidstone Bible Week in 2018, and we are thrilled that he is able to share with us again, this year on the theme of 'Jeremiah: Prophet for Today.'

*Come and join other Christians from around Maidstone for four nights of Bible teaching and fellowship.*

## **Connect Group: *Building Faith through Fellowship***

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25 KJV

Connect Group is a faith-based gathering where we discuss several topics to build our Christian faith. It is an avenue to fellowship with other members. It gives us the opportunity to study the Bible, pray, and intercede for our friends and family. It is also an avenue to support one another.

Over the last one year, we’ve had the privilege to host the connect group in our home. It has given us time for deeper study of the word of God, pray, as well as learn from one another.

Connect Group has helped us to even connect more to the church. If you are struggling with your Christian walk, believe me, joining a Connect Group might be a step in the right direction. This is because you get to discuss your struggles with others who are willing to support you in prayer and practical guides. The weight on your heart might be too heavy for you, a burden shared is half way to victory. When you join a Connect Group, you are trusting other believers in the church with your heavy burdens.

### **Benefits of Connect Group**

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

For us, connect group is a way of being accountable to others with our walk with God. It is a way for us to share our progress and struggles. Helping members stay strong in faith through support and guidance.

#### **BUILDING RELATIONSHIP**

Connect Group is a way to get to know other members of the church beyond the regular Sunday service. You get to know people beyond the surface which is a very good thing. You will agree with me the church is

one of the best places to build friendships, connect groups help us do this as we have been able to build friendship with other members of our group.

## **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

Connect Group facilitates the spiritual growth of members. Over the last few months, we have watched clips of other Christians around the world sharing how they were able to build such a strong faith. One of the things I love about our bi-weekly fellowship is we are able to discuss the Bible.

## **PRAYER AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

Connect Group provides a safe space for members to share their burdens and pray together.

Now you might say, ‘but I don’t have time,’ ‘I don’t know enough about the Bible,’ or someone is saying: ‘I can just grow on my own.’

Firstly, it is true that work and other community commitments can take up a lot of our time. The great thing about connect group is that it is very flexible and much consideration is placed on each member’s time. We mostly meet on every other Fridays in the evening. There are times we move our meeting day forward if most members are busy. So it is absolutely flexible.

“Jesus often withdrew to spend time with God (Luke 5:16), and if He made it a priority, shouldn’t we?”

It is important we make it a priority to spend time with other believers.

No one knows everything about the Bible. We’re all learning together. Connect groups are actually the best place to learn! You don’t need to be an expert, in fact most of us are not experts of the Bible —you just need a willingness to grow.

In Acts 8, the Ethiopian official was reading Scripture but didn’t understand it. Philip came alongside him, explained it, and helped him grow in faith. That’s exactly what the connect group does!





## New Wine 30<sup>th</sup> July - 04<sup>th</sup> August 2025

New Wine is held at the Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Wiltshire. Whilst attending last year we said it would be lovely to have more people attending this coming summer as a group, from Maidstone Baptist.

(For more details of programmes, facilities etc. see the article on pages 10 & 11 of March KSN 2025.)



If you would like to join us, please contact me or Anne Swannell.

Please note:

- ❖ You would need to either provide camping equipment to stay in (we are not able to source it for you) or arrange your own accommodation off site. There may be ways to share some equipment (cooking etc) possibly by having one or two cooking gazebos so that we cook for ourselves but work as a group to save on some costs and the amount of equipment we need to take.
- ❖ You would also need to arrange transport to and from the venue (daily if staying offsite)
- ❖ You will need to book it yourself, but we are available to give advice if required.

However, if you would like to ask questions about any of the facilities etc. please feel free to speak to us. We hope to have more of you join us in the little taste of what heaven may be like.

*Rachel*

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**Deadline for May Knightrider Street News:**  
***Sunday April 13<sup>th</sup>***  
 Please e-mail contributions to the address on inside front cover  
***No later than 20.00hrs on this date***



# Prayer Points

*April 2025*

- Tue 1<sup>st</sup> As we arrive at the start of another month with another challenge and new opportunities, may we ask for strength to face today whatever comes our way.
- Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> May we pray for any one who is still homeless and sleeping rough in Maidstone. Pray for the local services who support them in their quest to find permanent accommodation as our local council is also trying to house more refugees from around the world.
- Thur 3<sup>rd</sup> Remember anyone recently bereaved or with family who are gravely ill. Pray for comfort that only Jesus can give. Also for those people whose life has been affected by long term conditions which have become worse.
- Fri 4<sup>th</sup> Let us pray on a daily basis for the journey ahead in our lives; the struggles, the loneliness, the pain, the worry, the anxiety, the temptations, the fear, the grief, the need to have answers to many questions. Praise God that he has all the answers to what is currently going on in the world.
- Sat 5<sup>th</sup> Pray for our church and for the deacons, elders, trustees and officers.
- Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Pray for our dear young people who need help so much in these days of danger and risks on every side, even within schools.
- Mon 7<sup>th</sup> Pray for our Girls' and Boys' brigade, and pray for the youth

team led by Alastair and all those involved in the youth work.

Tue 8<sup>th</sup> Look around and see the warm spring sunshine, the flowers and trees and freshness in the air and look up to the skies and gaze into the eyes of our loving creator who gives us our every need because he can see our needs before we ask.

Wed 9<sup>th</sup> Pray for our government under Sir Kier Starmer that the right words will be said, actions guided, and plans smoothly executed as both sides of the house try and work together in the light of the events happening globally.



Thur 10<sup>th</sup> Remember our singing group and those who organise the electrical and communications systems that enable the services to be seen over the internet.

Fri 11<sup>th</sup> Let us remember to lift up our members who are terminally ill and too unwell to join our service. Pray that they will be comforted by Him who is the great physician.

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Pray for all our elderly folks in the church who may be struggling in various ways: pray for their safety and protection from abuse or danger especially with internet fraud.

Sun 13<sup>th</sup> Pray for the churches in Kent as they are working together to proclaim the everlasting gospel.

Mon 14<sup>th</sup> Pray again for the situation in Ukraine with the ongoing conflict of war there and also in Israel.

Tue 15<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for each other in our walk in the Christian life when it can be hard sometimes to fight against all forms of temptations. Pray for strength as we hang on in there.

Wed 16<sup>th</sup> Pray for our local council and social services here in Maidstone as they plan a new financial year deciding where spending

should be.

Thur 17<sup>th</sup> May we pray for our members who are unable to get out shopping or get to appointments due to personal circumstances.

**Good Friday** Pray for our deacons and church leadership team who are in the midst of another period of newly appointed management teams and deacons.



Sat 19<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for the Street Pastors in Maidstone as they talk together in preparation for future evenings out on the streets supporting those in need after a night out.

**Easter Day** Pray for our brothers and sisters in church who sometimes feel sad, unfulfilled or anxious about their life and find it hard to speak to someone about it.

Mon 21<sup>st</sup> Pray for our coffee mornings and social events which takes place each week.

Tue 22<sup>nd</sup> Pray for schools and colleges as they embark on the Summer term and plan for exams; and for children and students as they plan for their future careers.

Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> Pray for our local emergency services in Maidstone; the police, ambulance team and fire brigade.

Thur 24<sup>th</sup> May we pray for our local hospices who care for the terminally ill population in Maidstone.

Fri 25<sup>th</sup> Pray for all those who particularly miss having the prayer corner as it was before, for the support that it provided.

Sat 26<sup>th</sup> Remember all the young people again as they plan their careers and get ready to sit exams or embark on new jobs etc.

Sun 27<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for anyone here who is finding it difficult to find

work or employment and is having trouble making ends meet, especially with the rising cost of living.

Mon 28<sup>th</sup> Remember all those who are victims of workplace bullying or harassment and find it hard to speak as a result.

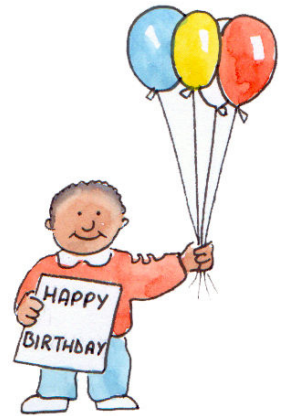
Tue 29<sup>th</sup> Pray today for parents of young children, that they will be supported in their endeavour to raise their children in the right path.

Wed 30<sup>th</sup> Let us pray that the words we speak, the deeds we do, will reflect the Saviour we worship so all those who witness it will see Jesus in the midst.

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# BMS Birthday Scheme.

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| April 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Mr Paul Ledger   |
| April 11 <sup>th</sup> | Mrs Pam Fishwick |
| April 14 <sup>th</sup> | Mr Paul Tebbutt  |
| April 29 <sup>th</sup> | Mr David Rouzel  |



# Happy Birthday to you all!

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"Lord, help me take my time, unhurried, as I read your Word. Open my mind and heart as I meditate on its truths; build my trust in you, your love, and faithfulness."

*Scripture Union, (US) "Encounters with God"  
Daily Devotional March 16<sup>th</sup> 2025*





## God is our refuge and strength

**“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.” (Psalm 46:1–3)**

Earth giving way... mountains falling into a raging sea... mountains shaking... The psalmist describes some terrifying contexts. And yet, in spite of all this, he says, ‘we will not fear’, because of our God. The source of our strength. The reason we know that we need not succumb to fear no matter how frightening the context around us may be. Our refuge.

### **SYRIA**

#### **Syria earthquakes, February 2023**

Tearfund partners in Syria have been working hard after the earth really did quake, causing widespread destruction in February 2023. As we pray for Syria, one of those helped by Tearfund partners following the earthquake was Darine.

Intrigued by the sounds coming from outside her balcony, 41-year-old Darine\* listened more closely. She overheard a woman explaining that they were from the Syrian Society for Social Development association, and they were offering psychosocial support through awareness sessions. This was how Darine first learned about the programme offered by Tearfund’s local partners in Syria which was set up to deliver comprehensive mental health and psychosocial support services to the people in her village.

Through group awareness sessions, focused on topics like stress management, depression, self-care, anxiety, how to deal with and overcome frustration and failure, and resilience building, the programme aimed to help individuals recover from the trauma of over 13 years of crises –

including the devastating 2023 earthquake and the profound impact it has had on mental wellbeing.

Darine, a married mother of three, had always strived to cope with life's challenges. But when one of her children faced a serious issue, her world shattered, plunging her into a deep depression. She withdrew from life, quit her job as a nurse, and rarely left her home. Sleep evaded her, a constant weight of sadness pressing down, and she lost interest in the things she once loved.

### **Tension eased and a glimmer of hope...**

With all of this, the programme made Darine curious and she decided to attend the next day's session on stress management, even though, at first, she didn't believe anything could help her.

But, after four sessions, she gradually started to learn new ways to manage her emotions.

Tension eased in her shoulders as she practiced deep breathing each morning, and a glimmer of hope flickered within her.

A month later, Darine started to break free from her isolation and reconnect with friends and relatives.

'Returning to my job was a crucial step in my recovery,' she says. 'I felt I was regaining my purpose in life and could once again support others.'

'It was not easy for me. It required daily effort and commitment to what I had learned in the sessions. However, I am happy with how I am now,' she adds with a grateful smile.

Darine's husband expressed his feelings too, saying, 'We're finally seeing the Darine we know. She went through a very difficult time, but now we see her smile again. Thank you so much for your support.'

Darine's transformation resonated with her family. Her eldest son shared, 'Mom used to be so sad all the time. Now she plays games with us and helps me with my homework. I'm so happy!'

‘Darine’s experience gave new hope and inspiration to those around her who witnessed the change in her.’

Darine has also become an inspiration to those around her, especially as she learned tools to help others. One of her neighbours says, ‘Darine is now participating in social activities and helping those in need.’

‘Darine’s experience gave new hope and inspiration to those around her who witnessed the change in her. We started to welcome more people to our sessions who have the will to change positively and overcome their distress to have more balanced wellbeing,’ one of the psychologists from the programme tells us.

Our local partner remains dedicated to these kinds of activities, recognising the importance of people’s mental wellbeing, especially in places where people have endured years of hardship, as many have in Syria. They thank Tearfund and the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) for their support in making this work possible.

*\*Names have been changed for protection.*

## **Violence in Syria**

In recent weeks a series of attacks have resulted in the execution-style deaths of many Syrians, with some entire families killed. The attacks have predominantly targeted Alawite cities and villages, with a number of Christians reportedly being caught up in the violence. In response to the violence, many people have fled across the border into Lebanon seeking safety. In a joint statement, the Patriarchs in Syria called on ‘all concerned parties within Syria to assume their responsibilities, put an end to the violence, and seek peaceful solutions that uphold human dignity and preserve national unity’. Pray for sustainable peace and stability in Syria. Lift up all those who are mourning the loss of loved ones. Pray for protection, courage and comfort for all those we work with in Syria.

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

**Please pray too for the terrible ongoing conflict in the DRC which sadly features very little in our news**

As the conflict in the DRC continues, fear is spreading. Thousands of people have fled their homes, making exhausting journeys on foot to escape the violence. Many have lost loved ones.

Families have been separated in the chaos and parents do not know where their children are, or even if they are still alive. Please pray for peace and stability across the DRC and the wider region. Lift up all those who are grieving, and ask God for safety, peace of mind, comfort and rest for all our staff and partners working there.

### ***Pray with us***

Our natural, human response to dangerous and devastating things is to be afraid. As Christians, it's not that we will never feel fear because we know God, instead, like the psalmist, we can choose not to fix our eyes on the context and instead focus them on God. Our strength. Our ever-present help. Our place to run to for shelter. We can decide to look at God's power, and then we can say 'therefore we will not fear'. As we approach our prayers, let's take some time to focus on God's strength, and as we allow him to be our refuge, let's pray for God's presence to be a real and tangible comfort and shelter for those around the world who are facing fearful circumstances.

Thank you for praying with us. Your prayers make a difference.

*Adapted from Tearfund One Voice 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025*

Tearfund's website: <https://www.tearfund.org/>

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Tel 020 3906 3906



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



It's been another busy, fun session for all our groups. It's been great to have welcomed some new members into our younger groups too.

Activities for the younger groups have included topic work on the moon, on natural disasters, thinking about Lent and enjoying pancakes together plus games and crafts. The older groups have done quizzes, a murder mystery and took part in the BB national Top Team Challenge. For their devotions this session they have been listening to some favourite worship songs as selected by the young people – some well known and some new to most of us – and have been challenged to think about the words and the part worship songs can play in their lives.

Coming up soon is our '**Camp Amazing**' weekend camp. We are going to be away over the first May bank holiday weekend (2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> May). Our older young people will be camping for three nights, the Juniors for two nights and the Anchor Boys and Explorers will be joining us for a fun day on the Saturday. As always we want the weekend to be about fun, building relationships, trying new things, sharing experiences and learning about Jesus. The value of weekends away like this for both the young people and staff are great. Please pray for all the plans and preparations and that all the various bits and pieces will come together.

Look out for details of our fund raising **Barn Dance** on the evening of **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025** which should be out shortly.

Don't forget that we would always be pleased to welcome new members (aged 5 and above) to any of our groups. Contact Alastair or myself if you would like to know more ([youth@maidstonebaptist.net](mailto:youth@maidstonebaptist.net)).

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.

*Jane Haslam [BBGBMaidstone-161@highg.net](mailto:BBGBMaidstone-161@highg.net)*



*Persecuted Church.*



## **BANGLADESH**

In Bangladesh conversion to Christianity is viewed as a betrayal of the Muslim faith leading to hostility, not only from the community but the family too. Women and girls are most vulnerable.

Bangladesh has risen from 27<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> place in Open Doors' World Watch List of 50 countries where Christians face the most persecution following violent protests last August, initially started by student groups angry about job quota systems but radical groups used the chaos as a cover to attack Christian communities, especially converts. This article featuring Jorina providentially formed part of our senior minister Nigel's sermon on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

### **SHAMED FOR HER FAITH. WILL JORINA SEE CHANGE?**

Jorina can't forget the most shameful thing that's ever been done to her. When a dozen women in Jorina's village in Bangladesh asked her to meet with them, she thought they wanted to learn about the gospel. Jorina and her husband, Shirajul, had recently become Christians and were excited to introduce other Muslims to Jesus. "We didn't feel the need to hide it from others," she says. "We believed we needed to share the truth with others." But that wasn't why the women had called Jorina to meet. Instead, they surrounded her and made her strip naked. "I couldn't believe how any of this was even possible," she says, still brought to tears by the memory. "There were so many of them. I had no choice."

#### **A humiliating attack**

Their cruel demand comes from a common misunderstanding in this region of Bangladesh. Because Ephesians 1:13 says "When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit," some Muslims believe that Christians have a literal 'mark' or 'seal' on them. "I told them, 'I don't have any seal on my body,'" Jorina says. "They told me

to shut up.” Of course, they couldn’t find anything. In a culture where women are expected to be very modest, this attack was especially appalling and shaming to Jorina.

“I cried a lot in that room,” remembers Jorina. “After a while, they kicked me out and I returned home. When I got back, I didn’t share this with anyone. How could I? How was it even possible to talk about such a thing?” What made this humiliating attack particularly painful was that Jorina knew her persecutors. Before she converted to Christianity, these women had been her friends – people she’d interacted with every day. Now, they rejected and persecuted her.

Open Doors have been sharing stories that highlight the specific vulnerabilities of Christian women around the world. In most of these stories, the persecutors have been male. You may have read accounts of Christian women and girls suffering at the hands of their fathers, brothers, husbands or other men in the community. What marks out Jorina’s attack as particularly shocking is that the people shaming her were women. It demonstrates how the demeaning of Christian women can spread through a whole culture. Jorina was already considered a second-class citizen for her gender.

Choosing to become one of the country’s tiny Christian minority compounded this. “After our conversion, in the eyes of the Muslims, we were seen as terrible people. They hated us and treated us differently,” Jorina says. She puts it very starkly: “For Islamic leaders in my village, it feels as if all Christian women are just as good as dead.” It’s no wonder that the women who persecuted Jorina felt entitled to cause her harm. As a woman, she had few rights. As a Christian, she might as well not exist.

### **Deciding to follow Jesus**

Given the attitudes towards female converts in Bangladeshi society, choosing to follow Jesus wasn’t a decision Jorina made lightly. She grew up as a Muslim and married a Muslim man – but he was not satisfied that he’d found the truth, and had been learning about Jesus from a local

Christian. “I was interested to know more about it but, according to village culture, a woman cannot talk and sit together with a stranger,” Jorina remembers. She made a courageous decision: “One day, with a brave heart, I asked my husband: ‘Who is this man? What are you talking about with this stranger? I want to join you.’” Many men in their community would have rejected such a request, but Shirajul agreed. Together, they learned about Jesus. “After he left, my husband and I sat together, thinking about what to do next.” They didn’t rush in to their decision. For the next two years, the couple continued learning about Jesus while also studying Islamic literature. Eventually, they were convinced that the Bible was true. Jorina and Shirajul both decided to follow Jesus and were baptised.

### **Death threats**

Intense opposition came quickly from the couple’s family and community, and continues to this day. “My husband received death threats from all sides, even from his nephew,” says Jorina. “They were saying, ‘In all our generations, they are the only ones ruining our family’s reputation in society by becoming Christians.’ When my mother-in-law passed away, they didn’t even allow us to attend the funeral service.” Jorina’s two children also experience discrimination. She remembers her son coming to her one day saying: “My friends always tell me that, since we are Christians, we have no religion and can’t go to heaven. They tell me that they will burn us alive.” All Jorina could do in response was pray and commit her son to God’s safety. She knew that filing an official complaint was futile. The local authorities would do nothing to help a Christian family like hers.

### **Extraordinary forgiveness**

There was a time in Jorina’s life when this ongoing ordeal would have filled her with hatred – but she’s transformed since she met Jesus. “After becoming a Christian, the biggest change in my life was that I had to love everyone and learn to forgive others,” she says. “I can’t live with anger anymore. I used to quarrel with others, lie and do many bad things, but now

I don't do such things. After receiving Christ and reading from the Gospels, I can now love others and treat them well." When asked if she has forgiven the women who humiliated her, Jorina is clear: "Yes, I forgive them. It was difficult. They wanted to check for a 'seal' on my body, but Christ knows us without that, and we receive salvation through Him. They too can receive that same salvation. I pray that for them."

### **Church community**

Through every season of her walk with God, Jorina never loses sight of what first led her to Jesus. The Bible is her source of strength through every difficult situation. "We should be obedient to God's Word," she says, referencing Matthew 19:29: "My God said, 'If anyone believes in me and leaves their home, children and everything for me, then in eternal life, they will receive a hundred times more than what they have left behind.'" One of the blessings Jorina experiences is her church community. Christian friends were the first she felt able to tell about her humiliating persecution, and their support brought her much needed healing. Now she is determined to help other Christian women who, like her, are vulnerable for their faith and gender.

### **Ananna training**

Jorina is a facilitator for 'Ananna' – which means 'unique woman' in Bengali. It's a discipleship programme funded by Open Doors local partners, and gives women the precious opportunity to learn the fundamentals of the Christian faith and understand God's design for women. "We need this because, in Bangladesh's Muslim culture, people often don't give value to women," says Jorina. "But, as believers, we value women and want them to know Jesus Christ. We want to pray for them and to encourage them. "Just like me, the women I am working with now should also participate in the Ananna training. They really need it. Not only those women but also their family members can come to know more about God through this. Pray that they can get the training. Just as I am receiving

these opportunities, pray that they, too, can receive the same opportunities to serve and work for the Lord.”

### **“You always stand beside us”**

The Ananna programme is one of several ways that your prayers and gifts can help Jorina’s ministry. “When I go through persecution, or when any of our church members go through persecution, [Open Doors partners] always stand beside us,” she says. “When we didn’t have a place to worship or hold our church services, we received support to build this house church. “During any persecution, we call [Open Doors partners]. Then they are present with us, offering support in legal matters and financial assistance, if needed.” Without this committed support, these women would be very vulnerable. With it, they can help the whole church be resilient. It’s only possible with your prayers and gifts. So many Christian women – in Bangladesh and many other countries – are repeatedly told they have no value and are ‘just as good as dead’.

Open Doors’ See. Change. campaign rejects this lie – and aims to ensure that women like Jorina are seen, valued and empowered to fulfil their God-given potential. Today, will you help this vision become a reality?

### **PLEASE PRAY**

Jorina asks for your prayers: “Please pray for my family. Pray for our security when we have our worship and prayers in the house church. Pray for God’s guidance. Despite all the persecution, we are standing firm in our faith in Christ. Pray that we can continue to stand firm and that, through us, many others may receive salvation.” Please pray for Jorina’s ministry with women and for all Christian women who are persecuted for both their gender and their faith.

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## Regular Sunday Meetings.

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

*Services also streamed via Zoom and YouTube when possible.*

**Please Note:** For safeguarding reasons photography and/or moving image recording, using any type of device, is **NOT** permitted in the church without **prior** permission.



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.