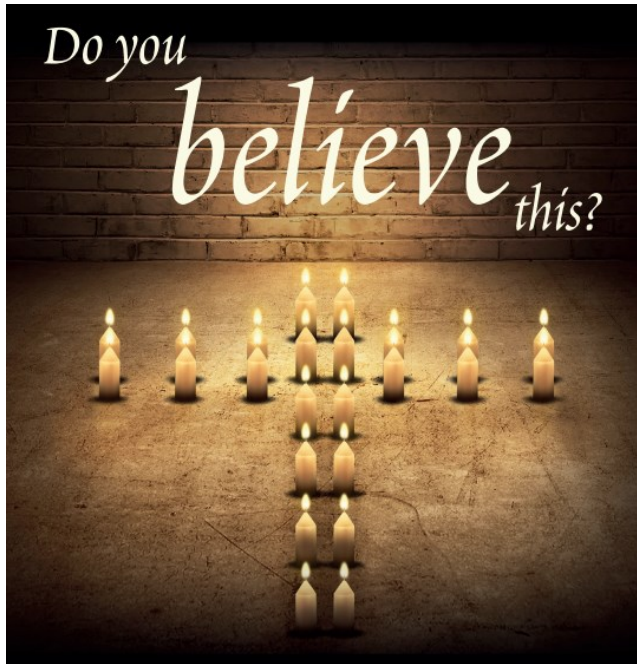




December 2024



For the year 2025, the prayers and reflections for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy. 2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople in 325 AD. This commemoration provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the creed formulated during this council. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 offers an invitation to draw on this shared heritage and to enter more deeply into the faith that unites all Christians.

The guiding biblical text for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 comes from **John 11:17-27**.

The theme for the week, "Do you believe this?" (v. 26), takes its cue from the dialogue between Jesus and Martha when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany following the death of their brother Lazarus.

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January.

The dates and times below are what has been arranged by Churches Together in Sittingbourne so far—please put the dates in your diary for next year and aim to come together in prayer whenever possible.

Date	Event	Time
Saturday 18th Jan 2025	Prayer poss. At RCCG/Ichthus	tbc
Sunday 19th	WPCU Praise and Worship service SBC	6.30pm
Monday 20th		
Tuesday 21st	Prayer, Tea and Cake SBC	2pm
Wednesday 22nd	St Michael's Mid week Communion theme Unity	10am
Thursday 23rd	Prayer Sittingbourne Methodist Church	7pm
Friday 24th	Taize style Ecumenical Service Sacred Heart	7pm
Saturday 25th	Prayer Ichthus/RCCG	

Also find Sittingbourne Baptist Church on Facebook for updates and information about our activities and our live streamed worship.



Minister

REV
NATHAN GORDON

CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Great new photos thanks to Charles O!



RICKY GROSVENOR -
YOUTH PASTOR



GRAHAME
ATKINSON
CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR



JOSHUA
AJIBOYE



PAUL BLAKE



DAVID CASSE



ADRIAN
CHEESMAN



KUDA OSOBA



LISA
PENNINGTON



RICHARD
SILLS
Responsible for
Safeguarding

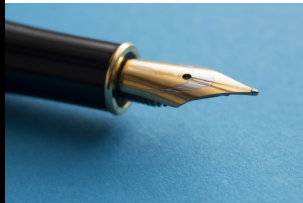


HYLKO
ZINGSTRA
TREASURER

Services for the month of December

	Morning Service 10.30am	Evening Service 6.30pm
1st	"God, Where is My Vote? (Coming to terms with the Sovereign Will of God)" Matthew 1:18-25. Rev Nathan Gordon	"Assisted Dying: What does the Bible say?" Alan Cole 
8th	Children and Youth Presentation of the Christmas Story 	Carolling in the Local Area to hand out invitations and share the Good News of Jesus
15th 	A short Communion Service followed by Carols on the High Street	Carols by Candle Light Service— "The Nativity is for Grown-Ups too!"
22nd	Christingle Service— led by Ricky	The Encounter (TBC)
25th	Also 10.30am Christmas Day Service—children please bring a still wrapped up gift with you!	
29th	Looking Forward— Rev Nathan Gordon	(TBC)





Administrators Notes

Dear Church Family.

Greetings to you all as we approach the "birthday" of our Lord Jesus.

I wish to reflect on this past year on the role as your Administrator, and the joy, trials and tribulations that I have had. When I started as the Administrator two years ago, I took it on completely new, never done anything like it before, but I also knew that it would not be easy, and at times difficult and demanding.

That "difficult and demanding" part was made all too apparent in May this year, when I was admitted to hospital with lymphoma and the subsequent treatment that followed over the next 3 months, finally finishing in mid September. All through that time I carried on with the job, with help from Beverley and the Deacons, and your love, prayers and support. I have made mistakes, and unfortunately, have left some things undone, to which I am still playing "catch-up" with, so please bear with me as I don't have much time till the end of the year to finish off,

I would also like to say...**CONGRATULATIONS** to Ian and Anna [Mr. and Mrs. Andrews] on their marriage last month. Please pray for them as they embark on their new life together.

Lastly, may you all enjoy **Peace** and **Love** as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus together.

Yours, in the love of Christ, Grahame.



We have been praying for Street Pastors to restart in Sittingbourne and they are sooooo close!

God's Timing is perfect and they have a prayer walk on the 13th of December which could turn into an actual patrol if everything comes through from the police and the Council. Praise God that they have sourced radios and all the practical bits over the course of this year— we are grateful for

the Committee who have taken on roles of responsibility— finance and guidance and oversight according to the guidelines of Ascension Trust.

Please do continue to pray for the teams as they eventually go out on a Friday Evening. It would be amazing if more Pastors could train up and join teams— the darkness on the High Street has definitely increased to fill the void that was left by their absence. Pray they push back the boundaries and shine light into the darkest corners of the street and those who live on and around our town centre. All of the churches seek to serve God and to shine His light into the lives they can reach. Street Pastoring is a way of speaking into lives, saving the vulnerable and serving our Community. Please speak to Ian Stride or Nic & Hus Hasan if you wish to know more.

Church Office details

01795 420990

Office hours: Mon, Tue & Thurs 9am-3pm Wed 5-9pm, Fri 9-2pm.

Office Manager: Bev Sills

office.manager@sbc-church.org.uk

Email: office@sbc-church.org.uk

Web: www.sbc-church.org.uk



December 8th at 10.30am— Invite the children in your child's class at school or your neighbours' families to the greatest story ever told!

December Bits

We can all get very busy over the month of December but there are lots of things going on within the church. Do invite people in for all of the Christmas services— 8th is the Children's Presentation— the whole service will be suitable for all of the family.

If you are able to join us on that evening to sing outdoors that would be a really good boost to the group who go out. People are so amazed that we aren't collecting money but we ask for requests and hand out invitations to the Carol Service the next Sunday evening.

We can witness much more easily during the month of December so don't miss the opportunities.

As SBC have gone early on the Carol Service then Holy Trinity have passed on the date of their Carol Service and it is the 22nd of December at 6pm. Their lovely office manager assured me that everyone is welcome. It is also the 22nd in Newington at St Mary's— check the time as I don't have that one!

**Carols by Candle
Light 6.30pm
15th Dec.
"The Nativity
is for
Grown-ups
too"**



Our Carol service is always followed by hot drinks and mince pies— If you are able to help with this please speak to Bev in the office. Also we will be putting the church tree up 5/6th December if anyone is able to help for a few hours. 22nd will be a Christingle Service with some making and taking during that time— if you have grandchildren visiting please do bring them along.

COME ALONG TO THE

**CHURCH
QUIZ**



ON SATURDAY
14TH DECEMBER

First question at 7:00 pm
Held in the Church Lounge

Join us for a fun quiz for all the family.
Please bring your own snacks and drinks.
Run by Andrew Cowan
Further information please contact:
Bev Sills (office.manager@sbc-church.org.uk) or Andrew Cowan
(cowan1@sky.com)

The Quiz is a time of fun— team names can be sensible or silly and snacks and sharing abound! All we ask as entry fees are for a few donations to the foodbank—tinned and long life/dried goods rather than anything fresh. Also it's a bring your own snacks and soft drinks event. We don't put people in teams unless you arrive as a set of 6-8 people – generally folk just fill up the tables as they go along, so a lot of laughter and getting to know one another better takes place.

Whilst on the subject of Christmas— please can we collect mince pies and chocolates for CAP hampers again? (collection date 8th Dec.) Big Box in Lounge.

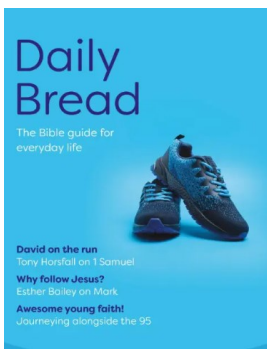


Also mince pies or Christmas style small cakes for our own Carols by Candle light Service on the evening of 15th December— you know the drill! **Nothing with any alcohol in for both of these thank you. Also check Best before dates!**

Studying God's Word

The Bible in English has been around for a very long time. There are some new ways of getting familiar with God's Word though.

In print there are some excellent daily reading notes available from different publishing houses and many really helpful Christians who have a wonderful way with exposition (what does it say?) You can always be independent and read each passage with the questions "What does it say?" "What does it mean?" "Where can I apply it in my life?"



There is a lovely (and long) prayer from Richard, Bishop of Chichester (1253) which ends with

"Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits Thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly, day by day "

Without being soaked in the Word of God and overflowing with His Spirit we will not be fulfilling the call to 'make Disciples' of ourselves.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 states that:-" All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Certain verses may be familiar but we constantly need to read and learn more of the Bible each day. Just as the Israelites were told to collect Manna from Heaven every day, Jesus said "I am the Bread of Life" so we need to spend time with him being nourished every day. The Bible notes 'Daily Bread' have the clue in their name!

Notes which run through themes are available freely from the bookshelf at the front of the church. The Hub which is situated along the corridor past the church office or sharp right as you come in the front doors is full of books on every topic you can imagine!

They have all been donated and there are a lot of donated Bible notes– take some for yourself, just write over the date– the truths they hold do not fade with being the wrong date! There are even some Bible study CD's and DVD's in the Office!

Fast Forward to the 21st century and Bible study can get App-y! Bible Gateway is free to download (and others) to your smart phone and you can have the whole Bible in your handbag or pocket.

Many of these Apps have the function to have the passage read out to you– press play on Gateway and a voice which sounds remarkably like the actor James Mason reads the passage or the chapter to you. There are reading plans– some of which cover discipleship topics or whole books or Letters from the Bible or you can set your own theme and use a concordance to search through (A Concordance will tell you every time a particular word or theme occurs in the Bible)



Another popular way of making Bible Verses stick in your mind is 'journaling'– basically notetaking in a very visual way. Maybe lists and bullet points work for you. Maybe you are a more visual person and doodle all over your notes? Maybe you prefer to dictate voice notes into your phone or will shout at Alexa or Siri to find the verse that says.....

Mark, the earliest Gospel written tells us:-

Mark 1v 35 –Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place, where he prayed.

If the Son of God who was God needed to talk to the Father in Heaven , then we do too. We will not see Him more clearly unless we get to know His Word and spend regular time with Him opening up our heart to let His love and wisdom in. That's what a Quiet Time is– not something odd but something wonderful– spending time getting to know your Heavenly Father.

Group Bible Study really helps too. If you are a younger Christian, spending time with others is encouraging and supporting. When we are children we learn to walk by holding onto an older person's hands. When we are spiritual children the same applies. There are a few Home Bible study groups linked to the church , we could do with a few more! If you are 12-18 speak to Ricky if you are 18-39 speak to Anna Andrews, if you are any age and would like to host a Bible study once a fortnight then please speak to Nathan or one of the deacons– We can offer so much support and if you are willing to make a few cups of tea then you will pretty soon have a group of fellow Christians who meet with you on a regular basis. This can be really good if you struggle to get out–make folk come to you!! It does help get to know people better as the church family grows too!



Planning for the Future

You may have seen a tiny photo like this in the Sermon Notes and wondered what was going on. Do have a think about the platform Area of the church as we are hoping to refresh it over the coming months. If you have any ideas about what it should look like and what would be really useful then do drop a note into the suggestion box in the Lounge.

Everything needs to be in-keeping with the church as a whole and should be accessible and 'user friendly' as they say! If you can contribute any wisdom about safety and accessibility please do pop your suggestions in the box. It will come before the church meeting again before plans are finalised so you have until February to ponder it!

Nicola and Hus Hasan and heading up a team for this project which includes Bradley—He has all the practical know how!

It is also hoped that we will renew the chairs as a part of this project. They were all kindly turned round to refresh the seats this year but the top corners are worn after nearly 40 years of service. Watch this space and please do contribute where you can with suggestions.

Pigeonholes

Mail is exchanged via the "pigeonholes" at the rear of the church lounge, filed under alphabetical surname order. Post mail here to other church members and check your own box each Sunday. Especially if you are part of a team that needs Rotas. You can also put articles for the magazine etc. in the church office pigeonhole!

As the cost of postage has gone 'through the roof' please do use the pigeonholes for Christmas Cards but remember to check them regularly over the course of this month. You need to know the initial of the persons surname so do ask around!



FOCUS ON

Children and Youth Presentation

The Practical details are here:-

Saturday 7th December – A full dress rehearsal will be held on Saturday 7th December at 2pm. Please drop your children at the church via the side door (press button 1 on the wall). This will enable the children to practice in the church and with the microphones. Please collect your children at 4pm



Sunday 8th December – Ignite children need to be in the church lounge at 10am

Friday 20th December – Children's Christmas Party 5pm in the lounge. It is for all the children who attend JAM club, Ignite 1 and 2, so includes children who are in Year R. We will need to know if your child is coming so we can make sure there is enough food for everyone. Also let us know if your child has any special dietary needs so we can cater for them. **Please let Sally 07729657398 or Lisa 07704859915 know by Monday 16th December.** Please collect your children at 7pm.

Here we go with Birthday and Wedding Anniversary mentions!

Birthdays pop up on Face book but do let me know the Anniversaries as I need a little reminder! It is better by e-mail than on a Sunday!



December– Busy Month– but still time for Birthdays!

6th Edward Lardner

11th Sandy

21st Miles and Pat's 61st Anniversary-whoop whoop!



23rd—Royan

28th Cindy

Don't forget to send in your special mentions for the January Magazine. The deadline will have to be 31st December. Then we can all pray for you too.

For all details and services you may have missed please check out the freshly revamped Church Website (Thanks Brian!) and follow/like the Facebook page for regular updates on all that is going on!

DECEMBER 2024

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
30 OFFICE CLOSED	31 Office Open briefly					1 10am prayer in Hub 10:30am Morning service- "God-where is my vote?" Matthew 1 v. 18-25-Rev Nathan Gordon 6:30pm -Alan Cole- "Assisted Dying "What does the Bible say?" 
2 10:00am-noon A.B.C. OFFICE CLOSED FROM 12 noon	3 8am Early Prayer 9:30-11:30am Café 3:16 in Sanctuary 10am-noon Private event in Lounge 7:30pm Deacons Meeting	4 8am Early Prayer 1:30pm & 7:15pm Housegroups	5 8am Early Prayer 9:30-11:30am Café 3:16 10:45am Focus on Faith Woodstock 2pm Bright Hour 6:30pm Youth Band 7:30-9pm Choir	6 8am Early Prayer 9:30am Pastoral Team 10:30am-12:30 Food Bank in Lounge 5-6:30pm JAM CLUB 7-9pm Underground	7 10am-12noon Contact Centre 11am-1pm - Outreach team out 2-4pm Presentation Dress Rehearsal	8 10 am Prayer in Hub 10:30am -Morning service- Children's presentation—"The Fleece Force" 6:20 pm Meet at church for Prayer and then Carol Singing in the Local Area
9 10:00am-noon A.B.C. 6-8pm Service of songs for Rachael	10 10:30am Rachael's funeral	11 7:30pm Church Prayer Meeting in Lounge	12 9:30-11:30am Café 3:16 2pm Bright Hour 6:30pm Youth Band 7:30-9pm Choir practice	13 10:30am-12:30 Food Bank in Lounge 5-6:30pm JAM CLUB 7-9pm Underground	14 10am-12 noon Contact Centre 11am-1pm Outreach Team out 7pm Christmas Quiz night in Lounge	15 10am Prayer in Hub 10:30am-Morning Service- Communion and then singing outside 6:30pm Carols by Candlelight "The Nativity is for Grown-ups too!" 
16 10:00am-noon A.B.C.-Party	17 9:30-11:30am Café 3:16 in Sanctuary 2pm Over 55s carol service 7:30pm Deacons prayer meeting	18 1:30pm & 7:15 Housegroups 1:30pm Pine Lodge service	19 9:30-11:30am Café 3:16 10:45am Woodstock Care Home service 2pm Bright Hour 6:30pm Youth Band	20 10:30am-12:30 Food Bank in Lounge 5-7pm Ignite & JAM CLUB combined Party 7-9pm Underground-Offsite	21 10am-12 noon Contact Centre 11am-1pm - Outreach team out	22 10am Prayer in Hub 10:30am -Christingle service Further services TBC
23 OFFICE CLOSED	24	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:30am Christmas morning service	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 10am-12 noon Contact Centre	29 10am Prayer in Hub 10:30am-Morning service "Looking forward" Rev Nathan Gordon Further Services TBC