



**St Johns Hill  
Sevenoaks  
United Reformed  
Church**



**October – November 2023  
Magazine**

**St Johns Hill United Reformed Church**  
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**Bookings** Clive Avery

## Sunday Club for children aged 0 – 16

**Our services are held at St Johns Hill URC every Sunday at 10.30 am unless advertised differently.**

**Services can also be viewed on the St Johns Hill URC YouTube channel.**

**For full details of forthcoming services please refer to emails from the Church Secretary**

Wednesday – ‘Midweek Prayers’. The Prayer team will send an email with prayer thoughts.

Thursday – 7:30pm on Zoom for ‘Coffee and Chat’ discussion group - Meeting ID: 660 593 603

Contact an Elder for details on how to be involved.

**Our Core Mission is:**

**To worship God**

**In as mutually supportive fellowship and, in the power of the spirit to develop our faith & to bring others to know & love Jesus Christ as our Lord & Saviour**



# CHURCH SERVICES

## October

1st	10.30	<b>Harvest</b>	Rev. Angela Rigby
8th	10.30		Albert & Elizabeth Wood
15th	10.30	<b>Communion</b>	Rev. Angela Rigby
22nd	10.30	<b>Praise Service</b>	Jenny Avery
29th	10.30		Mary Dewell

## November

5th	10.30		Rev. Angela Rigby
12th	10.30 16.00	<b>Remembrance Service</b> <b>Service of Memories</b>	Albert & Elizabeth Wood Rev. Angela Rigby
19th	10.30	<b>Communion</b>	Rev. Angela Rigby
26th	10.30		Rev. Vic Webb

## December

1st	10.30	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Advent Sunday - Nativity</b>	Rev. Angela Rigby
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## **From the Minister**

September with its endings and beginnings has flown by! As summer draws to a close and as we approach October, we put away our summer clothes and begin to see Halloween and Christmas decorations competing for our attention in the local shops, often sitting side by side. Our televisions are filled with new programmes, and in church, we look towards the season of Bonfires, Remembrance, and preparation of Advent. At the church's Worship and Outreach meeting, we are already planning this year's carol service! (Contact me or Dean if you would like to know more!)

But before we get to Christmas, we enter the season of autumn – a time of thanksgiving. Maybe you want to give thanks to God for a lovely summer holiday, for weddings, for friends and family or for new beginnings?

Our October begins with our Harvest celebration service on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. A time for us to say thank you for all that is produced for us, especially as we live in the Garden of England and we can see farmers going about their work to supply the raw ingredients to sustain us.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul encourages us all to live our lives in an attitude of thankfulness. It is difficult and takes a lot of discipline and effort. If you're feeling grumpy for no good reason, try smiling – just the act of smiling can help us to feel a bit more cheerful whether we want to or not! However, living lives of thankfulness doesn't mean we should just ignore our problems or the problems of others and say that they don't matter. As Ecclesiastes says, there is a time to laugh and a time to cry. Sometimes people say that they "mustn't grumble" and imply that their sufferings are too small to be of value compared to the suffering of others. We can find ourselves thinking, "There are so many worse off than me." Whilst in some sense that may be true; in another sense that is not true. All our

struggles and sufferings matter to God, however small they are. We each matter to God. But Paul understood that if we can learn to be positive and thankful during the good times, then that will help sustain us through the difficult times. He was in prison when he wrote to the Ephesians. Being thankful didn't diminish his hardship, but it did help him to endure it.

*"Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5 v18b-20 NIV*

Each new day brings with it a new beginning and a challenge. So how about a challenge to be thankful! I challenge myself too. To make an effort to see the positive in a situation rather than the downside. To stop us when we start complaining and give thanks instead. And I think that if we can do that, we'll discover that whatever life may bring, it will be the better for having consciously tried to live it in an attitude of thankfulness.

- Rev Angela Rigby

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## **Persecution – the Book of Daniel**

As we continue our study of the book of Daniel, we will read stories of men being persecuted for their faith. With the rise of a destructive form of nationalism in many countries around the world also being linked with religions (the religion varies depending on the country), there is an increase of people of many faiths being persecuted because they do not follow the faith that their country's particular form of nationalism is linked to. I don't want to pick on any particular country or religion, but there are people from many

different religions – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism to name a few – that are persecuting people of other faiths. We are quite blessed to have freedom of religion here in the UK, and although sometimes our personal faith convictions can clash with what the rest of culture or what our politicians do, thankfully we in the UK do not suffer with the type of persecution many face around the world.

During our service on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October, I will be talking about a charity called Open Doors, and you will have an opportunity to make a donation to Open Doors after the service. Open Doors is a charity that supplies Bibles, emergency relief and help to Christians that are being persecuted in countries around the world. To find out more about Open Doors, please look at their website:

<https://opendoorsuk.org/>

Every year Open Doors produce a World Watch list, and the top five countries where Christians are being persecuted for 2023 are: North Korea, Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea and Libya. A trend they noted though was that “approximately 15 Christians were killed for their faith every single day” in 2022, with “almost 90% being in Nigeria” (<https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/2023-world-watch-list-reveals-persecution-of-the-church-is-growing-globally>). Sometimes Christians are seen as a threat to the national religion, but sometimes as in the case of North Korea, Christians are seen as a political threat.

A close read of the book of Daniel, and we can see these forces playing out against Daniel and his friends also. A book that begins with Daniel’s decision “not to defile himself with the king’s food” (Daniel 1:8) and continues with his faithfulness to God and refusal to bow down to the idols of the Empire also doesn’t shy away from the potential suffering they would face. And if we fast-forward to the Christians being persecuted by the Roman Empire for refusing to follow the Emperor not just as ruler but also as a god, some Christians were tortured, imprisoned and killed. One Emperor, Nero,

had a particularly cruel streak, as he would tie Christians to stakes and set them on fire to light up his garden parties. Following God, following Christ was very difficult for people in Biblical times and shortly after and is still extremely dangerous for some people around the world. Please do consider giving to Open Door, and please do pray for people of all faiths and none who are being persecuted, but particularly for Christians.

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### A prayer for secret Believers (Written by Open Doors)

Lord Jesus,

Be with all Your disciples who are under suspicion,  
all Your followers who are being followed,  
whose lives are lived against a background hum of fear.

Give comfort and courage to the watched and the whispered about,  
the spied upon and the shadowed,  
those who have to hide their beliefs,  
disguise their actions,  
and watch their steps.

Refresh and renew those exhausted from the need for constant vigilance.

Protect all those who gather in secret.

Strengthen the underground networks of believers around the world.

Give wisdom to their leaders, so that they know whom to trust,  
when to speak and when to stay silent.

Thank You for their faith and perseverance, and for the courage of those who, despite the penalties for being caught, still try to share Your truth and love.                      Amen



# Harvest Service

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October

10.30



followed by

Traditional Harvest Lunch

Sevenoaks Foodbank (Loaves & Fishes)	
We really need:	
<b>TINNED FOOD</b> tuna ravioli beef bolognese chicken casserole sweetcorn spaghetti hoops	<b>CEREALS &amp; SAUCES</b> breakfast cereals (but not Weetabix or cornflakes) rice tomato ketchup mayonnaise
<b>OTHER ITEMS</b> hot chocolate biscuits tea cooking oil peanut butter chocolate spread tin openers cleaning products Currently we do not need: baked beans tinned carrots tinned tomatoes pasta chicken in white sauce	
Thank you for your support. It is much appreciated.	



**Press on - look up!**

*Bible Study*  
*Philippians 3-4*

*18<sup>th</sup> October*  
*by Zoom*  
*8 - 9 p.m.*

The Zoom link will be circulated a few days before the event.



# *Service of Memories*

*Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023*

*4.00 pm*

*St Johns Hill URC*

*Followed by light refreshments*

*All are welcome*

# Nativity & Gift Service



Where can we find Him?

Join us to help answer this question!

Includes donations for our local Food Banks

**SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER 10.30AM**

Wapn-wah-Postcard-Wah.com

# Prayer Letter



**Devote yourselves to prayer with  
alert minds and a thankful heart**

**Colossians 4:2**

This is a busy time of year at Hospices of Hope. The autumn is a peak time for our fundraising efforts – not only here in the UK – but also in the countries we support. In this edition of our prayer letter, we ask you to pray for our work as we approach the end of the year.

## **Your Prayers Matter**

### **Summer Trips**

Annually, we lead five children's respite weeks at various locations in Romania – two at Copacenci, two in Brasov and one by the seaside. These special weeks provide care and respite for children and their families who are affected by rare or terminal illness. All together over 260 children came along this year, together with their parents and helped by over 50 volunteers. Some of these were young people from the UK and others were local Romanian volunteers. Please pray for the lasting affects of this work.



**The Bucharest Holiday Club**



**The Seaside Club**

Ten years ago, a 14-year-old child came on our very first trip. He had lost his mother to cancer and had an alcoholic father. Following the trip and the care and love he received, he made the decision to commit his life to Christ. Then, supported by his local church, he looked after his younger brothers, acting as a parent to them. Quite recently and unexpectedly, he telephoned our founder, Graham Perolls, to tell him that he was starting his first job in the UK and attending a church in Newcastle.

'That Summer Trip changed my whole life', he said.

**Please pray that this year's Summer Trips will also show similar long-term positive benefits.**

### **Can we support you?**

*We would love to come to one of your church services or mid-week groups to talk about the work of Hospices of Hope and to encourage your prayers. You can e-mail us at [events@hospicesofhope.co.uk](mailto:events@hospicesofhope.co.uk) or call on 07801 045 406 and Church Link Volunteer, Rick Woodward, will be in touch.*



## Hospice care is more than pain relief

In Serbia, which has the highest cancer mortality rate in Europe, the government believes that hospice care is just about providing pain relief. However, the care provided by BELHospice is so much more.



Lazar with his parents

I visited a family whose 6-year-old son, Lazar, suffers from a rare genetic disorder called Dravet syndrome. It is an incurable disease causing frequent epileptic fits, delays in development and it makes him unable to speak. Each week a psychotherapist from the hospice visits the mother and father, providing counselling and support. 'We feel we are losing everything' the parents told me. 'My wife has given up her work to care for our son, and our friends feel embarrassed to come over, worrying that their own children might be frightened if our son has a seizure.' My heart went out to these parents. Their only hope is in our love and care - and that one day there might be a miracle cure.

Please pray for our hospice work in Serbia and the difficulties they face with a government that refuses to provide any support. Pray specifically that next year we are able to lead our first summer camp for children there.

## Please pray for:

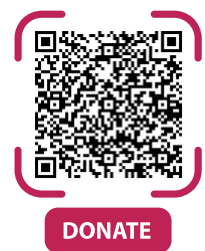
- The growing work of the new day centre in Chisinau, Moldova. We have benefitted from strong government encouragement – but many of the patients are poor and badly served by an inadequate health care service.
- Our support for two hospices in the Regional Palliative Care centre in Ukraine. Providing hospice care in an unstable war zone, with buildings that need refurbishment, is difficult and dangerous. Pray for the safety of staff and patients working there.
- Hospice care in Greece. Surprisingly, hospice care in Greece is almost unknown! We work in partnership with two out of the only three hospices in the country. We need more resources and much more education and understanding from doctors and nurses about the value of proper hospice care.
- Our shops - We have 15 UK shops stretching from Scotland to Kent. The retail business is an interesting challenge, but we are grateful that our shops raise over £1 million each year. Every donation or purchase supports our good cause. Incidentally, if you live near Westerham, do pop in and visit our newest shop which opened in the village just a few months ago!

## Thank you!

**Hospices of Hope depends upon God's help and your generosity. We value so much the individuals in your churches who pray for our work and enable us to bring hope to families whose lives have been torn apart through illness.**

*Rick Woodward*

Hospices of Hope Church Link Volunteer



@hospicesofhope

[www.hospicesofhope.co.uk](http://www.hospicesofhope.co.uk)

Registered Charity Number: 1088475 (England & Wales) and SC040117 (Scotland). Registered Company Number: 4120082.  
September - December 2023

Hospices of Hope Ltd  
11 High Street, Otford TN4 5PG  
01959 525110  
[office@hospicesofhope.co.uk](mailto:office@hospicesofhope.co.uk)



hospicesofhope  
making family life count

## Letters

**'You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody.'**

2 Corinthians 3, verse 2.

Rick Woodward's inspiring message on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September reminded me of a Bible Study Course, 'Blowing Your Cover' we followed as a church some years ago.

There were three messages which stayed in my mind. The first was from the phrase **'a trace of grace'** – the idea that wherever you are as you go about your daily life, we can live our Christianity through our behaviour, attitudes and actions and, through little deeds, leave behind a trace of grace. Rick reminded us of Paul's words, 'we are the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing,' (1 Corinthians 2, verse 15).

The second was Paul's image of Christians as 'living letters'. Rick told us we may be all some people have as an example of Christians. We have a responsibility.

I wrote these verses at the time of our Study Course.

Will you leave a trace of grace  
As you journey through the day?  
Will you blow your cover  
When opportunity comes your way?

Send a smile across a room  
Comfort those in pain,  
Be a guide across a road  
Shower sunshine after rain.

Will you be a living letter,  
Your destination clear,  
Prepared to share the message  
inside for all to hear?

You may not feel as strong as Paul,  
You may lack Peter's faith,  
but you can blow your cover  
With God's amazing grace.

The third message is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi:

**'I witness to people wherever I go and sometimes I use words'.**

Lionel

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### **August News from Kiryandongo**

According to UNHCR and the OPM (Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda), the level of food insecurity amongst the refugee population in Uganda is increasingly high. In all settlements across the country food security, the stable and continuous availability of diversified and nutritious food, is limited due to a number of reasons such as extreme poverty, limited knowledge in agricultural production and inadequate livelihood alternatives. The cuts in the past three years in food rations provided by the WFP further exacerbate the economic pressure and risk of malnourishment amongst refugees.

Among all settlements in Uganda, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement has the highest percentage of acute malnutrition. As children represent 60% of the settlement's population, they are the ones mostly affected by the lack in food provision which in the long-term can have a drastic impact on child development and general health.



To address the acute issue of food insecurity and malnourishment and to empower refugees economically, GRI developed a block farming program. Currently, we support five farmer groups within the settlement by providing access to land and by giving out seeds and other agro-inputs. Moreover, our livelihoods officer offers trainings on organic farming and climate smart agriculture as well as continuous guidance throughout the year.

Global Refugee Initiatives signed a partnership agreement with Saint Luke church of Uganda Bweyale parish, to support host community farmer groups in vegetable production. The program has empowered several church groups in Kiryandongo district to generate income by growing vegetables. Such initiatives also promote peaceful coexistence between refugee communities and host nationals.

### **September News:**

The year is reaching its last quarter but at GRI we are active as usual! Here a quick activity update from the field:

- After three weeks of holidays, our learners are back at Ubuntu Model Primary School for their third and last school term of this year. And they look smart as school uniforms have arrived.
- During the dry season our farmer groups face difficulties accessing water for their gardens. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) we will soon provide water for agricultural production.
- We thank Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI) Uganda for carrying out an enriching training on mental health for our entire field staff. The newly acquired skills will empower our team to respond to the psycho-social needs of our learners at Ubuntu Model Primary School and other program participants. Find out more about how the training has impacted our staff in this newsletter.

- Our Environment Officer, Angera Nduhukire, conducted a *partner sensory walk* with the members of the Environmental Kids Club at our school in the settlement. The *Partner Sensory Walk* is an outdoor learning approach in which young learners use their senses to analyse, perceive and develop a positive relationship with the environment around them.

Elwyn

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*Editor: by Tim Lenton*

## **A Bear called Paddington**

It was 65 years ago, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1958, that Michael Bond's children's book, *A Bear Called Paddington*, was published. It marked the debut of the lovable Paddington Bear, who is now a household name after appearing in two irresistible films.



Paddington starred in more than 20 books written by Bond, who died aged 91 in 2017. The original story was inspired by the author witnessing Jewish and British evacuee children passing through Reading station. Bond wanted the bear to have come from “darkest Africa”, but this was changed to Peru when his agent pointed out that there were no bears in Africa.

Many people have found Christian characteristics in the bespectacled, kind, red-hatted, innocent Paddington, who always tries to do the right thing but often gets into trouble as a result. He is invariably polite but has a “hard stare” for those who behave badly. The two hugely successful films, with Ben Whishaw voicing Paddington and household names in other roles, established the bear in the national psyche – a natural successor to Winnie the Pooh.

A stuffed toy Paddington Bear was chosen by British tunnellers as the first item to be passed to their French counterparts when the two sides of the Channel Tunnel came together in 1994. The books have been translated into 30 languages and have sold more than 30 million copies.

Paddington has also reached the very top of society. Comedian and later President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky dubbed him in the Ukrainian version of the films, and to cap everything, Paddington joined the late Queen in one of her last public appearances – a brilliant comedy segment in the Platinum Party at the Palace on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2022, in which the Queen ‘revealed’ that she always carried a marmalade sandwich – Paddington’s favourite food – in her handbag.

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*Editor: Lester Amann considers how the Bible Society was inspired to begin its work.*

## **Bibles for all**

Think for a moment about something you really want. How much would you spend to buy it? How far would you go to get it?

Young Mary knew what she wanted. It took years before she could afford it. She was ready to walk 25 miles over mountainous terrain to get it. Mary just wanted a Bible.

Mary Jones lived in a small village in Wales at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. From an early age, Mary loved to hear stories from the Bible. Every Sunday she attended her local chapel and enjoyed listening to people reading from the Scriptures.

When Mary was only nine years old, she decided on the most important thing in her life. She wanted to read from her own Bible. Unfortunately, Bibles were hard to come by. They were expensive and Mary’s parents

couldn't afford to buy one. So, Mary decided to do odd jobs for people and earn enough money to buy a Bible.

Six years later, Mary had saved enough money for her special book. Although the nearest shop which sold Bibles was in Bala, 25 miles away, undaunted she set out on her long journey. In Bala, she discovered that the book shop had sold out of all the Bibles! We can only imagine how upset and disappointed she was.

When the bookseller, Thomas Charles, heard about her long walk and that she would return home empty handed, he gave her his Bible. Later, Thomas Charles wondered if there were other children (and adults) around the country who wanted a Bible but had problems getting one.

Soon after Mary's visit, Thomas Charles went to London. Here, he met influential people including William Wilberforce and shared with them the story of Mary Jones. From this meeting came a response to Mary's situation. On 7<sup>th</sup> March 1804 the *British and Foreign Bible Society* was formed. Its purpose was to provide Bibles throughout the world, in a language people could understand and at a price they could afford.

After this, other national societies were created and in 1946 the *United Bible Societies* was established to co-ordinate the work worldwide. Today, there are over 100 Bible Societies, working in nearly 200 countries. While they are busy with translation, production and distribution programmes, there are still countless numbers of people who do not have the Scriptures.

If we own a Bible, let's give thanks we have God's Word in our hands and, where possible, support a Bible Society with their valuable work.

## **Community News**

There will be a free Tea Dance at the Kippington Centre, St Mary's on the 1st December.

*Elwyn*

## Concerts Don't Cost The Earth

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/concerts-dont-cost-the-earth-sevenoaks-tickets-721089055777>

### Date and time

**Fri, 6 Oct 2023 19:30 - 21:15 BST**

### Location

**TN13 3AE**

**The Drive Methodist Church, Sevenoaks TN13 3AE**

### Refund Policy

Contact the organiser to request a refund.

Eventbrite's fee is non-refundable.

### About this event

- **1 hour 45 minutes**
- **Mobile eTicket**
- 

This event is co-hosted with Sevenoaks Climate Action Network. In this concert Holly will facilitate a beautiful bridge between music and the climate crisis. Between two sets of carefully chosen repertoire where you will be taken on a musical and emotional journey there will be a chance to discuss the climate emergency and what we can do about it. An anonymous vote at the end will decide where the proceeds of the concert should go. A light and enjoyable event but with a serious edge.

[www.sevenoakscan.org.uk](http://www.sevenoakscan.org.uk)

[www.concertsdontcosttheearth.org](http://www.concertsdontcosttheearth.org)

Please share. They will be giving us a chance to choose between Friends Of The Earth or Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees.

*Elwyn*



## FUTURE DATES

**Our next Film Club will be on 19<sup>th</sup> November**

## Blood Donor Sessions

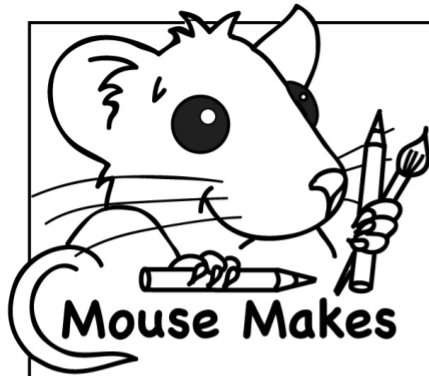
Wednesday 15th November 2023

Wednesday 6th December 2023

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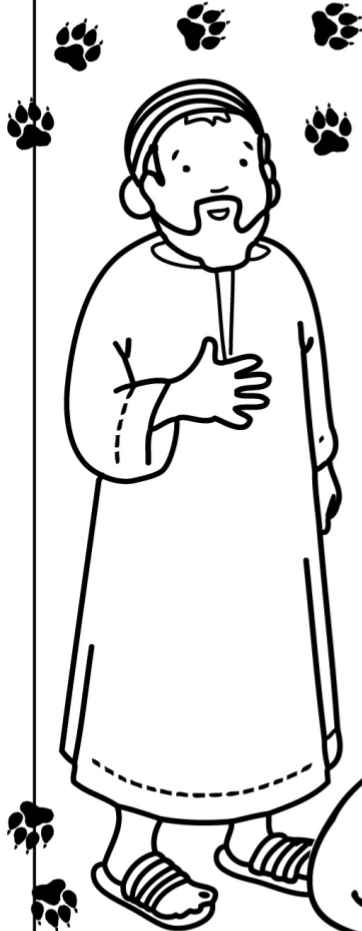


Thanks to technology, replacing the worn-out hymn books didn't cost a penny




You may have read the Bible story of Daniel in the **lions'** den, but have you ever read the whole book of Daniel?

Take your time and read a little each day and find out about the **vegetables**, the **statue**, the **gold idol**, the **furnace**, the **tree**, the **writing** on the wall, the **lions**, the **four animals**, the **ram** and the **goat**, and the **man**.



W A L L O M I S H A E L A W  
D S T A T U E T R E E O L U  
A H A Z A R I A H W D R L P  
N P N K D R E A M G O D I R  
I E I D O L D A R I U S O A  
E N W R I T I N G K F D N Y  
L A B C Y F U R N A C E S E  
A Z M H A N A N I A H N E R  
N E B U C H A D N E Z Z E R  
G R E S C U E  
E T R U S T  
L K I N G



  
Ashpenaz  
changed Daniel  
and his friends  
names. Look up  
**Daniel 1:7**  
to see what he  
changed them to.

Can you find these words from the book of Daniel in the wordsearch?  
KING • NEBUCHADNEZZER • DANIEL • DARIUS • ASPHENAZ  
HANANIAH • MISHAEL • AZARIAH • DREAM • STATUE  
IDOL • FURNACE • TREE • WRITING • WALL • LAW • LIONS  
DEN • PRAYER • LORD • GOD • TRUST • RESCUE • ANGEL

**If you would like further information on any of the following, please phone the church office. We will keep you informed via the Church Magazine of when the groups start up again following the Covid closure.**

### **House groups.**

**Please speak to Rev. Angela Rigby or one of the Elders if you would like to join a house group.**

### **Youth activities:**

Sevenoaks Campaigners (Mondays)  
Rainbows (Mondays)  
Eagles (Thursdays)  
Girl Guides (Fridays)

If you would like us to pray for you, or for someone you know, please leave a message on our phone, or email us at [sjhsevenoaksurc@gmail.com](mailto:sjhsevenoaksurc@gmail.com) or by post to the address on page 2.

**You can pray to God, anytime, anywhere, and in your own words – He is listening.**

***The Homepage of the Church website (specifically the Newsfeed) needs updating regularly to keep it up-to-date, so any information should be sent to Simon so he can refresh this. [s.browitt@sky.com](mailto:s.browitt@sky.com)***

**Any material for the December/January edition of the Church Magazine should reach me by the 23rd November either by email to [jpbrowitt@sky.com](mailto:jpbrowitt@sky.com), by hand or via the church office.**

If you would like your copy e-mailed to you, please send your e-mail address to [sjhsevenoaksurc@gmail.com](mailto:sjhsevenoaksurc@gmail.com) and all future issues will be sent to you in this way.

Large print copies of this magazine are available on request.