

# St Mildred's Church

## Newsletter

### September 2021



#### Building Project

Stella and David give thanks for answered prayers on the building project.

Pages 4-6

#### Thoughts about the Bible

What does the Bible say about itself? Tom shares some helpful thoughts.

Pages 7-8

#### Open Doors

Interview with Andy Worthington from Open Doors.

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**'Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!'**

**The call of God on our lives at St Mildred's is to make and equip disciples of Jesus Christ locally and globally in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

**[www.stmildreds.org.uk](http://www.stmildreds.org.uk)**



## Tom writes



At the moment there are some big debates taking place in the Church of England particularly over matters of identity and sexuality. You may have heard about this.

I believe that, ultimately, the heart of this debate is the question, “*What is truth and where does it come from?*”

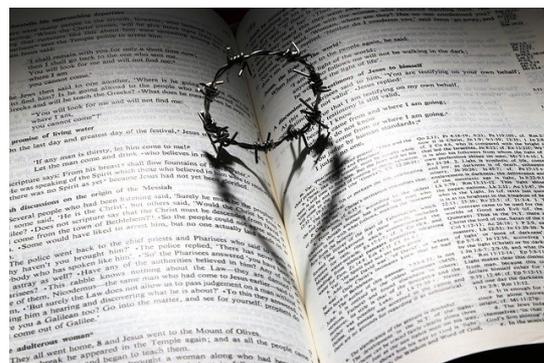
In a famous recent interview, Oprah Winfrey asked Meghan Markle, “*How do you feel about the palace hearing you speak today?*”

Of course, exactly what Oprah meant by the question - and her use of the word truth - is open to debate. But it does raise an interesting question about ‘truth’.

In response to Jesus’ assertion that, “*Everyone on the side of truth listens to me,*” Pontius Pilate famously replied, “*What is truth?*” (Jn. 18:38)

Pilate’s question, ‘*What is truth?*’ is well worth posing. Is truth a personal thing (which would be one interpretation of Oprah’s question)? Is it something I have for myself; whilst you have your truth for yourself?

Or is there an independent and absolute truth? A truth that remains the truth regardless of personal opinion; a truth that has consequences irrespective of individual people’s feelings and beliefs.



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### Newsletter Articles

Anyone who regularly attends St Mildred's can contribute articles to the newsletter.

Articles should be sent to the editors no later than Wednesday 22nd September for the October edition, which will be available on Sunday 3rd October.

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If there is such a truth, how do we access it? How do we find out what it is?

Let's take a closer look at the exchange between Jesus and Pilate:

*"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again." (John 18:37-38)*

This exchange tells us a few things. Firstly, as is clear from Jesus' use of the word, there is truth and, by implication, there is falsehood. There are 'sides'. You can be on the side of truth (and therefore listen to Jesus) or not. With that, Jesus clearly claims the concept of truth absolutely.

Secondly, Jesus came into the world to testify and make known this truth. His mission was revelatory - to make known and testify to the truth, absolute truth, truth that people need to hear. This shows that truth comes not from within us, but from outside us. It is something that was not known and so Jesus came into the world to make it known. The fact that Jesus frames this discussion about truth within his claim to be king shows how absolutely he treats this. His authority in testifying to the truth is the authority of a king.

Thirdly, it shows us that the context of the battle for truth is the world. The world is the place Jesus had to come on his mission to testify to the truth. It was

the world's plight in falsehood that made it necessary for him to come.

Finally, to access this truth we must listen to Jesus (as he says, "*Everyone on the side of truth listens to me*"). It comes from him.

Of course, how we listen to Jesus is the next question.

In last month's newsletter, I started a series looking at the Bible and what we believe about it. The reason this is so important is that the Bible is where we find the truth that comes from Jesus. It is the only authority - independent of any one particular person or church; independent of private beliefs or claims; independent of the zeitgeist - that can reveal Jesus to us. Rightly, we understand the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit too. But the Spirit enables us to understand the word of God - the Bible. He does not come as a separate and conflicting witness. Rather he enables the right understanding of the Bible so that we can know Jesus.

This is why it is so important to think carefully about the Bible and I hope the series we are covering in the newsletter is helpful.

The current debates require that we think carefully about the truth that Jesus reveals. Truth found in the Bible. May the Lord help us to understand and to delight in his word.

Amen.

# Building Project Update

**Finally.... we have planning permission to build our new church hall!**

We submitted our planning application in April 2019 and permission was refused in November 2019. We then lodged an appeal against the Council's decision in May 2020 and received the planning inspector's decision in mid-August 2021.... so it has been a bit of a marathon! The past couple of years have been quite challenging, but our faithful God has been with us throughout and has answered our prayers **very** generously. We give Him our thanks and praise for bringing us to this point. A big "thank you", too, to all those church members and friends who prayed, made submissions to Lewisham planning department, helped collect signatures for our petition in September 2019 and wrote to the planning inspector in support of our appeal: all very much appreciated!

The building project involves three major "hurdles": planning consent (Lewisham Council), Faculty (effectively Church of England consent, via the Diocese of Southwark) and funding. Getting over the first of these "hurdles" is a really encouraging step forward. We now need to do some further work on the design and to make progress towards the Faculty. Please pray for wisdom for the development team and the PCC in all the decisions that need to be taken on this.

On the third "hurdle", namely funding: the most recent cost plan indicated an overall cost in the region of £3.7m. We currently have just under £2m, a large proportion of which has been provided from completely unexpected sources. We are enormously grateful for God's generous provision in this. Please pray for further miracles and amazing surprises in respect of the remaining funds required.

We will provide further updates as we move forward. If you have any comments, suggestions or questions on the building project at any time, I or any of the other members of the development team would be really pleased to have chat. Alternatively, you can email [developmentproject@stmildreds.org.uk](mailto:developmentproject@stmildreds.org.uk). Thank you!!

Stella Gill



## Permission granted



We recently heard the wonderful news that the Planning Inspector had granted our Appeal, effectively unblocking the path of progress towards development of a New Hall!

This is a great encouragement after a process lasting more than six years, and almost two years after the process ground to a complete halt in November 2019, (Covid did NOT help!) All this despite the heroic efforts of our Development Group and the team of professional advisors. So what has the Lord been saying and doing and how has this been guiding and nourishing our faith?

Very early on words from Isaiah 45 seemed highly relevant. Since we would need a vast sum of money, the words in verse 3 are arresting: "I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord.. who summons you by name." So far the Lord has provided more than £2 million of which more than half has come from sources which we could not have known about at the outset! Truly "Treasures of darkness, riches hidden in secret places."

Thank you, Lord!

Now before you can build anything, you need permission to proceed, and the process (as we discovered) can be long and seemingly impenetrable, so how encouraging that the verse before, (Isiah 45:2) says "I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron," which is what finally seems to have happened in recent weeks

(after a long pause!) Glory to God!

So now what? There are still at least two major hurdles to cross. First, we need to apply for a Faculty - the Church of England will not permit any addition or alteration to Church buildings without the official grant of this particular regulatory document.

There is also the matter of cost! The delays so far have been accompanied by huge increases in construction costs! While no precise figures are available, it seems likely that we will need at least another £2 million! (Gulp!) and yet the Lord sets no limit on His power, His authority or His lavish ability to provide. What He has done so far in dealing with legal and regulatory processes, He is quite capable of continuing as faithfully as He has done so far!

Similarly, in terms of finance, He has graciously honoured our wavering faith so far, it seems logical that we should continue to honour His unwavering faithfulness to us! What might future "Secret places" mean? Well, if we knew the answer to that, they would not be secret!

All that has happened so far should cause our faith to rise and our vision of the Lord's character to increase. and therefore our worship. Thanks and praise should grow accordingly! After all, this is not just a "project" - this is His work, and His provision for His future mission. Haggai 1:8 says: "....bring down timber and build the House so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured says the Lord." Our praying, giving, worship and thanks - in effect our "faith" response - should all be part of this "honouring" process.

As Paul says: "Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire... The Lord who calls you is faithful and He will do it!" ( 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19, 24)

David Nicholls



### Businesses to pray for:

Baring Road School

Lyca Newsagent

Cafe Lokum

Baring Food and Wine

The Sun (Candid Lace)

Choice Homeware

ARCCI design

Dry Cleaner

Golden Chicken

Caribbean Takeaway

P & S Tyres

The Summerfield Pub

Chris' Barbers

Daniel Mercer

## Thoughts About the Bible Part 2: The Bible's view of the Bible

Last month we started a series considering some thoughts about the Bible. We began by considering Jesus' view of the Bible. This month we will consider what other parts of the Bible say about the Bible.

One of the amazing things to spot when reading the Bible is how often it talks about itself! In his book, *Taking God at His Word*, Kevin DeYoung begins by considering the longest chapter in the Bible. There are 1189 chapters in the 66 books of the Bible. And the longest is Psalm 119. It is a poem. In many ways it is a love poem. It is very carefully crafted, being structurally designed around the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

So the longest chapter in the Bible is a carefully crafted poem, and its theme is...the Bible! It doesn't use the word, 'Bible'. It uses words like, 'law', 'testimonies', 'statutes', 'judgements', 'commandments', 'precepts', 'words'. These words all refer to the written account of God's revelation available to the Psalmist at the time. This would have been the first 5 books of the Bible known as the Torah.



Here is a sample of the types of things said in the Psalm:

*I delight in your commands because I love them. (v47)*

*My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times. (v20)*

*I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. (v16)*

With such strong emotional language it is not wrong to think of this Psalm as a love poem. A love poem whose theme is the Bible. But Psalm 119 is just one of the many places in which the Bible discusses itself and how we should understand and think about it. Here are some other places:

There are many references to Moses making or having made an authoritative written account of God's words and actions (called 'the Book of the Law') and he is given the 10 Commandments written by God himself (*Exodus 17:14, 24:4-7, 32:15-16, 34:27, Deut 28:58-61, 31:24-26, Nehemiah 8:1-3*).

The everyday delight in God's law and the carefulness with which it should be treated are repeatedly mentioned (*Deut. 6:1-9, 13:1-5; 17:18-20, 30:10, Joshua 1:6-9, 23:6*).

*2 Kings 22-23* describes the Bible being rediscovered in King Josiah's reign, after it was lost, and his godly response to hearing its authoritative words read to him. Later, this is contrasted with the arrogant and dismissive attitude of his son Jehoiakim (*Jeremiah 36*).

Luke and John both reference the process they went through to write an accurate and useful account (*Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30-31, 21:24-25*).

Jesus tells a terrifying parable whose point is to say that the Bible is the only testimony able to provoke faith (*Luke 16:19-31*). Even meeting a person who has died cannot replace it!

John describes the authority that his account in the book of Revelation has (*Rev 22:18-19*).

Peter describes the careful process the prophets went through to make accurate records and how the Spirit equipped them for this task (*1 Peter 1:10-12, 2 Peter 1:20-21*).

Paul teaches Timothy about the God-inspired, authoritative nature of the Bible and its usefulness for us (*2 Tim 3:14-17*).

This sample shows that God's people have always kept a written record - a book - which contains the authoritative teaching about God and what this means for us. This record is now known as *The Bible*.

The fact that the Bible spends a lot of time talking about itself shows that we must not simply rely on how we currently feel about it to assess its authority and usefulness. Rather we are taught by the Bible itself what the appropriate way of treating it is. The Bible is the Spirit-inspired, authoritative record of truth about God and the implications of this for us.

At the coronation of the Queen in 1953, she was presented with a Bible by the Archbishop who said these words, "*Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.*"

Psalm 119, and the rest of the Bible's teaching about itself, suggests that these words are not an understatement!

Rev. Tom Lake

# MISSION FOCUS

I've had the pleasure in August of meeting with Andy Worthington from Open Doors, one of our Mission Partners, to find out about their work with the persecuted church. The interview is available on our YouTube channel and I would highly recommend you take the time to listen to what he has to tell us. Below is a short excerpt of the interview for those who don't have access to the internet. I am sure you will be blessed by the interview as much as I was speaking to him.

Covenant Home Trust showcase the uniforms they have been able to buy for the children and young people in their care as a result of our ongoing support and Tearfund have provided some helpful resources to help us think about the impact of climate change.



## **Excerpt of interview with Andy Worthington, Head of Church Relations, Open Doors**

### **Edna**

It's lovely to be joined by Andy this afternoon. Why don't you start by introducing yourself and telling us what you do at Open Doors?

### **Andy**

My name is Andy Worthington. I'm the Head of Church Relations at Open Doors. I've been part of the team now for seven years. Before that I was a pastor of a church in Birmingham for 10 years. And I absolutely loved working alongside the persecuted church, standing with them, supporting them. And before I go any further I want to thank you as a church, St Mildred's, for your amazing generosity and for your

ongoing prayer and support for our brothers and sisters around the world who share our faith, but not our freedom. I know if they were here and able to express their thanks to you, they would say it makes all the difference to them and helps them, enables them to stand and to keep going through the tough times. Thank you so much.

Open Doors was started by brother Andrew 65 years ago. I'm sure you've heard of his book 'God smuggler'. If any of you have not read it, then we've got plenty of copies and would gladly send you one free of charge. We're currently working in over 60 countries where Christians face high levels of persecution. At the moment, I don't know if you're aware, but there's 340 million Christians in our world today who live in areas where they face high or extreme levels of persecution. That's a huge number. To break it down a little bit, that's one in eight Christians globally.

One of the things that we do is help the church in UK and Ireland to stand with

and pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters. One of the ways that we do that is producing the world watch list, which takes you through the top 50 countries in the world where it's most dangerous to live as a follower of Jesus. This booklet tells you a little bit about each country, the source of persecution, what it's like for Christians living there today, and then three simple prayer points to help you pray for and stand with our brothers and sisters around the world.

In each of these countries, we support the local church. We help the church be the church in those countries. With COVID and all kinds of other things that have happened over these last couple of years, it's just added another level of complexity for our brothers and sisters and made it really hard. In some countries they're not able to access food and aid. In fact, when they've gone to get food that's been distributed because they weren't able to work, they've been unable to. They're told to go back to their church, knowing full well that the church hasn't got anything. It's been tough.

They really have appreciated the support that we've been able to help them with because of churches like yourselves that have been able to support and help Christians, particularly during these last couple of years. So thank you so much.

One of the countries we are focusing on this month is India. It's been on the news a lot with the pandemic. The issue in India for Christians is that they're also trying to eradicate all other religions except for Hindi. And they're trying to eradicate all other religions by the end of the year, particularly in the north of India. Christians have found

themselves facing lots of lies and propaganda that's been going out about them. In fact, some people have been told that Christians are responsible for the pandemic and it's caused anger and all kinds of problems that lead to Christians being persecuted, attacked and for some losing their homes, churches being burned down, their homes being burnt and people being killed.



So it's been a really tough time for the church in India right now. Alongside that we've been hearing of churches and church leaders not being able to meet and not being able to have the regular tithes coming in. So they're unable to support themselves and are unable to buy food for their families.

#### **Edna**

What are the things that you're looking for churches to help you with and to support you with?

#### **Andy**

We are looking for the church obviously to pray firstly – prayer is so important. Secondly, is through giving, which you've done as a church. We need finances in order to be able to support our brothers and sisters in these different countries. You can also write letters to Christians and church leaders around the world to encourage them and to let them know that you are

praying for them and standing with them or take part in some of our fundraising activities to help raise

money for our work like ran the marathon for us.



The ministry continues to educate and support children and young people in Kenya. With the new school term starting the team share photos of the young people in their new school uniforms - bought and paid for by the generous support of St Mildred's church family!



Dinah queueing for her uniform. She was awarded a place at one of the country's top boarding school because of her excellent primary school results. You can see parents in the background with their children, trunks and bedding.



Janet and Sheila all kitted out in their new uniforms and ready to start at High School.



Lucy and taking Bridgel to start at his new Secondary school.

Dinar and Tricia two of Helens girls that St. Mildred's have helped to go to school.



## Diary - September 2021

In these uncertain times, it is hard to plan exactly what our diary will be. We have tried to be as accurate as possible. Changes are likely—both in terms of new events appearing and some listed here being cancelled.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>5</b>	10am Morning Service 11.30am Prayer Meeting 6pm Sunday@six
Monday	6	9.30am Prayer Meeting
Tuesday	7	8pm PCC
Wednesday	8	8pm Prayer Meeting
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>12</b>	10am All Age Service 11.30am Prayer Meeting 6pm Sunday@six
Monday	13	9.30am Prayer Meeting
Tuesday	14	Parent and Toddlers (see website for details) 8pm Home Group
Wednesday	15	8pm Home Group
Thursday	16	8pm Home Group
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>19</b>	10am Morning worship 11.30am Prayer Meeting 6pm Sunday@six
Monday	20	9.30am Prayer Meeting
Tuesday	21	Parent and Toddlers
Wednesday	22	Prayer Meeting
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>26</b>	10am Morning Worship 11.30am Prayer Meeting 6pm Sunday@six
Monday	27	9.30am Prayer Meeting
Tuesday	28	Parent and Toddlers 8pm Home Group

## Diary - September 2021

Wednesday	29	8pm Home Group
Thursday	30	8pm Home Group
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>3</b>	10am Morning worship 11.30am Prayer Meeting 6pm Sunday@six

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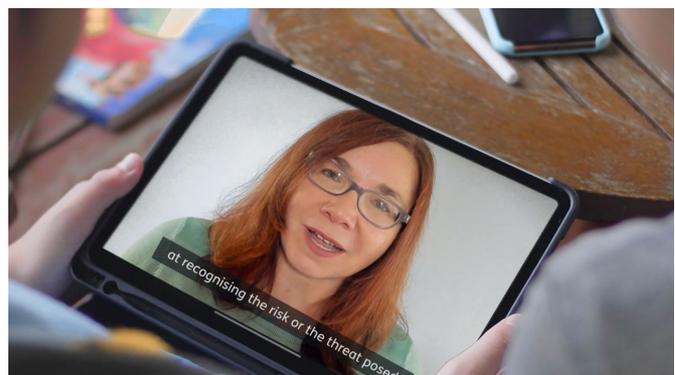


### Christianity and climate change

In November the UK together with Italy will host the COP26 event in Glasgow.

What can the church do to address the climate crisis?

If you've found yourself asking this question, amongst others, about recent reports on climate change and wondering what the answer should be, Tearfund have produced a nine-part film series [Christianity and climate change](#), featuring Katharine Hayhoe, an internationally renowned Christian climate scientist.



The films have been produced for small groups but could easily be used in any setting. Click the [link](#) to find out more, or visit the Tearfund website at [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org).

Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
06/09/21	Proverbs 12:1-10	Proverbs 12:11-20	Proverbs 12:21-28	Proverbs 13:1-10	Proverbs 13:11-20	Proverbs 13:21-25
13/09/21	Proverbs 14:1-10	Proverbs 14:11-20	Proverbs 14:21-30	Proverbs 14:31-35	Proverbs 15:1-10	Proverbs 15:11-20
20/09/21	Proverbs 15:21-30	Proverbs 15:31-33	Proverbs 16:1-10	Proverbs 16:11-20	Proverbs 16:21-30	Proverbs 16:31-33
27/09/21	Proverbs 17:1-10	Proverbs 17:11-20	Proverbs 17:21-28	Proverbs 18:1-10	Proverbs 18:11-20	Proverbs 18:21-24
04/10/21	Proverbs 19:1-10	Proverbs 19:11-20	Proverbs 19:21-29	Proverbs 20:1-10	Proverbs 20:11-20	Proverbs 20:21-30
11/10/21	Proverbs 21:1-10	Proverbs 21:11-20	Proverbs 21:21-31	Proverbs 22:1-10	Proverbs 22:11-16	Proverbs 22:17-29

# Prayer Page

“Trust in Him at all times, O people;  
Pour out your heart before him;  
God is a refuge for us.”  
Psalm 62:8

**Pray for all those** who are finding their work or lack of it stressful. Pray that they will receive all the practical, spiritual and emotional support they require.

**We pray for all businesses** within our community for guidance in all their decisions.

**The building project:** we thank our generous God for answered prayer in the success of our planning appeal. Pray for wisdom for the development team as they plan the way forward and please pray for miraculous sources of funding for the project!!

**Please continue in prayer for all who are suffering loneliness.**

That each person will be able to find friendships in which they feel valued and can flourish emotionally, physically and spiritually. Challenge and guide us all to value and treasure our friendships in new and life changing ways.

**Please continue to pray for Keiko and her parents and her sister** that as Keiko abides in You the truth of your Word will be made know to them.

**We pray for guidance** for all as we return from summer break.  
**Remember in prayer all children** and young people preparing to return to their educational settings. Keep them safe and happy guiding them in their friendships.

**Pray for all those who are unwell** and receiving treatment.  
That the treatment given would be timely and appropriate to the need.

**Pray for all those enduring change in:**  
employment, accommodation, relationships, home extensions, health, may they all find they strength and refuge in You Lord.

**We give thanks for all who have spent time with their family** during this summer break. We pray that these reunions will ease any pain suffered this year.

**We pray for Afghanistan.** For all those working to help people leave. We pray for all Christians that they will receive all the resources, inspiration, strength and wisdom that they need in their home, community and work place. We pray that God by his Spirit will move in ways far beyond our imaginings.

**Covenant Homes**  
Please continue to pray for the young people in Kenya.  
Keep them safe as the covid rate is high and vaccines are only just filtering through.

**For our government** that they would be prayerful in all their responses to the situation in Afghanistan.

**Give thanks to God** that the Toddler group was able to meet for 7 weeks and was such a blessing to so many.  
Pray the toddler group as they plan their for return in September.

**Send Prayers to:** lisharris68@yahoo.com

# The Back Page



## **Prison week**

**10 October 2021**

For forty years now, Prisons Week has prepared prayer literature to enable the Christian community, through individuals and churches, to pray for the needs of all those affected by prisons: prisoners and their families, victims of crime and their communities, those working in the criminal justice system and the many people who are involved in caring for those affected by crime on the inside and outside of our prisons.

Prisons Week raises awareness and generates prayer to motivate volunteers to step forward and give their time and gifts, in prisons and in their own communities.

Join the Nehemiah Project to support Prison Week through prayer.