

# Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 30th January 2022

## Sunday's "Live" Service

Barbara is leading and Ron is preaching from

Leviticus 5: 2-6, Matthew 11: 28-30 "Reversing Ducks"

Sunday's online service: Maggie is leading and Jerry is preaching from

1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11 "Living in the Light of Christ's Return"



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.



### Jerry's Extra Reads

Matthew 11:20-24, Matthew 24, Luke 12:47-48, Romans 13:12-14, 1 Peter 1:3-9

### For Your Prayers

Please pray for those in our community that are living in one room in their houses wrapped up in thick clothing in an attempt to stay warm as they are struggling to pay for fuel or food.

Also pray that people will be able to donate food to the Foodbank as the cost of living crisis will affect everyone in the coming months.

Pray that our Government will be able to focus on helping the many people that are struggling in our country. Also pray the Lord will give the leadership the wisdom to rebuild the trust we need in our Government.

Pray that the tension on the border of Ukraine can be eased and Europe will not witness a war.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Barbara Webb**.

### Virtual Prayer Room

On Wednesday 26th DJ Steve sent an audio message saying "Tomorrow I am moving to my new home Bishop Herbert House please will you pray for me, love you all."

Later he said "Thanks for all your prayers."

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

## Church Reading Matthew 7: 1-5 (ERV)

### Be Careful About Criticizing Others

7 "Don't judge others, and God will not judge you. <sup>2</sup>If you judge others, you will be judged the same way you judge them. God will treat you the same way you treat others. <sup>3</sup>"Why do you notice the small piece of dust that is in your friend's eye, but you don't notice the big piece of wood that is in your own? <sup>4</sup>Why do you say to your friend, 'Let me take that piece of dust out of your eye'? Look at yourself first! You still have that big piece of wood in your own eye. <sup>5</sup>You are a hypocrite! First, take the wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to get the dust out of your friend's eye.

*How easy is it as a Christian to get judgmental and have that big piece of wood in your eye?*

### Prayers for the Week

God of freedom, whether we like to admit it or not, we do not treat everybody with equality. We silently judge others based on appearance, social status, and even race. Please give us the courage to meet others who are different from us, to learn from them, and to partner with them. Please give us a willingness to set aside our own safety and comfort for the sake of others as we silently confess our sins to You now...

*Submitted by Austin D. Hill*

God of our hearts, make us aware of our selfish motives. We want too much. We consume too much. We judge too much. We forgive too little. We help too little. We dream too little about living an abundant life with You. We use our power for our own gain. We don't allow hurt and pain in the world to bother us. We think Your words are meant for someone else. Forgive us God. Make our lives about You, instead of us. Help us to pursue a life led by Your Spirit, and changed by Your mercy and grace. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

*Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church*

Source [The Pastors Workshop](#)

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)

Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington  
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno  
07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon  
07951949128

Ministry Team:

The Whole Fellowship

## For your Diary

**Monday 31st January**

7.00pm Deacons Meeting

10.30am in the Church

Prayers for young people

**Tuesday 1st February**

9.30am -12 in the Stables

Coffee and Chat

**Wednesday 2nd February**

9.30am -12 in the School Room

Table Tennis

**Thursday 3rd February**

Zoom Bible Study

Contact Diana for link

**Friday 4th February**

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

**Sunday 6th February**

10.45am Sunday Service

12.00 noon Special Church Meeting

Flowers: Susannah Pegg

## Food Bank & Personal Prayer

SBC is open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive donations for the food bank and for 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](mailto:@stalhambaptist.org.uk)

## Community Fridge in the Stables

Open Mondays 2.00 pm - 4.00pm

Tuesday 10.00am to 12 noon

Wednesday and Thursday 2.00 pm - 4.00pm

## 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)

## Special Church Meeting

There will be a Special Meeting on Sunday 6th February at 12noon to agree the way forward of the refurbishment of the Schoolroom. You can find the information on SBC's Forum and also printed copies at the back of the church.

## Sponsored Walk

In aid of the SBC building fund Ben & Barbara Mixer will be undertaking an approx. 6 miles walk on a pleasant day within the next few weeks as weather permits. We will be collecting sponsorship from those who wish to support this. Thank you and we will update in due course the funds raised. There will be a sponsor form at the back of the church.

## BMS Birthday Scheme

Thank you to all who donated to the above scheme last year. A total of £215 has been sent to BMS which will help support the medical and health ministries of BMS World Mission. If anyone would like to join the scheme, please let Jan Nicholson know.

## Have You Had a Look?

Have a rummage around on the tables at the back of the church. You will find magazines, newspapers and leaflets with lots of information that is often spiritually uplifting.

## EBA Prayer Focus 29th January 2022

### Holland-on-Sea Baptist Church

Holland-on-Sea is a lovely quiet seaside town in east Essex, where you will find the small and loving fellowship of Holland-on-Sea Baptist Church which has been led by Rev Chris Collicot for the past six years.

The church sits in a central location in the town and has good, modern premises that are well-used. The church congregation reflects the large retired population but has been busy during lockdown, serving sixty meals at lunchtime to the surrounding community.

Since opening up again after lockdown the church has had seven new members, new regular attendees, with baptisms this month, and is very excited about a new Alpha course that just began in the new year.

The church has a regular programme of weekday activities with a lunch club and a friendship club with afternoon tea but whilst these are well attended events it is very difficult to get people to come to church. Many of the weekday events take place in the afternoons which reflects the availability of the retired residents of the town.

The hall is rented out to local groups so provides a place for a range of community activities and access to lots of non-church people. However, there is currently no Sunday School, no young people's work and no church youth group.

The church is healthy and growing again after Covid and is looking at new ways of serving the local community and sharing the love of Jesus with those who live in the town.

Please pray for:

- The Alpha course which started in the new year (13 attending).
- That bridges will be built between those people who come onto the premises and the church itself.
- For the pastor and church leadership team as they look to the future.

## Food Bank Donations

During January, the following would be much appreciated:  
**Long Life Milk – full fat or semi-skimmed, Tinned Meat, Tinned**

**Vegetables, Tea, Squash/Fruit Juice, Rice Pudding, Sponge Puddings and Custard, Crisps, Instant Snacks – cuppa soup, pot noodle etc, Male and Female Deodorants, Laundry Liquid/Powder.**

For more info about food bank click on the link. [Food Bank](#)

## Energy Needs

If you are, or know someone who is, struggling with their energy bills North Norfolk Food Bank offers a scheme called Energybank that can help. Contact the Food Bank on 07826376343, or contact Ron Skivington at [minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk](mailto:minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk) Citizens Advice Bureau can also give advice and possible assistance. Click [here](#) for a link.

## 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.

Pre covid we passed around a collection bag, but as we are still trying to implement some covid protection protocols we have put a bag on the balustrades on the stage close to the exit door and a plate at the back of the church. Your contributions are always appreciated as we grow SBC.

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.

## Jerry's quotes of the Week

"Christians live in the light of the End. Much of what we believe and much of the suffering we are prepared to endure derive their meaning from the prospect of vindication and resurrection. Without that prospect, without the reality that that prospect anticipates, Christianity does not make sense, and neither do major planks in any Christian perspective on evil and suffering. "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all others" (1 Cor. 15:19)". —

**D. A. Carson.**

"Live expectantly. This does not mean putting on a white sheet and sitting atop a mountain. That is the very attitude God condemned. But it does mean living in the light of His return, realizing that our works will be judged and that our opportunities for service on earth will end. It means to live "with eternity's values in view."—**Warren Wiersbe** .

"The first time [Christ] came to slay sin in men. The second time He will come to slay men in sin."—**A. W. Pink.**

"Bible teaching about the Second Coming of Christ was thought of as "doomsday" preaching. But not anymore. It is the only ray of hope that shines as an ever brightening beam in a darkening world." **Billy Graham.**

"The early church thought more about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ than about death or about heaven. **The early Christians were looking not for a deft in the ground called a grave but for a cleavage in the sky called Glory. They were watching not for the undertaker but for the uppertaker. -- Alexander Maclaren (1826–1910).**

"To me the second coming is the perpetual light on the path which makes the present bearable. I never lay my head on the pillow without thinking that perhaps before the morning breaks, the final morning may have dawned. I never begin my work without thinking that He may interrupt my work and begin His own. This is now His word to all believing souls, 'Till I come.' We are not looking for death, we are looking for Him."— **G Campbell Morgan.**



# Learning from the last two years

We are all desperate to move on from the last two years, but it can also be healthy to reflect on what we have learned during this difficult time, including about what it means to be church, writes Chris Norden.

I offer here some questions and observations – which I hope will encourage honest discussions among us.

## What has gone well?

For a start, we are still here – most churches have at least kept going! To survive, we adapted to new technologies; we invested time and energy in communicating and connecting; we took our legal responsibilities seriously, doing our risk assessments and chivvying the reckless; we got involved in supporting those in particular need, perhaps through community partnerships or food deliveries; we may have hosted foodbanks or vaccine centres; we may have run online evangelistic courses such as Alpha; we encouraged the isolated and those struggling with poor mental health; and sometimes, sadly, we needed to do what we could to comfort the dying and the bereaved; and in all this we did our best to continue to worship, to break bread and share wine, and to proclaim the Gospel.

*So, what does your church have to celebrate?*

## What has been a struggle?

Most churches – even the largest and best resourced – seem to have found children's and youth work to be a particular challenge. If we managed only to keep the families of church members engaged during lockdown, we probably did well. We may also have struggled to restart activities due to lack of volunteers; the old 20/80 rule ("in church, 20 per cent of the people do 80 per cent of the work") seems to have become more like 10/90. And the 10 are feeling the strain.

Keeping people together has been hard, with congregations split between 'in person' and 'online', and with some switching between the two depending on shifting preferences. And perhaps our hopes that the pandemic would lead to a noticeable upturn in personal spirituality or corporate prayer have been disappointed.

*So, what does your church have to lament?*

## What have we got wrong?

I suggest that with hindsight we may have been too cautious.

Admittedly I am basing this on limited data, but Baptist churches often seem to have been slower than others to reopen after lockdowns, and church members often seem to have been more cautious about meeting in person than those outside or on the fringes of our churches. For example, in our church we found that numbers were significantly down at our services this Christmas, but that the proportion of 'outsiders' present was higher than normal.

Why is this? Nationally, it might have something to do with our age profile. Or it might have something to do with our ecclesiology – congregational governance can make us used to moving very slowly and safely! Or it might have something to do with how we interpreted the thorough guidance from Baptists Together – perhaps we focussed too much on risk, and undervalued the blessings and benefits of meeting.

Or, most worryingly, it might be that somehow we lost sight of our true hope, that we began to think that protecting ourselves mattered more than proclaiming Christ, or that we were no longer collectively able to say "for me to live is Christ, to die is gain".

The experience of our church was that we reached a point where we had to make choices between prioritising the more cautious preferences of some in the church vs. the less cautious attitudes of those we were trying to reach. This belatedly led us to be more adventurous – still considering risk and trying to mitigate it where possible – but not making the elimination of risk the over-riding consideration. And God brought new people in.

Some of our regular activities became more missional, in ways which may not have been possible if it were not for Covid, perhaps because the dynamics of the church had shifted. But with hindsight there were also opportunities we missed. And if I could relive this period (heaven forbid!) I would advocate upping our risk tolerance for the sake of reaching those who are without Christ and therefore without real hope. Because the risk that someone catches Covid in our buildings is surely less significant than the risk that we fail to live up to our Baptist duty "to bear personal witness to the

Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world".

*So, what does your church have to repent of?*

The Revd Chris Norden is minister of Haywards Heath Baptist Church

[Source Baptist Times](#)



**Learning From The Last Two Years**



# Open Doors

26 January 2022

## Zabi from Afghanistan: “You are a strand of hope for me”

Afghanistan is now the hardest place in the world to be a Christian. For the first time since the Open Doors World Watch List began, Afghanistan is number one – replacing North Korea, even though persecution got worse in North Korea too.

When the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 2021, it made headlines around the world. Secret believers in the country had always known it was a possibility – and even before this takeover, Christians faced extreme persecution in Afghanistan. The country was already number two on the Open Doors World Watch List. Somehow it got even worse. For the first time ever, Afghanistan is number one on the World Watch List.

### The destructive power of the Taliban

“I grew up in Afghanistan,” says Zabi, a young woman whose name has been changed for security reasons. “My family are secret believers – well, my father and brother and me. My mother remained a Muslim.” Christians in Afghanistan know that the Taliban are seeking them out, and will murder them without a second thought. Zabi knows first-hand how dangerous the Taliban can be. They have already had a devastating impact on her and her family.

“A few years ago, the Taliban came and they took my father away, because he was a Christian,” she shares. “They tortured and killed him. A few months later, my brother also disappeared. We never heard of him again.”

It’s hard to conceive of all that Zabi has been through. And now she has had to leave behind everything she owns. Zabi and her mother fled Afghanistan to a neighbouring country – along with the many thousands of others who left and are now refugees, including many Christians.

“Our situation is desperate,” she says. “What will happen to me? I don’t know. I’m praying I can leave this country and go somewhere safe. I may have to go into hiding. Or I’ll be deported to Afghanistan. I may be killed if that happens.”

Zabi puts it starkly: “I feel alone and hopeless.”

Zabi gets help, thanks to you. When local Open Doors partners first made contact with Zabi, she was particularly worried about finding money for food. Thankfully, these partners are able to support Zabi and her mother with emergency food, shelter and prayer.

“God led our frontline partners to Zabi,” shares an Open Doors partner in the region. “They are now in regular contact with her.

We have encouraged her, prayed with her, given her food and we pay the rent for her

apartment and have given her some money, so that she is currently safe and able to survive. We’ll continue to help her, although we don’t know what her future will hold for her.”

Your gifts and prayers are already making an enormous difference to Zabi’s life: “Thank God for your food and clothes deliveries, your financial support and your prayers and encouragement,” she says. “You are a strand of hope to me. There’s a chance I may live.” “Zabi’s grateful for the support, but it’s like being happy that someone showed up to the funeral of a loved one,” adds a local partner in the country neighbouring Afghanistan. “You’re happy this person is there, but you’re still overwhelmed with grief. It’s the same for her. She’s so thankful that we’re helping, but at the same time, she’s still in shock about what happened. “It’s difficult for her to express what has happened and how she feels. We just have to be with her and help her where we can.”

### 1 in 7 Christians face persecution

So many other vulnerable believers from countries in the Open Doors World Watch List top 10 need the same urgent help. Zabi is still very depressed and uncertain about her future, though still trusting in God and faithfully following Jesus. Millions of other Christians make that same courageous choice every day. One in seven Christians face persecution because of their faith. That’s more than 360 million men, women and children who choose to follow Jesus, despite knowing that they may have to sacrifice their home, their freedom, their job – even their life. Many, like Zabi, have to flee their homes – living either as refugees in another country, or displaced within their own country. Others cannot leave, or choose to remain, and faithfully follow Jesus in the face of extreme persecution and discrimination.

Thank you for being that ‘strand of hope’ that Zabi describes. Your prayers and giving help these brothers



and sisters know that they aren’t alone: Christians from Afghanistan, North Korea and all the countries in the World Watch List top 10 need your ongoing support. Please keep showing them that they are not on their own.

Source OpenDoors

For more information and donations click below

[OpenDoors](#)

#### Please Pray

- For Zabi to have a safe and fruitful future, for her mother to see the truth of the gospel, and for both women to heal from their trauma
- That all Afghan Christians – in or out of the country – would experience God’s unfailing love and mercy
- For Open Doors partners supporting Christians from the top 10 countries to be Jesus’s hands and feet, equipped to share practical support and spiritual encouragement.