

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 9th May 2021

Today we will be meeting "LIVE" at SBC



This Sunday's online service
"How's this for a Sermon?"

Barbara is leading and Ron is preaching from Acts 7: 1f.

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 Sam 4:19, Ezek 10:1f, Jn 1: 10f Jn 8:33f Gn 50:20f Ex26 1Kings 6-7

For Your Prayers

Please continue praying for India as Covid deaths are still escalating to record proportions.

Pray also for those around the world who are in prison because they stand up against authoritarian regimes that are not serving their people.

Also pray that those elected in Thursday's election they will serve the communities they are representing.

Pray for those in the fellowship and community who are still waiting for appointments with hospitals for routine operations.

As SBC is now open please pray that we can reach out to the community, radiate the love of God and use the skills developed during the pandemic to bring more people to the church and salvation..

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Maggie Harpur**.

Virtual Prayer Room

On Friday 30th April Steve Slade posted an audible message saying "Thank you everybody for my prayers they are much appreciated."

On Tuesday Julia posted "Thank you for your prayers. We had David's appointment today. He is expecting to have surgery in about 2 to 3 months. x."

To join the WhatsApp Virtual Prayer Room that gives support with the power of prayer and/or the Devotion WhatsApp site text Jerry on 07733837687. You will need a smart phone

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTIANS IN PRISON FOR THEIR FAITH AND THEIR FAMILIES

Lord, we pray for all those Christians who are held in prisons in so many countries around the world simply because they love You.

Father, we cry out against the injustice of their incarceration, held away from their families and, in so many cases, in appalling conditions.

We remember all the prisoners of faith in Pakistan, in North Korea, in Eritrea, in China, in Algeria, in Laos, in Iran – Lord, in so many countries – be with them all. Give them Your peace which passes understanding, restore and fortify their spirits. Use them as beacons of light in the dark places they find themselves so that they and others will come to learn more about You.

Thank you for being with them as they endure solitude and the constant threat of harm to their minds and bodies.

We also pray for their families. Families who face so many hardships even though they are not in prison. Lord, we ask that you will continue to provide for them, that they will receive all that they need to survive and to resist the curses and hatred which surrounds them. Unite these families, Father, in their love of You and help us to remember them in our prayers.

Lord, we especially pray for Alimujiang in China. Thank you that You are strong within him, that he gives You thanks that he is in prison (since 2008) and able to share the gospel and Your love in that dark place. We pray also for his wife, Gulinuer, and their children, that they will also remain strong whilst he is away from them and that they will also be filled with Your Spirit as they go through this time of trial.

Father, help us to keep all prisoners of faith and their families in our thoughts and prayers. Build us up, as well, to be able to speak of Your presence in our lives, without worrying what other people think or may do to us.

In Your name, Lord,
Amen.

Source The Voice <https://releaseinternational.org/about-release-international/>

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 May 10th 7.00pm
Deacons Zoom Prayer Meeting
Thur May 13th 7.00pm
Zoom Prayer Meeting
Contact Diana for a link.

"I've Never Been So Excited on a Sunday since the last time SBC was open for a Service"

Church Open

The Church is now open and a Covid secure system is in place requiring masks to be worn and a booking system requiring those attending to book each week by contacting Diana by email secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk Whatsapp or telephone **07951949128**.

Alpha Course

SBC will be running an online Alpha course starting in September. The lead on this is Dan St John and he is in the process of putting materials together. He is keen to hear from anyone who would be prepared to help with the course and if you feel this is something you can do then email him at alpha@stalhambaptist.org.uk

Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at Proverbs 31:8-9, Isaiah 1:17, Micah 6:8, 2 Timothy 4:16-17 and Galatians 6:2. How easy is it to stand up for others and even share their burdens.?

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

EBA Prayer Focus 9th May 2021

Kings Church, Mildenhall

Mildenhall is a busy market town just off the A11 in Suffolk and home to Kings Church located in the town centre. The church has over 100 members and is a lively and growing fellowship with a wide age-range including families and children. KCM is led by Revd Carl Morehouse, Associate Pastor Revd Tim Bright and Revd Peter Finnis who looks after pastoral care.

There have been no in-person services for over a year, but there has been an online presence including KCM Light on Youtube, and some smaller groups who have been meeting together on Zoom.

Prior to lockdown the church was holding two Sunday morning services in order to cope with growing numbers and KCM has been looking to move to a new location in order to accommodate the increased capacity on Sundays and the wider work of the church.

The church operates the King Project Foodbank from a separate location in the town. It has been operating throughout lockdown and seen increased demand for food provision.

KCM is about to embark on a new ministry which is due to launch in the early summer this year. The Community Money Advice service will offer financial counselling and debt management for individuals. Two KCM church members are the key figures in setting up this service, building a new team and carrying out the training and skills needed by the volunteers.

- Please pray for:
- The search for suitable new premises to accommodate the growing numbers
- The King Project Foodbank as it helps increased numbers of people
- The new Community Money Advice service which is about to launch
- The online prayer meetings as the church seeks God's guidance and leading for the future

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.

SWAN a helping hand

Teresa Benton writes. The Covid pandemic has affected many lives none more than those ladies who were already suffering from anxiety and depression. Are you LONELY, ISOLATED, DEPRESSED or STRESSED You are not alone! Come and join the SWAN ladies. We offer support and understanding in a safe and secure environment where you can be yourself. No judging, just support and friendship for ladies of all ages and backgrounds. We meet every Wednesday morning from 10am to 1pm at the Stalham Youth Club Hall in the Recreation Ground We offer various classes to help you discover your talents in a range of Art and Craft Therapy lessons with understanding tutors You never know, you could be the next Van Gogh! Alternatively, if you need to just talk and share, we offer a listening ear All our ladies have experience of mental health issues and want to help you recover your health and self-esteem Give us a try, you just might be glad you did! ONE SMALL STEP CAN LEAD TO RENEWED CONFIDENCE. Contact me on **07340 224835**

info@swanladiesnorfolk.co.uk you can find more information <http://www.swanladiesnorfolk.co.uk/>

Quotes of the Week

"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,**

"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,**

"Remember this: Seek the Truth. Once you find it hold on to it. Fight for it. Stand up for the truth even if you're standing alone."
— **Sara Francis, The Isles**

"Strong people stand up for themselves, but stronger people stand up for others."
— **Suzy Kassem**

Our society's insistence on limiting help to those who "deserve it," as indicated by their status in the labour market, has a profound impact on the capacity of those living in deep poverty to escape ... we also cannot defend the inhumane debate about who are the deserving versus the undeserving poor.
— **Wes Moore**

"Some critics will counter that poverty is a choice made by those that are lazy or who lack the desire to change their lives for the better. I agree that poverty is a choice. But that choice is not made by the people who live under it's oppressive effects. Rather, the choice is ours. It's the choice of government that represents our priorities and allocates our investments. Its a choice reinforced by the companies we patronize and the organizations we support."
... our fates are profoundly intertwined. We have to take care of one another.

— **Wes Moore,**



Open Doors

The secret police wanted names. Taher wouldn't give them.

Taher and his family were secret believers in a closed country in the Middle East. When their faith was discovered, Taher was arrested and ruthlessly interrogated by the secret police - but he refused to give up the names of fellow believers. Here's his story.

When the man came to Taher and Donya's door, only Donya was in. The man said he was a postal worker. Donya knew he wasn't, but by then it was too late.

"When I opened the door, he put his foot down so I couldn't close it," she remembers. He was from the secret police. And others were behind him. They ruthlessly ransacked the home shared by Taher, Donya and their daughters Farah and Arezoo (all names changed for security reasons). They were looking for any evidence of the family's Christian faith.

"In our house church, we used to sing 'I Surrender All,'" Donya says, "and we always asked each other, 'Are you ready and willing to surrender everything to Jesus?'" As the secret police tore through her house, Donya told the Lord: "I'm ready to surrender everything."

In many other countries in the Middle East, worshipping in public or sharing your faith openly is dangerous. So many Christians choose to keep their faith secret and worship in isolation. That's particularly true of Christians from a Muslim background, like Taher and his family. If their faith is discovered, they are likely to receive long prison sentences for 'crimes against national security'.

Arrested and interrogated

Taher was at his job in a textile factory while the raid was happening. He got a call from the secret service: "Taher, you need to come home, now." When Taher got home, they put him in handcuffs, blindfolded him and made him get in their car. It was terrifying - but Taher wasn't alone: "Right then and there, I felt Jesus beside me."

This raid wasn't a total surprise. Taher knew that the secret service were targeting Christians. He was aware of the risk - but believed it was worth it, in order to tell others about Jesus and to disciple new

believers. So he continued to meet secretly with other Christians, and to share his faith with his friends and co-workers.

He did all this, knowing what might follow.

The day Taher was taken away was the first of many long, terrible days of interrogation. The secret police questioned Taher ruthlessly for many hours, day and night. They wanted to know what he did with other Christians, what songs they sang, where he got money from. Most of all, they wanted Taher to write down the names of the other Christians he knew. They put a pen down before him and waited. Taher's courage is astonishing: he refused to write down a single name.

Scribbling scripture in his cell

Taher did secretly take the pen back to his cell, though. Rather than betray the believers he knew, he wanted to use the pen to encourage believers he didn't know. On the wall, in a corner of his prison cell, he wrote a version of Matthew 7:7: "Ask, seek, knock and it will be given to you."

Taher desperately hoped these words would encourage Christians just like him - believers who would be arrested and find themselves in this same 3x6 foot cell. Perhaps these faint messages would give others courage to stay strong in the face of their interrogators.

The secret police didn't just interrogate Taher. They threatened his family - taking him to a cell block which housed murderers, rapists and other dangerous criminals, asking "Is this where you want your kids to go? In here with them? This is where they'll end up if you don't cooperate and give us the names of the Christians you know - now!" Taher remembers it as the greatest test of his faith. Of course, he wanted to protect his family. But he recalled the words of the same song that Donya had recalled: "I surrender all". Despite everything, his faith stayed strong and he didn't betray his friends.

Reliving Acts



The secret service eventually released Taher on bail. During his sentencing, Taher was given one condition for his release: that he stop telling other people about Jesus. The judge told Taher that he wouldn't get such leniency a second time - that, if he were arrested again, he would be executed.

You might remember the apostles' miraculous escape



Open Doors



from prison in Acts 5. Peter and others had been arrested and put in the public jail – “But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out” (Acts 5:19). As soon as they were released, the apostles once again began preaching about Jesus in the temple courts. When he was challenged, Peter said “We must obey God rather than human beings!” (Acts 5:29).

Taher’s response was exactly the same. What did he do when he was released by the judge? “I went back home and started ministering and evangelising again,” he says. Amazingly, he has also forgiven the interrogators who persecuted him so relentlessly: “The time that I had with Jesus in prison was the real freedom for me.”

How Taher found Jesus

Spending time with Jesus isn’t something Taher always longed for. Growing up in his closed country in the Middle East as a strict Muslim, he felt something was missing but had never really considered Jesus – until his daughter Farah was ten and became very seriously ill.

Taher and Donya took Farah to many Muslim leaders for prayer and healing, but nothing happened. In desperation, Donya asked for prayer from some Christian friends, who courageously had not kept their faith completely secret. Shortly after this special gathering, God miraculously healed Farah!

Donya decided to follow Jesus, but Taher took a while to be convinced. When he did eventually put his faith in Jesus, he felt an instantaneous change: “It was like that burden came off my shoulders,” Taher says. “The burden I thought I would have – to give an account for my sins when I died – came off. It felt like I was flying. It was the most beautiful moment of my life.”

It was the most beautiful decision Taher ever made – and perhaps the most dangerous. Since then, he has known a deep and personal relationship with Jesus, but he has also had to leave the country he loves. After his release from prison, the secret service followed Taher and his family everywhere. He couldn’t find a job and the regular harassment became overwhelming. Eventually, they decided to leave their country. Now the family are refugees in Turkey – though they hope to return home one day, to keep telling the good news of Jesus to their community.

For now, life is difficult in Turkey. They are grateful to be a little safer, but refugees have almost no rights, work is hard to find and their future is uncertain. But Taher, Donya and their children are still sure of the joy of Christ. When asked if everything they’ve experienced is worth it – losing their home, their work, friends, family and material possessions – Donya doesn’t hesitate: “Jesus is worth everything. In my opinion, we have not paid any price yet.”

Write to Taher

You can encourage Taher and Donya by sending a letter - they’d love to hear from you. Click on Find Out How.

FIND OUT HOW

For more information about OpenDoors click below.

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>

Standing Strong Together

You are invited to join us for another amazing evening of worship, prayer and stories of courageous faith and hope as we celebrate Standing Strong Together online!

Following on from the success of last year, Standing Strong 2021 will be online again this year. While we won’t be gathering as one body, we can still come together to watch, pray and worship – as family, friends, churches and small groups. This is a freedom that millions of our persecuted family do not have. We will stand with them in solidarity, so that, as Christ’s body, ‘we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith (Romans 1:12).

This year, for the first time ever, young people and youth leaders will also be able to attend their own special Standing Strong event and get inspired by the courage and perseverance of the persecuted church.

Don’t miss this wonderful opportunity to hear first-hand stories of the hope we all share in Christ from our persecuted church family.

For more information click on <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/standing-strong-2021/>

Image by [Peter H](#) from [Pixabay](#)