

# Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 7th March 2021

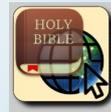
## This Sunday's online service "The Power of One"



**Ron is leading and is preaching from Acts 3: 1 - 10**

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 right.



### Ron's Reads

**Lk 15:1-7 Mt 10:29f**

### For Your Prayers

Please pray for the family and friends of Roger Nicholson whose funeral is on Tuesday March 9th.

Also pray for the children and teachers as schools reopen on Monday.

Remember those in the fellowship and wider communities that are currently undergoing treatment as out-patients and in-patients in local hospitals.

Please pray for Ron, Jerry and the deacons as they make decisions on the refurbishment of the schoolroom.

Pray for those caught up in the armed conflict in Yemen that has resulted in the largest humanitarian crisis in the world; parties to the conflict have killed and injured thousands of Yemeni civilians. According to the Yemen Data Project, more than 17,500 civilians were killed and injured since 2015, and a quarter of all civilians killed in air raids were women and children. More than 20 million people in Yemen are experiencing food insecurity; 10 million of them are at risk of famine. (source [Human Rights Watch](#))

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Pam De'ath**.

### Prayer for Courage In The Christian Life

Heavenly Father, I love You and thank You for all that You have done for me. Thank You for dying for me and taking the punishment that I deserve. Father God, please help me, for when I am on my own I want to tell the whole world about You, but when I am in company with other people, I just freeze up and get so tongue-tied and am so lost for words.

I feel I am letting You down by not saying anything about You, and remaining silent, when I should be lifting up the Lord Jesus and telling everyone I meet, the message of salvation by grace through faith.

Give me courage I pray, to open my mouth and speak the truth to whomsoever I may come into contact. Release my tongue and allow me to speak forth what is in my heart, to your praise and glory. Lord, I know that without You I can do nothing, but I also believe that I can do all things through Christ Who gives me the strength and courage.

So, use my life I pray, and give me the courage to be a good and faithful witness to Jesus, in word and in deed, to His praise and glory. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

### Prayer for Courage To Face The Future

Heavenly Father, the struggles and difficulties of life seem to be swirling all around me like a misty fog in the blackness of night, and at times I just don't know which way to turn.

Father, at times I just feel like giving up and walking away from everything, and yet I know that in life, "giving-up" is not an option. Give me courage and strength to face the future with You, and to trust You to walk with me every step of the way, for I know that the Bible tells me that You are with me every moment of the day.

Give me the courage to take my eyes off the difficulties of life and to unreservedly anchor my faith in You. And Lord, from this day forward, as I step out into the unknown future, may I have the courage to put my hand into Your hand and not to fear, knowing that You will never fail me nor forsake me. Thank You, in Jesus' name,

Amen.

Source: <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/>

Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington  
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno  
07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon  
07951949128

Ministry Team: The Whole  
Fellowship

**If you are reading this news-letter 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

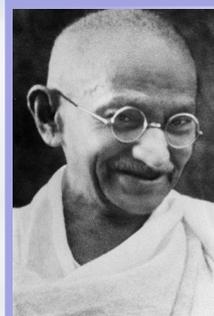
**Monday March 7th 9.00am**

Deacons Zoom Meeting

**Wed March 9th 7.00pm**

Zoom Bible Study.

Contact Diana for a link.



Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly

*Mahatma Gandhi*

## Daffodils

Edna is once again selling daffodils at her front gate and you will also find some outside SBC. The proceeds will go towards the church building fund.

## Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at Matthew 5: 38-48. How easy is it to follow Jesus's command? How many times have you reacted to others people's anger and abuse?

If you would like to suggest a reading or take part in "Testimony Tuesday" contact Diana, Jerry or Ron.

## 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's door at Three Windows Brumstead Road Stalham,

## EBA Prayer Focus 7th March 2021 Corringham Baptist Church

The small Essex town of Corringham sits between the larger towns of Basildon and Grays, just a stone's throw from the Thames Estuary.

The church is well-situated in the town centre and has recently celebrated the appointment of John Kennett as Pastor, following a three-year pastoral vacancy.

The past 12 months have seen the congregation join with nearby Socketts Heath Baptist Church for Sunday services on Zoom, resulting in an encouraging friendship developing between the two churches.

Fortunately the relaxing of the guidelines in the summer allowed the church to meet John in person and explore his calling together, before the return to online gatherings in the autumn. A new Bible study is in the pipeline and the church building was recently approved to be a Covid testing centre.

In 'normal' times, the congregation ran a number of midweek events, including coffee mornings, an over-50s club and a ladies' support group. The church are looking forward to exploring where God is leading them in this new season, and how they can better connect with their community.

### Prayer Points

- ◆ Pray for Pastor John as he attempts to build relationships with the congregation and the community without being able to meet them in person.
- ◆ Pray for God's guidance in terms of future plans. Particularly in relation to how the church can better connect with children and young people once restrictions are lifted.
- ◆ Pray for the new Zoom Bible study and prayer times to be beneficial and encouraging. Pray that those offline will still feel included through the provision of printed study materials.

## Leprosy Mission

The **leprosy Mission Spring 2021 catalogues** are now available at the back of the church (open Mon to Fri 10 a.m. to 12 noon.) They include the Fairtrade Easter eggs with Easter activity book.

Orders sent via Barbara Reynolds (Stalham Baptist's "trading partner") will save you postage, make a donation

towards church funds (in many cases 20% of your order) and enable the leprosy mission to assist folk with this awful disease. You pay the same prices seen in the catalogue and can also order anything you see on their website [www.tlmtrading.com](http://www.tlmtrading.com)

## 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.

## Quotes of the Week

"Stand up to hypocrisy. If you don't, the hypocrites will teach. Stand up to ignorance, because if you don't, the ignorant will run free to spread ignorance like a disease. Stand up for truth. If you don't, then there is no truth to your existence. If you don't stand up for all that is right, then understand that you are part of the reason why there is so much wrong in the world."

**Suzy Kassem,**

"TRUTH

Whenever you stand up  
For your conscience,  
Be prepared to be hated  
By the wicked.  
But never, ever,  
Let that scare you;  
For whenever you  
Stand up for God,  
By him,  
You are loved."

**Suzy Kassem.**

"The problem will never be diversity, the challenging of tradition or the one person that questions the way life should be. The person that shows the world that this is wrong, there is a perspective you didn't consider, this is worth fighting for and being different is a blessing, will always be the solution for change."

**Shannon L. Alder**

"Standing before your cross at Calvary. Who am I amongst the throng? Those laughing ridiculing "if you're so special do something about it." The Roman soldiers, doing their "it's just a job" efficiently ignoring the pain that they inflicted on others, then making a bit money on the side. The great and the good who are neither great nor good with so much to lose. Their power, and influence threatened by voice of a carpenter's son, relieved and cheering at their about to fail short term fix of your torturous death. The not fussed one way or another, does not mean anything to me spectators. The I'm not really sure if I believe this Man is the Son of God and He loves me and is dying for me, stuff. Those who love you, traumatised weeping at the base of the cross at your suffering and sacrifice.

One was the loneliest number as You died on the cross. The darkness fell, and the curtain was ripped in two and the pathway of my salvation was opened.

Forgive me Jesus for not following it much much sooner and not having the courage to proclaim your gift when I am now amongst those who walked away from Calvary unmoved when the show was over."

**Franky Dilch**

# Learning to tell our story afresh

A reflection on the place of faith within a culture and history and how we understand the place of the church in the wider world. By Ruth Gouldbourne

Being in a church that regularly welcomes visitors has many delights - but one of the trials is that sometimes people coming from other places think that they bring with them particular wisdom, and it is incumbent on them to share it. One such occasion was an Easter Sunday some years ago. A regular part of our Easter morning service was the sharing of small chocolate eggs with the children. After the service, a visitor from overseas took it upon themselves to ask me – standing too close and prodding me! – why I thought that introducing the children to a pagan fertility symbol as part of Easter worship was a good thing.

Well, as my colleague pointed out, if you are going to make fanciful historical claims, don't make them to a historian. This idea that we share eggs at Easter as some kind of hangover from a pagan fertility rite is pretty well disproved (see here for one well written approach – from a pagan, who wants to insist that the pagan links are by no means proved! [Easter Myths | Jason Mankey | patheos.com](http://EasterMythsJasonMankeypatheos.com))

What is well-attested is that during Lent in the early and medieval church, the "fasting" that was part of the process of preparation for Easter included not eating eggs – and so their reintroduction on Easter day was on a par with eating meat that day, and it generally being a day of celebration and rejoicing; the end of the fast.

There are other historical reasons why eggs are important at this time of year (priests were regularly paid in eggs, it was a time of giving to the poor, and eggs were a common gift in the 17th century for those who did not have enough food... and the marketing skills of the chocolate companies...) I think it is at least debatable to assert that Easter eggs are a dangerous import from a pagan system, and should be, therefore, excluded from Christian worship.

But, I think there is a bigger issue here than just the sharing of Easter eggs in worship. And it is to do with the place of faith within a culture and history and how we understand the place of the church in the wider world.

Even if the church has adopted and "repurposed" an existing festival - does that matter?

Those who claim it does do so for, I think, two reasons....there are those who argue that because Christians have taken over pre-existing festivals (or sites, or patterns of practice) this is therefore a demonstration that the faith is not true.

Firstly, there is – as my "instructor" that morning demonstrated, a fear that, somehow, if we are sharing in a common human practice (celebrating the end of Lent by eating eggs-or even celebrating the gift of life in a distant echo of a fertility celebration!) somehow, we are



contaminated and endangering the gospel.

Jesus got into trouble for eating with sinners....His holiness blessed them rather than their "uncleanness" damaging him.

Will we follow him, or do we need the kind of cordon sanitaire that the curtain in the Temple (torn at the Crucifixion) offered....?

And secondly, the argument that reshaped festivals are a sign of the untruth of the faith. Since our claim to the truthfulness of our faith is not based on – or at least should not be based on – the forms of practice used to celebrate Easter, or the exact date of Christmas, I am not sure exactly what this argument is an attempt to say. That Christian believers have taken over an existing festival and attempted to "force" another meaning on it, one they claim is true, might be a cause for irritation or laughter, but actually has nothing to say about the truth claims we make for the events happening around the Passover festival in whichever year it was...

The claims that the church has historically made about the history of these events have nothing to do with eggs, bunnies or fertility goddesses; remove them from the picture, reclaim them for a pagan past (and present!) and we lose nothing of our historical story.

And that is the story we need to be telling. The early church won new believers not because they "took over" an existing festival and renamed or changed it, but because they offered people hope based in an account of Resurrection, that challenged the fear of death, the despair of powerlessness and the life-consuming anxiety of meaninglessness. The early Christian congregations offered - and created – communities of mutual care and support that dared to trust that a new world was coming, had begun to come in the Resurrection of the Crucified One, and that by living in faith and love, people - whoever they were, slave or free, male or female, rich or poor, learned or unlearned....whoever – could be part of it through a freely given and unshakeable grace. Maybe, we need to learn to tell that story afresh in our place, in our time, through our current culture – adapting, renewing, deepening refreshing....rather than worrying about the origins of a cream egg.

Ruth Gouldbourne is minister of Grove Lane Baptist Church, Cheadle Hulme

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Source [Baptist Times](https://www.baptisttimes.com/)

# Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly.

## Something to read

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

- **John 8:7 from full reading John 7:53-8:11.**

## Something to think about

Read the passage again and this time picture the scene in your head.

It is dawn. Jesus has gone to the temple and the people have gathered. There is a commotion as Scribes and Pharisees drag a woman through the crowd. She is not properly attired and she has no head covering. Her demeanour is one of shame. A ripple goes through the crowd. What is this all about? In a clear, sanctimonious tone one of the Pharisees declares:

"Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

The atmosphere changes. Tension arises. The crowd react differently. There are sneers and foul names, shock and disbelief. In the midst of the deafening noise, Jesus bends down and writes on the ground. Still they do not stop questioning him. As he straightens, a silence descends:

'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.'

With those simple but profound words the Pharisees and Scribes walk away. No one will condemn her.

Who are you in this story?

The woman wilfully disobeying the laws of God?

The Scribes and Pharisees judging harshly and lacking compassion



and forgiveness?

The people in the crowd, bystanders to evil, staying silent and not standing up for justice?

In truth, we are all three. We give in to temptation and knowingly sin. We judge others when that role is for God alone. We stand by and do not demand justice when injustice is happening all around us.

Lent is a time to reflect on our walk with God. We need to ask God for forgiveness and the ability not to give in to temptation. To not judge others and the bravery to stand up for justice.

## Something to pray

*Heavenly Father,*

*I ask for your forgiveness for all of the times I have wilfully done my own thing even though I have known it was contrary to your will.*

*I ask that you will show me when I am judging people and help me to stop.*

*Please give me the bravery to stand up for justice so that I can act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you.*

*In Jesus name,*

*Amen.*

Today's contributor is Francine Magill. Francine is married with three children. She has been a teacher for 25 years, Head of Religion and a senior teacher at Malone Integrated College. She is a member of Scrabo Presbyterian Church

Source <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/daily-bible-readings>

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