

# Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 20th June 2021



Today we will be meeting "LIVE" at SBC

Maggie will be leading and Ron will be preaching from Colossians 3:1-4, 9-17  
"How's your advertising?"

Sunday's online service Maggie will be leading and Ron preaching from  
Nehemiah 4: 6f "A view from inside the City" and we will celebrate the Lord's Supper.

You can watch the online 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.



## For Your Prayers

Please pray for the SBC teams knocking on doors to bring the word of the Lord to local residents, pray they will be well received.

Also pray for Karen Snelling and John Collins whose wedding is at SBC on Saturday 26th.

Please pray for those in the fellowship who are understandably anxious about returning to the Sunday Services.

Pray for the local businesses affected by the extension of the Covid restrictions. Pray that the new Israeli and the Palestinian governments can step back from reopening the conflict between them.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Jill Humphry-Smith**.

## Virtual Prayer Room

On Thursday 10th June, Jenny posted "Thanks for all your prayers, we are now going to visit Stirling not Edinburgh! Paul is still not good but Charlie and the girls are fine. Could I ask for prayers for my brother and his wife again please. You may remember that Gill has stage 4 cancer and was doing well on the hormone treatment but yesterday she started to experience the old pain in her abdomen and is scheduled for a CT scan tomorrow. My brother Paul is in the middle of a very severe flare up of the Ankylosing Spondylitis which he has had since he was 15 years old and is experiencing severe pain through most of his body - he's due to see the consultant re: a new treatment. Thank you."

On Sunday Geoff posted "Barbara update: So sorry not to have shared the news earlier but its been a bit full on getting used to B being home! Hospital bed and other equipment came on Friday and B was brought home by ambulance yesterday afternoon.

I was able to say thank you to those in the church this morning, but to all of you, bless you for all the good wishes and especially for your prayers. Barbara was very aware of that support.

Please keep praying for good healing and recovery, we both appreciate the support of our church family and our amazing God who has been with us and is always close and does answer prayer! THANK YOU."

On Tuesday Jerry posted "From Jan and Elspeth. Please pray for us as we visit folk this week to share Jesus's love. Jan and Doreen go this morning, thank you."

On Wednesday Steve posted an audio message saying "Good news about mum she has visited the hospital and seen the consultant who examined her ankle and has said she no longer needs to go to the hospital and will carry on with physio."

On the same day Doreen posted "Please could you pray for Graham Gotts and Rebecca. Rebecca has been unwell since last October from a stroke and was expecting to come home on Friday. Please can we pray for her as coming home has been delayed. Graham is also disappointed and is still coming to terms with losing his mum - Joan."

## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God you have sown some great seed and potential into all of our lives. Thank you for gracing our lives with special qualities and gifts. Help us to focus on what you have invested in us to enable us to fulfil your purpose for our lives. Assist us to channel our energies and resources into what grows and multiplies.

Source [Christian Aid](#)

## 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@stalalhambaptist.org.uk](mailto:miniister@stalalhambaptist.org.uk)

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 newsletter as a PDF online 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)

## For your Diary

**Monday 20th June 7.00pm**

Deacons Zoom Meeting

**Thursday 24th June 7.00pm**

Zoom Prayer Meeting

Contact Diana for a link.

**Saturday 26th June 3.30pm**

Marriage of Karen Snelling and John Collins

**Sunday 27th June Service**

Flowers: Wedding

**Saturday 10th July 10am to 12**

Official opening of the Community Fridge

**Sunday 11th July 12 noon**

Church Meeting

**Wednesday 14th July 7.00pm**

Bethan and Gareth Shrubsole our link missionaries are home from Chad and will be visiting us, and making a presentation in the church.

Contact Diana to book a place.

The Meal planned for 6.00pm is not possible due to 4-week delay to Covid exit strategy. Ron is making arrangements for a 1 to 1 meal with Gareth and Bethan.

## Church Open

The Church is now open on Sundays 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](mailto:secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk) WhatsApp or telephone 07951949128.

## Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at **Luke 8: 4-15** Do we spend too much time where the seed has grown powerfully and not searching amongst the brambles, the down trodden and the rocks?

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

## A Big Thank You



A big thank you to David Osborne (pictured left) who was our guest speaker last Sunday. His sermon was humorous and challenging.

SBC is blessed with our Pastors the service leaders and guest speakers who bring to the fellowship the message of Jesus in so many different ways.

## Service Recordings

Since May 16th the live sermons have been recorded and can be found on the SBC Website to listen to the sermon's click [https://](https://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/sermons.php)

[www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/sermons.php](https://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/sermons.php)

## Message from B!

Barbara R writes: Thanks for all your prayers and good wishes - they are definitely making a difference. My next appointment is on Monday 21st at the N and N at 3.20pm so targeted prayers for then would be great. They aim to "cast off, take stitches out and cast on" - sounds like I'll come home with a woolly jumper!

## 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 20th June 2021 London Road Baptist Church

London Road Baptist Church in Lowestoft is blessed to be the most easterly church in the denomination and the site of the last major spirit-led revival in the UK, the "Forgotten Revival" of March 1921. To see the 'sun' rise first sums up LRBC's vision for today. A Jesus people wanting to see the 'Son' rise up over Lowestoft, and encounter a fresh revival of the out-pouring of God's Holy Spirit.

The ministry team is led by Senior Minister Revd. Neal Smith, and includes Community Chaplain and Minister-in-Training Esther Day, two Community Workers, a Youth Specialist and a Children and Families Worker.

Last year's lockdown didn't prevent the church from appointing Ferne and Jen as Community Workers, enabling a continued outwards focus on serving the community through providing meals, while over 700 children and young people were provided with Jesus-based activity packs.

The staff are supported by a unified visionary leadership team and a fantastic active membership.

The pandemic meant that live-streaming was pioneered for the first time, and also enabled the church to begin work on refurbishing the main auditorium. This included a Zoom Church Meeting agreeing to remove the 200-year-old Gothic Pipe Organ, with a 98% approval!

The refurbishment is borne from a desire to be 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians in a 21<sup>st</sup> century environment, sharing with the community the simple life-changing story of an encounter with Jesus.

The church is very excited and expectant that a season of blessing will prevail and they will catch up with what God is already doing. Prayers are focused upon receiving a dynamic experience of God within LRBC, coupled with the church's desire and commitment to introducing others to Jesus, baptising them, and seeing them grow in themselves into fully equipped and contagious disciples.

## Prayer Points

- Please pray for continued numerical growth.
- Pray that we would live out our mission statement.
- Pray that we would witness and encounter a fresh revival and outpouring of the Holy Spirit here in Lowestoft, as we partner expectantly with the other like-minded expectant local churches.

## Quotes of the Week

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

— **Mahatma Gandhi, All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections**

"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."

— **Nelson Mandela**

"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."

— **C.S. Lewis**

"Dumbledore says people find it far easier to forgive others for being wrong than being right."

— **J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a constant attitude."

— **Martin Luther King Jr.**

"Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it."

— **Mark Twain**

"Keep in mind, hurting people often hurt other people as a result of their own pain. If somebody is rude and inconsiderate, you can almost be certain that they have some unresolved issues inside. They have some major problems, anger, resentment, or some heartache they are trying to cope with or overcome. The last thing they need is for you to make matters worse by responding angrily."

— **Joel Osteen, Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential**

"People have to forgive. We don't have to like them, we don't have to be friends with them, we don't have to send them hearts in text messages, but we have to forgive them, to overlook, to forget. Because if we don't we are tying rocks to our feet, too much for our wings to carry!"

— **C. JoyBell C.**

"Throughout life people will make you mad, disrespect you and treat you bad. Let God deal with the things they do, 'cos hate in your heart will consume you too."

— **Will Smith**

"I think that if God forgives us we must forgive ourselves. Otherwise, it is almost like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than Him."

— **C.S. Lewis**



# Open Doors

## 40 years on: the legacy of 1,000,000 Bibles smuggled to China in one night

A million Bibles is hard to imagine. You might be able to picture a hundred Bibles, or even a thousand – but a million is an extraordinary amount. That's how many Bibles a team of Open Doors workers delivered to a Chinese beach in one night, 40 years ago. Here's the extraordinary story of that night, and the legacy it has had.

*Project Pearl saw a million Bibles being delivered to one Chinese beach in one night*

It started with a request for 30,000 New Testaments. Mama Kwang led a wide house church network in China, after her husband was put in prison for his faith. Bibles were banned in China, but there was an enormous hunger among the underground church to be able to access the Word of God. Mama Kwang requested 30,000 New Testaments to answer an immediate need – and these were smuggled by Open Doors workers over the course of ten days. But Mama Kwang knew that this was only a short-term measure.

"Thank you so much for these New Testaments," she said, "but we're still short. If every Christian we know is to have a Bible, we need one million Bibles."

And so Project Pearl was born. The project is named after Matthew 13:45, where Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a pearl of great value. Taking a million Bibles was a daunting task, but the leaders of Open Doors in 1981 were filled with faith that God would enable them to undertake this mission.

### From printing press to Chinese beach

"It was a big challenge because we had them printed in the United States – the only place that had two printing presses working day and night for weeks to print a million Chinese Bibles," remembers Paul Estabrook, one of the Open Doors staff members who was part of Project Pearl. "Each Bible weighed half a pound. It was like a very fat pocket size little Bible, but it was a complete Bible in the simplified script of China. A million of them weighed 232 tons."

Printing them was one matter – getting them to China, from the United States, was another.

"It took 20 containers to get all the blocks of books to Hong Kong," says Estabrook. "There, we loaded it onto Gabriela, the barge that we had specially built in the Philippines for this project. The deck was just exactly large enough for 232 of these one-ton blocks."

Twenty Open Doors workers from around the world came together into a crew to deliver the Bibles. Nineteen of them hadn't even been to sea before. Mama Kwang had asked them to bring them to a beach just south of a city called Shantou, which had a high population of

Christians. They would only have two hours to unload all one million Bibles.

Estabrook continues: "The idea was the barge, Gabriela, had a submarine-like function. It

wouldn't go underwater, but it could drop down to the level of the water. We had electric side doors that would go down and then all of these blocks could be pulled off of the deck – and they all floated. They could only be towed very slowly. All of these blocks were roped together, and we towed them in a row to the beach."

### Eagerly awaited

For the waiting Chinese believers, this felt like a miracle they had long been waiting for.

"Hundreds – possibly even thousands – of Christians were waiting on the beach for us," remembers Estabrook. "The men would come out into the water, some of them right up to their neck, and they would pull those blocks up on the beach."

"When you're in foreign territory and you're doing something clandestine, you want to be quiet and secretive. But we made a lot of noise. It was very noisy operation. And yet nobody ever came by or stopped us or intercepted us or anything. It was an amazing protection of God."

Xiao Chen (name changed) was on that beach when the Bibles arrived. He was only a teenager at the time, but remembers it vividly: "I saw my elder brother rowing a boat to the ship and speaking to a foreigner who might have been the captain."

"After some time, they started to work. My elder brother and three other men formed a team to pull the rubber boat to the shore with a thick rope. The rubber boat had a full load of boxes. After unloading the boxes at the beach, they repeated the process – there were countless numbers of boxes. I didn't know what was happening. Eventually, I knew those boxes were full of Bibles! A Bible was a miracle to us!"

### Bibles shared far and wide

The Bibles all arrived together on one beach on one night – but they travelled widely across China for many years.

"That one group we gave them to shared them with other groups all over the country," says Estabrook. "They went to all provinces of China. They were able to share them, but it took five years. It took us two hours to offload them onto the beach and took them five years because of security issues and hiding them and having to be careful to distribute all one million of them."

Charlie, a Christian who lived in China, was part of this distribution: "I recognised that God had called three groups of us to cooperate and make this project happen. First, he called the church in the city to coordinate Project Pearl with overseas brothers and sisters. Second, he called those in the villages around the beach to pick up Bibles from the ship. Third, he called us who lived in the town to distribute Bibles to different regions in China."

"Of course, we never forget the tremendous efforts made by overseas brothers and sisters. Without their prayers, it would have been too hard to walk through those difficult

years, and we would not have witnessed the revival and freedom today."

This provision of Bibles had an astonishing impact in China. God's timing was perfect – the million Bibles came just as the house church movement in China was mushrooming across the country. Estabrook now owns one Bible that had been used by a young pastor and evangelist – using that one Bible, he had grown a network of 400,000 believers.

"It's just incredible. The Christians said it was what really fuelled the revival and the growth of house churches," says Estabrook. "We didn't know that would happen – it was because of God's timing. We met the request that came to us, but the side effect was absolutely miraculous. It was just the right time to have all of these Bibles available for believers in China."

## Chinese Christians still face persecution today

Since Project Pearl in 1981, there have been periods of relative freedom for Christians in China – but today, religious restrictions have again been imposed on Christians to curb the phenomenal growth of the church. It's still number 17 on the Open Doors World Watch List of countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. In just three years, China has risen 26 places on the list. Open Doors still supports believers in China with persecution survival training, and by providing contextualised Christian literature to believers from Muslim and Buddhist backgrounds.

While China's measures to oppose Christianity may not be as harsh as those used in some parts of the country's history, various regulations have been introduced to make things increasingly difficult for Christians. Printed Bibles are only available in bookstores of government-sanctioned churches. Bibles can be read online, but the sale of printed Bibles online is prohibited.

"I am very aware that persecution is getting worse. I won't be surprised if bulk purchase of Bibles becomes more and more difficult," says Zhang Ming (name changed), a young Christian in China. "But I'm not anxious. In fact, I'm full of hope, because the Bible's prophecies and promises have prepared us for what is to come. We can't possibly withstand



persecution and hardship by ourselves, but by trusting the Lord we will be victorious.

"When I think about Project Pearl, and the way Christians around the world came together to raise money so it could happen, I praise God. This is one of the biggest miracles of the story! If it were not for the Holy Spirit's work this would be impossible. Praise God!

"Please pray with us for China. Ask God to prepare people's hearts and to open doors for Chinese Christians. Pray for an increase in workers and harvesters for the gospel. Pray that God raises up more young believers to spread the gospel."

Source OpenDoors for more information about OpenDoors click on link below

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/>

**Click below to watch an amazing video**

<https://vimeo.com/563678887>

# Project Pearl

40 years since Open Doors delivered one million Bibles in one night

