

Stalham Baptist Church

Sunday 15th November SBC News

“The Pure in Heart”

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

Diana is leading and Jerry is preaching, from Matthew 5: 8 "The Pure in Heart"
You can follow the service on the SBC website on Sunday
www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/ Then click on the icon pictured left.



The Structure

- 1 Pure and Heart
- 2 The Pure in Heart
- 3 The Beatific Vision

Jerry's Reads

Exo 33:12-23, Ps 24, Jer 17:9, Matt 15:10-20,
Mark 7:14-23; 12:28-34, James 1:6-8; 4:1-12, 1 John 3:1-3

For Your Prayers

Please pray for those who are again receiving letters instructing them to go into total lockdown. For many the last lockdown had a severe effect on their mental health and wellbeing..

Pray for those awaiting hospital procedures who will be anxious as they read that once the vaccine is available hospitals will possibly focus totally on the vaccination program.

As we pray through the new Church Directory, please remember **Edna Woolsey**.

Virtual Prayer Room

On Tuesday 10th Jane posted "Sadly Allan Diggins passed away on Sunday, please continue to pray for Tanya and Aaron."

The following day Julia Maile said "Thanks for all your prayers. I returned to work on Sunday, feeling better and have had a negative test result. David, Thomas and Steven's family are all ok and out of quarantine now. Although Thomas is back in total lockdown again thanks to the current restrictions!"

Prayers in a time of Coronavirus

Love never fails

Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope.

Love compels us to fight against coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty.

Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far.

Love compels us to give and act as one.

Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before.

As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family.

So, let us pause and find a moment of peace, as we lift up our hearts together in prayer.

This prayer is from Christian Aid click on this [link](#) for more information about their work. You will also be able to download an impressive PowerPoint presentation.

Prayer from Tearfund

Pray for God's blessing on your own church in this season, that community will be strengthened despite the inability to gather, and for wisdom for leaders as they adapt. Pray for churches in your community and around the world to be the hands and feet of Jesus during this pandemic, in both prayer and action where possible. Pray for protection, grace and courage for Tearfund's church partners as they seek to prevent the virus from spreading among poor communities and respond to the increased needs people are experiencing. Pray that Tearfund's many other vital projects that are bringing hope and help to so many will be able to adapt and continue despite coronavirus.

TEARFUND ARE CHRISTIANS PASSIONATE ABOUT ENDING POVERTY

They say "We're following Jesus where the need is greatest, working through local churches to unlock people's potential and helping them to discover that the answer to poverty is within themselves. When disasters strike, we respond quickly.
We won't stop until poverty stops."

For more information about Tearfund click [here](#).



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

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

This Week

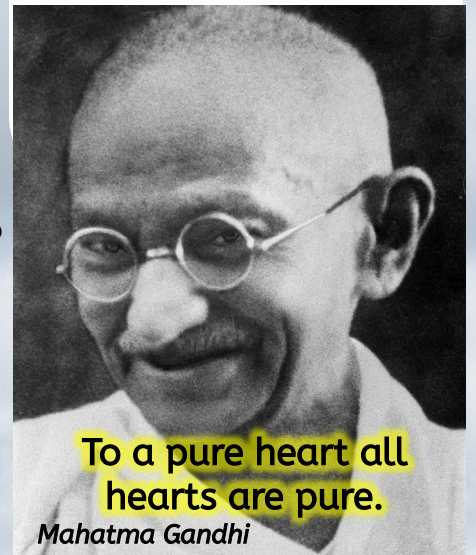
Monday 16th 7.00pm

Deacons Zoom Prayer Meeting

Wednesday 18th 7.00pm

Zoom Bible Study

Contact Diana for a link



To a pure heart all hearts are pure.

Mahatma Gandhi

Church Meeting

The deacons have been considering the idea of holding a church meeting as there are things, that in time, will need to come to the church for approval. Many of you are familiar with Zoom many are not but if we are unable to hold a meeting in the church would you be happy if we held a Zoom church meeting? We would arrange it so you could also join by phone, either from your land line or your mobile. Could you please let Diana/Ron know your view? Thank you.

Community Fridge

Jane Skivington is working in conjunction with NNDC and HUBBUB to run a community fridge in the stables. Network Norfolk the Christian website have an article about the venture click [here](#) to read it. If you would like to be involved with the project, contact Jane on 07729612736

Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at Habakkuk 1.

Habakkuk is suffering as he witnesses the turmoil of his time and berates God for his lack of action. How do we come to terms with a similar situation? If you would like to suggest a reading or take part in "Testimony Tuesday" contact Diana, Jerry or Ron.

A Weekly Prayer Focus

15th November 2020

Christ Church Coggeshall

The small market town of Coggeshall lies just off the old Roman Road between Colchester and Braintree. It is the home of the fellowship of Christ Church. The Church came into being at Pentecost in 1989 as a Local Ecumenical Partnership. It brought together Baptist, Methodist and URC in a united witness to the town of Coggeshall.

The fellowship at Christ Church have been described as a small but industrious and committed fellowship. Their mission statement, "Here to seek God, share Jesus and serve our communities" is one they continue to work to fulfil. Christ Church has been a hub for many activities and initiatives within the community. The current Minister, Revd John Prothero, has been with the fellowship since September 2017. In the past three years, the Church has

sought to make some changes that will enable it to reach further into the community. Prayer has been at the heart of all they have done, and they are encouraged and enthused as they have seen the Spirit of God move in their midst. The current pandemic caused some disruption to their plans, especially for Revd John Prothero who was due to retire at Easter! However, the Church has grasped the opportunities that also came. As computer technology was not an option for many in the fellowship, a weekly "Letter Box Service" was introduced. Prayers, song suggestions and a message of hope and encouragement was delivered not only to church members but to members of the community as well.

Live worship began in early October and, although things were different, God blessed this fellowship as they began to move into the new normal. The fellowship may, currently, be small in number but God has not given up on them Please Pray:

- For the fellowship as they seek ways to share the Gospel message in the new normal.
- For the Revd John Prothero and the church leaders as they look to the future.

Jerry's Quotes of the Week

"Grant us purity of heart
and strength of purpose,
that no selfish passion
may hinder us from knowing Your will,
and no weakness
hinder us from doing it;
but that in Your light
we may see light,
and in Your service
find our perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430)

"Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing"

Sören Kierkegaard,

"That purity of heart does not mean sinlessness of life is clear from the inspired record of the history of all of God's saints. Noah got drunk; Abraham equivocated; Moses disobeyed God; Job cursed the day of his birth; Elijah fled in terror from Jezebel; Peter denied Christ." - **A. W. Pink**

"Purity indicates a state of the heart where there is complete devotion to God. As unadulterated water is said to be pure, and as gold, without alloy is pure God, so the pure heart is the undivided heart where there is no conflict of loyalties, no cleavage of interests, no mixture of motives, no hypocrisy, and no insecurity. It is whole-heartedness God-wards."

R.A. Finlayson in New Bible Dictionary p1002

"To see a prince entreat a beggar to receive alms would be a strange sight; to see a king entreat a traitor to accept of mercy would be a stranger sight than that; but to see God entreat a sinner, to hear Christ say, 'I stand at the door and knock,' with a heart full and a heaven full of grace to bestow upon him that opens, this is such a sight as dazzles the eyes of angels." - **John Bunyan, as quoted in "A Puritan Theology" by Joel Beeke**

Christ...wants to have the heart pure, though outwardly the person may be a drudge in the kitchen, black, sooty, and grimy, doing all sort of dirty work...Though a common labourer, a shoemaker or a blacksmith may be dirty and sooty or may smell because he is covered with dirt and pitch,...and though he stinks outwardly, inwardly he is pure incense before God because he ponders the word of God in his heart and obeys it." **Martin Luther**



DURING NOVEMBER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WOULD BE VERY WELCOME - READY FOR US TO BE ABLE TO GIVE CHRISTMAS GOODIES TO CLIENTS

CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS - NO ALCOHOL -



**CHRISTMAS CAKE
- NO ALCOHOL -**

**MINCE PIES
- NO ALCOHOL -**

TINNED HAM

TINNED SALMON

TINNED POTATOES

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

BOXES OF BISCUITS

CRISPS, NUTS ETC

CHOCOLATE TREATS

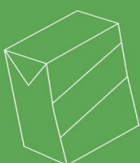
SPONGE PUDDING

CUSTARD

FRUIT JUICE

SQUASH

TOILET ROLLS





Open Doors

Children in India back to school thanks to your generosity

To your family, it may sound familiar. Lockdown was instigated, and for children there was no school to go to, and no opportunity to play with friends. They were confined to the four walls of home and only a garden, drive or front porch, if at all, to play on.

Unable to access education in lockdown

It was the same for young Hari in India. Like countless children across the world, he was confused and wondered when life would return to normal.

But unlike many children, Hari – whose name we have changed for security reasons, along with the other children mentioned in this article – couldn't tune into online classes or have his parents teach him. The required technology is unaffordable and his parents don't have the expertise to fill the gap.

For Hari's family, it's not the only challenge caused by Covid-19. His parents are daily labourers, with a low income in ordinary times. And during lockdown they had no work, leaving them with precious little income. Christian families have also faced discrimination when government aid has been distributed, the last in line to receive essential Covid-19 relief.

New school bridges the gap

But your faithful support has enabled a bridge school to

be set up. The aim is to help children, like Hari, who need to catch up following lockdown, and come alongside children with learning difficulties.

Hari is thrilled to be in school and not at home. "When this school started, I was so excited to get out of the house," he beams. "I was even happier to see many kids around."

The school also educates children in other life skills. Games and play equipment are used to develop team building, communication and even motor skills – all whilst having fun! Creativity, thought and opinions are expressed through drawing and colouring. They also hear stories from the Bible, and are taught about safety and hygiene to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

"Not only are we able to spend time in study, but also play and spend time with friends," says Hari. "It's exciting!"

The school is attended mainly by children of daily wage labourers and farmers who have low levels of education and income. Without your help, these children would be unable to benefit from this education. The school is open to children from all backgrounds, helping to build communal harmony as the children play with each other without discrimination. There is laughter, and the atmosphere is joyful.

Children grateful for education you provide

Like Hari, Ajay was upset at not being able to go to school or play with friends during lockdown. His

parents were worried, too. But the school has changed things.

He says, "Now I am able to spend time in study and play along with friends. And my parents are less worried. You have given us books, toys and stationery. We are greatly blessed because of the classes. We feel very good and are very happy. Thank you."

Anya, too, is excited to be at the school. "We thank you for this study centre," she says. "We are very happy, you have really helped us. We have good toys and notebooks, and we can focus and study well."

Gratitude bursts from the lips of the children. The support given to them today is providing them with a future full of hope and possibility. "Thank you for thinking of children like us," Hari says.

For more information on serving persecuted Christians or how you can support OpenDoors click [here](#).

Image by AkshayaPatra Foundation from [Pixabay](#)

Please Pray

- That the school will enable the children to live a normal life, despite the unusual times they are living through
- For the teachers at the school, that God will use them as powerful role models in the lives of the children
- That no Christian child across the world will be deprived of education, friendships and fun during the pandemic.



A wild way

We are moving into a new way of being church - missional listener Ben Lucas offers questions and waymarkers from his journey to help us reflect on our own contexts

I have a favourite walk. I have walked it so many times. It begins at the cricket club I used to captain in Abbotsbury, takes you up to St Catherine's chapel, a now deserted church on top of the hill, then down to the incredible Chesil beach with its views across the Jurassic coast. It is simply stunning.

I walked that walk at the beginning of lent with an Anglican pioneer, together praying about how we might see a pioneering movement break out across Dorset. It was a beautiful conversation in an extraordinary part of God's world. Because of lockdown, I was unable to walk this path for a few months.

Returning in June, it was halfway through that I remembered the conversations of pioneering. I sensed God tell me to look around, and to look carefully. I realised that this beautiful walk was now even more beautiful, filled with nature, overgrown hedge rows, swarming with butterflies and bees. It was now both beautiful and wild. It had not been touched, been allowed to grow freely, and the result was incredible wild beauty where old plants had found their way back to the surface, and wildlife had returned and become more numerous. My walk is not the only such illustration. Fish have been seen in the canals in Venice for the first time in ages, a tourist beach in Mexico has seen animals return (a turtle laying 112 eggs in front of a luxury dormant hotel), the birds in Wuhan can be heard for the first time – and even outside our front doors we see more butterflies and bees than we have in years. This is not new news for the Knepp estate in Sussex, which in the year 2000 embarked on a remarkable project to rewild. Theirs is a story of how a land was renewed and regenerated in extraordinary ways, by doing little except listening, learning, and enabling nature.

If taking our hands-off creation leads to a rewilding of our land – what might it look like if we took our hands off the church? What if we let go of control? What if, as leaders, we stopped strategizing and just helped people to experience the presence of God, and then enjoy what arises from such encounters?

I have been heartbroken in many church conversations regarding the coronavirus. I have heard that all know the real-life struggles people are going through – depression, loneliness, sickness, anxiety – but the main of the discussion is how do we continue to keep the show on the road. How do we continue to preach, sing songs, break bread, gather together etc...? Whereas, I would humbly suggest that better questions might be:

What is the cry of the community at this time?

What would it be like if God's kingdom came now?

What does the biblical imagination have to say to the situation?

And finally, what might church look like as we answer the previous questions?

The answers will be different and diverse in every locality.

The answer is likely to be beautifully wild!

I have been on the most exciting but difficult ride as I have transitioned from Baptist minister of a pretty big, institutional Baptist church to a missional listener, whose role is simply to hang around rural Dorset asking those questions. I am not suggesting everyone needs to be missional listeners, or that my approach is right – but I do think it is helpful to offer others waymarkers of the journey I and other pioneers have been on. We have already begun a journey away from what was to something new. These waymarkers are not for everyone, may happen in a different order but could be helpful to reflect upon as we all step into the unknown of the new normal of what it means to be church.

1). **Realisation** – as beautiful church is, and as amazing as some parts of it can be – there is more for us and for the community. That people are desperate for radical community.

2). **New set of questions** – instead of looking at how do we attract? How do we do what we do now better? – we engage with new questions, like those mentioned earlier.

3). **Wrestling with the powers** – what God call us to do is a bit like Noah's ark! It looks really odd to everybody else. People will try to control and reign us in – but somehow by the grace of the Holy Spirit and strength of character you continue.

4). **Change of posture** – instead of approaching God with full hands asking for blessing on our endeavours, we come with empty hands, seeking to join in with Him. Instead of approaching our neighbour as a missional target we want to grab and bring to where we are, we see them as missional conversation partner, whom as we journey together we realise they are discipling us, and we may be given permission to disciple them.

5). **Increased attentiveness** – transformation in our missional lenses leads us away from big events and pre-packaged discipleship courses to noticing how to join in with God in the everyday.

6). **Spiritual framework** – we become reliant not on others feeding our souls but discover our own rhythms of grace that build us up and helps us to join in the reconciliation of all things.

7). **Home and then Home again...** we realise that, somehow, we are more aware of who God is, and who we are in Him and what He is doing in our communities. This feels like home, and in living there we help others discover their homes and a radical movement breaks out...

We are moving into a new way of being church, and I am excited – though this excitement is tempered by my biggest fear that we go back to how it's always been done. If we can take our hands off the church, realise that God is calling us to a new thing which is join in with Him, rather than control – may my walk that day in Dorset become true for the church – rediscovery of wild beauty, the move of the Holy spirit and the good news that offers to the poor.

May new diverse communities rise up – and together as one Baptist movement, we celebrate, learn and grow; and may, because of the way our movement lives out Her call – may many experience the peace of God that is beyond our very imagining.

Ben Lucas was the minister of a large Baptist church before moving to rural Dorset in 2017. He and his family are living incarnationally, engaged in missional listening.

This reflection appears in the Autumn 2020 edition of Baptists Together magazine.

