

News from Minster Bethel, January 2021



As this New Year begins we hope that you all had an enjoyable Christmas in these strange times.

Some words I like to share at the start of a New Year::

“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” 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” So I went forth , and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

Those words were written by a lady called Minnie Louise Haskins (1875 – 1957). They were quoted by King George VI in his Christmas 1939 broadcast to the Empire and they certainly struck a chord with a country facing the uncertainty of war.

I often like to quote them at this time of year but they seem particularly appropriate at this time!

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The outside of the church has been painted but sadly, due to the current restrictions, we cannot do anything about the work we had hoped to do on the inside of the building.

Thanks to Jane and Christine who put the Christmas tree up in the vestibule and the Nativity scene on a table in the window – it's good to let the neighbours know that we are still there! Normally at Christmas we would donate the offering to a Children's charity so this year we have given £170 to Action for Children and also sent money to Compassion for gifts for Nado and her family.

Our young people continue to meet on Zoom and those of us with internet access enjoyed the Carol Service and Christmas Day service on Zoom.

There is also a weekly quiz on Zoom so if you do have access to the internet and would like to join the fun please ask.

We are very grateful to Jo Poynter who produces a weekly service for us which can be viewed at :www.mbccs.co.uk This is also printed and delivered each week, if you don't already receive a copy but would like one then please let Maggie know (875711) and we will add you to the list.

Congregational Federation News: The S.E. Area meetings have been held on Zoom which has made it possible for Bethel to be represented. You might remember Jonathan, who was our Church Support Worker – he led services for us from time to time and usually came with his wife Ruth and daughter Hannah. Sadly, Jonathan has resigned from his role with the area – we will really miss his support and guidance but I have emailed him to give him greetings from Bethel and to wish him well for the future. Many of you will remember the Rev Derek Scott and his wife Margaret who were good friends to Bethel. Margaret died early in 2020 and then Derek passed away in November.. I had spoken to Derek after Margaret died and I know he really missed her so we rejoice that they have been reunited and are not suffering anymore.

News from our many friends:

Over the last few weeks we have heard from many of our friends, including: Sue Wade, Jim Manley, Howard and Caroline Bunting, Jenny and Mark Thompson (Jenny says "Hello you lovely Lambsies), Amanda Pink and Nigel Lindsay. Nigel often sends me invitations to events at his church (they are of course on Zoom) so if anyone would like to join with Nigel's church please let me know and I will pass on the login details.

Island News:

Churches Together in Sheppey have a monthly prayer meeting (on Zoom) on the first Wednesday in the month at 7pm. Please let Maggie know if you would like the details or have any particular prayer requests.

The **Community Warden** has contacted all the churches to remind us that she is available to help where necessary. Her name is Jackie Swan and her phone number is: 07811 271304. I know that she is happy to help with a variety of problems so please do give her a call if you need any help.

The Food Bank continues to work from Holy Trinity Church, Sheerness. The Food Bank has collecting boxes in Tesco and Morrisons but they also accept cash donations which enable them to purchase items which they know they need. I have recently been given their bank details so please ask me if you would like to make a donation. We did make a donation from Bethel some months ago which they were very grateful for. Brigade have also been supporting Curly's Farm with various gifts and donations.

Please pray for:

- We give thanks that there are now vaccines available for Covid 19. We pray for all those responsible for administering the vaccine and pray that enough people will be willing to have the injection.
- We pray for those in our fellowship who have health problems, those who are waiting for the results of tests and for those who have surgery and treatment planned.
- For those who are feeling lonely, may they be able to reach out to those willing to provide friendship.
- We ask that all those who are mourning the loss of loved ones will find the comfort they need in these difficult times.
- We pray that at Bethel we will be able to make the correct decisions for the future re-opening of our church.
- We pray that we will all learn patience in these times!
- For those who have had the disappointment of cancelled weddings.
- We pray for our country, giving thanks for all those working hard in the NHS, care homes and the other key workers.
- We pray for those in authority in our country and the wider world, for correct decisions to be made for the future.

