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Winter is the time of the year when the nights are longer and the hours of daylight are much shorter. And especially in country areas where there are no street lights a torch or lantern are usually essential.

I read recently these words. 'He who carries a lantern on a dark road at night sees only one step ahead. When he takes that step, the lamp moves forward and another step is made plain. He finally reaches his destination in safety without once walking in darkness. All the way is lighted, but only a single step at a time. This is the method of God's guidance.'

As Christians we have the assurance of our ultimate safe arrival in Heaven but there are of course potholes and rough ground in life that can disrupt our journey, and so we need to daily focus on the light of God's Word which provides grace, strength and guidance for each and every step of our journey through life. In the same way as a lantern can enable us to journey safely through the dark, so the light of God's Word can help and equip us for the challenges that we face each step that we take through our dark world.

In Psalm 119:105 we read these words. 'Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.'

It is my prayer that we all strive to walk one step at a time in God's light, so that we all know God's guidance and blessings and ultimately not only reach our destination safely, but help others to do the same.

God bless you

Major Kevin



Regular Activities

Sunday:

9:30am Breakfast Church
10:30am Morning Worship

4pm Messy Church (2nd Sunday of the month or otherwise stated)

Fellowship Lunch (3rd Sunday of the month)

Tuesday:

10:00am CAMEO Club

2:00pm Over Sixties Club



Wednesday:

7:45pm Songster Practice

Thursday:

6:00pm Music makers

7:45pm Band Rehearsal

Monday to Friday

Café on the Rec - open for business 8am to 4pm and

Saturday 9am to 1pm.

Also **Sunday mornings** 8.30am to 10am for the Junior Park run.

All items for the March newsletter: messages, prayers or prayer requests, please let Major Kevin, Caroline, Mags or Bev know by Sunday 18th February, 2024. If you would like the newsletter emailed to you each month, please let Bev know.

bev.robilliard53@gmail.com

Lent is a powerful period of time covering 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter (does not include Sundays). It can involve giving things up; prioritizing prayer; finding ways to care more for the good of others than self; an endeavour to draw closer to God. It is a time to help us prepare for Easter and recall again, or realise anew the reason why Jesus had to die.

In the words of Pope Francis: “As we begin the Lenten season, let us pause and reflect on where we want to be in 40 days. Let us pray that as we begin the season of lent, we embrace the opportunity to:

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.*
- Fast from sadness & be filled with gratitude.*
- Fast from anger & be filled with patience.*
- Fast from pessimism & be filled with hope.*
- Fast from worries & have trust in God.*
- Fast from complaints & contemplate simplicity.*
- Fast from pressures & be prayerful.*
- Fast from bitterness & fill our hearts with joy.*
- Fast from selfishness & be compassionate to others.*
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.*
- Fast from words & be silent so we can listen.*

We pray that our daily desire and our one choice is to choose what better leads to the deepening of God’s life in us. We ask the lord to guide our decisions today and to bless our church and community with His peace, His joy and His love.”

Blessings Bev.

Last month, we recognised ‘Covenant Sunday’ when we were reminded that we each are called to make a difference in God’s world. I don’t know if you are aware of the posters on the wall in the foyer area of our church which detail the ‘5 marks of mission’ - they help us explore how we might make a difference and connect with those God is calling us to serve. These are not 5 alternative ways of ‘doing’ mission, they are just ‘different leaves of the same flower’ of love and service. Mission stems from our relationship with Jesus. The closer we are to him, the more we share in his life and he shares in ours. We are called:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

So! What does making a difference look like for us in Stowmarket?
 To whom are we called to be good news?
 What difference do we think God wants us to make? (Just my thoughts! Bev)

Diary Dates for February 2024:

Saturday 10th Corps Social Meal 6.30pm

Sunday 11th 4:00 p.m. Messy Church – The girl that was cured

Wednesday 14th Don’t forget Valentines Day! :)

14th February is the start of Lent ending on Saturday 30th March

Monday 19th Youth Drop in 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Sunday 25th Acknowledge Corps Anniversary 138 years. Actual celebrations to be held on 13th & 14th April

3:30 p.m.—5:00 p.m. Café Church

Please come and join us for a

Corps Social Meal on Saturday 10th February, 6:30 p.m. at the Hall. The menu—Pumpkin Soup; Roast Turkey and Dessert. We will play a game of ‘Categories’ to let the main course go down before dessert!

Please put your names on the list in the foyer if you would like to come along £5.00 per person (to be collected on the day)

Trip to Guernsey Monday 16th September, 2024 to Friday 20th September, 2024

16th—Leaving London Stansted on Flight No GR0627 (15:30 pm)
 20th— Leaving Guernsey Flight No GR0626 (13.50 pm)



If you are thinking about coming on the trip to Guernsey later in the year, you might like to book your flight (details above) now and take advantage of the lower cost!

If you need any help, please give me a call on 07880 721719. We can sort out the accommodation over the next few months. Please let me know when / if you’ve booked. Bev x

Café Church Dates for your diary:

Sunday 25th February
 Sunday 24th March
 Sunday 28th April

From 3.30pm to 5.00pm

This is a place for you to explore, question and belong.