

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 10th October 2021

Today we will be meeting "LIVE" at SBC. Ron is leading and Jerry is preaching from Luke 17: 11-19 "Where are the nine?"
Sunday's online service: Barbara is leading and Ron is preaching from 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10 "To the Church."
Today's Service will be followed by a Church Meeting at 12noon



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.



Ron's Reads

Acts 17:1f, Deut 7: 7-8, Jn 15:16, Eph 1: 4

For Your Prayers

Please pray for Marion, Steve and the family of Jan Slade whose funeral is at SBC at 10.45 on Thursday October 14th.

Lord we pray for those families and individuals in our community that have had their Universal Credit reduced by £20 a week. Lord help them find ways of getting through the winter as fuel and food prices are rising.

In some places in the UK Lord donations to foodbanks are reducing, please encourage people in our community to keep helping those who are in difficult circumstances. Lord give our government the wisdom to focus on supporting those who are struggling in our country now.

As tension grows between Taiwan and China the Chinese state media has warned that "war is real" and it "may be triggered at any time." Lord bring your wisdom to the leaders of the world who can deescalate this threat to world peace.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Daniel, Victoria, Gracie, Poppy and Autumn Nicholson.**

Virtual Prayer Room

On Wednesday 6th Simone posted "Thanks everyone for keeping Anna and our family in your prayers. Anna has been off all the support since yesterday morning and is coping well. The doctors said that we will be allowed home today evening or tomorrow if she keeps stable.

They are going to do a few other tests with her today as they want to make sure that there's no underlying reason why she took so long to get rid of the infection."

Also on Wednesday Josh posted "At Yare Valley Churches tomorrow we are going into a local school for 2nd week to do a running club and a girls football team, also one to one with a couple of kids for first session. We had 30 kids for first session last week. We have many of the same young people coming to our youth café. Please pray everything goes well again and we build relationships with the kids. Thanks Josh."

Are People Being Blamed for their Suffering?

Something to read

If your children sinned against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression - Job 8:4.

Something to think about

Imagine how Job felt when his 'comforter' Bildad said this to him about the children he had lost.

Job's friends are trying to comfort him in his suffering. They listen to him, but they do not seem to fully engage with his pain. Is this why, although they often speak true words about God, ultimately they fail to represent God truly?

In effect, Bildad is saying: 'They got what they deserved.'

How often do those who suffer hear people or society saying, 'You are getting what you deserve'?

Something to do

Listen out for people who unfairly assume that people are responsible for their suffering. It may be comments about refugees, people in poverty or other forms of suffering. Take the opportunity to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

Something to pray

Jesus, You refused to let a group of men put blame on a woman by writing in the sand. Teach me to creatively, but firmly, stand up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Amen.

By Peter McDowell who is a lecturer in Missiology with Practical Theology at Belfast Bible College. Previously he has been a minister in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and worked in Nepal Source Christian Aid

For more information about Christian Aid click [here](#)

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 11th Oct

7.00pm Deacons Zoom Meeting

7.00pm Alpha Meeting

Thursday 14th Oct.

10.45 Funeral of Jan Slade in the Church

7.00pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

Contact Diana for a link

Sunday 17th Oct.

Flowers: Cynthia Meale

Monday 18th Oct.

9.00am Deacons Prayer Zoom Meeting

WI Start Up Meeting

10.30am in the Stables

Wednesday 20th Sept

7.00pm Bible Study

Zoom Meeting

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

Prayer for Youth

In view of our ageing congregation, there is a real need to join together in prayer to petition God for the youth in our community and also the children in our church fellowship to pick up the baton in the future for the Kingdom of God that His name would continue to be exalted and honoured in our midst. **With this in mind please come and pray on Monday mornings from 10.30am in main church sanctuary, starting on 11th Oct.**

Let's Get the Sunday School fully Running

Janet Nicholson is asking for prayers for youth to take place on Monday 11th and points out that as a church we need to be preparing young people to pick up the baton to lead SBC into the future. The Sunday school pre pandemic was very successful but we need to fully restart it. There are parents searching for churches that have a vibrant Sunday School set up for their children. Yes, currently SBC is attracting a regular congregation of 60 plus but look forward 10 years! We need to be working hard to continually build into the future the growth that can reach out to the community and bring people to Jesus. To do that we need an environment that is comfortable for all ages. Fully restarting the Sunday school in the Stables and Schoolroom is essential for the future of SBC and our work in the community.

If you would like to be involved with this rewarding program, contact Diana secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk WhatsApp or telephone **07951949128**.

A big thank you to all those who have kept some Sunday School activities going at the back of the church.

Big Thankyou

A big thankyou to all those who decorated the church for the Harvest Service and another big thankyou to all those who donated food for the Foodbank and fresh produce for the Community Fridge.

Church Reading Plan

This week we are looking at **Luke 14: 14 -30**

As Christians how easy is it to deal with rejection when we talk about our faith and trust in Jesus? Do we just stick to talking to those who believe or do we persevere?

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

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](mailto:secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk)

Donations

We will use the box at the front door marked freewill offerings instead of a plate at the back of SBC. The offering bag on the balustrades on the stage close to the exit door will still be in use. Your contributions are always appreciated as we grow SBC.

Alpha Update

Dan StJohn writes. Thanks for praying for the online Alpha course – Alpha by the Sea and please keep on praying! There are 9 of us who meet each Monday to watch an Alpha video for around 25 minutes and then have a chat (on zoom) for half an hour or so.

Everyone who has joined the course is a friend or relative of someone who attends SBC, which is really great. Alpha UK have re-recorded the films so they are up to date and presented by younger presenters although Nicky Gumbel still features in all the films. They are very good quality and contain some powerful stories of changed lives.

2 people have expressed an interest in joining our next Alpha course when we can meet in person – perhaps in 2022?

Please consider whether or not you would like to lead an Alpha course (its not difficult) or whether you know someone who would like to sign up for an Alpha course in 2022.

The email address for any enquiries is: alpha@stalhambaptist.org.uk

EBA Prayer Focus 10th October 2021

Perry Baptist Church

Perry is a small Cambridgeshire village on the shores of Grafham Water reservoir near St Neots and just a few miles from the A1. Perry Baptist Church dates back over 170 years and is currently an active small church led for the past two years by minister Revd Jon Magee.

The church has been broadcasting services on Youtube throughout the pandemic and this has been continued when in-person meetings started again. At the moment there are between 20-30 gathering on Sundays, and there has been some growth in numbers despite the sad death of a number of members during the pandemic.

There are lots of cyclists, walkers and boaters around Grafham Water and a new initiative has just begun – T on the Green – offering free tea and refreshments in the church garden to passing visitors on a Saturday. It has started successfully this summer and there are plans to continue this monthly.

The church is starting the monthly Drop-in again in October for local people, families and children to come together informally.

A number of members from the church are part of the Kairos mission team at nearby HM Prison Littlehey, The church is used for Kairos staff meetings and training sessions.

Pastor Jon Magee regularly leads the Sunday morning service on Black Cat Radio, the local community radio station based in St Neots and he has also been interviewed about his faith and background having lived and worked all around the world.

Please pray for:

1. New initiatives as we are coming out of the pandemic
2. Wisdom for the church as it reaches out to the community in new ways
3. The Drop-In that starts again in October and the new T on the Green outreach

North Norfolk Foodbank

During October, the following would be much appreciated: **Long Life Milk – full fat or semi-skimmed, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Meat, Jam, Squash, Biscuits, Crisps, Male and Female Deodorants, Washing Up Liquid, Shampoo and Conditioner, Laundry Liquid/Powder, Household Cleaning Products.**

SBC is open for donations 10.00am to 12 noon Monday to Friday.

Quotes of the Week

"In the last 10 years, we have seen a rise in selfishness: selfies, self-absorbed people, superficiality, self-degradation, apathy, and self-destruction. So I challenge all of you to take initiative to change this programming. Instead of celebrating the ego, let's flip the script and celebrate the heart. Let's put the ego and celebrity culture to sleep, and awaken the conscience. This is the battle we must all fight together to win back our humanity. To save our future and our children." — *Suzu Kassem*

"Who you are is not determined by what you wear, the money in your wallet, nor how you look. Who you are is simply determined by who or what you follow. If you follow money you will only seek after such, giving your all for it. If you seek after what they call, 'fun,' your life will be aimed towards finding a way to fame, or a new way to party. If you follow the Lord Jesus your life will be given to Him, and the hopes and dreams you have will be in pleasing Him!! Everyone follows someone or something. Who will it be? Choose wisely- you are important!!" — *Mary Kate*

"If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning... Face it, friend. He is crazy about you!" — *Max Lucado*

Modern slavery and why we should care

Many victims / survivors of exploitation access services from churches, writes Dan Pratt, editor of a new book exploring theologies and faith responses to modern slavery.

Modern slavery now ranks as the second most profitable worldwide criminal enterprise after the illegal arms trade. There are an estimated 40.3 million people kept in modern slavery in the world today including (i):

- ◆ 10 million children
- ◆ 24.9 million people in forced labour
- ◆ 15.4 million people in forced marriage
- ◆ 4.8 million people in forced sexual exploitation
- ◆ 1 in 4 victims of modern slavery are children

Images of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) often highlight sweat shops in Asia, forced prostitution in Eastern Europe, or coca farms in West Africa. For those of us in the UK, why should we care?

For several years I ministered in an emerging Baptist church in Southend-on-Sea, Essex. The church was rooted among the rough sleeping community. MSHT were not on my radar.

That was until I met Richard. Having slowly gotten to know him, he entrusted me with some of his story (ii). He had been homeless in the north-west of England. In his homeless hostel, he was offered a job paving and tarmacking driveways. In return he would be given wages, accommodation and food.

Several months after having accepted the offer, the wages didn't materialise. He was accommodated in a run-down caravan which was sometimes shared with the owner's dog. When he requested his wages he was threatened. He was told 'if you try to leave, we know where your family live'. Fearing for his family and himself, Richard stayed. He was exploited for 20 years before escaping.

Richard's story was not the only story of exploitation encountered. There was a pattern of vulnerable people being exploited in forced labour, forced sexual exploitation and forced criminality. Modern slavery is a hidden crime. Estimates of its prevalence in the United Kingdom range from 100,000 to 136,000 people being exploited (iii). Consequently, almost every community in the United Kingdom is impacted by modern slavery.

In 2015, the UK Parliament passed the

Modern Slavery Act. The Act defines offences of slavery and human trafficking.

Slavery is when someone takes ownership of another person like a piece of property and often requires them to perform forced or compulsory labour (iv). This usually restricts that person's freedom of movement and exercises power over that person's choices.

Human trafficking is when a person arranges or facilitates the travel of a woman, man or child with a view to that person being exploited (v). The movement can be international, but also within the country from one city to another, or even just a few streets.

The extent of MSHT in the United Kingdom brings to the forefront the question of why should communities and faith communities care? The Gospels highlight the two greatest commands of loving God and loving our neighbour. Indeed, Jesus' mission of 'setting the captives free' is exemplified in his early ministry. With churches and faith groups increasingly encountering victims of modern slavery, loving our neighbour and setting the captives free can become a literal act.

A Baptist colleague who ministers in a church in an affluent part of Essex writes:

Keya regularly attended our local church. She appeared shy, nervous and scared. The family she was working for dropped her off at the door and collected her exactly one hour later. This didn't allow her to interact with people.

In brief conversations it became clear that Keya was not paid properly for her work and was not allowed out of the house without permission. The two sons in the house ridiculed her. She was unable to leave because she had to pay off a small debt to the family, who built her and her disabled husband a small house in India. The debt would take years to pay off.

It was a shock to those of us in the church who came to know Keya over her time with us that this situation was happening yards from our own homes. (vi)

The church had regularly welcomed a victim of modern slavery to their church services. Talking with other church ministers, it became clear these weren't isolated cases. This led the Eastern Baptist Association (vii), with more than 170 churches in the east of England to conduct a survey among its churches relating to modern slavery and trafficking. The survey indicated that out of the 47 churches taking part, 19 per cent of them had knowingly encountered victims of modern slavery. These encounters had often been in their grassroots work or serving the community.

There will be more churches who had unknowingly served victims through their church services, food banks, crèches, night-shelters and other community activities. But why were so many victims / survivors of exploitation accessing services from churches?





The charity Hestia interviewed 12 survivors of modern slavery, who had experienced homelessness, asking them 'where would a survivor of modern slavery who is experiencing rough sleeping go to seek help?' Only four out of the twelve would go to the police, with one person stating they '... would be too scared of police', and another, saying '...if they've been in trouble with the police before they'd be too scared'. None out of the twelve would go to the council for help. With one person explaining they '...would be too scared of being deported', and another saying, '...how would I know I could trust them [?]'. All interviewees indicated they would approach a church / mosque / or other religious organisation for help (ix).

In the same report, interviewees were questioned regarding what they thought were the barriers stopping survivors of exploitation who became homeless from seeking help. All indicated that 'fear was a barrier'. Other barriers included lack of information, poor English, low self esteem, mental health, shame, mistrust, and fear of deportation (x).

Hestia concludes their report by stating that: *Faith organisations and grass-roots and homelessness charities are significantly more accessible to survivors of modern slavery who are sleeping rough than existing statutory pathways* (xi).

We should care because victims of slavery are some of the most oppressed individuals, who like Richard and Keya are being exploited on our doorstep and often faith communities can help safeguard them. Faith communities are often located within unique grassroots contexts. This enables victims of slavery feel able to come for help. We are in a unique position to be able to love, safeguard and walk alongside survivors of his horrendous crime. In the midst of this horrendous crime, there is an opportunity for faith communities to show and live out Christ's love in action and to partner towards slavery-free communities.

To learn more about faith responses to modern slavery see the newly published book *Slavery-Free Communities: Emerging Theologies and Faith Responses to Modern Slavery*. It includes several chapters by Baptist authors including: Paul Fiddes, Kang-San Tan, Myra Blyth, Marion Carson, Gale Richards and John Weaver. A forward is included by the Rt Hon Theresa May MP.

Dan Pratt is the Eastern Baptist Association Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator who founded and leads *Together Free*, the Baptist movement seeking to work with local churches to end modern slavery and human trafficking.



Book Launch

On Zoom: 19th October, 7pm

With contributions from practitioners and theologians, the launch event will explore faith responses to modern slavery and includes: listening to survivors stories, emerging theologies, prayers and panel discussion.

Contributors: Major Kathy Betteridge, Revd Dr Myra Blyth, Revd Dr Marion Carson, Prof Paul Fiddes, Josh Findlay, Major Heather Grinsted, Mia Hasensen-Gross, Kevin Hyland OBE, Gabriel Kanter-Webber, Rt Revd Alastair Redfern, Revd Dr Dan Pratt, Revd Gale Richards and Revd Dr John Weaver.

Book your free place @ Eventbrite:
<https://slavery-free.eventbrite.co.uk>

A book launch for *Slavery-Free Communities: Emerging Theologies and Faith Responses to Modern Slavery* takes place on Zoom: 19th October, 7pm.

The online event will explore faith responses to modern slavery and includes: listening to survivor's stories, emerging theologies, prayers and panel discussion.

Book your free place via Eventbrite: slavery-free.eventbrite.co.uk

Slavery-Free Communities: Emerging Theologies and Faith Responses to Modern Slavery can be bought from our online shop [here](#).

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