

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 7th February 2021

This Sunday's online service "Mission Possible"



Diana is leading and Jerry is preaching from Acts 1:1 -11

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

Structure of Jerry's talk:

The resources we need to continue the work Jesus began:

1. **Proper Perspective v 6-7**
2. **Promised Power v 8a**
3. **Plan and Purpose v 8b**

Jerry's Reads

Deut 29:29, Joel 2:28-29, Ezk 39:29, Matthew 28:16-29, Mark 13:32-37, Luke 3:15-17, Luke 24:44-52, 1 Cor 15:1-11

For Your Prayers

Please pray for Amy English as she applies for a place in an Acting College.

Pray also for the families struggling financially who are struggling to buy food, pay their rent or mortgage and suffering from anxiety.

Remember those living in loneliness with at times only the walls to talk to who struggle to see a purpose to life as it is now. Be their comforter Lord encourage others and safely contact help them through the dark days they are in.

Pray for the over 340 million Christians who are persecuted around the world and the 4761 Christians who were murdered for their faith last year.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **David Child**.

Virtual Prayer Room

On Sunday 31st Pat Dabbs posted "All done! Alan home. He's sore but give thanks to God that everything went well. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers."

On Tuesday Lorraine Stewart asked "Hi everyone ... Can you please pray for Julie Gunton ... Julie moved away from SBC years ago and now lives in a care home in Rutland. Her nephew contacted Gloria to inform her that Julia has had COVID and this has resulted in her losing her swallowing reflex ... He asked us as a church to pray ...Thankyou."

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

Your Voice

God of Justice,
Your voice cries out for those who suffer,
for those who live in the burden of poverty and injustice.
You invite us to use our voices to echo your call of hope
that justice will flow like a river and this world will be changed.
Strengthen us to accept your invitation
to use our voices to cry out for change
and to build your Kingdom
for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Written by Andy Stinson. A disciple, husband, dad, deacon and priest. At the time of writing Andy is Rector of Barrow (near Chester) and Worship and Liturgy Missioner for Chester Diocese. [Christian Aid](#)

A Prayer of Doubt

Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. Psalm 73:23

Lord, I am uncertain. I am afraid. I am wondering where you are, if you are there. My mind is whirling with questions. My heart is heavy with the weight of grief. My hands are itching to do something but have been told to do nothing. Are you here? Are you in our hospitals and supermarkets and streets? Please be here. Be here in the stillness and silence. Be here in the busyness of ICUs and ambulances. Be here in my head and heart and hands. Be here, even when I cannot see you or name you. Be here, as you were in Mary's womb, as you were in a boat in the storm, as you were hung on a cruel cross, as you were in the cool silence of a grave, as you were in a room of frightened disciples, as you are drawing near with compassion and comfort to those mourning. Be here and it will be enough. Amen. **For more prayers click [Lockdown Prayers](#)**



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Ministry Team: The Whole Fellowship

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 & Personal Prayer

SBC is open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive donations for the food bank and personal prayer. Jerry or Ron will be on hand to ensure all safety measures are met.

The [Food Bank](#) is open on Fridays in the Stables, 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 miniter@stalhambaptist.org.uk

For your Diary
Monday Feb 8th 9.00am
Deacons Zoom Prayer Meeting
Wed Feb. 10th 7.00pm

Zoom Bible Study
Contact Diana for link.

"Do not be silent; there is no limit to the power that may be released through you."
Howard Thurman

It's Daffodil Time

If you are reading this in the UK it may well be snowing. However, we may well be picking daffodils in a few weeks. For some years John Applegate has organised the harvesting of the lovely spring flowers to raise money for SBC. If you could spare an hour to join Wordsworth as he wrote "I wandered lonely as a cloud. That floats on high o'er vales and hills, when all at once I saw a crowd, a host, of golden daffodils." Once you have spied them you can pick them. If you can help contact Henry on 07423597662.

Christmas Donation

The Candlelight services collection raised £219.10 which was donated to the Sir Norman Lamb Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund. Stewart received a thank you letter on the 4th January.

Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at Jeremiah 1 Do you get frustrated when nobody seems to listen to you? Do you give up and resign yourself to the mindset that you probably have nothing important to say? As Christians should we be speaking out against the injustices in this world? If you would like to suggest a reading or take part in "Testimony Tuesday" contact Diana, Jerry or Ron.

Can You Help Stalham High School

Stalham High School is recruiting Volunteers for their Covid Testing Team. If you are able to support our local High School contact Emma James **01692 580281**

EBA Prayer Focus 7th February 2021 Gunton Baptist Church

Gunton Baptist Church is rooted in the heart of a housing estate just north of Lowestoft, England's most easterly town. The church's location means it is well-suited to its community-focused outlook, with a range of activities designed to support local residents, many of whom live in deprivation.

In 'normal' times there is a weekly cafe, craft and toddler groups, a foodbank and Roots - a clothing scheme which provides clean, good quality clothing and shoes for those in need. One of the great success stories in recent years has been the work of Baby Basics, who work with midwives, health visitors and other professionals to provide baby equipment to vulnerable mums in and around Lowestoft. Sunday services are usually held in a relaxed, Café style, and are attended by around 30 people. Covid-19 has inevitably led to many of these activities being paused, bringing many challenges to those on the estate. Baby Basics and Roots have adapted their services though, to continue to provide their essential services. Indeed, Baby Basics helped 152 families in need last year, as well as providing bags of Christmas gifts for 80 local children.

As a small church, adapting to new ways of worship in the pandemic was challenging. Some were happy to migrate to services on Facebook live and latterly YouTube, usually led by the church's minister, Revd Ian Forsyth. Others have struggled, although the service is sent out weekly via email and posted to those unable to engage with social media. The church recently ran a Christian Health and Wellbeing course on Zoom in partnership with Kintsugi Hope and are planning to run another course later this year. However, there is a recognition that there is a disconnect between all these activities, and it has been difficult to keep all of the membership feeling part of the church family. Isolation has been a problem for many in the fellowship, and with limited people to support others, this has been a growing concern as time passes.

Please pray:

- For the elderly who are feeling isolated that they may be connected to the wider Church family.

- For energy and refreshing for the leaders of the community work continuing through COVID.
- For guidance for the minister and deacons as they seek to prioritise which activities to restart as the restrictions ease.
- For wisdom managing the financial resources, with the decline in income during 2020.

Donations

If you would like to donate to SBC you can go on line at <https://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/donate.php> where you will find details of how to pay by BAC's, SMS or debit or credit card. You can also put cash or cheques through Henry Nicholson door at Three Windows

Quotes of the Week

"We might preach 'til our tongue rotted, 'til we exhaust our lungs and die—but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit uses the Word to convert that soul. So it is blessed to eat into the very heart of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in scriptural language and your spirit is flavoured with the words of the Lord, so that your blood is Bibline and the very essence of the Bible flows from you".
C H Spurgeon.

"Of course, there is a proper place for a political and legal expression of the Christian world and life view. Christians should seek proper public expression of their beliefs, but they must not suppose that they can bring in the kingdom of God by imposing their views on others. Moral reform will not come by political power or power tactics. Only the Holy Spirit can take the gospel to the hearts and minds of men and women and change them into disciples of the Lord." -
Boice, J. M. Acts : An expository commentary .

"For Christ's kingdom, while not incompatible with patriotism, tolerates no narrow nationalisms. He rules over an international community in which race, nation, rank and sex are no barrier to fellowship. And when his kingdom is consummated at the end, the countless redeemed company will be seen to be drawn 'from every nation, tribe, people and language' Rev 7:9" - **John Stott.**

"We are in danger of forgetting that we cannot do what God can do and that God will not do what we can do. It is in the chrónos [Greek word for time] that we do what we can do; the propitious intervention to do what only He can do will be done on His timing and by His power"
-Oswald Chambers

"Do not forget the culture of the inner man—I mean of the heart. How diligently the cavalry officer keeps his sabre clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember you are God's sword, His instrument—I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. (Such) is an awful weapon in the hand of God". -
The Scottish preacher, Robert Murray McCheyne

"The Church is the pilgrim people of God. It is on the move—hastening to the ends of the earth to beseech all men to be reconciled to God, and hastening to the end of time to meet its Lord, who will gather all into one. Therefore, the nature of the Church is never to be fully defined in static terms, but only in terms of that to which it is going. It cannot be understood rightly except in a perspective which is at once missionary and eschatological, and only in that perspective can the deadlock of our present ecumenical debate be resolved.
Bishop Lesslie Newbigin , The Household of God,

Do we have enough hope?

The first legally binding international agreement to ban nuclear weapons entered into force on 22 January 2021. None of the nine nuclear states, including the UK, have signed the treaty.

Martin Tiller writing for the [Baptist Times](#) explains how the church can bring about change.

"My God is so big, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing that He cannot do (*clap clap*)"

You may have sung it at Sunday School, or taught it to others. And in our adult lives we continue to make similar bold professions. There is an area, however, in which it seems that many UK Christians have forgotten this hope. Britain is one of just nine countries which still maintains that nuclear weapons are a "necessary evil" to protect us from present or future threats. Christians have been praying regularly for peace since the earliest times. If we believe that nuclear weapons are now here to stay, are we denying the words of that chorus? Or are we actually suggesting that the weapons are His answer to those prayers, as they maintain the peace?

Nobody wants a nuclear war, obviously. Since about 1990 we have been collectively forgetting just how awful it would be, but we are still clear that, in the words of Ronald Reagan, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." The only debate among the sane majority is how best to avoid it.

In the UK we have been brought up on Deterrence Theory. Space does not permit a full discussion of this doctrine here; suffice to say, it takes some gymnastics to reconcile it with "love thy neighbour". Are we happy if other countries take this stance towards us (Luke 6:31)? Would we apply it to any other type of Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), or just the ones we already possess? Not many of us would even consider "deterrence" to be a justification for executing individual criminals, so why entire cities? The book of Jonah is just one Biblical example where God's mercy goes far beyond our narrow conception of how His standards should be upheld.

Some say you cannot "uninvent" nuclear weapons. But you cannot uninvent cannibalism or slavery either; this does not mean they deserve state sanction and vast investment from our ailing public finances. Still less should those of us who celebrate the Prince of Peace meekly accept that the current situation is as good as we can hope for.

Some say it is naïve to believe we can ever persuade the politicians to get rid of these things. See the opening quotation again; and in fact, the naivety

belongs to those who think we can carry on as we are now without a nuclear weapon ever being used. It is naïve to assume that all current and future political or military leaders will never use them. It is also naïve to ignore the risk of accidental use, particularly with the rise of cybercrime.



Ah, but we will get rid of our nuclear weapons when the conditions are right, say the politicians. Just be patient! But there were many well-documented cases in the last 70 years when we had a very lucky escape. Will we last another 70 years? Would even that represent adequate stewardship of God's earth? Are we happy to leave it to future generations to make the world a safer place?

The majority of the nations are becoming increasingly exasperated about the way in which the "nuclear nine" are risking all of our futures. In the long-standing Non-Proliferation Treaty (1970), the UK and others agreed to "pursue negotiations in good faith ... to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Frustrated by the stalled and reversing progress on this commitment, the United Nations has now agreed a new [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (TPNW) which has the support of 130 nation states. Some are small countries like Vanuatu, but the list also includes countries like Brazil, Mexico, Ireland, New Zealand, the Philippines and pretty much the whole of Africa. The UK government has refused to participate in the process at all, and has stated that it will never join the Treaty.

Nevertheless, the TPNW entered into force on 22 January 2021, to widespread rejoicing and thanksgiving around the world. Nuclear Weapons will be outlawed under international law, as every other type of WMD already is, but the UK will not recognise this law.

Some say this is politics, and the church should stay out of it. They said the same about debt relief, poverty alleviation and climate action! In any case, to quote Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, "We are not telling our government what to do, we are asking them to stop telling us what they will not do, and work towards developing plans that will rid the world of the danger and expense of nuclear weapons."

There are many important issues facing Christians, but this one demands more engagement and hope. How?

Firstly, we can make our prayers for peace more specific, informed, and credible. [Christian CND produces a monthly prayer diary](#) which may help.

Secondly, we must simply get this issue back on the agenda, and start to mean it when we say "there's nothing that He cannot do". Ask your politicians what they are doing to free future generations from this threat. Don't be naïve. There are powerful forces in play here and we need to engage with them, prayerfully and persistently. As we have seen with poverty alleviation and, more recently, climate change, when the churches rise up and an intractable issue becomes mainstream, change can happen. To quote from the hymn *God of Grace and God of Glory*: "Save us from weak resignation to the perils we deplore... Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving thee whom we adore."

Martin Tiller is a member of Rugby Baptist Church and part of the Executive Committee of the [Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament](#)

The thoughts expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministers and Deacons of SBC

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Open Doors

“Every day is one long nightmare” – the story of Prisoner 42 in North Korea

Your name is the first thing they take. Then they take your freedom, health and clothes, companionship, even your hair. And finally, they take away the daylight.

Drip by drip, like a tap slowly running dry, you're left with nothing but your own mind and body – and even these will be crushed eventually.

My name is Prisoner 42 – the name I was given when I entered this prison in North Korea.

Every morning at 8am, they call for 42. When I stand, I'm not allowed to look at the guards. I must get up, put my hands behind my back and follow them to the interrogation room. I can see the shadows of the guards, but I'm careful to never appear as though I'm looking at them.

Even though the same thing happens every day, each time I am afraid. Whenever '42' is called, I am beaten and kicked. It hurts most when they hit my ears. They ring for hours, sometimes days.

But for now, at least I'm alive.

Solitary confinement and relentless interrogation

I'm in the interrogation room for an hour each morning. Every day, they ask the same questions:

Afterwards, they return me to my cell. It's warm during the day and cold at night. In winter and summer, the temperatures can be unbearable. It's so small, I can barely lie down. But anyway, I'm not allowed to lie down much. I must sit on my knees, with closed fists. I'm not even allowed to open them. The place I live is not fit for any human. But to the guards I'm not a human – I'm less than an animal.

I'm in solitary confinement because they suspect the truth. They can see through my denials. Am I a Christian? Yes. But I must pretend. If I admit that I was helped by Chinese Christians, I will be killed, either quickly or slowly.

Dream reveals secret heritage of faith

The first Christian I ever knew was my grandfather – though I had no idea at the time. On Sundays, he often told me to leave the house and play outside. I didn't understand why.

When I fled to China because of the North Korean famine, I met other Christians. I was touched by them. They never really spoke about the gospel, but I joined their worship services. Then, one night, I dreamt of my grandfather. He was sitting in a circle with other men. In the middle was a Bible and all of them were praying. In my dream, I shouted at him, "I am a believer, too!"

It was then that I gave my life to Jesus.

One day whilst walking down a street, a black car pulled up alongside me. I thought the driver wanted directions, but he and other men stepped out of the vehicle and grabbed me. I resisted but couldn't escape. I was pushed into the car and, when the door closed and the car drove away, I realised that my life was over.

After a few weeks in a Chinese prison cell, I was handed over to the North Korean authorities. They brought me to this detention centre. I was stripped and searched, and they shaved off my hair. I was ordered to put on clothes that didn't fit nor match, probably from a previous prisoner. That's where my name came from – number 42 was printed on the jumpsuit. I was just another in a line of Prisoner 42s.



Secret church in prison

A month ago, I was sick and allowed to stay in the barracks. I thought I was alone, until I noticed a blanket in the corner which was moving. There was someone underneath. I tiptoed towards them and listened intently. The sounds were barely audible but familiar – a woman was praying. I retreated to my mattress and watched her closely for the next few days.

A week later, we were working outside. Nobody was near and I walked up to her and whispered, "Hello, greetings in Jesus' name." Her face turned white in shock. She knew if anyone overheard us, we'd both likely be shot on the spot. But seeing no one around, she raised a silent smile.

We formed a secret church inside the camp. When safe enough to meet, we prayed the Lord's Prayer and recited Scripture and the Apostles' Creed together.

She was much braver than I was – she spoke to others about Christ. That's probably why, one day a car came to pick her up. When I saw her leave, I knew they were taking her to a maximum-security prison, a *Kwan-li-so*. Nobody survives the *Kwan-li-so*."

That's the last time I saw her..

But God has watched over me. He kept me from giving up. I was not a tap running dry – Jesus gave me Living Water to keep me going. He kept me from ending my life. He helped me pray and cry out to Him.

Prisoner 42's story takes place every day for thousands of people in North Korea. Open Doors estimates there are 50,000 to 70,000 Christians imprisoned in the country. Through secret networks in China, Open Doors provides spiritual and physical support for Christians who can make it to safe houses. They receive training and aid, and some even return to North Korea – strengthened in their faith. Thank you for supporting your North Korean family and keeping them in your prayers.

If you would like to read the whole article or find out more about Opendoors click [here](#)