



## *October 2018 Newsletter*

### Sarah's message

October – stop or go (or both)?

Some months of the year have been hijacked by causes – Movember and Stoptober are the most well known. Smoking kills people – people who smoke and those who breathe in their smoke. So the NHS, to encourage people to quit, has a big promotion every year. If you sign up to ‘Stoptober’, all kinds of help is available to encourage and support you in the difficult task of stopping smoking and breaking the addiction to nicotine. It needs to be done carefully though; just last week there were headlines about not going ‘cold turkey’ and facing severe withdrawal symptoms.

I wonder if in church we do need to encourage a ‘cold turkey’ approach to some of our habits? As we grow closer to God, we can become aware that some of our habits are less than godly or in fact downright sinful. I’m pretty sure James encourages believers to confess to one another so we can get help and support in the difficult task of stopping some habits and replacing them with better ones. A couple I knew in London drank a bottle of wine together every night when he got home from work – she would have one glass and he drank the rest. It took time to realise he had a drink problem and more time to wean himself off the alcohol. Elsewhere, a friend would always answer the question ‘how are you?’ with a litany of complaints about people who she perceived had ‘done her down’. Although challenged, she never acknowledged it was a problem in her relationship with God!

And yet, in all our weakness and fallibility, God has given us His good news to share with people around us; to show them God and invite them to know Him and receive love and blessing and to learn to give love and blessing back. Whilst we do need to earn the right to share the gospel by demonstrating our love and concern for our neighbours, do we need to stop and think, ‘when was the last time I actually spoke to someone about my amazing saviour?’ Maybe this October you can ‘stop’ a habit that gets between you and God and you can also ‘go’ to a neighbour to share good news?

### Jessica Selenic

I would like to take this space to give thanks to God for restoring my faith and to share with you a key prayer that I have found to be foundational in helping me to know God more and developing my desire. The Centering prayer. The Centering prayer is from the contemplative tradition. This kind of silent prayer has been practised in Monasteries through the centuries but in the 1970s Thomas Keating (a Trappist Monk) brought the contemplative part of the church tradition to the ordinary lay people in the church. Thomas Keating likens Centering prayer to practising what Jesus taught when he said... But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. Matthew 6:6 NLT. Thomas believes practising Centering prayer as practical way of applying this teaching, as Centering prayer is about letting go of thoughts and being fully present to God. Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:2 NLT The steps to Centering prayer can be found on contemplative outreach website. They are essentially becoming still, choosing a word that symbolises your intent to consent to the presence of God, and being still with eyes closed for 20mins just being present with God. Please do talk to me about it and I can share more if this is something you find interested.

**Operation Agri** has the following number of projects currently in progress in,  
India 1, Bangladesh 2, Malawi 1,  
Mozambique 1, Nicaragua 1, Sri Lanka 1,  
Tanzania 2, Uganda 4. and Nepal 4.  
Rev. Fred Stainthorpe

### **CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APEAL**

Please join in the Christmas shoebox appeal, boxes are available in the church hall. We ask for a small £5 donation per box to help with shipping cost. Thank you  
Robert Silvera





