

The logo for Maidstone Baptist Church features the text "MAIDSTONE" in a light blue, sans-serif font, positioned above "BAPTIST CHURCH" in a darker blue, bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic of a blue wave with a white cross on top, all enclosed within a blue arch.

www.maidstonebaptist.net

Maidstone Baptist Church

Knightrider Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME15 6LU

Registered in England as a charity, no. 1128948

Verse for the year 2026:-

"This is the confidence that we have in approaching God, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." 1 John 5: 14

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Youth Pastor: **Alastair Middlemist**

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General Administrator: **Helen Jones**
Church Office

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Church Secretary: Position vacant

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

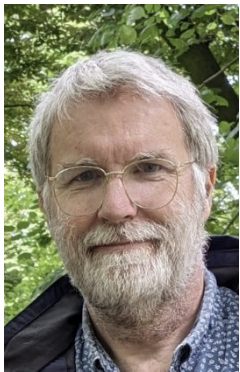
Tel: 07944 639851

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.



During the early weeks of February we see many of our shops full of red hearts enticing us to buy cards and gifts to declare our love for that one special person. Maybe it's a bit of over-commercialised fun, but everyone wants, and probably needs, to feel loved.

You're probably aware of the different types of love, which take their names from Greek. We have STORGE which is family love, PHILIA which is the love between good friends, and EROS which is romantic love. But the one I'm focusing on today however is AGAPE. Agape love isn't so much about how you feel about a person but how you treat them. Agape love is the unconditional, unmerited, selfless and sacrificial love that we read of in the Bible. It is the love that God gives; it's the love we read of in 1 Corinthians 13. It's the love we see in probably the most famous verse in the whole Bible:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:16)

Love is spoken about so much in the Bible. We are commanded to love one another, to love our enemies, to love those who persecute us... that's a big ask!! And that is one of the big differences with agape love. It is a love that values, respects, and honours another person because of their intrinsic value and worth rather than being based on their behaviour, attitudes or attributes. And it's not necessarily reciprocated - it is not based on whether they like you or not. Agape love is a choice, and it requires effort.

Whilst many of us are blessed with loving families, that does not go for everyone. Many of us have loving friends, but many others - even within churches - don't. Yet we all, undeserving as we are, have equal access to vast unconditional love from our living and loving God. Why would we not want to share that love with others?

As winter gives way to spring - a season of buds and new shoots - look for ways of growing in God's love for each one of us, and search too for ways of sharing His love with others.

Nigel

ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS AND DEACONS 2026

At the Church Meeting on 19th March there will be an election to fill vacancies for church officers and deacons. Nominations for these vacancies will open on Sunday, 8th February and close on Sunday, 1st March, and profiles of those nominated will be displayed on church noticeboards as soon after that as possible.

Nomination forms will be available from Sunday, 8th February.

There will be three Officer vacancies:-

- Treasurer: Barbara Williams is eligible to be re-elected if nominated and wishes to stand.
- Church Secretary: this position is currently vacant.
- Assistant Church Secretary: this position continues to be vacant.

There will be 5 Deacon vacancies:

- Neil Sherry has completed one three-year term as a Deacon and is therefore able to stand for another term if nominated and he wishes to stand.
- Nic Weller has complete one three-year term as a Deacon and is therefore able to stand for another term if nominated and she wishes to stand.
- Anne Swannell has completed two terms of three years and is therefore not eligible to stand for re-election.
- Gwyneth Tozer is standing down as a deacon.
- The other vacancy has remained unfilled from previous years.

The maximum number of church Trustees given in our Constitution is 12, plus our Senior Minister.

Continuing Trustees will be:

Senior Minister (Rev. Nigel Riley), and 4 deacons (David Atilola, Keith Burgess-Clements, Rachel Flemons, Dhan Kumari Rai).

We ask all members to consider prayerfully each of the vacancies, who they might wish to nominate to stand for election from within the fellowship and also whether they themselves are being called to the privilege of serving God and the fellowship in this way. For anyone wishing to find out more about the roles of being an Officer or Deacon, please contact Nigel or speak with any incumbent of the post who will be happy to answer questions you may have or to talk you through the roles and responsibilities. This is an opportunity to be part of the Church Leadership Team.

Our Church Rules state that to be nominated for any of these vacancies, you need to have been in membership of the church for a year, i.e. since March 2025. New Deacons and Officers take up their roles after the May AGM on Thursday, 21st May 2026.

A form to request a postal vote, should you be unable to attend on 19th March, can be obtained from the church office from Sunday, 15th February and returned no later than Sunday, 1st March.

Since we do not currently have a church secretary, please contact Nigel, Alastair, Barbara or Nic to obtain a nomination form, to return completed forms or to ask any questions etc. about the role.

February 2026

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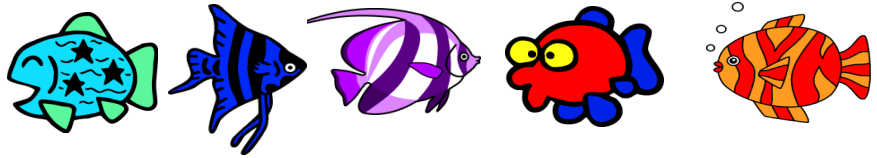
Deadline for March Knightrider Street News:

Sunday February 8th

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

No later than 20.00hrs on this date

LITTLE FISHES



We finished last year with our Christmas Party where we enjoyed a visit from Santa, pass the parcel, a talk from Nigel, party food and each child had a present.

It is good to have additional help now though we are happy to have more if you feel this is an area you are led to.

Numbers have been lower so we pray that these may increase this year.



We value all the prayer and support we receive.





YOUR NAME

I was recently struck by the amazing fact that our Father God knows my name: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” Isaiah 43 verse 1.

It particularly came to me that in a growing church, we do not know everyone’s names, however hard we try to learn them – I may not know your name, but God does, and He embraces you in His love.

*Father, you know me, you know my name
I may be a nobody, but it’s just the same.
You have chosen me, touched me with your love,
Sent your Holy Spirit from the realms above
To lead me, guide me, reveal your power,
Embrace me, protect me, be with me every hour.*

*I may not know your name, I cannot learn them all
But I know He knows you, so in Him please stand tall.
Receive His saving love, accept His embrace
We worship Him together and long to see His face.
I see Jesus in you, my fellowship friend,
Brother or sister, His love will never end.*

Sheila



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



We started back at Brigade for the new session as planned on 7th January. Our younger groups had a fun evening with games, lego paint printing, learning about prayer fingers and thinking about ways to respond to bullying and the Juniors explored the story of The Prodigal Son. The older groups did some new year activities, some planning for the new session and games.

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 – which is in the planning stage now.

If you know of any children / young people aged between 5 – 18 years who would like to join us, or you would just like to find out a little more about Boys' / Girls' Brigade or what we do here you can take a look at our national websites <https://boys-brigade.org.uk>
<https://www.girlsbrigadeministries.org.uk> or get in touch with Al (youth@maidstonebaptist.net) or myself.

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

Jane Haslam

mbc-415@highg.net



Prayer Points

February 2026

- Sun 1st As we start a new month with many thoughts in our minds, which for some of us is a new chapter in life due to circumstances, pray for sure footing for that journey ahead - new job, new relationship, sickness, loss, fear, or grief.
- Mon 2nd Let us pray for our world leaders at this most turbulent time as we do not know what lies ahead. Pray for those who are making decisions over in the states with President Trump.
- Tue 3rd As we come to this part of February, remember those who are still benefiting from the winter shelter scheme for the homeless and those sleeping rough here in Maidstone.
- Wed 4th Some of our members are suffering ill health at this time , and maybe feeling so low in spirit that it is sometimes hard even to pray. Ask that God will bear us up as the days unfold.
- Thur 5th Pray for the national security and terrorist risk that is always around us, that we will be daily shielded according to the will of the Father. Remember the constant threat of violence on a daily basis as a direct result of the situation in the middle East.
- Fri 6th As we are still hearing of the aftermath of the shooting in Minneapolis, pray that those affected will be restored to some kind of normality.
- Sat 7th Remember in prayer our church leaders in Maidstone and surrounding districts who at this time are trying to maintain comfort to many at this time of uncertainty.

- Sun 8th May we pray for our youth at this time as they face big challenges ahead; for guidance in their decision making as some go on to new career pathways and new direction in their lives. Also remember those who are appointed to lead and direct them in these challenging times.
- Mon 9th Pray particularly about the continuing unrest in the Middle East, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and violence in cities in the USA.
- Tue 10th Pray for our elderly members who find life so painful at times and may be bereaved and lonely, with struggles that seem to be eternal. The loss of their loved ones is always before them.
- Wed 11th We pray today for our local health service as they try to cope with overwhelming pressure of winter ill health and emergencies. Pray for comfort and peace as we continue to battle through the winter flu virus and infections of all kinds.
- Thur 12th Pray today for our local community in Maidstone, that those responsible for keeping stability and peace will be able to meet these demands.
- Fri 13th Pray for members of both sides of the house of commons that they will support each other and work together in the national interest, trying to maintain peace here and abroad.
- Sat 14th Pray for our government under Sir Kier Starmer that correct decisions will be made in the next few months as he continues to lead, with advice from the right people
- Sun 15th Let us pray for all those who are depressed or down in spirit and finding it hard to smile or feel good in themselves for all kinds of reasons that only God knows.
- Mon 16th Pray for Alistair and Nigel as they continue to lead services each



week, that when times sometimes become difficult and shaky they will be strengthened, guided and supported.

Tue 17th May we pray today for our elderly folks who cannot get out due to frailty or ill health and are living in nursing or residential care, through no choice of their own.

Wed 18th Pray for all those who are struggling in their Christian life, burdened with daily pitfalls. Pray that the cross with all its meaning will be forever before us each day, because we are all in this together.

Thur 19th May we pray for our Street Pastors as they continue to support people in the town some Saturday nights.

Fri 20th Ask God today as we go about our business that those who see us will see the light of Jesus in the words we speak and the things we do. When we are in the workplace let the light shine in all situations.



Sat 21st Let us pray for all world leaders at this time when they are making major decisions both locally and internationally.

Sun 22nd Pray for those who were involved with our weekly coffee mornings that they will keep the memory alive of good times past. Let us pray for the 5 and 2 lunch service run by Elaine, which has been greatly appreciated over the past few years.

Mon 23rd Pray for anyone who has been a victim of crime or injustice in whatever form, particularly in the city and surrounding districts. We particularly remember victims right here in Maidstone.

Tue 24th Pray for our Boys' brigade and Girls' brigade as they support each other in whatever way they can at this awful time for our young people.

Wed 25th Remember our members who are undergoing hospital operations at this time or who are recovering in hospital.

Thur 26th Let us pray for our local schools and colleges as they continue to guide our children and young people at a time when being at school is such a challenge with the various issues faced by families such as housing and cost of living.

Fri 27th Pray for all those who are out of work at the moment and struggling to find employment. Heeding the words, 'I will supply all your needs according to the riches of my glory.'



Sat 28th Pray today for anyone who is being bullied or harassed in the workplace, finding themselves victims in various forms and needing support from counselling. Pray that the wonderful counsellor will attend to them.

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An inspiring testimony!

AMAZING GRACE

Encounter God's saving mercy through Htoo Lee's story of coming to faith in Thailand.

What if your son's reckless behaviour landed you with a fine that you couldn't afford? If his drug taking wound him up in jail? If his downward spiral was dragging his brother down with him? What would you do? Probably not organise a worship evening to cover your child in prayer.

Sarah Brown, a BMS World Mission worker based in northern Thailand, recalls the moment her eyes welled up with tears of joy during an English class at Siloam Bible Institute (SBI). Her student, Htoo Lee, had just shared his testimony, in clearly articulated English, of the events that brought him to faith. The class had been discussing the salvation of Shadrach, Meshach

and Abednego from the fiery furnace, leading Sarah to ask, “What miracles has God done in your life?” Little did she expect the deeply honest, vulnerable answer she received.

Just two years earlier, Htoo Lee was as far away from a seminary classroom as he could be. Disobedient, sad and fearful, he spent his days hanging around with friends who looked on at life with the same disillusioned anger. There were just two things that helped him calm down: drugs and alcohol. “He didn’t want to listen to his parents; he didn’t want to listen to anyone,” explains Sarah. “That’s how his life went into a downward spiral.”

Htoo Lee used to sell tomatoes in his local village. One day, he and his brother were transporting their wares via bicycle when they were stopped by the police. It was immediately clear to the officers that the boys needed to take a drugs test. “Htoo Lee knew exactly what result it was going to come back with,” adds Sarah, “and that those results were going to be positive.”

The test landed Htoo Lee in prison for two nights, with his brother locked up beside him. Because Htoo Lee had been riding his bike under the influence, the police also gave him a fine. It was money he didn’t have, and his parents couldn’t afford it either.

When Htoo Lee’s parents received news of his arrest, it sat heavily with them. Punishing him would have been just. But Htoo Lee’s parents, both Christians, decided that upon his release, they would pray with him instead. In fact, that same night when the brothers came out of prison, they decided to hold a prayer and worship evening.

It was during the prayer and worship night that Htoo Lee felt a new sensation. It was peace. A family member gently asked him if he wanted to give his life to Christ, and, without hesitation, he said “yes”. “He realised within a matter of weeks that God was calling him to go to Bible school,” Sarah explains. The first Bible school he applied to invited him to

interview, and Htoo Lee felt he needed to be open and honest about his past life. “The seminary said no,” explains Sarah. “They didn’t accept him.”

Htoo Lee was disheartened but not broken. Coming back home, he spoke to a trusted teacher, who recommended he apply to Siloam Bible Institute. In the interview, Htoo Lee trusted the same sense that told him he should be honest about his past. Immediately after speaking, he dropped his head, preparing to hear the news: ‘Not accepted’.

It was in that moment that the Christians around Htoo Lee once again chose to embody mercy. Ajarn Glad, the head of SBI, told Htoo Lee, “It’s okay. Christ has forgiven you and you have been transformed by him. You have changed”. At that point, Htoo Lee realised the seminary had identified the miracle, the transformation and the work that Christ had done in his life.

Htoo Lee has hopes in the future to go on to become an evangelist. He is in the very early stages of a BA Theology programme, but he hopes he’ll be able to go back to his village to share the good news, and to bring many others to Christ.

BMS Magazine Engage Issue 54

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BMS Birthday Scheme.

February 17th

Valerie Rouzel

February 26th

Mary Jeacock



Happy Birthday to you both!



PRAY TODAY FOR JOY THAT MAKES YOUR HEART SING

My name is Nicky Crampton and I am part of the Partnerships Team at Tearfund. Can you think of a moment when you experienced such joy that you thought your heart might burst? I'd like to tell you today about a time that I experienced utter joy raining in a church in Rwanda. And that's not a spelling mistake – I really mean raining!

The small rural church in Huye, Rwanda, sits off the main road looking a little rundown. But in the space of just two years, this unassuming church has been the centre of transformation in the community – people have been lifted out of poverty, broken relationships have been restored, lives changed forever.

How? By vision, determination, desperation and some training.

Desperation rather than Hope

For years, Pastor François lived in poverty and faithfully led this struggling church. The regular offerings came to 900 Rwandan Francs a month – that's about £1. Can you imagine trying to be a leader and pastor when you can't even provide for your own family? In desperation rather than hope he signed up to Tearfund's Transforming Communities programme.

Pastor François took part in the training and then led his church through a series of Bible studies. They learnt about being loved, being made in the image of God, being salt and light, being enough as they are.

They learnt to recognise what skills and resources they already had in their own hands. God's word taught them to love and value each other – healing relationships. No handouts, no top down plan. People were simply released by the power of God's word to be who they really are – finding their identity in Jesus.

Two years on, this church of 50 people now has a congregation of 1,450.

A community transformed

Why and how did this happen? As they discussed their problems they realised what they most needed were sustainable livelihoods and access to healthcare. Tearfund's training provided them with a self-help group model of community saving. They began community pig farming. By starting small, they were then able to breed pigs, sell them on, and also give them away to other members of the self-help group. They were able to pay for their own healthcare and they then started to identify members of their church in vulnerable situations who they could help with healthcare costs too.

Pastor François also went out into the community and invited people to his church. He had something exciting to offer – the transforming love of Jesus. This changed the lives of people like Innocent, a young man and father of seven children, who was sleeping in a damp, cold tent with his family. He began to come to church, started a business, and the church members built him a house. The church is now at the stage where every member of the congregation can pay healthcare costs. They are also paying the health insurance of community members in need who are not part of the church. This includes helping families in vulnerable situations to send their children to school by providing uniforms and materials.

With people travelling far and wide to come along to church, they have now planted two more churches across the parish.

Prioritising people

Pastor François explained to us that the transformation has been so complete that the church offering was now around 250,000 Rwandan Francs a month – almost £200. From this he receives a small salary to support his own family. The rest is being used to support the mission of the church to reach out into their community. What I really love is that they were prioritising people over the church building itself, which was in need of serious renovation, although they were improving it gradually.

As I sat in that rickety, tin-roofed church and these remarkable, ordinary people told their stories, I was in awe. Their trust, open-hearted, full-throttle generosity was allowing God to flow through everything. The transforming power of God was palpable.

As we sat together, the weather turned and rain began dripping in through parts of the roof. The main problem with this was that I could no longer hear the stories because of the noise. Pastor François was visibly embarrassed and uncomfortable about this. But the congregation took over and started to use the rhythm of the rain to sing and dance and we all praised Jesus together. The joy of the Lord was literally raining in that place.

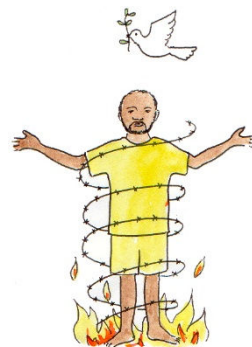
Author CS Lewis says, ‘Joy is the serious business of heaven.’ Let’s be people who, with Jesus, look for the light, see the good, find the hope and bring the joy.

If it’s raining today, take a moment to watch it or listen to it on a roof. (If it happens to be a dry day, you can find rain-sound playlists online.) Picture the rain coming through the church roof in Rwanda and the joy that filled that place. Ask God to rain joy on you, on your family, on your community.

Please pray for the 62,000 churches around the world that Tearfund is currently working with. Pray they will continue to be centres of transformation in their communities. Tearfund has an ambition to be working with 250,000 churches by 2030 – please pray that God paves the way for that to happen and brings growth in the coming year.

Tearfund Email 15/12/25

*Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE 0203 906 3906
info@tearfund.org*



PLEASE PRAY FOR IRANIAN CHRISTIANS AS AUTHORITIES CRACK DOWN

I am Barnabas Aid's Projects Manager for Central Asia and Iran. Iran is currently engulfed in its largest nationwide uprising since 1979, and our brothers and sisters are caught in the crossfire. Since 28th December 2025, a collapsing economy and 70% food inflation have driven millions into the streets across all 31 provinces. The authorities have responded with an unprecedented level of brutality.

Christians scapegoated

On 8th January, a near-total nationwide internet blackout was imposed — a “digital darkness” used specifically to hide a violent crackdown from the eyes of the world.

“The authorities have labelled peaceful protesters as ‘enemies of God’ and ‘foreign mercenaries’ to justify mass slaughter,” said an Iranian Christian. “In this atmosphere of paranoia, the Iranian government is using the Christian minority as a strategic scapegoat,” he continued. “By linking house churches to the ‘economic riots’ they seek to frame the uprising as a conspiracy of foreign interference.”

Despite the internet blockages (see below), Barnabas Aid has received some harrowing direct reports from our partners inside the country.

- Violence in the streets: Partners report that gunfire has been constant throughout the night for the past several days. The killings have intensified, and the true casualty count is far higher than official numbers.
- Mass disappearances: In Mashhad, we have received reports of more than 55 missing church members.

- Confirmed deaths: At least 11 church members have been confirmed killed in Fasa, Fars Province.
- Mobilised mercy: In an incredible display of the Gospel in action, “house churches” have mobilised to provide medical care to the wounded, as they often fear “disappearance” if they seek help at state-controlled hospitals.

Systematically silenced

We must share with you that our ability to receive news is becoming nearly impossible. The authorities have implemented a sophisticated, multi-layered protocol where only state-approved institutions can access the web. Iran is effectively severed from the global community. We have had almost no communication for days; however, within the past 24 hours, we managed to receive a few brief, frantic calls from partners using short-wave radio and illegal satellite links.

These calls were short and plagued by interference, but the message was clear: the situation is far more dire than the occasional leaked video suggests. These few minutes of contact are our only window into a nation being systematically silenced

The situation is critical. We humbly ask you to stand in prayer with the Iranian Church. Please share this report with your church and small groups. The authorities rely on the world looking away; our attention provides a measure of protection.

How you can pray

Please pray for those who have been bereaved and for those whose family members and friends are either arrested or otherwise missing. Intercede for those being held by the authorities, asking that the Lord will sustain them in their time of severe trial. Ask for a resolution to Iran’s economic and political difficulties that leads to greater peace and prosperity for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and for all the people of Iran. Pray that the light of Christ will shine through the darkness.

Barnabas Aid email 15th January 2026

Regular Sunday Meetings.

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

Services are also streamed on 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 for more information



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