



Dear Friends,

In our recent Nativity Play we featured a song called, 'I'm going on a journey' by Stephanie Reynolds. The tune is catchy and the actions are fun but it's important not to overlook the words.

*I'm going on a journey down a narrow, bumpy road,  
I'm going on a journey so that I can learn and grow  
Reaching far and wide an adventure I will find  
And it's so great having Jesus by my side.*

It's not just children who need to learn and grow, we all need to learn and grow on our journey of faith. As we enter a new year, perhaps we can rekindle a childlike sense of excitement and adventure as we walk with Jesus.

The road may well be narrow and bumpy, but as it says in another well-known song, 'Fix your eyes upon Jesus.' Don't leave Jesus in the manger, it's vital to have him as our guide and companion. The friends on the road to Emmaus were blessed to spend time with Jesus, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us and opened the Scriptures to us.' (Luke 24:32).

We also need to spend time with Jesus each day.

At the risk of 'teaching my grandmother to suck eggs,' can I also suggest the following to help us on our journey;

- Read you Bible each day  
'All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting

and training in righteousness.’ (2 Timothy 3:16)

- Pray.  
‘Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.’ (Phil 4:6)
- ‘Let us not give up meeting together.’ (Hebrews 10:25)
- ‘Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.’  
(Ephesians 5:19)
- ‘Therefore encourage one another and build one another up.’  
(1Thessalonians 5:11)

I’m sure you can all add to my list but I would just like to close with one more tip that I learned from a speaker at Spring Harvest. It’s not exactly in the Bible but it has encouraged me on my journey.

It’s the 11<sup>th</sup> Commandment – Thou shalt bash on.

Happy New Year

Kate Henry xx

### **Welcomers Rota - January**

**Sunday 2nd - Adri and David**

**Sunday 9th - Kate and Peter**

**Sunday 16th - Jo and Nic**

**Sunday 23rd - Brenda and Graham**

**Sunday 30th - Mavis and Peter**



This is the Day  
that the *Lord*  
Has made, let us  
*Rejoice*  
& be glad in it.  
Psalm 118:24

**Surface Deadline** For inclusion in the February edition of Surface Magazine - please send all copy to Kate M by **Thursday 22nd January**. If you no longer wish to receive this magazine, please contact the church administrator to **unsubscribe**. Many thanks!

## Community Fridge Update

It's the Wednesday afternoon after Christmas and the Community Fridge has been really busy today....oops!

*PAUSE..*

Sorry about that.. just paused to chat to a lad and his Mum who we've got to know here. He is a lovely young man and he came in with a fist-full of two pence coins that he was determined to put in the donation pot before helping mum with her shopping needs...

With regard to support

we've been so encouraged by the daily food donations from Sainsbury's and also locals who are placing items into our designated container at the supermarket.

Marlpit Farm shop regularly supplies us with apples, Emily, with a multitude of surplus milk, Kitchen of Kent with fruit and veg, Hubbard's lovely donations, Frankies, and then, other amazing private donations just keep arriving.

It is a privilege to be able to both reduce food wastage and find a home for food where it is most needed.

Our team has been brilliant in collecting food nightly from Sainsburys and also helping to log food in or to clean and check stock rotation.

Over the Christmas period we've been grateful that folk have kindly manned the church on the days the Community Fridge is open (whilst Maggie has been on her hols.)

Having a presence here has meant that there is always someone available to chat or provide help for Pantry visitors if they need us.

*PAUSE..*

Sorry, more folk stopping for a shop and a chat. They really enjoyed some of the Pantry's Christmas goodies and the youngsters are having fun finding some tasty morsels to help their lovely Dad cook dinner.

He only works part time at present so he can help in their care.

How Covid has impacted people's lives is a real big topic of conversation for many folk at present...

As I was saying, it is such a privilege to be here, to get to know folk and have some real conversations.

With that in mind,

I'll close with something that I think might touch you as it did me.



Before Christmas a gentleman came in and after asking what the purpose of the fridge was, he explained that he had been through a difficult time and generous people had given him a box filled with everything to provide a good Christmas dinner.

I said it was a wonderful gift and how kind they had been.

He agreed, but went on to say, that with my permission he would like to take some items from the shelves to pack the box once again so that he could pass the kindness on to someone else who he felt needed encouragement.

Wow.

God is clearly in the 'driving seat' and on the Pantry's exciting journey with Him we are wide-eyed and daily reminded that all this is only as a result of His love and generous provision.

There's so much more to share but not today!

Suffice to add..

"My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Amen!

God bless,

Mary

### **Coffee Shop Opening**

The 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022 is currently scheduled to be the first day of opening for the new Shepherd's Pantry Coffee Shop at SFC. This is the fourth in the portfolio of new food and hospitality-based projects which was envisioned several months ago and will work alongside the Community Fridge, Hug-in-a-Box and the Pantry Parcels which are already up and running. The pandemic has highlighted to us all issues such as social isolation and financial hardship so the purpose of these projects is to find new, compassionate and relevant ways to engage with and support people in our community using the resources we have available or can leverage as a Church.

The Coffee shop will be open to everyone and is 'pop-up' in style rather than being open every day so the opening times are initially planned to be 12noon to 2pm on Thursday's and Saturday's. The intention is to create a welcoming and informal space for people to 'get refreshment' by enjoying great drinks, snacks and light lunches and to increase social connections and friendships. SFC has secured grant funding to cover the salary of a barista as the lead worker in the coffee shop and local person Charlotte Taylor has been appointed to this role. She will be supported by myself and hopefully other volunteers in time.

So do make a note in your diary when the coffee shop is open and come along and support and enjoy this new community facility!

Roy



**Staplehurst Free Church Leadership Team**

**Terence Hawgood  
Bob and Mary Howse  
Clive Jones  
Kate Henry**

**Treasurer: Roger Bashford**

**Staplehurst Free Church  
Church Administrator - Maggie Martin**

**Office Tel No.: 01580 893993  
[www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk)**

**Sunday Connections in January**

<b>Sunday 2nd</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>All Age Family Service. New Year Service and baptism of Paul Hamilton</b> <b>Led by: Kate H and the Leadership Team</b>  <i>Refreshments will be served after the service</i>
<b>Sunday 9th</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Sunday Connections - Worship, Word and Communion</b> <b><i>Theme: The Time of the Judges</i></b> <b>Speaker: Paul Martin</b>
<b>Sunday 16th</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Sunday Connections - Worship, Word and Communion</b> <b><i>Theme: Ehud Judges 3: 12-30</i></b> <b><i>Speaker: Chris Tolley</i></b>
<b>Sunday 23rd</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Sunday Connections - Worship, Word and Communion</b> <b><i>Theme: Deborah Judges 4&amp;5</i></b> <b><i>Speaker: Martin Chapman</i></b>
	<b>6.30pm</b>	<b>United Service for Church Unity at SFC</b>
<b>Friday 30th</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Missionary Sunday</b> <b>Speaker: Mary Digman on the work of Orphaid.</b>

Enabling everyone to know Jesus  
and grow in a personal relationship with Him

**STAPLEHURST  
FREE CHURCH**