

Stalham Baptist Church

Sunday 30th August SBC News

This Week's Online Service

"Boasting in our Weakness Part 2 "

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

Welcome to this Sunday's Online Service

Jerry is leading and preaching, continuing the series on 2nd Corinthians. This week 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

You can follow the service on the SBC website on Sunday www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/ Then click on the icon pictured left.



Sermon Structure:

Paul's three experiences from God:

1. Lifted up by God v 1-6
2. Humbled by God v 7-8
3. Helped by God. v 9-10

Jerry's Reads

On Paul's visions:

Acts 9:2ff; 16:9-10; 18:9-10; 22:6, 17-21; 23:11; 27:23-24; Eph. 3:1-6

On God's strength in weakness:

Isaiah 40: 28-31; Isaiah 41:10; Hebrew 3:17-19; 1Cor 2:1-5; 2.Cor 4:7-11p

For Your Prayers

Please continue to pray that as a fellowship we can come to a decision about reopening SBC, or not, safely in the near future.

Please pray for all those in the fellowship and community who are unwell and receiving treatment in these still difficult times. Also pray for those who still feel the need to isolate.

Please also pray for the children, teachers and support workers as they tentatively return to their schools in September under government guidance and pray for those parents who are anxious at being pressured to send their children to school when their child has underlying medical problems.

As we pray through the new Church Directory, please remember **Jan Slade**.

Praying for the UK's government and politicians

A prayer for the cabinet and its key areas of influence and the opposition. Giver of gifts, we thank you for the intelligence, gifting, experience, knowledge and wisdom that are present in the men and women our Prime Minister has selected to help him govern. Help them use all they have been equipped with wisely to do their jobs to the best of their abilities and give them the courage they will need to admit what they don't know, ask for help or change direction. We recognise the immense pressure facing the men and women who lead each ministerial area – and ask for your guidance, strength, insight, humility and love to be with each one. Lord bless and lead those who govern and shape our health service, our education system, our work and pensions department, our justice system and laws and our foreign policy and international development work around the world. Help those working to protect our environment and forming vital strategies on climate change and energy at this crucial time for the whole world to make reforms and give our chancellor the clarity and compassion to conquer complex calculations and systems in a just way.

Leader of leaders, help this team of powerful individuals work together and build each other up and honour and work well with the civil service staff underneath them. Use them to build a culture among them which values vision, respect, honesty, compassion and above all the heart to truly serve people in the UK and beyond.

Taken from; The Sanctuary where the world and worship meet.



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

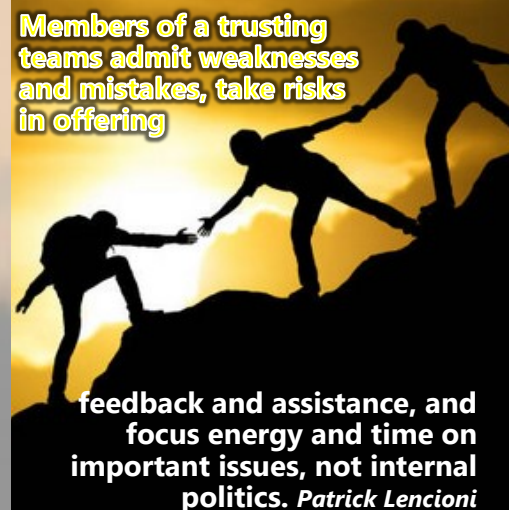
FOOD BANK & OPEN FOR PRAYER

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 the time that the Food Bank donations are being received. Jerry or Ron will be on hand to ensure all safety measures are met.

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.

Members of a trusting teams admit weaknesses and mistakes, take risks in offering



feedback and assistance, and focus energy and time on important issues, not internal politics. *Patrick Lencioni*

Questionnaire on Opening SBC

So that we can move forward we would like to seek the views of the church fellowship on opening, and to this end you should have received a questionnaire. Those who receive a paper copy of the bulletin will also receive the questionnaire at the same time and it will be collected the following week. Those with internet access should have received an email from survey monkey (if not contact Diana) to allow you to complete and return on line. We are hoping that all will be returned by 29th August. If you still have yours perhaps you can get it to me. Diana Gordon Church Secretary.

Church Reading Plan

The first five chapters of the Book of Esther is this week's reading plan. The next and final 5 chapters will follow next week.

One might at first glance pass over the book of Esther as just another historical story of the Old Testament but its much more than that. It is a pivotal step in Gods plan for humanity. The detail contained in the story of Esther is magnificent and the sort of stuff that movies are made of(which it was of course). Along with the Song of Songs, the Book of Esther has a major difference to all other books of the Old Testament. Maybe when you complete the book you will have worked out what that difference is. The Jewish festival of Purim recounts the story of Esther when there is always a public reading of the book.

David Has A New Mobile Number

David Child has a new mobile number you can now reach him on 07561 603586 .

The Baptist Union Environment Network

A new Baptist network that will connect people with a passion for the environment and climate change is to launch on 6 September

The Baptist Union Environment Network - "BUEN", meaning good in Spanish – aims to inspire churches and regional associations to grow in valuing creation and join God in environmental mission and taking action to care for creation and people.

BUEN is building a network of environmental partners across our Regional Association life who can journey alongside churches to able them to declare with God in worship, life, and action that "creation is good" (Gen 1v25).

Two of the partners are our former President Dave Gregory, minister of Croxley Green Baptist Church, and Hannah Gray, who works at the University of East Anglia, managing environmental research projects in developing countries and is a member of Light of Life Baptist Church on the east Norfolk coast.

In a jointly authored feature about BUEN for the forthcoming (autumn) edition of Baptists Together magazine, they write:

'BUEN will inspire the Baptist Together family locally, regionally, and nationally to hear the cry of creation and to join God's redemptive action for it as an integral part of our missional discipleship.

'It aims to release the prophetic Pentecost voice of children, young people and the Millennial generation who are so concerned over the damage being caused to their world that they will inherit from previous

generations. BUEN will help our wider family share in the pain felt by people and churches with strong links to the developing world by the injustice experienced by those who have contributed least to climate change yet who feel its negative impacts first.

Together with the injustice of global calls to mitigate fossil fuel emissions with little financial support from historical major emitters to transition towards low carbon economies. And it will encourage churches, associations, and national bodies to take steps towards being carbon neutral by 2035.'

BUEN officially launches on 6 September. Look out for more details on our website [here](#).

Follow it on [Facebook](#) BUEN – Baptist Union Environmental Network.

To contact BUEN email BUEnvNet@outlook.com

Dave is a contributor to a [webinar on 2](#)

[September](#) exploring why as Christians we should be concerned about climate change and what Baptist churches can do collectively to reflect the gospel in their approach to the environment.

Jerry's Quotes of the Week

"The grace of our Lord Jesus is, sufficient to uphold thee, sufficient to strengthen thee, sufficient to comfort thee, sufficient to make thy trouble useful to thee, sufficient to enable thee to triumph over it, sufficient to bring thee out of it, sufficient to bring thee out of ten thousand like it, sufficient to bring thee home to heaven.

Whatever would be good for thee, Christ's grace is sufficient to bestow.

Whatever would harm thee, his grace is sufficient to avert.

Whatever thou desirest, his grace is sufficient to give thee, if it be good for thee.

Whatever thou wouldst avoid, his grace can shield thee from it if so his wisdom shall dictate."

C. H Spurgeon, *Strengthening Word from the Saviour's Lips*.

"The messengers of satan are not always overthrown here and now by prevailing prayer, though they will be overthrown ultimately; neither is it necessarily the will of God that his children 'triumph' in this life in terms of body healing or spiritual power. The 'thorn' from God kept Paul from imagining him as a spiritual superman and revealed to him the reality of his human mortality and weakness despite his extraordinary revelations. The 'thorn' also kept Paul pinned to the Lord, in trust and confidence."

Paul Barnett, *The Message of 2 Corinthians* pg 178.

"It is good that we sometimes have griefs and adversities, for they drive a man to behold himself and to see that he is here but as in exile, and learn thereby that he ought not put his trust in any worldly thing..... Therefore a man ought to establish himself so fully in God that whatever adversity befall him, he will not need to seek any outward comfort."

Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* pg 43-44.

Celebrating VV Day (Victory over the Virus)

Darren Blaney compares the events of VE Day 75 years ago, and some of the calls for social change that followed, with similar calls being made now in the midst of the coronavirus epidemic

How did you celebrate VE Day?

In our small cul-de-sac we made the best of things; people held their own mini celebrations in their front gardens, and we all waved and shouted friendly greetings.

What stood out to me was that someone played [part of Churchill's speech](#) from the balcony of the Ministry of Health through their stereo. It is a famous clip, but there is part of the incident that I had never heard about before. The streets below where Churchill stood were packed, crowded with tens of thousands of people. He famously shouted, "this is your victory." What I never realised was that the crowd shouted back "no, this is your victory."

We forget how unlikely our survival seemed in the difficult days of early 1940, let alone any hope of possible victory. Churchill somehow gave people resolve, hope, belief. Five years later, the impossible was a reality and the crowds gathered that day knew what a debt they owed to their Prime Minister. One might argue that, but for Churchill, we would not be here today, not in any way that is recognisable as modern Britain anyway.

All the more remarkable therefore that just a few weeks later, this same, thankful nation, unceremoniously voted their hero out of office. Indeed, with one of the cleverest election slogans ever, Labour

urged people "[Cheer Churchill, Vote Labour](#)", and that is exactly what people did. But why?

However grateful the British people were to Churchill, they were not prepared to go back to life as it was before. World War 2 had cost too much—too many lost lives, too many destroyed homes, too many devastated cities. On the battlefields of Western Europe and North Africa rich and poor had fought and died side by side together in the cause of survival. The idea that we the nation could go back to the old divides of privileged and underclass was unthinkable. More than that, it was unacceptable. Those that had laid down their lives or had suffered the loss of home and family had not done so in order to allow the gentry to return to their estates while they struggled to put food on their tables. If one generation had sacrificed everything, at the very least it was so that their children might have a better future. People longed for a different world. They longed for a way out of poverty, for education, housing, health care.

Britain was ripe for a new social order. Possibly the only ways to forge meaning from all the senseless death and destruction was to see in it an opportunity. The ashes of devastation presented a once-in-a-lifetime possibility for the country to reinvent itself and emerge phoenix-like from its class riddled past into a new, socially just future.

That is what Labour offered. That is why they were voted in. The debate may indeed rage as to whether that more just society was ever delivered. Yet it remains the case that was why the people voted as they did in 1945—they voted for a different future. They voted for hope.

Seventy-five years later, almost to the day, I am starting to hear the same sort

of voices speaking similar things. As we walk through this pandemic, as normal life recedes into a dream-like memory, and we are told that our old 'normal' may never return, people are starting to ask what opportunity might lie in the midst of this crisis. Already people are suggesting that it is unthinkable that the NHS should ever be allowed to be underfunded again.

Others are pointing out that in this epidemic, it is the lower paid workers (the nurses, care workers, delivery drivers and supermarket assistants) who are carrying the greatest risk and the greatest workload. If the lower paid carry us through this time, are we happy to continue to live in a society where they stay low paid?

Yet others are talking about the need to embrace walking, cycling, and staggered work times that ease pressure on public transport. Much is also made of this period finally establishing the long talked about 'working from home' era. All of this would improve health, decarbonise the environment and move us away from our over-dependence on the car. In a similar vein, other voices proclaim the end of easy air-travel and urge that the economy post-coronavirus will need to be thoroughly green.

Is all this just wishful thinking? Will it all just disappear as soon as the first Wetherspoons reopens? Or will it last until someone points out that the cost of all this social readjustment is higher taxes? Will we be all in favour of raising the wages of the poor, as long as someone else pays for it? Perhaps. Or will the fact that some forms of social restriction are likely to stay in place until well into next year have a longer-term effect on people's thinking?

A leading Oxford historian who was interviewed on the radio said that in 30 years' time when students study this period of history, they will talk about BC and AC – Before Coronavirus and After Coronavirus. He believes it will be that significant.

Perhaps?

The question I find myself asking is, how can the

church be a prophetic voice in this season? How can the people who name Jesus' Kingdom speak into this cultural and social turmoil and offer a vision of a different society? Or have we become too conformed by the values of the society that we live in to possibly be able to offer it a radical alternative?

Following the Allies first major victory, Churchill famously said "It is not the end, it is not the beginning of the end. It is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." It feels that we are in much the same place now with the coronavirus epidemic. If we have begun to turn a corner, however slow or gradual that may be, what is it we are looking forward to when we do finally emerge on VV Day? Perhaps our slogan will be, "Cheer the NHS; follow Jesus".

Darren Blaney is minister of
Herne Bay Baptist Church

