

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 6th February 2022

Sunday's "Live" Service

Pat is leading and Ron is preaching from 2 Thessalonians 1:1F

"Jesus is Always the Same"



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

1 Thessalonians 5: 12-22 "Duties and Responsibilities of a Congregation Part 1"

Special Church Meeting 12 noon

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.



Jerry's Talk

1) Duties to the leaders v 12-13 2) Duties to one another v 14-15 3) Duties to God v 16-22.

Jerry's Extra Reads

Romans 12, 1 Cor 12,, Galatian 6:1-10 Eph 4, 1 Tim 5:17-19, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 4

For Your Prayers

Please pray for the family and friends of Norah Brindid who died on January 29th.

Pray for all those in our fellowship and community who are facing huge leaps in their heating costs and do not have the finances to cover them.

Pray that the Lord will bring wisdom to our government and that by their actions they will show they have listened and understood His words.

Isaiah 30: 1 "Woe to the obstinate children," declares the LORD, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin. Isaiah 30: 10 They say to the seers, "See no more visions!" and to the prophets, "Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions."

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Anne West.**

Virtual Prayer Room

On Thursday 27th Doreen posted "Prayer request from Steve. He cannot move now as he needs somewhere with nursing care and where he was going is only residential. They now have to look again. Please can you remember him in your prayers as he is feeling disappointed x"

On Friday Julia posted "Hi, Thomas is waiting to go down for his hernia operation. He is 2nd on the list so hopefully not too long to wait Jx"

Also on Friday Ruth posted "I'm now in hospital with possible hip fracture."

Later in the day Julia said "Hi, thanks for all your prayers. Thomas is now awake. About to tackle a cup of tea. All went well Jx" and Ruth posted "I have broken my pelvis. Not badly but enough to put on crutches for three weeks."

On Saturday Victoria posted "Please keep us in your prayers. Poppy, Autumn and I tested positive for covid yesterday. Currently we are all symptom free. Praying it continues especially as I'm almost 7 months pregnant and Poppy is vulnerable. Thank you everyone x" (A few days later Gracie tested positive)

On Monday Julia posted "Hi, please pray for David as he has been cancelled again! He is rather disappointed. Ps. Thomas is making steady progress. Thanks Julia x"

Tuesday Doreen posted "Please can you pray for Steve Slade as he has tested positive for Covid but is currently without symptoms - please pray for him - Doreen x"

On Wednesday Lorraine posted "Update. My friend Hilary saw her consultant today. The results were very positive which is very rare considering her condition. The consultant was amazed! Thank you so much for all your prayers."

Church Reading Matthew 6: 25-30 (ERV) Put God's Kingdom First

²⁵"So I tell you, don't worry about the things you need to live—what you will eat, drink, or wear. Life is more important than food, and the body is more important than what you put on it. ²⁶Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Don't you know you are worth much more than they are? ²⁷You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it. ²⁸"And why do you worry about clothes? Look at the wildflowers in the field. See how they grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. ²⁹But I tell you that even Solomon, the great and rich king, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers.³⁰If God makes what grows in the field so beautiful, what do you think he will do for you? It's just grass—one day it's alive, and the next day someone throws it into a fire. But God cares enough to make it beautiful. Surely he will do much more for you. Your faith is so small!

As Christians how easy is it when things are heading in the wrong direction to just leave the situation to God when anxiety and stress is filling your mind and body?

Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno
07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon
07951949128

Ministry Team:

The Whole Fellowship

For your Diary

Monday 7th February

9.00am Deacons Prayer Meeting

10.30am in the Church

Prayers for young people

Tuesday 8th February

9.30am -12 in the Stables

Coffee and Chat

Wednesday 9th February

9.30am -12 in the School Room

Table Tennis

7.00pm Zoom Bible Study

Contact Diana for link

Friday 10th February

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Sunday 13th February

10.45am Sunday Service

Flowers: Doreen Hollebon

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

Community Fridge in the Stables

Open Mondays 2.00 pm - 4.00pm

Tuesday to Friday 10.00am to 12 noon

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

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

Gunton Baptist Church Visit

On Saturday 2nd April friends from Gunton Baptist are going to join us for a time of worship and fellowship around a meal. We will begin gathering around 10.30 for an 11.00 start. Please pray for our time together as churches and let Ron know if you wish to come.

Tesco's Community Scheme

Big thank you to all those who placed the blue tokens into the Community Token Stand. The Community Fridge received the most tokens and was awarded £1222.

Also a big thank you to all the volunteers who staff the Community Fridge each week and Sara who does a brilliant job managing the project.

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.

BMS DAY OF PRAYER SUNDAY 6 FEBRUARY

Join us once again to spend a day praying for BMS World Mission work across the world and for God's name to be known by all.

We hold our Day of Prayer each year because we know that God can do amazing things through our faithful prayers — and because we need your prayerful support! Join us on Sunday 6 February to stand with us in prayer for our world. You can pray as a church, in a group, as a family or individually. Downloadable prayer points to guide you are available on the link below.

However you like to pray, whether using Bible reflections, in sung worship, using creative prayer spaces and more, we'd love you to join us. We're so grateful for everyone who prays for our work and we know God will do incredible things through you.

And if you have heard from God while praying for our work, we would love to hear about it! If you receive any words of encouragement or wisdom, please get in touch with Laura, Editor of the *BMS Prayer*

Guide via ldurrant@bmsworldmission.org, or leave us a message on our [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

We post daily prayer points on our Facebook page and Twitter feed too, so make sure you're following us there for more prayer inspiration. And don't forget the *BMS Prayer Guide*, packed full of prayer requests for each day of the year. You can receive a printed copy free of charge with *Engage*, the BMS World Mission magazine. [Sign up to get your copy right here](#) if you're not already subscribed.

Click [here](#) for more information and prayer points.

EBA Prayer Focus 29th January 2022 Stradbroke Baptist Church

Stradbroke is a large village in mid-Suffolk. The population is set to rise from its present 1,600 with the addition of about 150 new-builds scheduled within the next two years. Due to its rural location most folk tend to work in local industries that support or relate to agriculture. Many of the elderly folk have spent a near life-time in the village and have three generations of family folk nearby – the majority of the elderly folk recall Sunday School days at the Chapel.

The fellowship remain greatly encouraged through worship and outreach in the village. Although we have been unable to host our twice monthly lunches we spent many Wednesday mornings last summer hosting 'Meet Thy Neighbour'- Pop-Up Coffee Stops. These were held on front gardens around the village where folk could drop in for a chat and a cuppa. Most were

attended by well over 30 folk allowing us to make a number of new friends and folk to minister to and pray for. Some have since attended worship with us. We plan to continue this during the summer months.

The fellowship continues to be excited and thankful in what the Lord has been doing over the past few months and is expectant in what He will do among them, through them, and in them, in the days ahead as they commit their way to Him and His Word. Please pray with us in the following matters:

- Please rejoice with us in the Lord's goodness toward us
- That the Name of Jesus would be lifted up in Stradbroke and in all we do
- That He would guide us as we love and minister around the village
- That we may grow in holiness and devotion toward our Lord
- That the Lord would provide as we still seek £22,300 to pay for a new Chapel roof

Food Bank Donations

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 Citizens Advice Bureau can also give advice and possible assistance. Click [here](#) for a link.

Jerry's quotes of the Week

"You and I have it in our power to demotivate our pastors, so that they are gradually ground down into a slough of despond from which they will be utterly unable to do us any good at all. But we also have it in our power so to cheer them, so to put a spring in their step, that they will gladly do for us all that we hope and pray."—*Christopher Ash, The book Your Pastor Wishes you would read (But is too embarrassing to ask) pg 32-33.*

"The church is not a select circle of the immaculate, but a home where the outcast may come in. It is not a palace with gate attendants and challenging sentinels along the entrance-ways holding off at arm's-length the stranger, but rather a hospital where the broken-hearted may be healed, and where all the weary and troubled may find rest and take counsel together." —*James H. Aughey*

"The church is a hospital for sinners, and not a museum for saints."—*Vance Havner*

He placed us in churches to serve, to care for others, to pray for leaders, to learn, to teach, to give, and, in some cases, to die for the sake of the gospel. Many churches are weak because we have members who have turned the meaning of membership upside down. It's time to get it right. It's time to become a church member as God intended. It's time to give instead of being entitled." — *Thom S. Rainer, I Am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference*

"The most likely man to go to hell is the man who has nothing to do on earth. Idle people tempt the devil to tempt them. If I throw myself down in idleness, like an old piece of iron, I must not wonder that I grow rusty with sin."— *Charles Spurgeon*

The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members. - *William Temple*



Why Christians should be concerned about the growing influence of the tech giants

Will these brands continue to serve us, or is there a point at which they become “idols of our time”, with us serving them? Chris Goswami writes for Baptist Times.

The top five brands in the world are now all tech companies. [According to recent reports](#), the world’s most valuable brands are Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and Samsung measured by brand value and financial performance. In case you don’t think that’s surprising, just stop and think of ANY famous brand you can name ☐. Maybe it’s McDonalds or Coca Cola, Mercedes or BMW, Nike, Gucci, Chanel or Prada ☐ and then forget about them. They are all behind the tech giants in brand value – most of them way behind. Gucci’s brand value is only four per cent of Apple’s.

Brand value is concerned with ‘mind share’- the extent to which we desire, depend and aspire to own the products that these organisations produce. And there’s always something new and enticing. We recently heard about the “metaverse” (a 3D immersive internet), Artificial Intelligence (AI) robots that look after us, and 3D printers that print food now sold in restaurants in Europe. Facebook even rebranded itself (somewhat clumsily) as Meta. Meanwhile, Elon Musk, founder of PayPal and Tesla, announced Tesla’s household robot for 2022. Slightly tongue in cheek, he said, “it will be small enough to push over”, and “it probably won’t work”. OK good, so now we only have to worry about the big robots that do work!

Those things are all future, 2022 events. But the benefits that these brands bring to us are numerous and already here – from the way we breezily wave our phone to pay a bill, to smart home assistants like Alexa and Siri. And it’s been a Godsend these past two years as it enabled churches to continue and even grow. We no longer even view technology as anything

special. We grab our smartphone the same way we used to pick up a pen, and we Google our questions without a second thought. Technology is “disappearing”. It’s becoming a natural extension of our brain.

But what are the concerns for Christians with the rise of the internet behemoths?

Always on, everywhere

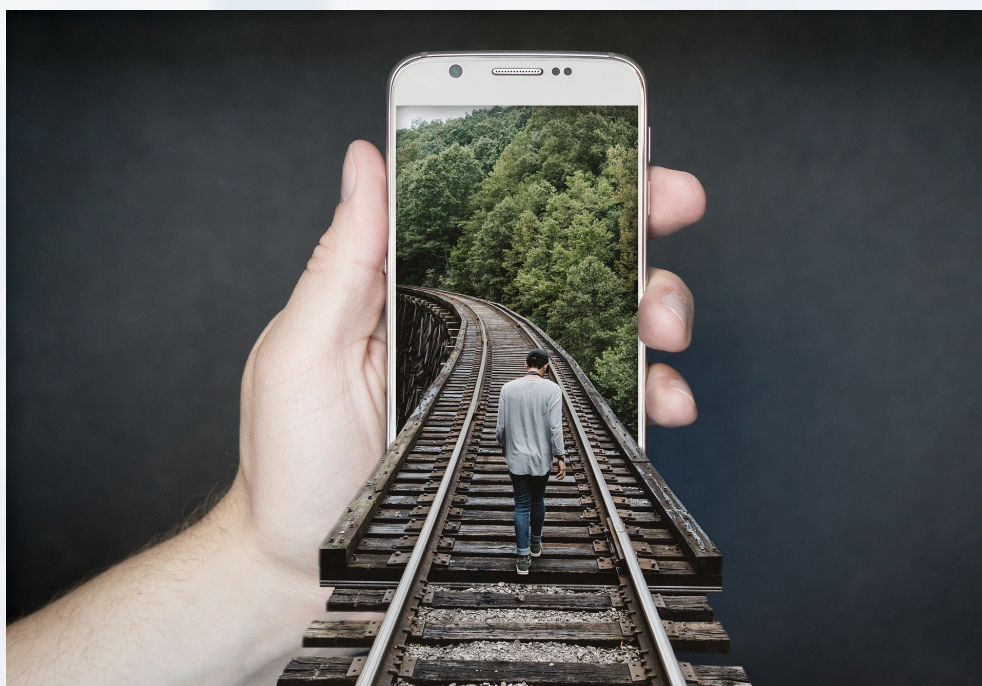
At the simplest level, there is the immersive and addictive nature of the always-on, everywhere you go, mobile internet, particularly for young people. This was highlighted in 2021 by Facebook employee -turned-whistle-blower Frances Haugen. Haugen leaked information exposing the fact that Facebook was aware of the harm its platform was enabling, especially among teenage girls, but deliberately chose to do nothing about it as that could risk its hundred-billion-dollar revenues.

Our addiction to technology of course is not just limited to teenagers, we are all vulnerable. Our smartphones are the technological equivalent of sugar – leaving us always wanting more. It’s not surprising then that some have described smartphones as “the cigarettes of our century”. Of course, Apple, Google, and co strongly assert they are giving users what they want. But in the long term, is it what we want?

Then, there is the mass gathering of personal data. The business models of tech companies rely on advertising. Their ads work so well because they know you so well. You have seen the powerful recommendation engines on the web: people who buy this also bought that. Well, now it’s more like: *people who typed that, or looked for that, or*

said something to Siri, or posted a photo from this place ☐ will definitely want THAT! Our phones and tablets have become sophisticated tracking devices.

There’s nothing wrong with the responsible gathering of personal data based on our permission or opt-in, and there are benefits for



us. The problem is that it's very difficult to *not* opt-in, ie to not ACCEPT the small-print, conditions, and cookies that pop up on the internet. Consequently, Facebook, Apple, and Google have built up detailed profiles of our preferences and habits WITH our permission but, often, WITHOUT our knowledge.

But why does this matter? It matters because we rely on those with intimate knowledge of us to direct and guide us. This includes parents, close friends, and of course, God. Think, for example, about the well-known Psalm 139. It beautifully describes God's deep knowledge of us and how He always knows what we are doing:

"You discover my thoughts. You notice everything I do and everywhere I go. Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say, where can I go to hide from you?" (v2-4 and 7).

This is a great comfort because we believe that God has our ultimate good at heart. However, if as someone has said, "Facebook knows more about you than you", there may be a point at which we unconsciously, begin to depend more on the profiled information stored by tech giants, than we do on God. Young and Kinaman in their book *The Hyperlinked Life* state: "The internet has become an idol of our time, commanding a central place in our lives as well as attention and huge respect, and with the final say in many of our dealings and desires".

Of course, that idea is very far-fetched right? Well if you think that, ask yourself: when it comes to making decisions, do I consult God as often as I consult Google?

Powers and authorities

The internet is slowly becoming "centralised". Its colossal influence and control is increasingly wielded by this tiny group of brands. None of them set out to do harm, quite the opposite in fact. But, at the end of the day, these organisations must deliver financial success to shareholders. Every quarter has to be better than the one before. That compels them to behave in certain ways. And it's these brands that we obsess over, it's these organisations that we hand over our personal data to, and it's their products we can become addicted to.

This growing centralisation of authority and control means there are changes afoot in our world, whether intended or not. In case you still need convincing, observe how Facebook, Twitter and Google have become the key battleground for modern warfare between nation-states, including direct attacks on industries, and the power to manipulate crowds and interfere with democratic

elections.

Paul, in more than one place, warns of the dangers of not recognising how much authority and influence alternative "powers and authorities" can command – that means any earthly power that offers an alternative authority to God's authority. And the addictive nature of technology, combined with the mass gathering of personal data, and their sheer reach into populations, gives the tech giants colossal authority.

As Christians, we are all prone to unhealthy addictions, but we should not be mastered by anything of this world. The Christian life requires us to have one ultimate authority, which is Jesus Christ. Anything that competes becomes one of Paul's powers and authorities. The Christian life also requires us to do more than scan and surf. Spiritual depth requires us to be able to pray for more than a couple of minutes, to memorise scripture, to love God with all our mind, and, occasionally, to be able to disconnect and to live at least our Sabbath in "airplane mode".

Will these brands continue to serve us, or is there a point at which they become "idols of our time", with us serving them? Watch this develop over the next 12 months.

Chris Goswami is Director of Communications at Openwave Mobility and Associate Minister at Lymm Baptist Church. He is the author of www.7minutes.net, where this reflection previously appeared. It is republished with permission.

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