

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 12th September 2021

Today we will be meeting "LIVE" at SBC. Barbara is leading and Ron is speaking from 1 Samuel 17: 17-31 "It's the little graces that count."

Sunday's online service: Ron will be leading and is preaching through Nehemiah 13: 23 - 31 "Tough Love."



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



Ron's Readings

Ezra 9:1f, Neh 13:1f, Mt 5:31f, Dt 24:1f, Mal 2:10f, 1Kings 11:1f

For Your Prayers

Prayers please for Josh as he starts his sports internship on Saturday.

Please pray that the Harvest Edition of the Community Scene, now being delivered round the town, will be well received.

Please continue to pray for those in the fellowship and wider community who are awaiting routine operations.

Lord in the musical halls of the past they sang "It's the same the whole world over, it's the poor what gets the blame it's the rich what gets the pleasure. Isn't it a blooming shame?" As the government brings the country out of the pandemic and wrestles with the NHS funding issues and the social care crises help them Lord to have wisdom not relive the lyrics of the musical hall song.

Lord our media is full of stories and images of people in poverty. Lord, does the way these people are treated respect Your creation? Help us in prayer and actions to challenge those who have the power to alleviate those suffering and not walk past on the other side. God, whose Wisdom shapes and directs the world, help us to live by that Wisdom, so that justice may be done and your perfect vision for this world may be made real.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Jill Mobbs**.

Source for prayer "God whose Wisdom" **Christian Aid**

Virtual Prayer Room

On Friday 10th Geoff posted "Thank you for all your prayers for Barbara she continues to improve. Remember her for her appointment at NNUH at 11.05am. Thanks Geoff." Later Geoff said "Just heard from Barbara, now back in ambulance awaiting the return trip. Apparently there are 2 others to drop off on the way so she is looking forward to a magical mystery tour!

Now discharged from hospital, can gradually dispense with the braces and keep going with rehabilitation steadily. All good news."

The same day Sue StJohn posted "Naomi and Flo are having their baby today! Will let you know."

Sue later said "Baby and mum are safe, and all good. No details yet. Thanks for praying everyone!!"

On Saturday Sue posted "We now have two beautiful babies in the fellowship, Meshak and Anna."

DJ Steve sent an audio message on Sunday saying "May the Lord be with all my friends at Stalham Baptist Church. God bless. DJ."

Monday Sue posted "Morning, Naomi and Flo's baby Meshak went quite blue today whilst they were being assessed for discharging from hospital. They will remain in hospital for 24 hours whilst they check him over again. So glad it happened whilst they were still in the unit. Very thankful. Will keep in touch."

On Tuesday Simone posted "Please can you continue to pray for Anna. Her bilirubin levels have risen again this morning. The doctors want a few other tests with her to see if there's anything else they can do to help her get rid of the jaundice. We'll have to stay at the hospital over night. Please pray for wisdom for the doctors, for strength for Anna and patience for us parents and siblings."

On Wednesday Sue posted "News from Naomi and Flo. The baby had another blue episode yesterday so they remain in hospital. Lots of tests to try to find out why,"

Thursday Sue said "Baby Meshak still doing well, no medical findings, which is good news, Still under observation."

The same day Simone posted "Baby Anna has been taken off of the treatment now. We are waiting for blood results to see what will happen next."

Later Simone posted "We have been discharged from the hospital. Her levels were good and we are now transferred to a community nurse. That means we don't even have to come back for a repeat blood test. Thanks to all for your continued prayers."

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

Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno
07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon
07951949128

Ministry Team: The Whole
Fellowship

For your Diary

Monday 13th Sept. 7.00pm

Deacons Zoom Meeting

Alpha Zoom Course Starts

See information on page 2

Tuesday 13th September

Coffee and Chat restarts

Thursday 16th Sept 7.00pm

Zoom Prayer Meeting

Contact Diana for a link.

Sunday 19th Sept Service

Flowers: Lorraine Stuart

Monday 20th Sept 9.00am

Deacons Zoom Prayer Meeting

WI 2nd Exploratory Meeting

10.30am in the Stables

Wednesday 22nd Sept

Over 60s Table Tennis restarts

Bible Study Zoom Meeting

7.00pm Contact Diana for a link.

Community Fridge

Open In The Stables

Monday 2 to 4pm

Tuesday to Friday 10 to 12 noon

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

Church Open

The Church is 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 WhatsApp or telephone 07951949128

Big Thank You

A big thank you to our guest speaker at last Sunday's service David Osborne.

Harvest Service Help Needed!

Can you help decorate the church for our Harvest Service which will be on Sunday 26th September? You could decorate a window using a Harvest theme or the stage area. If you can help talk to Magda or call her on 07794581875. We are also planning to put food donations on the stage that Sunday - all tins etc will go to the Food Bank and any fresh food will go to the Community Fridge.

Coffee and Chat Tuesday 14th

Coffee and Chat is starting again on the Tuesday 14th September from 9.30am to 12 noon. Elaine will be grateful for any donations to kick start the bric-a-brac table.

Donations could be given to Elaine, left at the back of SBC or dropped off in the Stables when it is open for the Community Fridge.

Table Tennis Wednesday 22nd

Table Tennis in the Schoolroom is restarting on Wednesday September 22nd 9.30am to 12 noon.

Coffee and tea are provided and the break for these allows us time for socialising.

We are grateful to Stewart Marsh who is taking over the organisation of the club, adding it to his treasurer responsibilities and his work on the refurbishment of the schoolroom.

Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at **James 2: 1-13.**

How easy is it to treat those well dressed completely differently to the bedraggled stranger?

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

The Alpha Zoom Course Monday 13th

The Alpha course is an internationally renowned course that encourages people from any background to discuss the big questions of life in a friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere. You can find out more about Alpha by searching: [alpha course](#)

Dan StJohn will be hosting SBC's first online Alpha Course running for 10 weeks from Monday September 13th at 7.30pm using zoom.

Now you can join an Alpha course from the comfort of your own home!

There may be the opportunity to meet face to face for any who would like to, but the Alpha course sessions will be run virtually/online so you can take part from home.

Please use the email address below if you would like to sign up or would like further information. We look forward to hearing from you. alpha@stalhambaptist.org.uk

Christian Friends of Israel

Jan Nicholson writes. CFI (Christian Friends of Israel) have just held their annual conference 2021 in Eastbourne during last weekend 3rd and 4th Sept. There are 4 teaching sessions which have been Livestreamed and you can listen to them on YouTube, they last about an hour each. I really enjoyed the teaching which gives a deeper understanding of the teachings of Jesus and a fresh understanding of Israel and its place in the future return and reign of Jesus the Messiah.

<https://www.cfi.org.uk/>

The Gathering Online 2021

This year's Gathering online is bringing together the global community to pray, learn and worship together. Join them by booking your FREE ticket today!

They're so excited that this year, LOCAL communities can join the GLOBAL family as we spend 3 incredible days ONLINE together.

Diana says "Many will know of Pete Grieg and the 24/7 prayer movement he established.

Their on line conference this year is 29-31st October and if you access the link below you can find out more about it.

There is no cost but donations can be given.

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/events/GatheringOnline21>

Sue StJohn joined last year and I'm sure Sue will tell you more about her experience if you ask her. If you aren't able to attend on the days, as long as you are signed up, you can access the 5 major talks at your own convenience You can of course book individually but I am looking to book as a church, so if you would like to be added as a delegate then please let me know. "

Stalham WI Next Meeting

At their first exploratory meeting on Monday 19 people attended. Valerie Hughes has organised another meeting on Monday 20th at 10.30am in the Stables. For more information email Valerie on valerie.hughes08@gmail.com.

EBA Prayer Focus 12th September 2021

Church at Great Notley

In 1994, a vision for an ecumenical church emerged from a women's prayer group. A lot has happened since then.

Thanks to a gift of land from Countryside Properties, The Church at Great Notley has come into being and is making an impact in the community of the garden village of Great Notley, Essex.

The church is an ecumenical partnership. It is part of the Baptist Union, Church of England, Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church and is also in association with the Roman Catholic Church. The current clergy team are Rev David Sebley, a URC Minister based in Braintree, and Rev Rachel Prior and Rev Roman Kukiewicz, both Anglican team members. Suzanne Gillingham is the Children's, Family and Outreach worker.

When the current pandemic began, the church moved its activities online. Gradually, the fellowship is seeing some of its activities begin to re-open. The fellowship has been blessed by some new contacts within the community and is exploring running a 'seekers course' later in the year.

Please pray for:

- Discernment as the leadership explore the possibilities for a seekers course
- Rev Rachel Prior as she settles into the work at Great Notley
- The fellowship as it continues to re-open and reach its local community

Quotes of the Week

"We need a better guide to facing giants—and there is no better place to start that journey than with the epic confrontation between David and Goliath three thousand years ago in the Valley of Elah." — **Malcolm Gladwell**

"You see the giant and the shepherd in the Valley of Elah and your eye is drawn to the man with sword and shield and the glittering armour. But so much of what is beautiful and valuable in the world comes from the Shepherd, who has more strength and purpose than we ever imagine."

— **Malcolm Gladwell**

"Our confidence is not in what we have, but He who freely gave us what we have. If God's will is in your little stones, they will surely bring down giant Goliaths... but you have to make the throw!" — **Israelmore Ayivor**

"What the Israelites saw, from high on the ridge, was an intimidating giant. In reality, the very thing that gave the giant his size was also the source of his greatest weakness. There is an important lesson in that for battles with all kinds of giants. The powerful and the strong are not always what they seem."

— **Malcolm Gladwell**

A rise in the currency of grievance

Exacerbated by the instability of the pandemic, the currency of grievance has become a dominant force circulating in many churches, as well as wider society, suggests Shaun Lambert for the Baptist Times.

Asking how do we effect change?

What currency does your church trade in? Rowan Williams raises this question in his perceptive book *The Way of St Benedict*.^[1] He recounts a story from the Catholic writer Donald Nicholl, at that time the head of the Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem.^[2] Nicholl has a conversation with a visiting English priest about a university mission the priest was involved with. The priest spent time on the mission attentively listening to 'what people talked about and how.'^[3]

How do we establish the currency or currencies of our institution or company, church, or community? By listening to what people talk about and how. The insight emerges in conversation and is worth repeating in full.

"And eventually," Aidan said, "one day the penny dropped. What did those people exchange with one another when they met? You'd be surprised – they exchanged grievances. So the currency of that University is grievance."^[4]

Nicholl goes on to comment that if it is grievances that circulate in the blood of a group of people then grievance is what will emerge.^[5] Living in intentional community for the last six months has meant that this story resonated with me. Mindfulness is about self-awareness and self-examination, and so I must ask what currency have I put into circulation?

Reflecting on 26 years of ministry I think the primary currency I have tried to circulate is loyalty, which is linked to Benedictine spirituality. At the heart of Benedictine spirituality is stability, 'staying put,' as Williams summarises it.^[6] The opposite of forbearance and loyalty is grievance which can lead to disloyalty.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the currency of grievance has become a dominant force circulating in many churches, imitating our social media culture of Twitter and Facebook.

This evidence receives further support from Carey Nieuwhof the commentator on church and culture. In a post back in May he talks about ['how to pastor a mob.'](#) He argues we have moved into an era of grievance, of 'polarisation,

partisanship, and division.'^[7]

This has been exacerbated by the crisis of 2020-2021. He says this is as true of church as it is of culture. Dealing with a small, angry, critical group is very difficult for any leader or group of leaders, especially if grievance is their only currency – creating a wormhole that can suck the whole institution down. Grievance is often expressed indirectly, with passive aggression – seeing the other through a distorted lens. At the heart of it is often the covert use of triangulation, talking about someone with other people in a way designed to undermine them behind the scenes. Face to face meeting to deal with conflict the minute it occurs is avoided.

[In a separate post dealing with toxic people](#), Nieuwhof lists a number of behaviours that it is important to name or spot, 'self-absorption, lying, manipulation, an unwillingness to listen to feedback, assigning blame, refusing to accept responsibility, they're never wrong, playing the victim, frequent anger, hidden agendas.'^[8] Nieuwhof points out the list could be much longer!

From a psychodynamic perspective what is most destructive is that caught up in grievance the person with the grudge disengages from the humanity of the person they are attacking, and projects a fantasy of them which they then seek to destroy.^[9] To deal with this negative transference you try and create a real relationship with the person rather than a distorted one. Importantly it is important not to get drawn into a countertransference where you behave in a distorted way. Sadly, sometimes it is not possible to create a real relationship and then you need to put boundaries around the relationship. Grievance, especially when fuelled by envy, can be malign and very destructive: we only have to read the stories of Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, the envy expressed towards Jesus by other religious leaders to recognise this.

Why are we seeing this rise in the currency of grievance? Drawing on the wisdom of Donald Nicholl again, Rowan Williams suggests that many people carry around unforgiveness and resentment, that has built up over many years.^[10] They have a bag of stones tied around their waist, each stone a different grudge. These stones are highly polished from a constant getting them out to relive the grievance, nurse the resentment and prelive a planned revenge.

The person waits for an opportunity to throw those stones, not just once, but again and again. What the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown have brought is continuous instability and uncertainty which is unlikely to change, with a rise in the currency of grievance. What can we do? Mindful parenting tells us to be the person that we want

our children to grow up to be. In the same way we can, along with the practice of forgiveness, be the person



who circulates different currencies. I know living in intentional community in North Yorkshire for the last six months my whole family has been shown the currency of kindness and goodness daily. The wisdom of intentional community has a lot to offer about how to circulate healthy currencies, and how to dissolve the currency of grievance. That wisdom can help all other institutions including local churches and businesses.

One of the questions of intentional community is not what do you want to do, but what sort of life do you want to live? A life that spreads the currency of kindness and goodness is the good life.

Shaun Lambert is a Baptist minister, author, and psychotherapist living on community with Scargill Movement, currently exploring mindful community and mindful church

Source **Baptist Times**

1 Rowan Williams, *The Way of St Benedict* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020). [2] The original story is told in Donald Nicholl's journal of his time in Jerusalem *The Testing of Hearts: A Pilgrim's Journal* (London, 1989). [3] Williams, 17. [4] Williams, 17. [5] Williams, 17. [6] Williams, 6. [7] See <https://careynieuwhof.com/how-to-pastor-a-mob/>. [8] <https://careynieuwhof.com/how-to-deal-with-toxic-people-7-pro-tips/> [9] See Carrie Doehring, *Taking Care: Monitoring Power Dynamics and Relational Boundaries in Pastoral Care and Counselling* (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1995) for a very helpful discussion of disengagement. [10] Williams, 15.

Feasts of Israel - Rosh Hashanna

In Leviticus 23v24 we read "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation." Writes Janet Nicholson

Tishri being the 7th month of the year (what the seventh day is to the week) is a Sabbatical month which is in September or early October according to the Jewish calendar. It signals the beginning of the final harvest of fruits and the start of a new season or era. The Jews officially recognize and celebrate it as their New Year and this year it falls on 7th and 8th September.



There is a command to blow the trumpet (Levit 23v23-25), to wake up, pay attention, urgent call to action. But what action? Repentance!

Ezra read the book of the law on this day to the Jews returned from Babylon (Neh 8v1-8). They trembled as they realised they had not

kept the law, but were told not to grieve as the Lord would

accept their repentance and forgive so they could celebrate.

It celebrates a New Year, also the birth of creation, honours God's Kingship over all creation and one's personal responsibility in God's plan for the world and in Thanksgiving that the fruit harvest is in. It is a call to take stock of the fruit of one's own life over the previous year. There follows 9 Days of Awe to try and put things right with others and seek forgiveness from God before the Book of Life is closed 10 days later on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.



The trumpet is still blown in services in all Jewish communities, and it is a day of rest, a sacred assembly. Gifts

are given to the Lord and the poor. People wish each other a Happy New Year and eat apples dipped in honey and wish/pray for each other to have a sweet and fruitful year. The whole of the previous month (Elul) is a time of spiritual heart searching in preparation for 9 Days of Awe between Trumpets and Day of Atonement (fasting day). It also looks forward to God's reign on earth recognising that He will judge sin, disunity and hatred and that nothing that defiles will be allowed into His kingdom so that there is a need to repent, seek forgiveness and reconciliation now before it's too late and the Book of Life is closed.

(Mat 25v11-13,19,46).

May God give us a deeper understanding of these feasts.

Images by **young shanahan** and [U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv](https://www.usembassy.gov/)

