

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Saturday 24th April 2021

This Sunday's online service
"Opportunity to Change"



Diana is leading and Ron is preaching from Acts 6: 1- 7.

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



Ron's Reads

1 Tim 3: 7-13

For Your Prayers

Please pray for the family of Joan Gotts whose funeral is on Wednesday. Please pray also for our deacons, for Josh, Maggie, Stewart carrying on, David, Diana, Henry re-elected and Dan serving for the first time as they seek to lead the church forward out of lockdown and into the future.

More than 34 million people are on the brink of starvation this year world wide. The combined impacts of conflict, climate change and inequality, coupled with the COVID-19 crisis, have led to an acute food insecurity situation around the world up to 270 million people are acutely food insecure with millions "teetering on the very edge of famine please pray that the UK government and other countries around the world will fund food programs and work towards alleviating poverty.

Remember in your prayers the tragedy unfolding in India as record deaths are being reported daily.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Margaret Fisher.**

Shrubsoles Evacuated from Chad

Bethan and Gareth Shrubsole and their children, the missionary family SBC supports, have been safely evacuated from G2 hospital in Chad because of the post-election troubles in the country which have resulted in the death of the President Idriss Déby and the army closing parliament, implementing a military council for 18 months governed by his son General Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno.

On Sunday 18th the Shrubsoles and others were given 12 hours to pack and get to the airport for a flight home to the UK.

As Chad isn't on the government red list they are now home with family.

Claire Bedford and Brian & Jackie Chilvers were unable to leave on Sunday as their recent arrival in Chad meant all documents needed were not in their possession. Please pray that the emergency papers they need will arrive speedily so they can leave as soon as possible.

Bethan and Gareth are concerned for their Chadian friends and the rest of the G2 staff who are still there. Please pray for them and their safety too.

Prayers for the Week

I embrace the **change** because I know that You will lead me and be with me. I bless Your Name knowing that You will not fail me or abandon me, so I will not lose courage or be afraid. I will not worry because I know that You are in control, You see what **changes** I am going through because You are with me, Amen.

Bible Passage - [Luke 13:6-9](#)

Praying for myself

When I read a passage like this one, Lord, I feel guilty. Comments on old school reports come into mind - "Could do better". I know I could do better, for when have I borne fruit for you? There are those that say we never know when a comment or a bit of encouragement may have brought someone else closer to you. That we can only sow seeds and that the harvest comes later.

Help me to be patient, Lord, with myself, with others, as well as with you. Help me also to hear your voice when others encourage me, and to spread your love to those whom I meet. For it is in your name that I pray. Amen

Praying for others

Lord Jesus Christ, so many people in this world are prevented from reaching their true potential, whether by being oppressed by others, or by lacking confidence in their own abilities. Reach out to them, Lord, and lift them. Show them that You love and value them for who they are, not what they have, or have not, done.

You were able to use ordinary people like fishermen and bring out the best in them in order to spread your word of love, peace, joy and justice. Be close, now, to the oppressed of this world, those seeking justice, those whose lives are torn apart by wars, those who are being bullied. You are truly our Saviour, and we pray in your name. Amen

Source [Methodist Church](#)

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

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 miniister@stalhambaptist.org.uk

For your Diary

Mon April 26th 7.00pm

Deacons Zoom Meeting

Thur April 30th 7.00pm

Zoom Prayer Meeting

Contact Diana for a link.

"You never change your life until you step out of your comfort zone; change begins at the end of your comfort zone."

Roy T. Bennett

Church Re-Opening 9th May

We are planning to reopen SBC on the Sunday 9th May unless there is any change in Government Guidance.

A Covid secure system will be in place including a booking system requiring those attending to book by contacting Diana by email secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk Whatsapp or telephone 07951949128.

SBC AGM 18th April

A big thank you to all who took part in Sunday's Zoom AGM which was well managed by Diana and Jerry.

All of the deacons standing for re-election were voted in and Daniel Nicholson was accepted as a new deacon.

Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at Acts 10. How easy is it to change your mindset when the challenge is to confront all you were taught and believe to be true?

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

Flower Rota

As the church is soon opening for "live" services I am preparing the flower rota, so if I hear nothing to the contrary, I will assume you are happy to be included on the rota. Many thanks. Magda Tel: 01692 580002

News from Salt Malawi

During 2020 Salt Malawi, prayerfully supported by SBC, was again able to send funds responding to requests for Church of the Disciples of Jesus' Mercy Work. This included funds for maize, blankets, soap and other materials destined for the most needy around the country. The team in Malawi have been distributing these items through the church network. The demand for blankets was higher than initially thought however. 100 blankets were purchased but, in the event, these met the needs of only 3 of the 4 districts.

In the South, which was much harder hit by 2020 weather events than the rest of the country, leaders identified 100 people urgently needing blankets. Salt Malawi has now sent funds for a further 100 blankets (approx £1,000) to be distributed via Southern Churches.

Blankets are needed during cold nights at this time of year, especially by the sick, elderly and young children, all of whom have poor clothing, no means of home heating, and no other way to keep warm.

Thankyou for your donations, which enabled us to respond to this need within a week of receiving the request from Malawi. Please continue to pray for the people of Malawi, especially those in the South where there continues to be great need.

For more information go to <https://www.saltmalawi.org>

EBA Prayer Focus 25th April 2021

Earls Hall Baptist Church

Earls Hall Baptist Church is in Westcliff, part of Southend-On-Sea. According to a recent traffic survey conducted by Southend Council, between 8,000 and 10,000 people pass the church building each day. The challenge the fellowship face is to find ways to connect those people to Jesus and support their local community.

Although the pandemic has meant that the building has not been used as it normally would, Earls Hall have increased their social media footprint, and have used the side of our building to share different messages of hope to the community. Over the Easter period, "Jesus, is the way, truth and life" was displayed in the windows and lit up every evening.

For those members who have not been able to access social media, the fellowship has sought to maintain contact with them. Like many, they are looking forward to being able to meet face-to-face again.

The fellowship is praying with an awareness of the timeline for the easing of lockdown restrictions. As a fellowship, they want to not only hear God's voice, but are also asking for a willingness to move their feet. There is a real sense that God is ready to pour his Holy Spirit upon them, as they lead people to a whole life lived for Jesus. They recognize that it may

mean some changes to what is deemed normal.

In 2019 - 2020 Earls Hall Baptist Church were an EBA Project of the Year. The pandemic has meant that fundraising plans had to be placed on hold. However, they have not given up! The fellowship is still seeking to step out in faith.

Recently, they have become a partner church with Kintsugi Hope. Kintsugi Hope help churches to engage with mental health and wellbeing. The courses will not only bless the church, but the wider community too.

Please Pray For:

- Open ears, to hear what God is saying and a willingness to follow God's lead
- Effective engagement with the community and the Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Groups
- The lonely and isolated
- The building project

Message from the Leprosy Mission

The World Leprosy Sunday UNCONDITIONAL campaign ran from Sunday 24th January – 24th April. During this period *every penny* donated, helping people affected by leprosy in Mozambique, was *doubled* by the UK government!

Here is the YouTube link for the virtual service

<https://youtu.be/2xSV8Bujlp8>

Or you might want to watch and share the 5-minute UNCONDITIONAL video headed up by Dame Darcey Bussell

<https://youtu.be/UARsiHkoZHy>

I would very much welcome an opportunity to thank and update Stalham Baptist Church on the work of the leprosy mission. I am also able to deliver a Sunday sermon.

Thank you so much for all you are doing helping people affected with leprosy. Together we will see an end to the disability, stigma and transmission of this terrible disease, together we will see an end to leprosy!

With abundant blessings.

Helen Walton - Regional Manger East of England and Jersey

Quotes of the Week

"The ladder of leadership can only stand firm on the grounds of integrity. Any other ground makes it unstable till it falls."
Israelmore Ayivor, Leaders' Ladder

"Respect isn't automatically earned. You have to first position yourself with a level of mannerism that's worth emulating, before others could see a strong reason to respect you."
Edmond Mbiaka

"If you want to be the best leader you can possibly be, no matter how much or how little natural leadership talent you possess, you need to become a serving leader."

John C. Maxwell

"A leader who thinks they can do everything better than everyone else and constantly emphasises that, doesn't need a team and will quickly lose the one they have." *Franky Dilch*

A good leader realises that the intellectual capacity of their team is their greatest asset. *Franky Dilch*

"Jesus said several times, "Come, follow me." His was a program of "do what I do," rather than "do what I say." His innate brilliance would have permitted him to put on a dazzling display, but that would have left his followers far behind. He walked and worked with those he was to serve. His was not a long-distance leadership. He was not afraid of close friendships; he was not afraid that proximity to him would disappoint his followers. The leaven of true leadership cannot lift others unless we are with and serve those to be led." *Spencer W. Kimball*

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

Albert Einstein

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." *Barack Obama*

The Church post Covid 19

We often hear about a new way of doing or being church - but where to begin? Asia's quest for 'new ways of being church' as they emerged from the missionary era might have something to say to us, writes Alec Gilmore for the [Baptist Times](#).

One unintended and unexpected consequence of Covid-19 is a remarkable capacity for change and adjustment in day-to-day life, businesses, institutions, social customs, shopping patterns . . . and Churches. Churches which could haggle for years over replacing pews with chairs have suddenly found themselves turned inside out by lockdown and here and there are discovering that some enforced changes have positive features. Mention the return to normality and instead of 'the-sooner-the-better' line, we have people floating ideas about 'new ways of being (or doing) church'.

With change in the air and the wind at our back I have often felt over the last year that Baptists, with their variety of practices, their independence and capacity for experimentation, are better equipped than any to pick up the torch and run with it, and the York Survey ([reported recently in *The Baptist Times*](#)) seems to confirm it. One of the problems is leadership; church leaders with experience of such an enormous undertaking are few and far between. This not rearranging the chairs on the Titanic; more like transferring to a new and untried vessel without a trained crew. A second problem is where to begin; think of refloating an enormous vessel stuck in the Suez Canal.

Far be it from me to dip a toe into that one, but by a strange coincidence only a few weeks ago [a 17-page booklet*](#) landed on my desk out of the blue. It began with an Indian religious person complaining to missionaries about their methods in his native India: 'You say that you *bring Jesus* (italics mine) and new humanity to us', (s)he said, 'but what is this "new humanity" you are

proclaiming? We would like to see it, touch it, taste it, feel it. Jesus must not be just a name, but a reality.' From where (s)he sits what they *brought* was 'Jesus as understood in the West' — a Jesus for export, 'a potted plant . . . transported without being transplanted', alien to Asia and missing an opportunity to explore Asian life and culture and then proceed with lay training and workshops to envisage a 'Jesus for Asia'.

The rest of the booklet describes what happened next, leaving me to wonder whether Asia's quest for 'new ways of being church' as they emerged from the missionary era might have something to say to us with a similar objective to behold 'something new' as we emerge from the rigours of Covid-19. Turning up as it did, just weeks before *The Baptist Times* report, the York Survey and rumblings in our churches, seemed almost to have a touch of serendipity; about it and stirred me to action.

Fortunately they had a potential leader in José M de Mesa, a Catholic Filipino lay theologian who rang the bell and got things moving, leaving this booklet as a legacy. His methodology was a Cultural Group Project to facilitate 'the doing of Christology in a Cultural Context' ('Culture' because that was their concern; ours may be a 'Local Community'), grounded on three sound hermeneutical principles and in three distinct phases. Bypassing the Asian issues and the details (all available on the web) what grabbed me was the methodology, Has it got legs for Baptists right now? This is 'Listen and Learn' before 'Preach and Teach'; not so much taking Christ to the local community as working with the local community to create a relevant church and an awareness of a 'Christian presence' where we are.

Space permits only one example of José's hands-on approach. Groups had to choose a specific word, image or concept which would do for their local community (especially the younger generation) what a more esoteric 'churchy word' does for regular churchgoers (e.g. 'wellbeing' as an alternative to 'salvation'); they were then to discuss its shades of meaning, characteristics, positives and negatives, which work and which don't, avoiding all traditional titles (e.g. Good Shepherd, child Jesus), and ideally back it up with pictorial representation facilitating exchanges of 'discoveries and suggestions' between the groups, sharpening the focus and adding to the diversity. José's project surely had Asian legs. Can we discover the western ones?

***José de Mesa, *Making Salvation Concrete and Jesus Real. Trends in Asian Christology*, Brill, Leiden, 2001. (https://brill.com/view/journals/exch/30/1/article-p1_1).**

José is an Associate Professor in Religious Education Department of De L Salle University in Manila, Philippines and author of *Doing Theology and Doing Christology*.

Alec Gilmore is a Baptist minister

Image by [jplenio](#) from [Pixabay](#)





**The Leprosy
Mission**
England and Wales



Caring for disabled people

Towards our goal of **zero leprosy disability**, we work to reduce the likelihood of people with leprosy being disabled* after diagnosis.

Disability is not an inevitable consequence of leprosy. The earlier the condition is diagnosed, the less likely someone is to suffer permanent effects.

But, globally, millions of people are permanently disabled by leprosy. Many need long-term care or rehabilitation. They may have clawed hands, drop foot or affected eyes that can be corrected by surgery and physiotherapy, or ulcers that need hospital care before they will heal.

An increasingly important part of our work is improving the mental and spiritual wellbeing of people affected by leprosy. The stigma of the disease can lead to discrimination and rejection, meaning many people struggle with mental health issues like depression and anxiety. We provide counselling where appropriate and work with communities to fight prejudice.

At Anandaban Hospital in Nepal, counselling is an important part of caring for patients and their families, who often arrive for treatment bearing not only physical wounds but emotional ones too. Counselling has a positive effect on the wellbeing of patients, who tell us the hospital is a special place for them, where they feel loved and part of a family.

It is vital that people affected by leprosy understand the need to take care of their bodies after being cured. This prevents future disability. Permanently desensitised skin can stop someone feeling injuries and lead to infection and ulcers. It's important to protect hands and feet when cooking over a fire or working in the fields. So our work frequently involves promoting knowledge of self-care, through individual and group training.

In Mozambique, we have supported people affected by leprosy to set up self-care groups, where they meet regularly to check their hands and feet for wounds and learn techniques to prevent disability.

At some of our hospitals and clinics, staff make **prosthetics, protective footwear, mobility aids, and modified tools or protective gloves**. These are crucial to prevent further disability and enable people to regain their independence and dignity.

This is the case at Chanchaga Orthopaedic Workshop in Nigeria. The workshop serves people affected by leprosy for free, and has become a sustainable social enterprise by offering its services to other disabled people. In 2019, the workshop helped 1,012 people affected by leprosy.

**Our work is informed by the social model of disability, which says people are 'disabled' by barriers in society, not their impairment or difference. But we recognise that across the world, including in many of the countries we work in, some prefer the term 'people with disabilities'.*

Ram's story

Ram, from Nepal, was diagnosed and treated for leprosy several years ago, but he had already developed clawed hands. This meant he could no longer earn his living as a stonemason.

He was also worried about the stigma of being disabled by leprosy, fearful about how he would be treated by his community.

Ram is one of the many people who receive reconstructive surgery at Anandaban Hospital each year.

The surgery restored the movement in his hands and has enabled him to work again. He has also received counselling to grow his self-esteem and give him confidence as he rebuilds his life.

For more information about the Leprosy Mission click [here](#)