

# Stalham Baptist Church

Sunday 19th July SBC News

This Week's Online Service

"Cheerful Giving"

**Pastor:** Rev. Ron Skivington 01692 582731

**Assistant Pastor:** Jerry Otieno 07733837687

**Secretary:** Diana Gordon 07951949128

**Ministry Team:** The Whole Fellowship

## Welcome to Sunday 19th July Online Service

This Sunday Jerry is leading and preaching, continuing the series on 2nd Corinthians. This week 2 Cor 9:5-15.

### "Cheerful Giving"

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.



### The sermon structure:

- ♦ God Loves a Cheerful Giver v 5-7
- ♦ God is a Cheerful Giver v 8-10
- ♦ The Results of Cheerful Giving v 11-15

### Jerry's Further Reading

Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Ps 112; Proverbs 11:23-28; 22:8-9; Eccl 11:1f;  
Matt 6:1-4; Matt 13:1f; Gal 6:7-10; Phil 4:10-20; 1 Tim 6:17-19

### For Your Prayers

Please pray for those involved in producing the online services that are successfully reaching out to people. Also pray for those in our community that are currently furloughed and concerned about their jobs when the scheme ends in October and also those who have lost their jobs. As we pray through the new Church Directory, please remember **Alan and Dee Patterson**

### WhatsApp Virtual Prayer Room

On Saturday 11th Victoria posted from Paul Child's Facebook "An update: Yesterday I went to see the surgeon who performed my operation. The good news is he was happy with how the operation went, and with how I am healing. Unfortunately he also told me that the histology report on what was removed showed I definitely had cancer, and despite taking as much as he possibly could from me during the operation the cancer was situated right next to the bone, so they cannot be certain it has all been removed. This means they need to treat me further, with either radiotherapy, chemotherapy or a combination of both, depending on what the oncologist decides is best.

Obviously not the news we were hoping for, so your ongoing prayers for the family would be greatly appreciated. Thank you."

On Tuesday Diana posted "Hi all. Update on Greg. He has inflammation in his stomach and oesophagus caused by bacterial infection. They have taken a biopsy but not expecting anything abnormal. The infection can be treated with medication and care of his GP. Very thankful that it was nothing more serious."

On Thursday Sue StJohn posted "I found out last night that our niece, little Millie who was born 10 weeks ago (and we all prayed for her safe delivery) had a fit on Sunday evening (no fever or apparent illness) she was kept in for observation. Today she is returning for an MRI. Thanks everyone for your prayers today."

Also on Thursday Doreen Hollebon asked "Prayer request for Steve Slade. He was taken into hospital last night with an infection. It is unknown what the infection is but he is on a drip. He cannot receive visitors due to the current situation but will be reviewed on Monday."

Later on Thursday Victoria asked for prayers for Poppy, saying that Poppy had been in remission for just over 2 years for her kidney problem and treatment free for 8 months but had been spilling protein again for the last 4 weeks. Victoria said "I am hopeful that it will return to negative on it's own as on average it had been spilling at its lowest level. Though today it had started to rise again. She went on to say "it would be a massive blow for Poppy to relapse now and start treatment again especially in the current climate."



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)

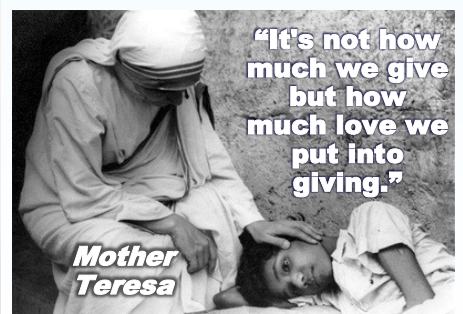
## FOOD BANK & OPEN FOR PRAYER

SBC is open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive donations for the food bank and for personal prayer.

Since June 15th people have been welcome to pray quietly in the church at that time the Food Bank donations have been received. Jerry or Ron will be on hand to ensure all safety measures are met.

Also, The Good News paper, bibles, books 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).





## Update on Church Re-Opening

You will have no doubt heard we can now begin to open churches for services as well as prayer and the Foodbank however, the restrictions are still fairly prohibitive at the moment. As a first step we will need to carry out a full risk assessment which we will do next week to enable us to plan towards a date for re-opening. We will keep everyone fully informed as to progress through the website and bulletin. [Deacons]

## Weekly Prayer Focus: 19th July 2020 Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church

Bishop's Stortford is a growing town on the Hertfordshire/Essex border near to its noisy neighbour, Stansted Airport. The Baptist Church has been part of the town for 201 years and in 2012 moved to new premises on the edge of the town centre which has allowed it to become a hub for many community organisations and activities, as well as being involved in the community itself. They hope soon to develop another building on the site to accommodate Exchange, which provides equipment for children and family life, the Bishop's Stortford Churches Together Money Advice Service and to house a café, a drop-in, a prayer room and a community pantry.

The church is a growing fellowship that is international in character with people from over 20 different countries. They seek as a church of all nations to be a church for all nations. The Senior Pastor John Walford is joined by a Minister in Training Gustavo Gubiani from Brazil who leads the church's Portuguese language congregation. The church also has a Youth Worker, Heather Martin.

As with all churches, activities on the site were shut down and staff furloughed at the start of the pandemic, with the exception of the Ministers and Youth Worker. They are now in the process of exploring how to re-open activities on the church site.

### Prayer Points

- ◆ Please pray for Heather as she tries to keep in contact with the young people at this time when there are mental health issues and lack of motivation caused by lockdown.
- ◆ Pray that the planning process to convert the buildings on site into a community resource and café will go through smoothly.
- ◆ Pray about what should the church do next and how should it do it, now that lockdown is easing? What activities should reopen, which should close? What lessons have been learnt from lockdown that will help shape the future?

This month we have a video which is at <https://youtu.be/UlrlxGST-kI> and a subtitled version of it can be linked to on the video. For more information go to <https://www.stortfordbaptist.org/>



## Zoom Call to Prayer

The next call to prayer will be on Thursday 2nd July at 7.00pm. Diana will be sending out a link by email.

## Jerry's quotes of the Week

"Lord, thou lov'st the cheerful giver, who with open heart and hand blesses freely, as a river that refreshes all the land. Grant us then the grace of giving with a spirit large and free, that our life and all our living, we may consecrate to thee."

**-Robert Murray in his 1898 hymn "Lord, Thou Lov'st the Cheerful Giver"**

"Joyful and cheerful then is one who attends to the poor. Quite clearly, he is joyful, because for a few small coins he acquires heavenly treasures for himself; on the contrary, the person who pays taxes is always sad and dejected.

Rightly is he sad who is not drawn to payment by love but forced by fear.

Christ's debtor then is joyful and Caesar's sad, because love urges the one to payment and punishment constrains the other; the one is invited by reward, the other compelled by penalties."

**- Maximus of Turin ( a 5th Century theologian.)**

"Our bank statements are perhaps the greatest evidence of having minds that have truly been transformed by the grace of God."

**-Tim Keller**

"Perhaps nothing today is more radical than to assert that God, not our own "Self", is responsible for all that we are and have. Our resources originate from him as a blessing, not from us as an expression of what we deserve.

This insight is as profoundly life-changing as it is simple. That God is the giver of everything is the foundation of our giving to others.

The key to generosity is not caring less about what we have in the world, but caring more about God's purposes in granting to us his gifts.

Wealth is a gift of God, freely given as an expression of God's commitment to his people; hence, for those who trust in him, it can be freely given away." Cheerful givers" are not so by nature.

Only those who realize that they have received great benefit from God have both the material means and inner disposition to become cheerful givers"

**-Scott J. Hafemann, The NIV AC 2 Corinthians pg 377**

"I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess."--  
**Martin Luther**



# "We're just different generations, and I will never understand your generation!"

That was how the conversation ended. Twenty minutes backwards and forwards, about a short video I showed in a recent service. Writes Adrian Semerene minister at Gamlingay Baptist Church, Cambridgeshire for the Baptist Times.

While 'the rest of the church' laughed, smiled, and saw the depth of the message presented, this particular person was deeply offended and found it necessary to tell me, expecting an apology. Sure, I was deeply apologetic that offence was taken, but my dilemma came from the mere fact that if I were ever to be presented with the decision to show the video again, my actions would remain the same...

I have spent much time reflecting on this, and many other conversations through the years that seem to result in a conclusion that our generations are just 'different' and how 'times have changed'. Yet we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, called to be one. As such we must make the efforts to better understand one another, so as to love one another, as well as reach those around us who have yet to enter into a deep relationship with Jesus. In one sense, it is easy to 'get to know' a certain older generation, because many of our churches represent and reflect them very well. However, there is a well documented 'missing generation' that is harder to get to know, simply because, well, they are missing. Please don't misunderstand me, they are not non-existent, I am one, and there are many churches across our union that have some, or many worshipping and present in their churches.... BUT, we've been called the missing generation for a reason. Most know us as millennials.

(Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (ages 23 to 38 in 2019) is considered a Millennial, **and anyone** born from 1997 onward is part of a new generation.)

I quickly want to clarify that I am no expert, and there are many much better qualified people out there for that. Some you will find in [this magazine](#), and I encourage you to reflect on them all. And while I also know that my experiences are not everyone's, conversations with many people in different contexts across the UK and beyond have led me to believe that there is much similarity across the spectrum. I also hasten to add, much of these are generalisations and I apologise if you or someone you know doesn't fit with these thoughts, but please know that many (if not most) do.

So, who are millennials and what do they want out of church? These are some of the things that characterise us:

**We are deeply relational:** As millennials, we are not after information or knowledge. We have that at our fingertips, literally with our devices. We are looking for relationship, deep and meaningful relationships. The truth is, that type of relationship is not going to be achieved in a 1-2 hour service once a week. That relationship is built through investment of time. That relationship is built through meeting for coffee regularly; it is built through having relevant small groups in which the Bible is talked about, but where there is also scope to share each other's lives and walk alongside one another, applying the truths that we see in scripture. One of the reasons we've seen such rapid growth on social media sites is because as a generation we want to be connected with

one another regularly. Please don't misunderstand me, there is a lot wrong with social media; however, it is the drive for relationships that leads many of us there in the first place.

**We seek authenticity:** As millennials, we are seeking to be real with one another. We have friends and family members who are struggling with addictions, who make mistakes regularly, who are journeying through questions of sexuality and identity... or we are ourselves. We are looking for a place and people to journey life with, in all its realness and mess. We long for authenticity, and can tell when people are trying too hard to be something they are not, or aren't allowed to be who they are for fear of judgement. Don't get me wrong, this is hard, and messy. As a Christian who holds conservative views, this can sometimes be difficult, but surprisingly, when we are open and honest with one another, relationships go deeper, and we find ways to move forward together.

**We are doers:** One of the ways we build that deep relationship and journey in authenticity is by getting plugged in, and doing. I have a friend who is a minister (and a great one at that); however, there is a policy he has which I disagree with. He and the team have established that new members to the fellowship are not allowed to serve in the church for a year, so that the church can better get to know them and vice versa. In part, that is a great policy, that also seeks relationship prior to service. However, as millennial, I wouldn't attend his church. If I was told I couldn't serve, I would feel lost and would quickly find myself moving on. This may be a sad reality, but it's a truth. As a generation we believe that part of our deep relationality is serving one another and we feel cut off if we're not allowed. Often we are told that we can't serve because of our age... That never goes down well, as we believe that we may do things differently, but we can do it, because if we can't ourselves we'll find someone who can.

**We are visual:** I have found that we as a generation like to see things. We visualise sermons, we visualise worship, visualise our lives and futures. Some of this is cross-generational and simply explained as a learning style. Some of it is simply deeply embedded in us. We are the generation that saw our phones go from the brick to a beautiful HD screen with which we can capture the highest quality photos and videos. We are visual. Our social networks reflect much of that nature.

**We are perfectionists:** This term is perhaps too harsh. However, as a generation we like to see things done properly. Many of us would rather not see something done than see it done badly. While it may seem petty, this stretches to things such as screen visuals, announcements, sermon illustrations, sung worship, etc. Much of this drive of perfectionism within church comes from a deep desire to do and give our best to God. This is often misunderstood as us trying to be 'flashy'. We are just being us. There is much more that could be shared (we are connected, we are driven, we are optimistic and hopeful), yet this seems a good way to start. The question then becomes for many of us, what do we do to draw and connect with the missing generation? Change! Fact is, we aren't missing everywhere, there are churches who have embraced the change that is needed to welcome, engage and journey with us. But that change puts many people off. We hear change and we hear having to abandon our roots, our beliefs, our ways of doing things, our roles and so much more. While some of that is true, not all of it has to be.

The change is not about changing our beliefs, but changing how we 'express those beliefs' perhaps. In one of my previous churches, there were three elderly members of the fellowship (85-93) that always stand out in my mind. These three continually encouraged me, pushed me, prayed for me, and





released me to do things differently. We'd often have conversations in which they might say, "I don't necessarily like it, or understand it, but I see what God is doing in it, so I can get behind it." They spoiled me: I thought that's how it would always be. It isn't. But maybe that's how it's meant to be?

There's a missing generation because the generations before failed to connect with them. That may seem a harsh reality, but it is a reality nonetheless. I wonder what role you might have to play to reach that generation? And if you are a millennial, what is your next step to engage with the churches that may not know what to do with you? If you are part of the generations prior to us, I wonder what role you might have to play to make space, to welcome, to be authentic with the millennials right in front of you?

One thing is for sure, we need to start working together on this quickly, because there is another generation rising up, that brings with them everything that millennials do, and more, to learn from, and change and adapt for. Gen Z might have to wait until another article though, we have enough to reflect on.... For now!

**Adrian Semerene became a member of Baptist Union Council in 2019**  
This reflection appears in the [Summer 2020 edition](#) of **Baptists Together** magazine



## WHEN GOD OPENS A DOOR... CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF STANDING WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

This week we're celebrating 65 years since a Dutchman, Andrew, made his first trip into Eastern Europe and received a commission from God that has since grown to become Open Doors!

Ever since that day in 1955 when Brother Andrew – as he is more widely known – felt called to 'strengthen what remains and is about to die' ([Revelation 3:2](#)), millions of Christians around the world have been upheld in prayer and empowered practically to continue to be the church in their nations and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ! Your prayers and support enable the worldwide church to stand against the fiercest persecution and 'run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith' ([Hebrews 12:2](#)). As Brother Andrew said, "The work of the church is not survival. She exists to fulfil the Great Commission. Her work is making disciples of all nations." [How has Open Doors' ministry transformed and grown since 1955?](#)

### PLEASE PRAY:

- ◆ Give thanks to God for all that He has done over the past 65 years, and all the believers He has reached through the gifts and prayers of Open Doors supporters
- ◆ That more doors would open to reach more persecuted believers around the world
- ◆ That God would continue to transform hearts and minds through the worldwide church.

## THE TRUE COST OF THE WORLD CUP IN QATAR

Qatar is an absolute monarchy. The state religion is a conservative form of Islam; leaving the faith is illegal. Both indigenous and migrant believers risk discrimination, harassment, police monitoring and all sorts of intimidation by vigilante groups. There are many Christian migrants working to prepare for the 2022 World Cup; they live and work in poor conditions, are often paid less than promised. But despite their living conditions, these Christian communities are growing.

Open Doors supports the body of Christ across the Arabian Peninsula through organising prayer, distributing Scripture resources and training believers and pastors.

[What is it like to follow Jesus in Qatar?](#)

### A prayer for Qatar

Lord Jesus, thank You that Your light shines in Qatar. Thank You that You are drawing the homesick and lonely workers to a home with You. Help believers find ways to meet together safely, and may their lives be a testimony to Your grace and love. Protect and provide for Your people. Amen.

**With many thanks for your prayers,**

*Henrietta Blyth CEO Open Doors UK & Ireland.*

## NORFOLK CHURCHES BIKE RIDE

The Norfolk Churches Trust bike ride will take place on September 12th.

The Bike Ride in 2019 raised a wonderful total of £95,037.

Let's see if we can do even better this year!

The Bike Ride has raised around £2,800,000 over the past 32 years. The money has been divided between the church of the participant's choice and The Norfolk Churches Trust, which gives grants to hundreds of churches for repairs, renovation and the conservation of their buildings. More than 600 churches will be open throughout the day for everyone to explore.

Due to these unprecedented times there may be Covid-19 restrictions to the bike ride.

However, this is a wonderful opportunity to visit our beautiful and historic churches which have been closed for so long.

If anyone feels they would like to do the sponsored ride [or walk] this year please contact Ron for further details.

Further details can be found at <https://norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk/bike-ride/>

