

# MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

## January 2021



**'NEVER BE AFRAID TO TRUST AN UNKNOWN  
FUTURE TO A KNOWN GOD.'**

**CORRIE TEN BOOM**

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**THE CHURCH  
IN THE MIDDLE OF  
THE VILLAGE!**



## PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY FAMILY

Dear Church Family

In the Bible Timothy urges us not to neglect our intercessions: "I urge then, first of all, that prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people..." (1 Tim 2 verse 1)

The doors of our church have been closed since April, and all the activities suspended, As I started to prepare this Messenger at the start of January I thought about our church family and the way we have together kept touch with each other, the way in which Maureen our Deacon has faithfully made contact with each of us, and the way in which the circuit has provided us with worship opportunities on the videos and the printed service sheets. Thank you to all those across the Circuit who have contributed to these.

It has been a difficult year for us all. In addition, Eddie, Janet, Elaine and I ended the year with operations and Gerald has been in hospital. We are grateful for your prayers.

The situation at the start of 2021 feels as if it could not be worse. But we are given to believe that it will be. As 'The Church in the Middle of the Village' I believe Timothy is talking to us and that we have a responsibility to respond to his call to pray not only for each other as part of our church family, but also for all those around us who are part of our community family in Mottingham. We don't know everybody but God does. Everyone will have various needs and problems and needs our prayers. Our prayers can make a difference. So, pray for all those who have participated in our church activities: Messy Church, Good Companions, All Sorts Craft Group, the Youth Club, and the Mottingham Community Lunch. Then pray for our other Mottingham churches, and finally for the shop owners, the library, Councillors' and neighbours.

From Ruth



## WHEN WILL OUR CHURCH BE OPEN AGAIN FOR WORSHIP? ...NOT YET!

Once again we are in lock down, and the church is not open for worship. Please join the 500 who meet together on line within the Circuit for worship each week on <http://www.orpchiscircuit.org.uk/> (Videos), or access the printable Sunday worship service from the Circuit website.

**Churches together in Mottingham is on Facebook;**

<https://www.facebook.com/Churches-Together-in-Mottingham-104482874785693>



### WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Churches together in Mottingham is holding a united service on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 3.00 pm . It will be available on Zoom and will include telephone links.

Contact Maureen Spinks on Phone 01689 821956 or E-mail [mdospinks@gmail.com](mailto:mdospinks@gmail.com) and she will provide you with the links.



**'KEEP CONNECTED! - serving the community'**

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## A SCIENTIST'S LETTER TO THE UK CHURCH

From *Ruth M Bancewicz*

### POWER, LOVE AND SELF-CONTROL

I want to share a message of hope that Christians in the sciences around the world can bring to the church. Dr Francis Collins, who leads medical research in the US, spoke earlier in the pandemic about his faith and his hope in God to help us through this time. He expressed the grief that so many are experiencing, described an intensity of scientific work he has never experienced before, and shared his conviction that he is in exactly the right place just now - serving God with science. He is holding on tight to the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 1 verse 7, 'for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.'

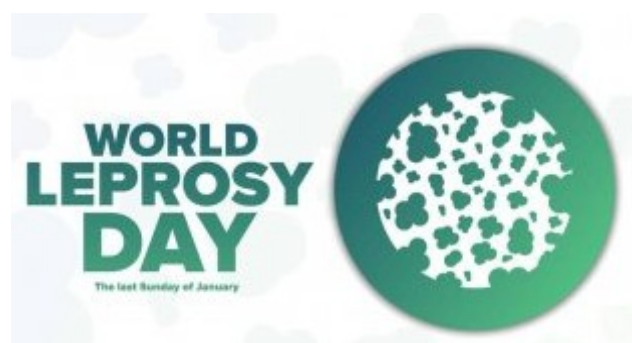
**Power:** In 2 Timothy the apostle Paul encourages his friend to 'fan into flame the gift of God' that is in him. I am thankful that scientists like Francis are using their own particular talents to understand this virus, and to help prevent or treat infection. The things they discover are not just useful, but at times they can also display the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

**Love:** A scientist shows their love for God, for people and for the rest of creation through their work in the lab. One scientist described his experiences to me: "I study God's fingerprints in His creation to learn more of Him and the world He placed us in and to learn how we should take care of it and each other...I pray for inspiration and insight into how His creation works...and that He provides the opportunities to give the glory to Him."

**Self-Control:** It is largely our own and others' selfish actions that can turn one animal's friendly virus into our own species' personal nightmare. Thankfully Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection are the solution to evil. Our ultimate and certain hope is that one day all Creation will be renewed. We can also have hope

for today that God is with us in our suffering. When we respond in positive ways to painful events that is evidence that Jesus is alive and working in our lives.

Science will not solve all our problems. With God's help and wisdom we can use the tools of science to serve him and love others. Let's pray for strength to cope, and an end to this pandemic.



## WORLD LEPROSY DAY 30TH JANUARY

It is not just Covid-19 that makes other people want to avoid us. Up to three million people worldwide are living with leprosy, a disease that can separate sufferers from their loved ones for years.

Someone is newly diagnosed with leprosy every two minutes, and millions of people suffer crippling deformities.

Leprosy Mission was founded to help defeat this terrible disease, and to transform the lives of its victims. Nowadays this established Christian charity is a global network active in 34 countries across the world. 15 countries have a high burden of leprosy; Leprosy Mission works in 11 of them.

Leprosy Mission works closely with governments, local communities, partner health organisations, the World Health Organisation, local NGOs, local churches, and Christian partners.

And - you can help! This month you can pray, make a donation, or even consider working with Leprosy Mission. Visit <https://www.leprosymission.org/get-involved>



## GOD IN THE ARTS

*'St Joseph the Carpenter'* by Georges de la Tour. The hidden years



When St Paul wrote about the birth and humanity of Jesus to the Philippians, he described it as an emptying and a humbling. Jesus humbled Himself, he wrote, 'and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.' In obedience and love Jesus followed the will of His Father

through His ministry from baptism to the cross and Easter beyond.

But what about that period called 'the hidden years', after the Holy Family's return from Egypt? The Gospels tell us of only one event in that period leading up to adulthood: the pilgrimage to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12. For the rest of those 30 years, He lived with Mary and Joseph 'growing in wisdom and in divine and human favour.' Just as He followed His heavenly Father's will in His ministry, so in these growing years He followed the guidance and teaching of Mary and Joseph.

This painting highlights one moment in those years of growth: *'St Joseph the Carpenter'* by Georges de la Tour. It captures the strong contrast of light and darkness. Georges de la Tour lived from 1593 to 1652 in Lorraine. He was a Franciscan and this work from the 1640s captures St Joseph and the Christ-Child with Franciscan tenderness and insight.

We can see the tools of Joseph's trade on the ground. He leans over them, hard at work on a piece of wood. Jesus is sitting by his side, his face lit by the candle, which lights up the carpenter's shop. As well as contrasting light and dark, there is the contrast of young and old, and the thought that the child learning from the old man is also the one who can teach us. De la Tour was particularly fascinated by light and shadows cast by a candle or a lantern. Here

the artist shows the candlelight illuminating the face of the child Jesus who will grow up to the Light of the world.

As this New Year begins, we can think back to the light from the Bethlehem manger we celebrated at Christmas. We can look ahead to the light shining from the adult Jesus through His teaching and healing. Here in these hidden years, we can celebrate the light of wisdom and divine favour, as Luke calls them, shining on the face of the child Jesus. We pray for that light to guide us through this New Year. When the way ahead may look dark and uncertain, let us pray that God's light will make clear the path ahead.

*Michael Burgess*

# CRISIS

## at Christmas

### MESSAGE FROM DIANE HUDSON:

Just to let you know that we raised £271.52 for CRISIS with our Carol Singing on the Green for Churches Together. It was lovely that all our churches were represented.

I think the Ecumenical Choir did very well singing the Carols and were very generous in giving to CRISIS along with the money

Rev Catherine had received prior to the event. I can't recall that we have ever raised so much money Singing Carols for CRISIS!





## CONVERSION OF ST PAUL

January is a month of the beginning of great things! As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He was given a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote epistles to the young churches that he founded - and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: Paul was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in 64AD, and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:  
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he  
replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand  
of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a  
known way."

Minnie Louise Haskins