

Knightrider Street News



MAY 2025

MAIDSTONE
BAPTIST CHURCH

A black silhouette logo featuring a cross on a hill with a rising sun or wave behind it, all enclosed within a 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)

Senior Minister: **Rev. Nigel Riley**

Mob: 07354 849933

e-mail: minister@maidstonebaptist.net

Youth Pastor: **Alastair Middlemist**

Mob: 07876 335131

e-mail: youth@maidstonebaptist.net

General Administrator: **Helen Jones**

Tel/Ans/Fax: 01622 686013

Church Office

e-mail:office@maidstonebaptist.net

Church Secretary: **Sheila Smith**

Tel: 01622 671747

e-mail: secretary@maidstonebaptist.net

Church Treasurer: **Barbara Williams**

Tel: 01622 726006

e-mail:treasurer@maidstonebaptist.net

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

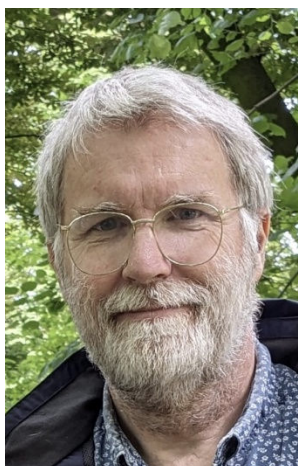
Tel: 07944 639851

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

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 come in to the church in Knightrider St most days, and I am so encouraged to see the buildings used for many things - homeless night shelter, Brigades, Maidstone Bible Week, one to one prayer and pastoral conversations, from fellowship lunches, community café, toddler group, Let's Make Lunch, sport and music activities.... it's a long list, and it is exciting to see kingdom growth as we continue making our church (the people **and** the buildings) a real hub in this community.

Our church is growing, with new people arriving most weeks. This is a true blessing, but it also reminds us all to extend a warm welcome to everyone - and what a joy it is on Sunday mornings to see so many children and young people leave for their activities.

We give thanks for this: God is moving powerfully and we must be alert to His leading and prompting to be sure that we stay true to His Word and avoid any sense of complacency.

But as we grow, we also face the challenge of having enough help to respond to what God is doing amongst us. We are super-grateful for all who already do so much to minister to others, but with an expanding fellowship, new opportunities for service in His kingdom are constantly arising. Everyone has gifts, visible or otherwise, and scripture clearly instructs us to use our gifts to serve others and to honour God:

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)

Whether your gift is pouring coffee, washing- up, music, singing, admin, kids' work, preaching, praying, cooking, serving on the AV desk, or something else entirely, your talents can make a BIG difference to God's kingdom. And whether you can offer one hour a month or three days a week, we can fit you in. Do please pray about what role God is calling you to - and imagine what our amazing church could yet become.

Nigel

God Is Good

On a beautiful sunny spring day at the end of March, thirty or so ladies from the fellowship gathered to spend a morning together. We were treated to a delicious brunch provided by Jane who was assisted in the kitchen by Helen and Paula, many thanks to them all. Whilst we enjoyed our food there was plenty of time to chat and share news.

We heard testimonies from Pauline and Rose outlining the way that God has led and guided them throughout their lives, giving wonderful provision in times of need and bringing healing on many occasions. It reminded us all that our God is good. He knows just what we need when we need it and delights in providing for us. We need only to trust in Him and allow Him to work in our lives. Thank you both for being willing to share your story so far.



We were encouraged to share more about ourselves in small groups by answering simple questions designed to help us get to know each other better. We were reminded that God is at work in our lives all the time, creating us to be wonderfully unique and all have a plan and purpose that God is working out throughout our lives right up to the time we meet Him in glory.



We will be arranging another ladies event later in the year, we do hope many of you will be able to join us.

On Sunday 6th April we had the great blessing of dedicating Cooper Endacott along with his Mum and Dad, Katherine and Tom. Let's continue to support and pray for Katherine and Tom as they raise Cooper.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." - Matthew 19:14



New membership

We welcome Christine Wright into full membership of the church. Please pray for Christine and her husband Chris as they worship with us.

If you would like to find out what it means to become a member of our church, please have a chat with Pastor Nigel or one of our deacons.

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work -

Ephesians 4:6



Mon 12th–Thurs 15th 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.



2nd Maidstone Girls' Brigade & 1st Maidstone Boys' Brigade



We finished the last session with an Easter themed evening for all our groups. Both children and young people enjoyed hunting for eggs (or ducks) and a variety of Easter themed activities and other challenges, as well as being reminded of the Easter story. This was a lovely way to spend the last evening of the term.

Camp Amazing

Please pray for all the plans and preparations for our '**Camp Amazing**' weekend camp and fun day (2nd – 5th May 2025), for the staff team and the children and young people, and for fun, safety and challenge in all our activities both on and off site whilst we are out and about. As always we want the weekend to be about fun, building relationships, trying new things, sharing experiences and learning about Jesus.

Awards & Celebration evening

We will be holding our annual awards and celebration evening on Wednesday 21st May starting at 6.00 pm for about an hour. We would be pleased to welcome any Church friends who would like to join us for this event. It is a great chance to see and hear a little of what the children and young people have been doing over the year, and for us to present awards to a number of the boys and girls in recognition of their efforts.

Barn Dance

We will once again be holding a fund raising **Barn Dance** at Boxley Abbey on the evening of **Saturday 14th June 2025** (£10.00 adult ticket, £5.00 per child (under 16). **Bring your own food and drink** (tea & coffee will be provided). All are welcome. Do contact one of the Brigade leaders if you would like to purchase tickets or need any further information.

Don't forget that we would always be pleased to welcome new members (aged 5 and above) to any of our groups.

Jane Haslam

BBGBMaidstone-161@highg.net



Prayer Points

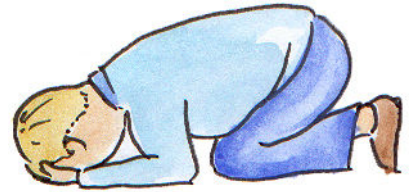
May 2025

- Thur 1st As we start a new month, may we take the widespread concerns of the suffering that is happening in the world to the almighty God of the universe, asking for an end to the destruction that is happening in the Middle East and Ukraine and that peace will soon be seen.
- Fri 2nd May we pray for those in our town who are living in isolation and still homeless and sleeping rough as a result of personal hardship, and who may be unwell both mentally and physically due to difficulty getting treatment for long term conditions.
- Sat 3rd Remember in prayer today our church secretary, the deacons and senior minister as they co ordinate the church activities at this uncertain time.
- Sun 4th Pray for our Boys' and Girls' brigade and their work, leaders and projects in Kent and surrounding regions: pray that the light they bring to people will reflect Jesus.
- Mon 5th Pray for those in our church who have recently lost loved ones and are now widowed and alone.
- Tue 6th Lets pray for families who have been housed over here from war torn countries, that the healing process will be their continuing experience.

Wed 7th Pray for our elderly members who may be struggling in various ways. Pray for their safety and protection from abuse or danger and that their care will be maintained in these times of unprecedented sickness.

Thur 8th Let us pray for the churches in Kent as they meet in spirit and truth to proclaim the simple gospel, for “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Fri 9th May we pray for our Government leaders and local politicians who are involved in negotiating peace in Israel and the whole of the Middle East at this time.



Sat 10th There may be people in the church who need special help in their walk in the Christian life, finding it difficult in the fight against addictions of all kinds. Pray for strength, healing, and confidence in the comforting words of Jesus : “Neither do I condemn thee.” May we be open to his word today.

Sun 11th Pray for Alastair and Kirsty in their work here in Maidstone, asking God to be with them with the challenges facing our youth and young people as they go out in a very dangerous time.

Mon 12th Pray for the church family as we meet each week, facing the same situations and concerns. Pray for the Maidstone Bible Week meetings which commence this evening.

Tue 13th Pray for our church leadership team and the deacons as they plan for the year ahead. Pray for the newly elected deacons as they begin their term of office.

Wed 14th Let us pray for local businesses in Maidstone who are finding it a financial challenge to run due to the increased tariffs world wide.

Thur 15th Pray today for those in church who sometimes feel unfulfilled, saddened or anxious about their life, but find it hard to speak to someone about it. Pray for them because God knows who and where they are.

Fri 16th May we pray today for the church budget plan and its financial standing, and for those responsible for managing this as they need divine help in financial leadership.

Sat 17th Pray for Jane as she is involved in the Make Lunch project here in Maidstone and that any future plans will be executed according to the needs of families.

Sun 18th Pray for the local hospitals accident and emergency service as well as other medical services as they struggle to meet the health needs of people locally.



Mon 19th Pray for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted in countries who are against Christianity. Pray for their safety.

Tue 20th Pray for local schools and colleges as they continue to meet the demands placed upon them to maintain standards in education and learning.

Wed 21st Today let us remember families in the church with young children and teenagers growing up in a highly technological age with social media and all the risks associated with the internet. Pray for them.

- Thur 22nd Pray for families who are struggling to make ends meet in the cost of living crisis with continually rising fuel prices and having to rely on food banks.
- Fri 23rd Pray today for those who are sick and receiving treatment and those who have just found out about an illness, or those who know something is not right. Pray for them.
- Sat 24th May we pray for all the political parties and local and central government, that they will be led and directed. Pray that they will be given wisdom and understanding.
- Sun 25th Pray for wisdom in the words we speak and the actions we portray to our colleagues in the workplace today, that we will be invitational for the good news we have.
- Mon 26th Let us pray for our young people who may have varying degrees of personal issues which are complex, yet very real to them. Only our dear Lord knows what they are.
- Tue 27th Pray today for Alastair and his work within the schools in Maidstone and surrounding districts and the team he works with.
- Wed 28th Pray today for a closer walk with the Lord Jesus, asking Him to answer the deep questions and hear the deep groans we have in our spirit which we are unable to express in words. Pray for the conviction that God knows what we are worried about before we even ask Him and that he can see way in the future before we arrive there.
- Thur 29th Let us pray for the social services here in Maidstone as they



continue to help those children who have lost parents as a result of war, particularly from the Middle East and north Africa.

Fri 30th Remember those who have been the victim of radicalisation with terrorist groups. Pray for their release.

Sat 31st May we pray for our service in church each week, that it will echo a blessing for anyone who is passing by at the time as they look enquiringly towards the doors.



WERE YOU THERE?

Oh, how did Jesus feel?
Sharing that final meal;
Sorrow was shared
By those who sat up there.

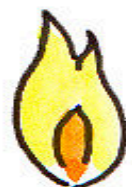
Were you with Jesus Christ?
Rejected and despised;
Hung on a cross,
Suffering for our loss.

Bottles of precious oil,
No need to work and toil.
The tomb was bare
Thanks to His Father's care.

No more sorrow and gloom
High in the upper room;
The Spirit came
Setting their hearts aflame.

Now when the healings flow
Setting our hearts aglow,
It's all for you
If you will follow, too.

Anne Lever



BMS Birthday Scheme.

May 6th

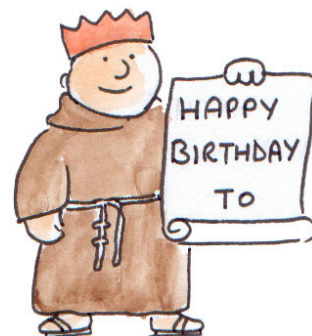
Jan Garrod

May 16th

Marilyn McIntosh

May 21st

Barbara Small



Happy Birthday to you all!

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**A personal account from the
earthquake site in Myanmar**

A Tearfund partner tells us what it's like in Myanmar after the devastating earthquakes shook the region on 28th March.

Everywhere I look, there is devastation. Buildings are in ruins. Roads are blocked. Families sit amongst the debris of what used to be their homes. Some sit silently in shock. Others weep for the loss of loved ones. Rescue teams work tirelessly to help people.

The air is very heavy. It's hard to breathe. The sounds around me are a mix of sorrow and urgency. In some places, there is silence.

Entire neighbourhoods have been emptied. The void of loss hangs in the air. Emotionally, it is overwhelming. The pain and fear are palpable, but so is the determination.

Acts of solidarity

Despite the devastation, we are seeing incredible acts of solidarity among the people. Neighbours are helping each other. Local churches and community groups are organising temporary shelters and distributing essential supplies. Volunteers are stepping in to provide first aid, comfort the grieving and care for children who have been separated from their families.

Even those who have lost everything are offering whatever support they can – things like food or a place to rest. The resilience and kindness of the

community in this crisis is truly inspiring, but the need for external support remains urgent.

We are exhausted. People are exhausted, hungry and grieving, yet they push forward, helping one another, searching for survival. Trying to render kind words to each other and clinging to hope.

The resilience of the human spirit is as visible as the destruction around me.

Rubble, challenges and despair

A big majority of the city, especially in Sagaing and Mandalay, has been reduced to rubble, and many families are without shelter, food and clean water. People are still searching for loved ones among the collapsed buildings. Rescue teams are working tirelessly to reach those still trapped. Hospitals and clinics are overwhelmed with the injured, and there is an urgent need for medical supplies, food and safe drinking water.

Many roads are blocked and communication lines are down, making it more difficult to deliver aid to the areas. But, despite the despair, local communities and churches are coming together to support one another. The need is immense and immediate assistance is critical.

The most urgent needs

The most urgent needs we are seeing right now are shelter, food, clean water and medical assistance. Many families have lost their homes and are sleeping in temporary shelters out in the open space at night.

There is a desperate need for safe drinking water as damaged infrastructure is increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. Food supplies are scarce and people are struggling to access basic necessities.

The emotional toll of the earthquakes

And the emotional pain from this disaster is very big. Many people are in deep shock, unable to process the loss of their homes, loved ones and sense of security. Some are reacting with panic and desperation. Others feel utterly helpless, convinced that no one will come to their aid.

This is leading to a sense of despair, making it harder for communities to organise themselves for recovery. Others are struggling with survivors guilt, questioning why their lives were saved while others perished.

The psychological strain is overwhelming and without proper emotional support, these patterns could deepen, making long-term recovery even more

difficult. At the same time, I see people offering trauma counselling assistance to the communities.

One of my friends, who is a counsellor, has been out talking with the people, listening to their pain. There is an urgent need for trauma care, counselling and a message of hope to help people regain their sense of dignity and resilience.

What Tearfund partners are doing

I am very proud seeing the amazing work of Tearfund's partners. They are actively responding to the crisis, working to meet the most urgent needs of those who are affected by this disaster.

Tearfund Stories 3/4/25. Edited by Tarryn Pegna

Tearfund 100 Church Road Teddington TW11 8QE

Tel 020 3906 3906 Website: <https://www.tearfund.org/>

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Persecuted Church

Pastors take fiery trials in their stride



On a recent trip to communist Laos, Release International's James Fraser, along with colleague Josh Simpson, spent time with church leaders on the frontline who see persecution simply as a validation of their ministry.

Christianity may have gained a certain level of acceptance in the popular South-East Asian tourist destination of Laos but scratch beneath the surface and you'll find deep hostility and discrimination persisting towards believers. Following the killing of a pastor last year I wanted to find out what life was really like for Christians, especially church leaders, and particularly whether the shooting of Thongkham Philavanh had affected their behaviour.

What I found was both surprising and reassuring.

I had recently attended a church leaders' conference in the UK and wasn't sure what to expect from the equivalent experience with a group of pastors from Laos. One marked difference was the intensity of the conference

programme: these dedicated brothers and sisters began their first session before breakfast at 6.30 and did not finish evening worship until midnight!

However, what was even more notable was their attitude to suffering for the gospel.

Release International's partner, who organised the conference, told us that the pastors thought it strange that we were so interested to hear their stories of persecution. For them, suffering was not anything unusual. In fact it was a normal part of following Jesus, as well as being a validation to them that their ministry was on the right track.

It reminded me of 1 Peter 4:12-13: 'Do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.'

One of those we met who has accepted this 'normality' of persecution is Pastor 'Phouang'*. Since he witnessed police breaking up a house church meeting more than 10 years ago, Phouang has dedicated his life to reaching a minority people group in rural Laos. Christians from this particular tribe are forced to meet together outside their villages after dark but, thanks to Phouang's help in providing resources and training, this underground church is growing.

Phouang's work has not gone unnoticed by the authorities and three years ago he was arrested and interrogated. 'The police could not understand why I cared so much for these tribal people,' he said. 'They accused me of being drugged on religion and offered me money to stop the work.' Since then Phouang has continued to face harassment. People who visit him are followed and put under pressure to give up their faith. The authorities have threatened to discredit him, through accusations of immoral behaviour or by planting illicit material. He has been rearrested several times, and even had a gun pointed at him. Phouang worries that his life is genuinely at risk. Last July, a pastor in Laos, Thongkham Philavanh, was murdered by masked men outside his home after being warned several times to stop his Christian activities. Sometimes Phouang wonders if he should leave the area; his wife is not sure how she would manage if she lost her husband. But then they ask: 'Who would take care of the believers?' Ultimately, they are committed to continuing the work. 'Deep down I feel like I am being used by God and will leave a good legacy among the people I am serving,' said Phouang. He asked us to pray for him and his wife.

Officially, Laos is a one-party communist state and the hammer and sickle flag dutifully flies on every street corner alongside the red and blue national colours. But the reality of life in this beautiful South-East Asian country is more nuanced. The legacy of French colonial days lingers in the architecture of the laid-back capital, Vientiane. Adventuring backpackers flock to the scenic trail of the Mekong river. And Chinese investment is delivering efficient, modern infrastructure projects.

Over time, Christianity, which was once heavily suppressed, has gained a certain level of acceptance. The Laos Evangelical Church (LEC) is an officially recognised denomination and has some freedom in its operations. However, outside this authorised framework, Christians cannot easily meet together, and in certain parts of the country evangelism and distribution of Christian literature remain heavily restricted.

In rural areas, Christians are especially vulnerable to mistreatment and discrimination. Although Laos is nominally Buddhist, in practice many villagers hold to a more traditional animist belief in local spirits whom, they believe, control events and must be honoured and appeased.

Witch Doctor

One of those who was previously more heavily involved in such occultic practices was Pastor ‘Vong’*, who had been trained as a witch doctor from his youth. He told us: ‘I had heard about Jesus but I didn’t care because my interest was in the spirit world.’ He was later chosen to work with one of the officials in his village because he was seen to have special spiritual powers. However, Vong’s world was turned upside down when his son, who had been studying away from home, returned to the family dwelling. Vong was so glad to see him but was immediately concerned when he refused to wear the spiritual amulet he gave him. His son had become a Christian and instead of honouring the spirits he now wanted to lead people to Jesus. Vong was upset and worried. He thought that the evil spirits would be angry and stop protecting his home so he gave his son an ultimatum: give up your faith in Jesus or face eviction.

Soon afterwards his son moved out, but not before leaving behind a Bible and other Christian books. Drawn to read them, Vong began to learn about the character of God. He was convicted of his sin and wanted to get rid of the idols in his life. Eventually he gave his life to Jesus and was soon inspired to share his faith.

However, when other villagers found out they quickly reported him to the police and Vong was arrested and interrogated. The police told him he would be released only if he gave up his new faith. Vong said, 'At that time I didn't have good Bible knowledge but I did know that God was powerful because after I came to faith the evil spirits left my house. So I prayed that God would help me to pass this test.' He refused to recant and after five weeks behind bars he was released.

Since then Vong has faced a number of other challenges. He was prevented from giving members of his church a Christian burial; he was told that if he didn't stop preaching he would be evicted from his village; and he was threatened with prison and put under pressure to sign a paper agreeing to stop his Christian work.

However, throughout these trials Vong's faith has remained strong and he has been greatly helped by attending the regular conferences organised by Release International's partner.

'The seminars help me understand more about the Bible and give me wisdom to know how to respond to persecution and protect church members,' he said. 'The fellowship gives me strength and encouragement, and helps me not to feel isolated.'

Leader healed

As well as being influenced by animist beliefs, life in rural Laos follows traditional social and communist party hierarchies. The village leader is an important and respected figure invested with the authority to make and enforce key decisions. Residents who do not fall into line face discrimination, ostracism and even eviction. And when someone is evicted from their home it is very hard for them to be accepted in another place without a certificate of commendation from the head of the village they have left. In turn, village leaders are expected to maintain order and adhere to the priorities of the higher party authorities.

Pastor 'Somsak'* was one of those leaders until he was miraculously healed after placing his faith in Christ. As the number two leader in his village he had detested Christians and had not even wanted to hear the name 'Christian'. But then he became very sick. He went to hospital and offered sacrifices to the spirits but nothing seemed to make him better. Then he remembered that his father had left a Bible in his house. He went home, read it, and spoke to some of his relatives who were Christians. They

explained the gospel to him and he put his faith in Jesus. Miraculously, he was then healed from his illness.

However, soon afterwards, he started to face opposition. Officials told him that if he wanted to continue in his position he would have to renounce his faith; if he did not stop following Christ they would take away his land and stop all government support. Pastor Somsak refused to concede and two years ago his status as village leader was removed. He told us that he would have been promoted to the number one position if he was not a Christian but then he added defiantly, 'How could I refuse Jesus and choose my position in the village over Him when He healed me!'

Since then the head of the village has told Somsak's neighbours to have no relationship with him and he has faced many insults. When the electrical grid was extended to his village the authorities refused to connect his home. He has been under pressure to sign over his land and he was threatened with eviction. Then later, when he actually wanted to move on, the head of the village refused to sign the permission papers.

Pastor Somsak asked us to pray that he will have wisdom for the future. He said, 'If God wants me to stay in the village and be salt and light, then God will make a way. I want God to do a miracle in the village, to show His power and lead people to the truth.'

It was clear from talking to these pastors that our brothers and sisters in Laos are facing many trials. However, they are not surprised. They are realistic about what it means to follow Jesus in the world and they are persevering in their ministry.

*Names changed to protect identities

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releaseinternational.org

Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington BR5 4RT Tel: 01689 823491

Email:info@releaseinternational.org

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Deadline for June Knightrider Street News:

Sunday May 11th

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 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.



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We are always looking
for volunteers to join us.

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



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