

23 September 2022

Dear Church

Persecution in Ethiopia has intensified in the last few years, especially against those who faithfully proclaim the gospel, plant churches and train biblical disciples. One believer, a man named Dereje, has been specifically targeted for his work in southern Ethiopia, where his faithful witness and the power of the gospel are viewed as threats.

While attending a mission school, Dereje developed a burden for Muslims and set a personal goal of reaching one Muslim family with the gospel. And when he began to show love to his Muslim neighbours, they became more open to hearing about Jesus Christ.

In 2016, however, Dereje said some Muslims in the region grew angry about the number of Muslims coming to faith in Yeshua. And the following year, rioting Muslims attacked, beating and killing some Christians and destroying more than 2,000 homes and more than two dozen churches. Dereje was among those targeted.

During the last month of the attacks, as an attack on their village was imminent, Dereje gathered some believers and encouraged them with a message from Psalm 23. "By the time I finished sharing the Word," he recalled, "the attacks had started. I heard people getting beaten and saw flames from burning homes, so I ran home as quickly as I could to protect my family.

"When the attackers arrived at my house, they called me by name, saying, 'Dereje! Dereje! Come out! This is your day and you won't escape!'"

When Dereje learned that he was one of the attackers' main targets and that they would not stop until they had killed him, he fled with his family to another town. They travelled on foot for five days and slept in the jungle before finally reaching safety.

Dereje and his family eventually resettled in a different area, where he resumed his ministry leading Muslims and others to Christ. He has returned to the site of the attacks twice since 2017, and he said he is willing to serve there again if God calls him to do so.

Dereje and other Ethiopian Christians like him continue to witness boldly for Christ, willingly facing the consequences.

"There is only one Mighty One," he said, "the One who sent us. If we die, we are going to Him. But just trust the Lord; do not be afraid. Fear is a disease. If you fear, you cannot walk even one step. The One who is with you, He is greater than fear. Don't be afraid. Trust the Lord."

May you, like Dereje and Joshua, be strong and courageous, for Yahweh your God, the Mighty One will be with you wherever you go,

Stephen

News & Events

Hope to Bedford - Jonathan Conrathe and a team from Mission24 are coming to Bedford in September to lead a week of mission. There is one more evening on Saturday 24th September 7:30pm at all Nations. For more information see the poster or to find out more about Jonathan and Mission24 visit: <https://www.mission24.co.uk/>

Alpha - Will is organising a Youth Alpha course that runs till Christmas Please speak to him if you know of any young people who might be interested.

Mind of Their Own - *Care for the Family* are holding training events for parents and carers who would like to better understand issues around mental health. 1 in 6 children aged 5-16 now show signs of a mental health problem. Thankfully, you don't have to be a mental health expert to help children to grow into strong and emotionally resilient young adults. Those who attend the 'Mind of Their Own' training will come away with practical and preventative ideas to use at home. Events will be held in Milton Keynes on 12 Oct, Kettering on 13 Oct, and Oxford on 18 Oct. For more information or to book places please visit www.careforthefamily.org.uk/events/tourevents/a-mind-of-their-own/

New Kids Club - Every Tuesday 4:00pm-5:00pm here at Church. Jen and the team are running a new club for school children who are in Reception to Year 6. There will be songs/stories/crafts to help them learn more about Jesus. Speak to Jen for more information or just come along. Jen is also looking for more volunteers to help run the club so if you are interested in being part of this exciting new venture please speak to her- she would love to hear from you.

Samaritans Purse - Operation Christmas Child: Following last year's successful shoe box collection, our Church has again been selected to act as a shoe box drop off point during the week commencing Monday 14th November. Last year we collected over one thousand boxes for distribution to children around the world. Children receiving their shoebox gifts are filled with joy, and gives us a great opportunity to share the love of God and his gospel. Pre-printed shoeboxes are available in Church, or you could use your own and

wrap it with colourful paper. For information as to what to include in the shoebox visit the Samaritans purse website or pick up a leaflet from the welcome area.

Fund raising for Utange - Francesca is looking to set up a committee of people (that she will head up) to concentrate on fundraising for the Utange Project. If you already do some fundraising for this charity or you would like to be part of the committee please speak to Francesca or contact the Church Office.

Sale - Francesca is holding a huge final clearance sale which will be a fundraiser for the Utange Orphans Charity. Items for sale include a collection of teapots, Italian pictures and furniture amongst other things. Sat 1st October 10am-4pm at The Laws Hotel/House in Turvey MK43 8DB. Please come along. Also, any offers of help for sorting items the mornings of Wed 21st and 28th September would be most welcome. Please speak to Francesca if you are able to help.

Afternoon Tea - Shari is organising a Christmas Afternoon Tea on Sat 19th November to raise money for the Utange Orphans Charity. There will be stalls selling various crafts. If you would like to host a stall or are able to donate a cake please contact the Church Office

Prayer & Praise

General thanksgiving for...

- The funeral of our late Queen and the clear Gospel message that was preached.
- The successful launch of Youth Alpha
- Contact ministry and their fellowship time together last Wednesday.

General intercession for...

- Those attending the Youth Event tonight.
- Persecuted Christians in Libya.
- Pinsent Avenue and Princes Road.
- Dereje and other Christians in Ethiopia to be enabled by the Holy Spirit to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them.
- Christians in Afghanistan forced to sell their organs or even their own children to overcome the poverty brought about by the Taliban regime.

Personal intercession for...

- Terry and Christine for their adaptation to the new reality in Cordoba and the logistics running smoothly as they return to back to Spain. Please pray for the house move, unpacking, the Thompson family living with us initially and then Peter and Sue joining them in November and wisdom in all this.
- A smooth visa process for Peter and Sue.

This week

Fri 23 September

7.30pm Elevate Youth – Hope to Bedford' event at All Nations Church.

Sun 25 September

10.30am Morning Service

5.00pm Evening Service

Mon 26 September

8.30am Gathering Grounds & Wellbeing Lounge

9.15am Toddler Group

10.00am Reflective Psalms Prayer Time

1.00pm Reflective Psalms Prayer Time

1.30pm Postnatal Group

4.00pm Reflective Psalms Prayer Time

Tues 27 September

4:00-5:00pm Children's Club

Prayer & Fasting Psalm for Monday: Psalm 146

Contacts

Will (Elder/Pastor: Youth Ministry Leader)

Andrew (Elder/Pastor: Worship Ministry Leader)

Ian (Elder/Pastor: Prayer & Property Ministry Leader)

Paul (Elder/Pastor: Treasurer)

David (Finance Ministry Leader)

John C (Welcoming & Integrating Ministry Leader)

John G (Overseas Mission Ministry Leader)

Marion (Contact Seniors Ministry Leader)

Sharon (Pastoral Ministry Leader)

Jen (Children & Family Worker)

Sally (Administrator)