



Zion Baptist Church
In the heart of Tenterden

Newsletter

DECEMBER

2020

Tree of Hope

This year, Zion will have a Christmas tree of Hope in the front garden of the church.

There will be coloured tags available in a box beside it. These need messages and prayers for hope writing on them, and then hanging on the tree, to 'decorate' it.

We are inviting you to write on a tag and hang it on the tree. Then, **tell your friends and neighbours about it**, and invite them to do the same. This will be a witness to all passing by the church in the run up to Christmas.

We will offer up the prayers and messages during our Sunday service on 13th December, and this will be available on Zoom, for your friends to join in too. A real opportunity to let Jesus become more real to them. SM



For
To us
A child
Is born, to
Us a Son is
given, and the
Government will
Be on His shoulders.
And He will be called
WONDERFUL Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6,7

EMMANUEL

Happy Christmas
and a blessed 2021!

Services in December

All Services available on Zoom (except*)
All Services in church if allowed

Sunday, 6th 10.30am	Morning Worship Service , led by Rev Freddy Farias Palacios, including Holy Communion
Wednesday, 9th 10.30am	Rainbow Tots Service*
Sunday, 13th 10.30am	Service of Hope , led by Rev Freddy Farias Palacios
Sunday, 20th 10.30am	Morning Worship Service , led by Ian Banks,
Sunday, 20th 4pm	Carol Service by candle light
Christmas Eve, 11.30pm	Communion Service , led by Rev Freddy Farias Palacios
Christmas Day, 10am	Christmas Service , led by Rev Freddy Farias Palacios
Sunday, 27th 10.30am	Morning Worship Service , led by Rev David Adkins

Our **Home Groups** run fortnightly.
They are currently on Zoom only.
Mondays 10am-12noon and Thursdays 8pm-10pm
Please join a Home Group

We meet for prayer:

Fridays: 10am—1pm church open for private prayer

Saturday, fortnightly: 8.30am—9.30am Prayer Meeting
Currently via Zoom

First Thursday of the month: 7.30pm, Church Monthly Prayer Meeting
Currently via Zoom

Letter from our pastor:

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have heard inspiring stories about remarkable people who have listened to a cry for help. Captain Sir Thomas Moore, popularly known as 'Captain Tom', raised a significant amount of money for the NHS in the run-up to his 100th birthday.



The Manchester united player Marcus Rashford has earned praises and royal recognition for his free school meals campaign. Again, Marcus responded to a need (a cry for help) and we can mention many more remarkable people who have made a difference during these challenging times.

We give thanks for those who have contributed towards Zion Baptist Church's "Hardship Fund". Our fellowship has been able to support families in Tenterden who have been struggling through the Coronavirus pandemic.

If you hear about individuals or a family that might need support, please let one of the Elders, Suzanne or Christine know. Also, if you feel you can contribute towards our "Hardship Fund", please contact our Treasurer.

There is so much need around the world and in our local community. Millions are crying for help. However, is it all about physical needs such as food? Or maybe mental and emotional challenges such as loneliness?

As we look forward to celebrating Christmas, there is a message that we hear more and more: "Christmas celebrations are cancelled because of the pandemic, Christmas is off".

New restrictions are again in place, and uncertainty about jobs has once again increased. This year, it has been an almost impossible mission for new graduates to find a job. Businesses in many parts of the country have been hit very badly and some have not been able to recover.

Some churches have not been open for most of the year, and some have lost their main income because they depend on lettings. How to prepare services in the middle of these uncertain and challenging times?

Do we have to cancel our Christmas celebrations?

There is something more important than celebrations, resources, or money. Despite the £32,795,065 Captain Tom was able to raise, the NHS will be crying out for more resources tomorrow. Those children who will be fed through the free school meals initiative in the next few weeks, will be hungry again.

In Psalm 121, the psalmist sings a question, **“I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?”**

Bible scholars tell us that this psalm was probably sung in an antiphonal fashion by the pilgrims on their way to the holy city of Jerusalem to attend some solemn feast. The psalmist says that as he travels, he looks to the hills, to the distant hills of Jerusalem.

When we face problems or difficulties in our lives, we tend to see what is in front of us, we focus on our circumstances and we cannot see beyond.

Christmas celebrations will be different this year. There is struggle, uncertainty and challenges around the world. But the psalmist paints a beautiful picture. He looked from his own little sphere of life (his problems and challenges) out to the great hills and beyond them to the Lord of heaven and earth.

One scholar said; ‘The psalmist understood that the pilgrims didn’t need to arrive at Jerusalem before they came under God’s protective care. He would watch over them on the journey. God is just as present in the journey as in the destination.’

He responds with certainty, “My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth”. The psalmist has faith that as he travels, as he faces the challenges in life, the Lord will be looking after him, the Lord will not let his foot slip — He will be watching over. Therefore, the psalmist can have strength and calmness to face uncertainty.

Whatever our circumstances, there will be a turning point in our lives when we must exercise complete trust in the Lord. When we trust in the Lord is when we exercise our faith. Are you experiencing a turning point in your life?

How to celebrate Christmas?



Whether in lockdown or in normal circumstances, Christmas is about the love of God. The true meaning of Christmas is described in John 3:16-17 **"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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."** The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of this incredible act of love.

Why not to follow the psalmist example. When things seem to be impossible for you to bear, lift up your eyes and see beyond your circumstances. Turn your eyes upon the Lord from where your help comes from. Look to Him in faith, bring your situation, family, and life to Him, believing that He has the power to protect you and to give you strength to face the challenges of life.

If you have not surrendered your life to Him. Why not receive Jesus into your heart this Christmas, and let Him have His way with you?

He wants to help you and give you not only perishable things but eternal life.

Happy Christmas and a blessed 2021!

Freddy



Our next
Church Members Meeting
is planned for:
Sunday, 24th January
after the morning service.

BMS birthdays:

21st Nov: Kirsty Taylor-Black
26th Dec: Mr Stephen Wood

Thank you

We are feeling blessed in these times that we are busy with work. Some of that work involves *offering respite to schools for pupils that need some time in a smaller group with one to one. These young people already had struggles before covid came along.*

The young people need our prayers.

A heartfelt thanks for all the prayer for our family even though restrictions keep us apart, you remain in our thoughts and prayers also and we are still connected.

We would like to thank Zion for their continued support, phone calls, messages and emails.

Shaun and Chrissy

ALIYAH*

Isa43:5-6

Fear not, for I am with you, I will bring your descendants from the East and gather you from the West: I will say to the North, "Give them up!" and to the South, "Do not keep them back!" Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth'.

Jer1:11-13

The Lord Himself is watching over His Word to perform it

What a privilege to be the generation witnessing these end time prophecies being fulfilled before our very eyes! It baffles me why His church is so indifferent to this amazing and exciting story!

Isa49:22

We, the Gentile church are charged with encouraging Jewish people by prayer, finance or assisting them by arranging travel arrangements, as many around the world actually do often travel many thousands of miles to the 'ends' of the earth searching for Jewish families.

Isa60:8-12 Isa40:1-5 Zeph3:19-20 AMOS 9:13-15 and many other Scriptures.

(www.operation-exodus.org if you want to know more.)

*'Aliyah' means the 'going up' to Jerusalem by the Jews in the diaspora. The return of the Jews to the land of Israel is inextricably linked to Jesus' return!

Dorothy C.

Rainbow Tots:

Throughout this challenging season, we have kept in touch with Rainbow Tots via our WhatsApp group.

We enjoyed bumping into Rainbow Tots families at the Recreation ground, each Wednesday morning, welcoming newcomers too, until this lockdown.

However, we are praying that guidelines will mean we can meet in church for a Christingle service, on Wednesday, 9th December.

We also hope to start a support group for Rainbow Tots mums in January, which can legally meet in church.

Please pray that this will happen.

SM



JOY

A Devotional from MAF

Are you a glass full or half empty? It's easy to go through life looking at things through the lens of pessimism or optimism without consciously understanding the filter that defines our thinking.

When Moses sent a leader from each of the tribes of Israel to spy out the land of 'milk and honey', 10 of 12 were so focused on the negatives—seeing the people there as giants and themselves as grasshoppers—they failed to recognize God's provision and the victory He had promised them. Only Caleb and Joshua believed that God could defeat their enemies and bring them into the promised land. As a result, they were the only ones who were allowed to enter.

How many of us have missed out on God's blessing because we've focused on the negatives of our situation?

As we enter another month of lockdown-related limitations, with ever increasing rates of coronavirus cases being reported across the globe, it can be easy to see only doom and gloom.

However, when we feel anxious, worried and overwhelmed, we find ourselves weakened, fearful and struggling to pray. Optimism seems futile. What we really need is for the joy of the Lord to be our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

'Joy' is a short but powerful word. The difference between joy and happiness; happiness being dictated by our circumstances, joy being something that goes deeper.

Christian author Kay Warren adds this definition: 'Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life'.

Although self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, the mindset above can cause you to fail, to feel condemned when worry and grief take hold. At times when you are struggling the most, the idea that joy is something you choose, can leave you spiritually paralyzed.

It is worth noting that the Bible doesn't separate joy from emotion. More than 100 verses in various translations use the words 'happiness' and 'joy' together: 'For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honour' (Esther 8:16, NIV); 'I will turn their mourning into joy... and bring happiness out of grief' (Jeremiah 31:13, HCSB).

God created not just our mind, but our hearts. It isn't about choosing joy with our conscious mind, **it's about finding joy with an open heart.** Joy is contagious! The Israelites wandered for 40 years. God didn't provide a detailed map to take them easily to their destination, but He did dwell among them. He provided, guided and comforted them He promises to do the same for us too.

His presence is where we will find the joy that strengthens us. What an amazing gift we have in the Holy Spirit—sent to be the powerful, personal presence of the living God within us. Why not invite Him afresh to be present in your life?

Psalm 100:4 reminds us that we can experience the presence of God when we come with thanksgiving and praise.

Give thanks for His faithfulness to you.

Jackie G.

St. Mildred's Advent Calendar Online



Tenterden's churches and organisations are sharing about their experiences during the lockdown and give a Christmas message.

The Advent Calendar can be viewed on St. Mildred's website in December

Missed the church service last Sunday?

You can watch the full service on our church website:
www.zionbaptistchurchtenterden.org

You can watch sermons on YouTube:
search for: Rev Freddy Farias Palacios

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