

# Stalham Baptist Church

Sunday 5th July SBC News  
This Week's Online Service  
"Titus Arrives"



**Pastor:** Rev. Ron Skivington 01692 582731  
**Assistant Pastor:** Jerry Otieno 07733837687  
**Secretary:** Diana Gordon 07951949128  
**Ministry Team:** The Whole Fellowship

## Welcome to Sunday 5th July Online Service

Ron is leading and preaching, continuing the series on  
2 Cor 7:4-16

### "Titus Arrives"

You can follow the service on the SBC website on Sunday

[www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/](http://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/) Then click on the icon pictured left.

### Ron's Read's

Eph 5:26f, 1Cor 3:3f,4;18,6:8, 2 Cor 2:13 Jn 14:16f  
Acts 20:21Mt 19:24, Mt 22:36f

## For Your Prayers

Please pray for the All Saints School Lessingham leavers service and prize giving on 9th July 1.45pm. Please also pray for those who are receiving hospital treatment and those still waiting for appointments. Pray for those Stalham businesses that are struggling to restart and stay viable. Also pray for those in our community who are struggling financially due to the pandemic may our benefit system support them promptly and ask for blessings on those that regularly donate food at SBC for the Food Bank

## Virtual Prayer Room

On Tuesday 30th Diana posted "I have been speaking to Christine this morning who hasn't been well this past few months and has been in hospital several times. She has had recent problems with her vision which may be connected to her Lymphoma that has been monitored for a few years. She will also need surgery for a gall bladder problem.

On Thursday David asked for prayers for Lyn in Durban SA as she is going to have to spend 14 days in isolation as another person in her conurbation has developed the coronavirus.

**To join the ever-growing WhatsApp Virtual Prayer Room and Devotion WhatsApp site text Jerry on 07733837687. You will need a smart phone.**

## Prayers for Holiday Family

Please pray for Nabil his wife and family. They joined us during the summer 2019 and his children came to the Holiday Club.

Nabil receives the bulletin and emailed this week.

"Once again, thanks for these great updates. We're visiting you virtually about once a month or so. Enjoyed Jerry's message and had a good discussion about it as a family afterwards."

He was also hoping that SBC would be opening soon so the family could attend a service at SBC when they are holidaying in Norfolk.

He included a thoughtlet in his email.

"I was thinking about Abraham and Lot in relation to Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was separate from the city whereas Lot started off living near it and then ended up being part of it. Lot remained righteous but it was a daily struggle for him being that close to the culture ('vexed his soul').

When God decided to take action, He came to speak with Abraham. The one who had been living separate had the chance to intercede for the city. When God moved in on the city Lot had to separate himself. On top of being vexed, he suffered the loss of his wife, and moral collapse of his family. As we watch the culture around us declining, I think about this a lot. Interceding from a place of sensible separation ('come out of her... and I will be your God')."

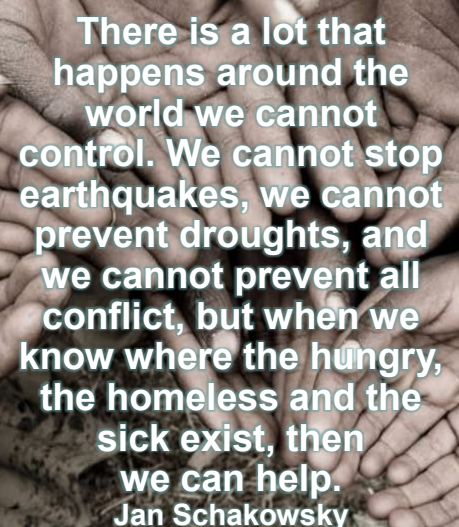
**If you are reading this newsletter as a PDF you can click on the red highlighted links and you will be taken to the relevant websites.**

**Don't forget you can also follow what's happening at SBC on twitter <https://twitter.com/StalhamChurch> and on Facebook [www.facebook.com/stalhambaptist](http://www.facebook.com/stalhambaptist)**

## FOOD BANK

SBC is open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive donations for the food bank or for anyone who wants to sign up to help in the community with food or medicine deliveries. It is manned by either Ron or Jerry. Also, The Good News paper and the Community Scene Magazine are available at the back of the church.

The **Food Bank** is open on Fridays in the Stables from 1.15 to 3.00pm. If you need help, or know someone in difficulty, either contact the Citizens Advice Service 0344 411 1444, the Food Bank on 07826376343, or contact Ron Skivington at [minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk](mailto:minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk).



**There is a lot that happens around the world we cannot control. We cannot stop earthquakes, we cannot prevent droughts, and we cannot prevent all conflict, but when we know where the hungry, the homeless and the sick exist, then we can help.**  
Jan Schakowsky

## House Groups

During lockdown our regular house groups have been doing different things to keep in touch. If you would like to be part of the 2 weekly Wednesday evening Zoom Bible study please let Diana (secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk) know so she can give you the password details [next one will be the 15th July] The Zoom style meetings will be with us for the foreseeable future and so it would be good to explore using them for Alpha or Talking Jesus type courses. However we are aware that the use of such media is not available to all and so as restrictions are easing it has been suggested small groups could meet informally in gardens, at times to suit, to be able to share, consider a bible passage, pray as well as enjoy a cuppa, neighbours also could be invited to join such a small gathering.

If you would be interested in hosting, being part of any of the above please speak to Diana, Ron or Jerry. (From the Deacons)

### Weekly Prayer Focus: 5th July 2020

#### Foulsham Baptist Church

Foulsham is near Fakenham in Norfolk, and Foulsham Baptist Church has been part of the village for more than 200 years.

In normal times, as well as Sunday services, the church has a weekly toddler group and a Wednesday lunch open to anyone, as well as regular Bible studies.

Having been without a minister for some time the church is very excited that their new minister, Nick Mitchell, his wife Crystal and two young boys will be moving to the village soon, and the fellowship is in the process of renovating the manse ready for them.

During lockdown there have been short telephone conference services every Sunday morning, which have been a wonderful way to continue to worship together and keep in touch with each other. People have also kept in contact via a WhatsApp group.

On 6th May, Eric Stroulger died. He had been a member of Foulsham Baptist Church since 1940 and was an important part of church life, and everyone is looking forward to a memorial service for him when it is possible to gather again.

#### Prayer points

- ◆ Please thank God with us for the life of Eric and for the way we have been able to encourage each other in the last few months
- ◆ The decisions about how to make the transition back to normality
- ◆ Our new minister, Nick Mitchell and his family, their move to Foulsham, the work we are doing to prepare for them, and the start of a new era for our church

You can find more information about Foulsham Baptist Church at <https://www.foulshambaptist.co.uk/welcome.htm>

#### Meet our BMS Partners

Over the summer we were due to have had visits from some of our mission partners, on recent Sundays we have had videos from the Browns and the Shrubsoles we are now going to have a BMS Zoom linked meeting with Nathan and Rose on Sunday 12th at 7.00pm all welcome to join, we also hope to offer a telephone link please contact Jerry on 07733837687 or asstpastor@stalhambaptist.org.uk for log in details.

#### Why are Indian Christians last in the line for aid?

In this interview with Heena, an Open Doors partner in India, she explains why persecuted Christians are often last in line for vital aid (and how your support is helping). **Heena\***: Yes. Imagine you're a Christian family in a Hindu village. It's very likely the villagers are

socially boycotting you. Even when there isn't lockdown, you're not allowed to buy from the local shop or draw water from the local well. To read the whole article click [here](#)

#### Quotes of the Week

"If she had even once rejected Grandma Bev's insistence that she put on a happy face and make the best of things, if she had just told her mother how hurt and abandoned she'd felt, maybe they wouldn't have had to endure over two decades of distance and resentment. Maybe she would have had her mother.

Grandma Bev meant well, no doubt. She was trying to give Melody the resilience she'd needed to deal with all the changes in her young life, but it had only taught her to escape into fiction- both the kind in books and that of her own making. And instead of growing deeper in a true faith, one that was tested in tears and anguished prayers, she stuffed down her pain and retreated to superstition and magical thinking. She'd looked at God's providence like she'd looked at fairy tales- blindly and without any real belief. She'd gone from man to man, trying to buy their love at too high a price, all because she wouldn't admit how much she needed that love. How much it hurt that it always seemed to be out of reach.

And because she wouldn't admit any of it, she just went on haplessly repeating her mistakes instead of turning to the One who loved her no matter what."

— **Carla Laureano, Brunch at Bittersweet Café**

"When something goes wrong, what's the best course of action? To change your direction. The word repentance means to stop going one direction (your own way) and turn toward the right direction (God's way). Your past may be a part of who you are, but it certainly doesn't have to define your future. Or if you feel stuck and unable to change directions and move toward God, think of this transformation another way. The Bible says that God is the Potter and we are his clay ([Jer. 18:2-6](#))."

— **Craig Groeschel, Altar Ego: Becoming Who God Says You Are**

"God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else.

Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there."

— **C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity**

# From Open Doors

## “I am overjoyed”

### Thank You from Nigeria

Thanks to your support, persecuted Christians in Naka, Nigeria, received essential aid just before the coronavirus lockdown. Pastor Sule sends his thanks.

Today is a good day for Pastor Sule Sunday. You have not only made his day, or week. No, you have made his whole year.

“Today I am overjoyed! Open Doors has responded to our plight! You can see people are just laughing and happy because we have never received this kind of support. This has not only solved our physical needs but also our spiritual needs! I kept hearing my people say, ‘God is alive! He has answered our prayers and brought help to us’. This support has indeed brought hope back to the hearts of the people of Naka.”

#### **Targeted by Fulani militants**

Pastor Sule Sunday ministers to people in Naka, a mostly Christian farming community situated in Benue State. It has always been a peaceful community. But things have changed in recent years. A toxic cocktail of climate change, politics and an Islamic expansionist agenda has increasingly brought militant Fulani herdsmen into the Middle Belt, often resulting in violence and destruction. Hundreds of people were killed in a series of attacks last year, countless homes looted and destroyed and at least 12,580 people displaced, leaving many in desperation. These attacks have continued during the coronavirus lockdown – targeting Christians who have been isolating in their homes for protection.

“My community has experienced severe persecution from the Fulani herdsmen,” Sule explains. “We have lost houses, loved ones, our livelihoods, and our communities. It was a trying time for most of my church members.”

Sule was worried for his people, frustrated that there was so little he could do to protect them from attack and from hunger. “Some began to doubt that God listens and cares for us. There was severe hunger and difficulty in the land. We received some food, but it was so little that only a few families could be helped. What they got was finished in a week.”

#### **Bringing hope to Naka**

But thanks to your support, Open Doors partners were able to visit with relief aid to many people Naka.

*Persecuted Christians queue for aid (photo taken before coronavirus restrictions)*



*Veronica and her baby (photo taken before coronavirus restrictions)*

Holding her baby on her lap, Veronica kept smiling and laughing. When we approached her, she said, “I want to thank Open Doors for their good gesture. Thank you for bringing this food to the people of Naka. We have never received anything like this before. God will bless you and provide in all your needs.”

Amazingly, this happened just before Covid-19 lockdown. If the delivery had been scheduled for any later time, travel restrictions would have meant that Open Doors partners wouldn't have been able to go to Naka. Your gifts and prayers mean that 1,500 families received food for three months, and money to help them get back on their feet and on the path to self-reliance. Many of the people who received aid and money are widows, like those whose story you might have read on the Open Doors website or in the Open Doors magazine in March 2020. The delivery also included Bibles and Christian literature to help Pastor Sule and others minister to the believers. Open Doors' contact in Naka has confirmed that the considerable provisions are enough to sustain the families in these uncertain times. Volunteers helped unload the food and organise them into neat squares of 20x20 packs containing rice and beans, while hundreds of families waited eagerly. Once the distribution started, they each patiently awaited their turn – but as soon as they received their parcels, many women broke out in song and dance.

Ngehide 38, a mother of three said, “Thank you for this food that you gave us – we didn't expect this kindness. I will go home and cook for my children; we will eat and forget our troubles. God bless you.”

“God bless you and thank you to all who contributed to bring hope back to our hearts!” says Sule.

#### **Please pray**

Join with Pastor Sule in praising God for the timing of the delivery.

That the community in Naka would be protected from further attacks.

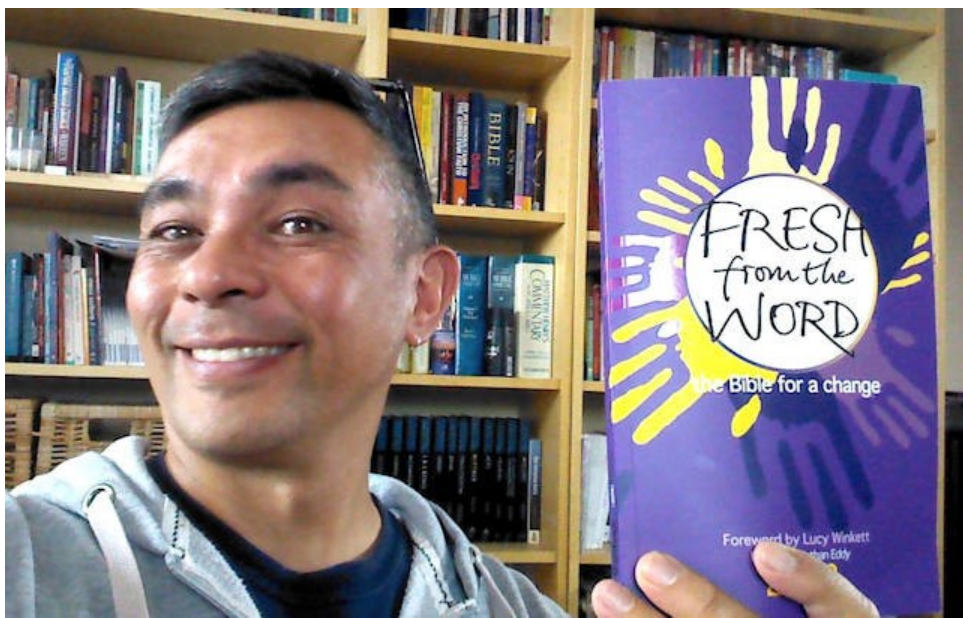
For Pastor Sule and other church leaders caring for those experiencing trauma. May the Lord provide them with compassion and wisdom to comfort believers.

For more information click [Open Doors](#).



# What's the church's future after the pandemic?

**Will the church ever be the same again once the pandemic finishes and does God even want it to be? That was the question posed by Rev Tim Yau at yesterday's (July 1) Transforming Norwich online meeting.**



Addressing church and organisation leaders on Zoom, Tim asked "What is God trying to say to the church during this period of lockdown and how do we make sense of it for the communities we serve?"

Tim quoted Christian apologist John Lennox who talks about "fractured nature" - God made the world good and great but somehow it is broken and we know that.

"John Piper talks about the pandemic being a 'bitter providence' – and that really stayed with me," said Tim. "Is this God's providence to us – we have prayed against it and it has hurt so many people but what is God saying to us?"

The **Praise Song for the Pandemic** by Christine Valters Paintner ends by hoping that we can say that love spread more quickly than any virus could and may we be able to say this was not just an ending but also a place to begin.

"As we are coming out of the lockdown, life is still not 'normal'. Maybe God is trying to disrupt society and disrupt the way we have been, the way we do things, so how are we meant to be? I cannot tell you that – you have to work it out for yourselves," said Tim.

"There are two parts to my job – being a Diocese of Norwich missionary enabler to encourage our churches to be engaged missionally wherever they are, and the other part is being in Cringleford among the young families and working out what church looks like there.

Of the 650 churches across the diocese, a lot of them may be on a cliff-edge and who knows whether they will survive after this pandemic?

"We are not talking about how to weather this but how we can think more creatively about what to do in the future. We have talked so much about resilience and keeping things going but maybe some of the things we do are not fit for purpose anymore and we need to let them die," said Tim.

Finally he quoted theologian, Rev Rachel Mann, who said: "The church which comes out of lockdown will, I think, be digitally promising, physically smaller, more financially precarious and tentative, and potentially more flexible and interesting."

"I have left more questions than answers," said Tim, "but I am hopeful that if we are willing to let things die then we will be open to resurrection. Change is always difficult but the most important thing is to follow God and what he wants."

**The next Transforming Norwich meeting will be on Wednesday September 16 from 12.30pm for an hour. More details before then.**

Printed with kind permission of Network Norfolk. The Norfolk and Norwich Christian website packed with articles about events, church activities and people in Norfolk. In the latest: issue read about an urgent Uganda appeal, political prayers, churches to reopen, drive-thru prayers, Aylsham pastor's book, job opportunities and lots more. Click [here](#) to access the site.

# network norfolk

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