

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 5th December 2021



Sunday's "Live" Service

Jerry is leading and preaching from Isaiah 55: 1-13

"God's Satisfying Word"

Sunday's online service: Ron is leading and preaching from
Genesis 3: 1-13 "The Fall: What was very good now isn't !"

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

Isa 55:8-9, Job 38:1f, 1Jn 2:16f

For Your Prayers

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

Pray for those in the fellowship and community who are vulnerable and are feeling anxious about the new covid variant.

Pray also for those families and people that are going to rely on the Foodbank this Christmas and will possibly be unable to keep their homes warm.

Also pray for the people in low-income countries where only 5.8% of the populations have received at least one dose of the covid vaccines.

The Financial Times says Afghanistan is facing an economic meltdown stating "Hundreds of thousands of workers are owed months of salaries, hospitals are on the brink of collapse and nine out of 10 Afghans are expected to fall below the poverty line by next year. More than half of the 39m population require food assistance, with about a quarter facing "emergency" food insecurity and potential famine."

Please pray for the people of Afghanistan that foreign aid will be forthcoming as the winter temperatures can drop to -20 degrees centigrade accompanied with heavy snowfalls.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Rita Rudrum**.

Virtual Prayer Room

On Saturday 27th Jerry posted on behalf of Sheena "Please pray for Margaret and Mike friends from Cambridge. Mike has stage 4 kidney cancer, which has spread to his lungs and liver, He starts immunotherapy on 29th November. Pray please it will be effective to keep cancer at bay. Thank you. Sheena."

Also on Saturday David posted "Ros, Kjell's great aunt who lives in Durban SA says he is doing well and making good progress so far and his reflexes are good thank you for all your prayers. Kjell's family in Germany said to say thank you and appreciate all your prayers. God bless. Ros." Jenny posted "please could I ask for prayers for tomorrow morning when I will see the consultant radiologist to plan the treatment I need. Thank you all."

On Monday Susie said "Thank you for praying for me. I still have a lot of peace and joy from God about my tongue operation which is amazing. It's on Thursday, so we're all isolating until then. Please pray the surgeons remove all the cancer and that there isn't any more elsewhere on my tongue. Thank you, Susie xxx"

On Tuesday DJ Steve posted an audio saying "This is DJ praying for all my friends that you are all OK love DJ."

Give Us Hearts

God of love and compassion: may we always recognize your spirit:

- in the refugee family, seeking safety from violence;
- in the migrant worker, bringing food to our tables
- in the asylum-seekers, seeking justice for their families;
- in the unaccompanied child, traveling in a dangerous world.

Give us hearts that break open whenever our brothers and sisters turn to us.

Give us ears that no longer turn deaf to their voices in times of need;

Give us eyes to recognize a moment for grace instead of a threat.

Give us voices that fail to remain silent but which decide instead to advocate prophetically.

Give us hands that reach out in welcome, but also in work, for a world of justice until all homelands are safe and secure.

Bless us, O Lord...

Fr. Dan Hartnett S.J.

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 6th December

7.00pm Deacons Meeting

10.30am in the Church

Prayers for young people

Tuesday 7th November

9.30am - 12 in the Stables

Coffee and Chat

Wednesday 8th December

9.30am - 12 in the School Room

Table Tennis

Thursday 9th December

7.00pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

Sunday 12th December

Flowers: Barbara Mixer

Monday 13th December

9.00am Deacons Prayer Meeting

10.0am WI Meeting in the Stables

10.30am in the Church

Prayers for young people

Wednesday 15th December

7.00pm Zoom Bible Study Meeting

Contact Diana for a link.

Sunday 9th January

12.00 noon Church Meeting

Sunday 12th January

4.00pm Candlelight Carols

Sunday 19th January

4.00pm Candlelight Carols

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

Christmas Services

To book a place for the Christmas services please contact Diana Gordon on - 07951949128 you can also text or WhatsApp the same number or email secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk

Candlelight Services

Sunday 12th -19th December All welcome for traditional Carols
Starting at 4.00pm

These services will be relayed to the car park so we can therefore offer a "drive in" option.

When booking your place you will need to tell Diana which option you are booking

Celebrate Christmas Day Morning

Starting at 10am youngsters can bring their presents and the fellowship can be festively dressed.

Christmas online Service

Will be available from 1.00am On Christmas Day

Sunday 2nd January

The New Year's Family Service 10.45am

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

Community Fridge

The Community Fridge is open In the Stables

Monday 2 to 4pm -Tuesday to Friday 10 to 12 noon.

Church Reading **James 2: 14-26**

Faith and Good Works

¹⁴ My brothers and sisters, if a person claims to have faith but does nothing, that faith is worth nothing. Faith like that cannot save anyone. ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister in Christ comes to you in need of clothes or something to eat. ¹⁶ And you say to them, "God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat," but you don't give them the things they need. If you don't help them, your words are worthless. ¹⁷ It is the same with faith. If it is just faith and nothing more—if it doesn't do anything—it is dead. ¹⁸ But someone might argue, "Some people have faith, and others have good works." My answer would be that you can't show me your faith if you don't do anything. But I will show you my faith by the good I do. ¹⁹ You believe there is one God. That's good, but even the demons believe that! And they shake with fear. ²⁰ You fool! Faith that does nothing is worth nothing. Do you want me to prove this to you? ²¹ Our father Abraham was made right with God by what he did. He offered his son Isaac to God on the altar. ²² So you see that Abraham's faith and what he did worked together. His faith was made perfect by what he did. ²³ This shows the full meaning of the Scriptures that say, "Abraham believed God, and because of this faith he was accepted as one who is right with God."^[a] Abraham was called "God's friend."^[b] ²⁴ So you see that people are made right with God by what they do. They cannot be made right by faith alone. ²⁵ Another example is Rahab. She was a prostitute, but she was made right with God by something she did. She helped those who were spying for God's people. She welcomed them into her home and helped them escape by a different road.^[a] ²⁶ A person's body that does not have a spirit is dead. It is the same with faith—faith that does nothing is dead!

How can SBC continue and grow "Christianity in Action" not just being content with what we have already achieved? With the storm economic clouds gathering many people in our community are going to find things difficult in 2022. Without doubt we can pray but how can we increase the help to our community making SBC a hub of support showing Jesus at the centre and radiating outwards "Jesus Loves You" ?

EBA Prayer Focus 5th December 2021 Hedingham Baptist Church

Hedingham Baptist Church was founded in 1805 and is one of the leading congregations in Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham in Essex. It's a vibrant, all-age congregation dedicated to serving the spiritual, educational, and cultural

needs of the surrounding community. The church is deeply rooted in the Bible and worship, and everyone always receives a warm welcome.

Since August 2021, the church has been without a minister as it was not possible to financially support the full-time role. However, despite being a small congregation, all the members pull together to serve God in their community. The vision is to meet needs, share Jesus with others, teach and encourage each other as believers, to be guided by God in all we do and to love and serve Him.

There are a number of regular weekly events including: Sunday morning service and Sunday school; Cygnets toddler group; coffee morning; Wellbeing Support group; CAP Life Skills courses; Bible studies and home groups. There are also regular prayer events, Messy Church, all-age services, a summer holiday club and other seasonal events. The church building also serves as a meeting place for several community groups during the week.

Prayer points:

- Pray for God's clear guidance and direction as the church enters a time without a minister
- Pray for all the ways in which the church can be a shining light to reflect Jesus to the surrounding villages
- Pray for Hedingham's work with CAP and Wellbeing Support as they seek to reach out to the most vulnerable in the community

Janet Nicholson Asks

If anyone would like to donate goodies for Christmas for the young folk at Empanda e.g. biscuits, chocolates, cakes, gifts etc, please give them to Jan or Henry and we will deliver them near to Christmas,

Big Thankyou

To all those who have been delivering the Christmas edition of Community Scene and to Monica and Frank who have organised the deliveries.

Bric-a-Brac for Cof f ee & Chat

Coffee & Chat needs more bric-a-brac to display and receive donations for. If you have anything you could drop it in to the Stables on a Tuesday morning or give it to Elaine on a Sunday. Coffee & Chat has been very successful but is running short of items to sell.

David Away

David is away on Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th of December. He will produce a newsletter on Monday and Tuesday of that week. If you have any items for the newsletter dated 12th December please get them to him by Monday 6th of December.

Quotes of the Week

"When Adam and Eve bit into the fruit, therefore, they weren't just violating some arbitrary command, "Don't eat the fruit." They were doing something much sadder and much more serious. They were rejecting God's authority over them and declaring their independence from him.

Adam and Eve wanted to be, as the Serpent promised them, "like God," so both of them seized on what they thought was an opportunity to shed the vice-regency and take the crown itself. In all the universe, there was only one thing God had not placed under Adam's feet—God himself. Yet Adam decided this arrangement was not good enough for him, and so he rebelled."
— Greg Gilbert,

"If Adam and Eve were not hunter-gatherers, then they were certainly gatherers. But, then, consumer desire, or self-embitterment, or the 'itch,' as Schopenhauer called it, appeared in the shape of the serpent. This capitalistic monster awakens in Adam and Eve the possibility that things could be better. Instantly, they are cast out of the garden and condemned to a life of toil, drudgery, and pain. Wants supplanted needs, and things have been going downhill ever since."
— Tom Hodgkinson,

Abby St John A Girl On A Mission

Abby wrote this article for the first edition of the Community Scene in Easter 2017.

Since then Abby has gained a degree in Social Work and is currently working at Kings Hall school in Oxford as a Pastoral Assistant.

My name is Abbey, I attended Stalham High School, and have lived in Stalham for 10 years now.

Probably all of you have followed the migrant crisis, even if you didn't choose to, it's unavoidable on the news and radio everyday! I, like most of you, found it shocking, and the numbers bewildering, but it didn't affect the rest of my day.

Except one time, I was listening to the radio, and I heard an interview with a Syrian doctor.

I was expecting the usual flat and hopeless report of bombings, so was taken aback by the passion in his voice. He spoke angrily 'Why are you not doing more?' he asked.

It was then that I realised that each of us have a responsibility of compassion- that one day someone will ask us what we did to help. England is historically a Christian nation, yet currently are we trying to preserve our 'Christian culture' by acting un-Christian in this crisis?

I am currently doing a discipleship training school (DTS) with a Christian organisation YWAM.

The DTS has a refugee focus,

so we have been working with refugees for the full 6 months. For the first 3 months we volunteered in Greece, at Moria refugee camp, doing very basic work of distributing clothes, tents and food.

Conditions in Moria were very poor, because originally it only served as an overnight stop before being moved on- however now, due to the huge number of people coming and a new migration policy that has tightened borders, those in Moria will

be there for at least 6 months before being processed for asylum or deportation.

It's frustrating for many who have gone through so much for the dream of freedom, yet they are still trapped, unable to go home or move forward.

Even after leaving, I still remember and am struck by how incredibly resilient and gracious they were. I'm certain I would not be like that after sleeping in a thin wet tent for a week, let alone six

months.

Now we are travelling in Turkey, volunteering at different existing refugee projects.

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a Christian nation, yet
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The opportunities to be involved are very varied: we spent 3 weeks running art classes at a school for Syrian children, all from Aleppo; 1 week doing conversation English classes with Syrian college students; and are currently working with Syrian women, training them in business skills so they can be financially self-sufficient after losing husbands in the war.

Most of the refugees we have met hope to go back to their homes once the problems are over.

As for me, I feel very fortunate to be coming home to Stalham, and I hope they will soon be able to return to where they call home.

Labels

David Skivington wrote this article for the Christmas 2020 edition of Community Scene.

What image springs to mind when the term 'refugee' is mentioned? Perhaps it is a dinghy full of people tossed around on the sea. Maybe a camp full of thousands waiting in limbo for the chance for a better life.

I imagine it's not Albert Einstein. Or Freddie Mercury. Or even Gloria Estefan, Mo Farah, Jackie Chan or Bob Marley. The danger of labels, as seen in the poem below by Brian Bilston, is that they dehumanise, causing us to stereotype and generalise. We no longer see people as individuals and understand the full potential of that person but instead limit them to a single word. We see a 'refugee' instead of a doctor, musician, artist, friend, mother, father, son or daughter. We need to try and see beyond the label.

As Christmas approaches, we hear all about shepherds, angels and wise men while singing carols about the baby Jesus in the manger. However, it is not often mentioned that soon after his birth Jesus and his family had to flee to Egypt for years to escape persecution and seek refuge in another country. It always strikes me that God chose for his son not to be born in riches and luxury but into poverty and as someone seeking asylum in fear of persecution as so many people were at that time and still are in our world today.

It is estimated that there are around 79 million displaced people in the world at the moment, with around 25 million people having been forced to leave their home country. The vast majority, like Jesus, head to the nearest safe place with Turkey, Pakistan, Jordan and Lebanon hosting the most refugees out of any country. Of those 25 million people only 35,000 applied for asylum in the UK last year (nowhere near enough people to even half fill Wembley stadium).

In the UK, there is a policy to create a 'hostile



environment' for undocumented migrants which was initiated by Theresa May when she was Home Secretary. This involves asylum seekers (people waiting to be told if they can claim safety in the UK) not being allowed to work while they wait for their decision from the Home Office. Over 50% of cases take more than 6 months and many wait for years and years, stuck in limbo on £36 a week.

They cannot choose where they stay and often live in fear of being detained (the UK is the only country in the world where someone can be detained indefinitely as an asylum seeker).

Sama* volunteered as an interpreter for the charity I work for. While in the UK she waited 5 years to be granted refugee status. She arrived without winter clothes and during her first week here had to walk in the snow with her 9 year old son for an hour to get food from a local charity. On arrival the charity was closed so her son asked if they could take the bus home. On the verge of tears, she had to ask her son to choose if he wanted to walk the hour home or have lunch, they couldn't afford to do both.

Despite not being allowed to work, Sama volunteered in numerous places, always eager to help others and show care and compassion.

Now she is able to work,

she still devotes a large amount of time to helping in the local community. Her love, empathy and wisdom are amazing and it is a privilege to know her.

In my career I have been very fortunate to get to know many asylum seekers and refugees as friends. To share their homes, food and dreams. Refugees are people, just like us. They are all different, with different stories, experiences and lives. Please take a moment to read the poem again, but this time read it from the end to the start in reverse. This Christmas, look at the world a different way. When you see someone in need of help, think of Jesus seeking shelter. Forget the labels and see the person.

REFUGEES by Brian Bilston

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me

These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand

We need to see them for who they really are

Chancers and scroungers

Layabouts and loungers

With bombs up their sleeves

Cut-throats and thieves

They are not

Welcome here

We should make them

Go back to where they came from

They cannot

Share our food

Share our homes

Share our countries

Instead let us

Build a wall to keep them out

It is not okay to say

These are people just like us

A place should only belong to those who are born there

Do not be so stupid to think that

The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)

For more poems go to <https://brianbilston.com/>