

# Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 14th February 2021

**This Sunday's online service:**

**"There is more to Pentecost than perhaps we first thought!"**

**Barbara and Geoff are leading and Ron is preaching from Acts 2: 1 -12**



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

## Ron's Reads

Ex3:1f, 19:16, Kings 18 v 24, 2 Chron 7:1f Mt 5:17  
Jn1:14, Jer 31:33

## For Your Prayers

Please pray for people in our community who are struggling to keep their homes warm due to the impact of the pandemic on their incomes leaving them to make decisions about purchasing food or purchasing heating.

Pray also for the small businesses in the area who are desperately trying to keep their companies viable.

Also remember those who are awaiting medical help and are stuck in long waiting lists and those having to attend hospital regularly in the current snow and ice.

Please pray for Ron, Jerry and the Deacons who will be meeting virtually on Monday that the Lord would guide them as they try to lead SBC in the current lockdown.

Please pray for Amy (Wagner) and Tyler (Hale) part of the Lighthouse Church in Durban South Africa who are getting married on Saturday. The service is being conducted by Alan Wagner, Amy's father and the church's pastor. SBC and the Lighthouse Church regularly share services and prayers.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Iris Clark**.

## Energy Needs

**If you are, or know someone who is, struggling with their energy bills Cromer Food Bank offers a scheme called Energybank that can help. Contact the Food Bank on 07826376343, or contact Ron Skivington at [minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk](mailto:minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk) Citizens Advice Bureau can also give advice and possible assistance. Click [here](#) for a link.**

## Virtual Prayer Room

On Sunday 7th Jerry posted "Thank you for praying for Julie Gunton. Unfortunately she died this morning in the care home. Please continue praying for her family."

Sue StJohn posted "Thank you for informing us Jerry, she was such a sweet lady who had a very real faith, and a big sense of humour."

On Monday Ruth Hayward posted "Just to let you know I am still in hospital. I am still unsure whether I will need surgery."

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

## Prayer for Trust in the Disappointments of Life

Loving God, there are times when the burdens I carry and the disappointments that come my way seem too much to bear. Lord, my daily tasks seem to mount up with every passing week, and however much I manage to get done I never seem to do all that I ought to do. I find myself stressing out and worrying about all the things that I have left undone.

I know that this is not the way that the Christian life should be lived, and although I have heard people preach on living in a way that is pleasing to You, I never seem to manage to live that way myself. Lord, if I am honest, I don't really understand how to live a life that is pleasing to You, even though I have tried so very hard.

Help me to do what the Bible says, to cast all my burdens on You and to let You be my full sufficiency. When the disappointments in my life seem to be piling up all around me, help me to trust You with all my heart and not lean on my own understanding, or rely on myself. Help me to seek You first, knowing that all the other things will be added unto me. Help me to trust You instead of trusting in myself.

Lord, You have promised to guide all Your children in all truth. Teach me Your truth of abiding in You and trusting in Your Word. I ask this in the name of Jesus,

Amen. Source: <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Prayers-for-Trust>



**Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington**  
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**Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno**  
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**Secretary: Diana Gordon**  
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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](http://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 [minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk](mailto:minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk)

## For your Diary

**Monday Feb 15th 7.00pm**  
Deacons Zoom Meeting  
**Thursday Feb. 18th 7.00pm**  
Zoom Prayer Meeting.  
Contact Diana for link.

**"Pentecost was the day of power of the Holy Spirit. It was the day the Christian church was born."**

Billy Graham, [Billy Graham in Quotes](#)

## It's Daffodil Time

"She turned to the sunlight  
And shook her yellow head,  
And whispered to her neighbour:  
"Winter is dead."

— **A.A. Milne**, [When We Were Very Young](#)

The snow is still laying across the fields and gardens but the winter will soon be dead and those beautiful yellow flowers that bring so much joy will be ready to pick to raise money for SBC. If you can spend an hour harvesting them, a very therapeutic, experience contact Henry on 07423597662.

## Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at Acts 9. How easy do you find it to place trust in those who have made mistakes, let people down let you down? Maybe someone who has committed a crime? If you would like to suggest a reading or take part in "Testimony Tuesday" contact Diana, Jerry or Ron.

## EBA Prayer Focus 14th February 2021 Dagenham Baptist Church

Dagenham lies on the Essex/East London border. The area originally comprised of small-holdings and farms and a number of roads are named after the farms on which houses now stand. Work began on the giant Becontree Council Housing Estate in 1921. The record says this was to provide 'Homes for Heroes'! It took over ten years to build and its 27,000 houses provided new homes for over 100,000 people. Today the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham houses 180,000 people.

Dagenham Baptist Church was established in 1927, the first of four Baptist churches to be built as the town developed – all four are still here! Chaplin Road has had its ups and downs, but is today a thriving Christian family aged 1 – 93. Our membership is 60 (three having come into membership during lockdown), and before lockdown our average morning attendance was 100.

We endeavour to provide nurture for all age groups, which is also a means of contact with the wider community. Our Pastor does work with a local undertaker which is another means of contact with the community around the church. We hold an annual memorial service for the families and invite them to the carol service – which many attend.

In common with all churches, the way ahead is unknown – to us. At our Zoom Bible study/prayer meeting recently our title was 'God's footprints'. We do not know the way ahead, but we know one who does; and we will endeavour to discern and follow in his footsteps.

Pray for us, as you would pray for your own church in these unprecedented times.

## Thank you from Cromer Foodbank

During January you contributed 379.15kg of food which helped towards a monthly total of 2579.25kg. We totally rely on donations, both food and financial, to operate and we are extremely grateful when people choose to support us. So, thank you for thinking of us and enabling us to serve the people in crisis across our district. If you would like to be involved in fundraising for us in the future or would like one of us to come to talk about the work of the Foodbank, then please get in touch.

Thank you for your support and generosity without which the foodbank work would not be possible. During February, the following would be much appreciated: **Long Life Milk – full fat or semi-skimmed, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Potatoes, Tinned Vegetables, Tinned Fish, Tinned Meat, Sponge Puddings, Fruit Juice, Tea, Microwave Rice, Instant Snacks – Mugshot, Pot Noodle, Cuppa Soup, Crisps, Sweet Snacks, Toilet Rolls, Male and Female Deodorants, Shampoo and Conditioner, Household Cleaning Products.**

Please note that we cannot accept any fresh food or items that contain alcohol.

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 [minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk](mailto:minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk)

## Quotes of the Week

"When you strip it of everything else, Pentecost stands for power and life. That's what came into the church when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost."

— **David Wilkerson**, [The Cross and the Switchblade](#)

"The Christian vocation is to be in prayer, in the Spirit, at the place where the world is in pain, and as we embrace that vocation, we discover it to be the way of following Christ, shaped according to his messianic vocation to the cross, with arms outstretched, holding on simultaneously to the pain of the world and to the love of God.

Paul, we should note carefully, is quite clear about one thing: as we embrace this vocation, the prayer is likely to be inarticulate. It does not have to be a thought-out analysis of the problem and the solution. It is likely to be simply a groan, a groan in which the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the crucified and risen Christ, groans within us, so that the achievement of the cross might be implemented afresh at that place of pain..."

— **N.T. Wright**, [The Challenge of Easter](#)

"Our task, as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled Christians, following Christ and shaping our world, is to announce redemption to the world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to the world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to the world that has discovered its brokenness, to proclaim love and trust to the world that knows only exploitation, fear and suspicion."

— **N.T. Wright**, [The Challenge of Easter](#)

"The gospel of Jesus points us and indeed urges us to be at the leading edge of the whole culture, articulating in story and music and art and philosophy and education and poetry and politics and theology and even, heaven help us, biblical studies, a worldview that will mount the historically rooted Christian challenge to both modernity and postmodernity, leading the way into the postmodern world with joy and humour and gentleness and good judgment and true wisdom."

— **N.T. Wright**, [The Challenge of Easter](#)

"If we who self-designate ourselves with terms like "Catholic," "Orthodox," "Protestant," "Evangelical," "Charismatic," "Pentecostal" and others would fully surrender ourselves to The Holy Spirit, we could stop focusing on the secondary words we use to describe the primary experience of The Holy Spirit."

— **John David Geib**, [Beyond Beliefs](#)



# Leaving prison with faith

Serena Bailey highlights the power of supportive faith communities for prison leavers with faith - and introduces the Welcome Directory, a fully searchable national directory of faith communities prepared to welcome and appropriately support people who have left or are leaving prison. First published in the [Baptist Times](#).

We all have moments from our lives that we deeply regret. Moments when weakness or poor judgement got the better of us.

For me, my faith is my saving grace in such moments. 1 Corinthians 12:9 tells us that: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

This teaching reminds me that I am not defined by my worst moments and that redemption is available to me, enabling me to choose a better path next time.

I recently interviewed Bob Wilson, a prison chaplain and Baptist minister (pictured) who has worked within prison ministry for over 25 years.

He told me about Jonathon's story, which demonstrates the power of such faith for helping individuals to rebuild their lives.

## **Jonathon's story - by Bob Wilson, prison chaplain and Baptist minister (pictured a former member of SBC)**

*Jonathon\* led a challenged life, with a final downward spiral that resulted in his incarceration. During his time in prison, he took the first steps on a faith journey... Having heard the Lord's Prayer countless times before, he found himself finally connecting with the words, and threw himself into exploring his faith further. He sought every opportunity to develop his faith, engaging in Bible study, Alpha courses and in-house recovery programmes.*

*Having had no faith before prison he found that his chaplaincy team were an invaluable source of support, helping him to stay focused and to imagine a more positive future.*

*As his release day drew closer, he began to wonder how he could continue his faith journey beyond the prison gates. Would he be able to find a supportive church? Would anyone accept him and welcome him despite his past?*

*Fortunately for Jonathon, his chaplaincy team had strong connections with a local Baptist church who were committed to accepting and welcoming prison leavers. The chaplaincy team made contact, and some members of the congregation came to visit him before his release. Together they discussed his positive plans for the future, and how they could support him beyond the prison gates. On his first Sunday after release, they picked him up and accompanied him to his first service in his new church.*

*Jonathon was released in 2010 and is still a member of that congregation to this day. He is highly involved in the life of the church and got married in that same church where he attended his first Sunday service. His journey hasn't been smooth sailing, with painful challenges like losing his father and his business.*

*However, at every hurdle he had the benefit of a support system and his own faith to help him to make good choices*



*and get back on track. His faith community was a stabilising influence and helped him to seek positive solutions when hope felt lost.*

## **The Welcome Directory**

Jonathon's story really demonstrates the power that a good supportive church can have in supporting people as they leave prison. In fact, research shows that inclusion within a faith community reduces reoffending and helps prison leavers to have more positive journeys beyond the prison gates.

Unfortunately, not all prison leavers share Jonathon's experience. People leaving prison are not always guaranteed a fresh start, as stigma and negative stereotypes are widespread. Fear of rejection and judgement hold some back from engaging with new communities, with only 20 per cent of prison leavers with faith going on to join new faith communities. This can result in them losing traction with the faith they left prison with.

That is why [The Welcome Directory](#) exists. We are a charity, dedicated to helping faith communities across beliefs become places where people who leave prison find acceptance. We maintain a directory, listing registered faith communities who have declared their commitment to welcoming and appropriately supporting prison leavers.

This directory is used by prison chaplains, probation workers and prison leavers themselves, to identify welcoming communities upon release from prison. Communities where people like Jonathon can find the support and care they need.

The Welcome Directory did not exist when Jonathon was released - his church was identified via personal networks in the chaplaincy team. However as soon as The Welcome Directory was born, his church was the second faith community to register. We now have close to 140 faith communities registered with almost a quarter of them being Baptist churches.

However we need to continue to increase that number. Our vision is to reach a stage where all prison leavers with faith can find a supportive faith community, wherever they are, whatever they believe.

If you believe that your faith community is ready to welcome prison leavers or would like to learn more, please visit our [website](#) today or contact [admin@welcomedirectory.org.uk](mailto:admin@welcomedirectory.org.uk) for more information.

**\*A pseudonym has been used to protect this individual's identity.** Image by [falco](#) from [Pixabay](#)



# Open Doors



## Pastor Raymond Koh still missing 4 years on – family still no closer to answers

On 13 February 2017, Pastor Raymond Koh was abducted in broad daylight by secret state police in Malaysia. Four years on, after fighting tirelessly for answers, his wife, Susanna, and her family are no closer to finding out where he is – but she is not ready to give up yet. Your prayers and support have enabled the family to keep going.

On 13 February 2021 it will be four years since Pastor Raymond Koh was abducted, and since his family began searching for answers about his mysterious disappearance.

In April 2019, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) concluded that Raymond Koh was a victim of enforced disappearance by the state, namely the Special Branch of the Malaysian Police Department. The government then formed a special task force to establish Raymond Koh's whereabouts. The task force was scheduled to publish a report with the findings of its investigations within six months but, in January 2020, the government said that the task force needed more time to complete the report. They have yet to publish this report.

[Follow the timeline of events of Pastor Raymond's disappearance.](#)

Susanna Koh, Pastor Raymond's wife (pictured below with their son Jonathan), has been actively campaigning to find him since he disappeared. Although the case has gained a lot of international attention, the family still don't have firm answers about what happened to Raymond or where he is now. They also still don't know why he was taken.

It's been four years since Pastor Raymond Koh from Malaysia was inexplicably abducted, leaving Susanna and her family still searching for answers.

## Who is Pastor Raymond?

One possible reason for his abduction is his compassionate work among the poor and marginalised people groups in Malaysia.

With Susanna, Raymond started a charity, Harapan Komuniti (Hope Community), that works with the underprivileged from all communities, including those with HIV/AIDS, recovering drug addicts, single mothers and their children, and homeless people.

Esther, Raymond and Susanna's daughter, remembers her father once advised her to 'waste time with people'. "He said it's important... what he means is just spending time with people, getting to know people, because to him, people are the number one priority."

Sri Ram, a close friend of Raymond's, says, "Having come from a poor family background, Raymond understood the needs of the poor and the neglected. Anything that he could imagine doing for the marginalised communities, Raymond would take it on."

Pastor Raymond even received death threats and hate mail for the work he was doing, but he refused to respond in anger.

## Moving forward without Raymond

It has been very hard for the family to adjust to life without Pastor Raymond. "It has been particularly difficult when it comes to birthdays, anniversaries and festive seasons, because we miss him," says Susanna. "That's the time when the family gathers, so it's really been a struggle." Carrying on without Pastor Raymond has been difficult – but Susanna and her family testify to the power of your prayers at work in their lives.

We recently met with Susanna online, where she expressed her thanks for your prayerful concern. "The Christian community has been a great encouragement to me," she says. "[Your prayers have] been so encouraging to me, you know, they really touched my heart and I'm so grateful and thankful for the worldwide Christian community."

She also talked about the hope and strength she has found in the Bible – in particular, Isaiah 43:1-3: "If you go through the flood, go through the river, you go through the fire, He will be with [you]. It's very assuring; God's Word does strengthen us, and it plants that faith in our hearts."

## What next for the Koh family?

In February 2020, Susanna Koh announced that she has filed a lawsuit against the police and Malaysian government over Raymond's abduction. The Koh family won't stop until they find answers, and ultimately, find Raymond. "Please pray with us for justice to be done as this matter is now in the hands of the judiciary," says Susanna.

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