

Knightrider Street News



September 2025

MAIDSTONE
BAPTIST CHURCH



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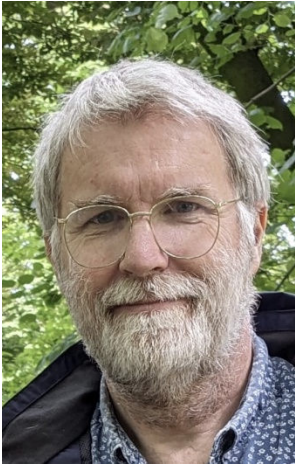
*Views and opinions expressed in KSN articles are those of individual contributors,
and are not necessarily those of the Church leadership or editor.*

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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.



**Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things;  
let this be known to all the world. *Isaiah 12:5***

What are your thoughts about music in church? I know many of you love the organ, many love a worship band, and often in church we rely on pre-recorded tracks. But what about the hymns and songs themselves?

What makes a good worship song? Maybe you like the tune, it's catchy and you find yourself humming it during the week. Maybe it reminds you of your wedding, or possibly the funeral of a loved one, or it reminds you of your childhood.

For me, whilst the tune matters a lot, the lyrics are also really important. Some great tunes have lyrics that are less than inspiring, or even theologically dubious. Others have powerful words but are let down by forgettable music. Some worship songs are spiritually sound, but the language can seem a complex or archaic: this can prove very hard for youngsters or for those whose first language is not English. Whilst they may have an air of reverence and tradition, they can be less accessible for today's church.

I love hymns that have lifted the words of scripture and set them to music - these can become a great foundation for learning scripture by heart. Some years ago I was leading a youth Bible Study and as we read the passage one of the girls started beaming as she realised she knew the words from one of the worship songs.

Others give a simple Christian message to live your life by. You may remember a worship song from the late 1990s that had a very simple chorus:

**He said, "Freely, freely you have received,  
Freely, freely give!  
Go in my name, and, because you believe,  
Others will know that I live"**

There's so much truth in those few words. We have all received so much from God at no expense to ourselves. Yet how much do we actually give back? I don't mean financially, but in time and service. How many of us could be helping in Sunday School to teach the next generation? Or helping to cook for the homeless at 5&2 lunches? Or becoming a Street Pastor or School Pastor in our local community?

How many of us actually talk to others about our faith, thus using God-given opportunities to do so?

There are so many ways for you to give back to God - come and have a chat with me if you'd like to know how.

Because unless we live out line 2 of that chorus, then line 4 won't happen!

However, whatever style of worship you prefer, the most important thing of all is to keep on praising! Be bold in sharing your faith.

And sing out to God in confidence of a secure future in and through Him.

*Nigel*

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**Worship Area:**

At our July Members' Meeting we voted (by overwhelming majority) to begin a process of changing the worship area within our church.



Over coming months we shall slowly be removing pews and replacing them with upholstered chairs: these will initially be second-hand chairs, but we may well yet decide to replace these with a set of brand new chairs.

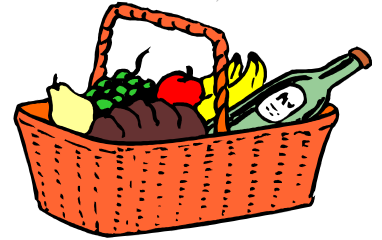
It is important to note that this is a decision to start a process, and there may yet be many further conversations around how best to create a practical and inviting space that serves our calling before God.

The basic decision has now been taken, but we carry on inviting the whole fellowship to be part of continuing deliberations and plans. Please pray that we would hear God's voice at every stage of this process.

*Nigel*



God is so, so good and He demonstrated His goodness to us once again as about 25 of the ladies from the fellowship met for a picnic at Teston Country Park in August.



It was a gloriously sunny day with a gentle breeze blowing and we managed to find a shady area under a big tree to join together to eat and chat for the afternoon.

Some of us went for a walk by the river, some made good use of the coffee van and we all joined in a cheerful chorus of "Happy Birthday" and shared cake to celebrate Anne's birthday which happened to fall on the same day.

We all agreed that the afternoon went far too quickly and that it had been wonderful to fellowship together in God's amazing creation.



## LADIES DAY – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Following the success of our Ladies Picnic at Teston in August, we are planning another **Ladies Awayday for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October**, and do hope you will come and join us.

There will be times of worship, encouragement, craft and a great speaker. If you haven't been before, do try it !

Beautiful place and great fellowship.



***Details are as follows:***

Time: 9.30 for 10.00 a.m. Finish by 3.00 p.m.

Place: The Friars, Aylesford, ME20 7BX – the Patrick Geary Room

Speaker: **Rev. Lesley Ludlow**

Subject: **Journeying with God**

Cost: £10 (but let us know if this is a problem)

Please bring your own lunch, although there is a café on site where you can buy sandwiches.

*Also do let us know if you would need a lift to get there.*

Numbers will be limited to 40, so please book early with either Nic Weller or Sheila Smith.

(sheilasmith27@btinternet.com)



# Prayer Points

**September 2025**

- Mon 1<sup>st</sup> May we thank God for his continued leadership in our lives as we near the end of the summer months. Pray for our world leaders and governments as they battle with the impending consequences of climate change and global warming around the world.
- Tue 2<sup>nd</sup> Let us pray for the planning team involved with the winter shelter, that this will be successful this year.
- Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> Remember the situation here in Maidstone and surrounding towns in the wake of recent protests and riots relating to the growing tensions around refugees.
- Thur 4<sup>th</sup> May we remember our Boys' and Girls' brigade as they start another autumn programme of projects along with their educational commitments. Pray for all the brigade leaders at this time of so much change.
- Fri 5<sup>th</sup> Remember our young people who are starting schools and colleges this autumn and who may be feeling apprehensive or fearful of the future.
- Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Pray for the world leaders both here and abroad as they deal with war and conflicts around the world in many countries - Gaza, Ukraine, Israel and the recent summit meetings.
- Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Pray today for people who are still trying to escape from violent countries like Iraq, that governments will show mercy as they



cross the channel in dangerous conditions.

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> May we remember those in our church suffering ill health and who are under special medical management from the hospital.

Tue 9<sup>th</sup> Pray for elderly members in our church and outside in the community at large, that they will get the care and support they need; particularly as many Doctors and Gp's consider industrial action.



Wed 10<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for our Senior Minister Nigel and youth pastor Alastair as they continue to serve here in Maidstone in these trying times, keeping the church functioning with the support of the Deacons.

Thur 11<sup>th</sup> Pray today for those of our church family in nursing homes and care centres receiving care 24 hours a day.

Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Pray for our church leadership team and the deacons involved with planning and guidance at this difficult time.

Sat 13<sup>th</sup> Pray for the local hospitals and emergency services as they prepare for a busy winter ahead.

Sun 14<sup>th</sup> Pray for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted in this country and abroad because of their Christian beliefs.

Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for those near us who feel unfulfilled and desperate about their life and who may be discouraged on their Christian journey, but also fearful about the future.

Tue 16<sup>th</sup> Remember the work of the Street Pastors; pray for their role and commitment and the support network as they go out each week.

Wed 17<sup>th</sup> Pray for relationships within our neighbourhood and friends as we try and shine Jesus light to them in this dark world.



Thur 18<sup>th</sup> Pray for our government leaders and the soon coming party conferences, which usually take place in October. Pray for each of the political parties.

Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for all those who have recently lost loved ones and are now bereaved - both young and old.

Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Pray for our youth club and all the youth and the supporting teams involved in their management at this time when term has started again.

Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Pray for members who are finding things difficult at work, either because of bullying, victimisation or harassment.

Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> Let us pray for all those who are commencing new careers, new jobs and those taking final exams.

Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> May we pray today for a closer walk with God in these troublesome times when we are challenged, sometimes daily, to express our faith.



Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Pray today for families in and outside church who have young children to guide in these difficult times.

Thur 25<sup>th</sup> Pray for any members who are not able to communicate or contact others and feel isolated due to personal circumstances.

Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Pray for wisdom as we speak to our friends and colleagues in the workplace. May the peace and joy of heaven fill the conversation.

Sat 27<sup>th</sup> As we are almost at the end of the final week of the month, pray that we will be peaceful in our relationships, kind to those who mistreat us, give love to anyone who shows hate, a soft answer if we are given verbal abuse and be a blessing to our persecutors.

Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Let us pray for a closer walk with Jesus as we go into our individual place of work, school, college, office, hospital or meeting.

Mon 29<sup>th</sup> Remember all those who are sleeping rough and are homeless here in Maidstone.

Tue 30<sup>th</sup> Pray for our social services here in Kent as they are often overwhelmed with demand for emergency support especially with families who have no permanent home due to personal loss.



**Let us pray**

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**Deadline for October Knightrider Street News:**  
**Sunday September 14<sup>th</sup>**  
Please e-mail contributions to the address on inside front cover  
*No later than 20.00hrs on this date*



## The young people planting resilience: growing a new future

### *How young people in Zimbabwe are growing resilience and change in the face of our shared environmental future.*

Imagine living in a place defined by extremes. Where temperatures soar, winds are strong, and rainfall is desperately low and unpredictable. This is the reality for communities in Mbire District, Zimbabwe. For years, they have faced severe droughts, leading to acute food shortages. Their reliance on rain-fed crops, like maize, in this challenging climate has made food insecurity a constant threat and the situation has left people dependent on food assistance for their survival.

But, what if the response to such harsh conditions wasn't just reliance on external aid, but cultivating resilience from the ground up? What if it was about taking theories on climate-smart agriculture and turning them into tangible, life-giving reality?

This is the idea behind the Mbire Garden initiative where hundreds of young people are learning and taking action to find solutions to issues of food insecurity and the climate crisis.

#### **The Mbire Garden: growing resilience (and food)**

Located in Mahuwe, the Mbire Garden isn't just any garden. It is a response to both the urgent needs of the local community and a desire to demonstrate how practical solutions to climate change and food insecurity can work. A local pastor, who is part of Tearfund's Transforming Communities training, came up with the idea when working alongside the Tearfund-supported Zimbabwe Environmental Care Network (ZECN) and the Zimbabwe Church and Community Transformation Network (ZCCTN). With help from Tearfund training on movement building, advocacy and media engagement, and with support from Tearfund's Zimbabwe office to help design activities with the greatest impact, the team chose an organic

approach, focusing on environmentally friendly practices to improve the soil and provide people with nutritious food. And they were also determined to create a model that was sustainable and cost-effective, using what was already available to them. They incorporated locally available resources – like unused land and empty plastic bags for construction – and they leveraged the valuable time and skills of community members who contributed their labour. They combined organic techniques like composting and cow-dung tea with traditional farming practices and local knowledge. The goal was a contextually relevant and sustainable model.

### **The Mbire Garden now serves multiple purposes:**

- It's a vital **education and demonstration site**. After years of talking about smart agriculture and climate resilience, this is where theories become visible, touchable projects.
- It's a strategic way to **engage the government**. By creating this positive, visible project, government departments began engaging, opening safer avenues for further work.
- Crucially, it directly **builds climate resilience**. Techniques like mulching, composting and crop rotation help the soil retain precious moisture and reduce erosion in this dry, windy environment. They are even practicing plasticulture as a way to adapt to water challenges.

The impact of this project has been remarkable. By building a critical relationship with a local partner, they equipped the 0.8 hectare organic garden with a solar-powered borehole and drip irrigation system – a vital source of water in a water-scarce region.

This now provides water not just for the garden, but for nearby community members, local schools and even government departments like the police, army and health ministry. Over 660 community members and 700 students directly benefit from access to clean water.



## **Agents of change: young people actively shaping the future**

The Mbire Garden project is now a hub for training on conservation agriculture, disaster risk reduction and resource mobilisation. And here's where the future is being actively shaped: more than 245 young people have been trained through this initiative.

These young people are not just learning; they are taking action, with some already starting their own gardening projects. They are becoming agents of change and resilience in their own right.

Stories like this highlight the power of investing in and empowering young people – they are the key to growing resilience and change in the face of our shared environmental future.

Whether by tackling national environmental legislation through strategic advocacy and legal battles, or building climate resilience and food security at the community level through practical, collaborative initiatives, the journey is often challenging but can lead to transformative change.

## **Pray for young people bringing change**

- Pray for young people everywhere to be inspired to look around them and find solutions to the issues facing their communities and our world. Pray that they will be infused with hopes, dreams and creativity, rather than discouraged by the difficulties they encounter.
- Lift up programmes that seek to train young people and equip and empower them to make sustainable, impactful changes in their local communities and further afield.
- Ask God to raise up leaders from the emerging generations who will hear his voice and be filled with his wisdom to bring long-term solutions that allow their communities to thrive.

*Joan Kariuki, Church Advocacy Team*

*7<sup>th</sup> August 2025*



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



Preparations are well in hand for the start of the new Brigade year in early September. We are looking forward to another fun and busy Brigade year together.

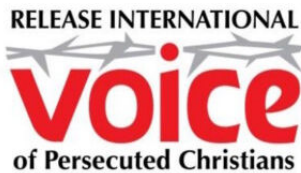
Boys' Brigade & Girls' Brigade are Christian uniformed youth organisations, open to all children and young people aged 5 – 18 years. They provide opportunities for children and young people to learn, grow, discover, gain awards, make friends and have fun in a safe, fun and caring environment.

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 or myself.

We are always pleased to chat through what we do and would love to welcome new members.

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



## ***COURAGEOUS PASTOR PAYS HEAVY PRICE FOR INTEGRITY***

It is hard to imagine being shot at by someone opposed to our religious beliefs in this country. It is arguably more difficult to picture oneself then being arrested, detained and tortured by the very people sworn to protect us and uphold justice. However, that is precisely what happened to a pastor in Pakistan, who was fired on by an extremist after refusing to embrace Islam and who then registered a complaint with the police.

Pastor ‘Victor’\* relies on the physical support of his wife and a walking aid to be able to move around the family’s small apartment. He is still suffering the effects of torture in Pakistan and has to lie down as we talk. Despite his injuries, though, he is clearly strong in his faith and has not wavered in his beliefs but understandably grows tearful when we discuss the events he endured. The memories of physical abuse but also betrayal by the authorities are still raw.

‘I was a pastor in a rural district and looking after a number of villagers. Everything was okay until the Jaranwala incident in 2023.’ In August that year more than 20 churches and around 80 Christian homes were the subject of co-ordinated attacks by militants.

Victor, whose church was located near Jaranwala, said that after this incident the peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims came to an end. ‘Christians were then accused under the blasphemy laws in a number of cities and Islamist slogans began to appear on church walls,’ he said. It was not long before Victor’s church was targeted. ‘After a morning worship service I was informed that words had been written on our building so I called the police helpline.’ Officials told him to remove the slogans before they visited. ‘I said to them that if I did that I could get into trouble as the surrounding villages were the stronghold of an extremist group. I knew that if I erased the name of Mohammed from the church walls then I

could be accused of blasphemy.’ In response police officers visited the church and removed the graffiti for him and after this a certain degree of normality seemed to return. It did not last long, however.

Victor was on his way back home one day after dropping his son at school when he was confronted by three men who told him that, as he had ‘removed the name of [Islam’s prophet] Mohammed he too would be removed from the earth very soon’.

He said: ‘Again I called the police and requested help and protection. They told me that they were keeping an eye on me and that I would be safe but I’m a village pastor so I had to go out and visit my congregation.’

After a worship service one evening in September Victor was travelling back on his motorcycle when he stopped to relieve himself in a nearby field. ‘While I was in the fields, a bearded man approached me and said that I should immediately say the Islamic creed, thereby becoming a Muslim. He then pulled a gun and said that unless I followed his instruction my time would be up! ‘However, I replied that I would not say the name of anyone except my Jesus Christ.’ At that point the man opened fire. ‘I fell backwards and thought that my life was over. As he was very close to me I reckoned I had probably been shot in the chest but after the man walked away I came to my senses and discovered that the bullet had hit my arm. My right side was covered in blood.’

Victor called to a teenager whom he had left to guard his motorcycle and told him what had happened. The boy helped him to get to nearby shops where locals called the police; officers then transported him to hospital in Faisalabad. However, it was while he was being treated in hospital that events took a turn for the worse.

‘A senior policeman visited me and asked me to change my statement. He said that because of the Jaranwala incident Pakistan was gaining a bad reputation and so if I reported that a Christian pastor had been shot that would worsen the country’s reputation even more. He told me to say it was



an attempted robbery; refusing to hand over my mobile phone I was shot at in the scuffle. He then warned me that if I did not follow this the police would say something else had happened and that I had fabricated the medical evidence, adding: “We will mess up your case so that no one will believe you. Then you will disappear”.’

Very early the next day Victor was discharged from hospital and taken home where, because he had refused to change his statement, he was placed under house arrest. ‘Christian organisations were contacting me [to talk about] Jaranwala but [the police] did not want me to speak to anyone so they put a guard on my house on the pretext that it was to protect me from extremists. Even though I was the complainant I was treated like the criminal.’

That treatment was to get worse as just a few days later Victor was taken to another location where he was tortured. ‘They tied my feet together and then the same with my arms before stretching my body so it was hard to breathe,’ he said. They then beat his legs so badly that he is unlikely ever to be able to walk normally again. On top of that Victor was denied food and water for three days. ‘I am diabetic and regularly need an insulin injection to help to keep me alive but they deprived me of even that.’ The only way he was able to survive was by scavenging for the remains of food that had been thrown away. At one point he found a few drops of liquid at the bottom of a can of soft drink which helped to maintain his sugar levels. those levels dropped dangerously low and he fell unconscious. It was only the timely arrival of his wife and aunt, who had been allowed to visit, that he was taken to hospital and saved.

‘On September 18<sup>th</sup>, a petition against my forceful abduction and disappearance was submitted and the courts sent a bailiff along with my cousin to retrieve me from police detention.’ However, ‘the police refused to let me go. The officer in charge took me to the sessions court where I was asked who had been responsible for treating me this badly. “You Muslims did this to me,” I replied. “What else can you do? It seems you

will kill me and dismember my body.” ‘The judge ordered that I should immediately be taken to hospital for proper treatment.’

As a result of the torture Victor’s left side had started to show signs of paralysis but even at the hospital he was treated with contempt. ‘The doctors and nurses had a bigoted and discriminatory attitude to me because the police had told them that I was against Pakistan and anti-Islam and Mohammed.’ A few days later he was returned home by officers but with cuffs on his hands and feet like a criminal, adding to the humiliation. ‘I felt terrible as my wife and sister were there.’

Even at home there was a constant police presence, with officers even standing next to his bed. Victor insisted on being allowed to go to church, a not unreasonable request for a pastor, but instead he was taken back to jail where multiple charges were registered against him. There officers again inflicted extreme physical, mental and psychological suffering on him, constantly using insulting language and forcing him to confess to being a criminal on a video which they then posted on social media. ‘It made some Christians doubt that I was the victim,’ he said.

## **PRISON BAPTISM**

Despite his suffering Victor testifies to a deeper communion with God. However, on the third day of his ordeal ‘I asked Him why I had to suffer and He led me to many Scriptures including from the book of Job (chapter 2, verse 10) where it says, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”’

At the same time many Christians in Pakistan and elsewhere were making his case publicly known. He believed God was reassuring him that he would get him out even though the crimes he had been implicated in were non bailable and carried a 15-year prison sentence. The authorities refused his request for a Bible but one of the prison guards indicated that, if he was willing to pay, his wife could bring in the Scriptures for him each day. Victor agreed and even told him that he could read it when he took it back

from him at the end of the day.

As a result of reading the Bible, the guard informed him that his life had started to improve. He had stopped fighting with his wife, and had thrown away an amulet with Islamic verses on it. ‘He had been told that if he did this he would get epilepsy but it did not happen. At the same time he was afraid that if he became a Christian he would lose his family as well as his pension. I told him that it was about a relationship with God, not a religion.’ Victor led the guard to the Lord and baptised him by pouring a glass of water over him and making the sign of the cross on his forehead. ‘I gave him the name “Barnabas”.’

In early October Victor was granted bail but, with Islamist extremists vowing to kill him, human rights activists moved him into hiding in another city. Eventually he was helped to escape Pakistan.

It would be gratifying to believe that Victor’s trials ended after fleeing Pakistan but on December 31<sup>st</sup> last year he suffered a stroke and was on a ventilator in hospital. ‘Because of the torture I can’t sleep properly at night and that led to my blood pressure rising and the stroke,’ he said.

With all that he has suffered it would not be surprising if Victor felt bitterness towards those who had caused him, an innocent man, so much pain and anguish. However, he holds no resentment against them. ‘I forgive them from the bottom of my heart and pray that the Lord will give them opportunities to be saved,’ he told me. ‘Please pray for me as well; that God will heal the paralysis on my left side and will also make a way for me to be able to move to a safer country than where I am now.’



*\*Names changed to protect identities*

Release International VOICE magazine  
July 2025

## 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.