

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 20th February 2022



Sunday's "Live" Service

Maggie is leading and Jerry is preaching from Psalm 46

"Be still and know I am God"

Sunday's online service: Barbara is leading and Ron is preaching from
2 Thessalonians 1: 3 -12 "You have been found worthy"

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

Mk 8:31f, Ro 4:13-5:1, Ps 73, Ex 13:21, Mt 3:11-12, Ps 139

For Your Prayers

Please continue to pray that the current situation on the border of Ukraine and Russia can be de-escalated and a war in Europe avoided.

Pray that all the households who have lost their electricity supplies during storm Eunice.

Also pray for those who have a hand to mouth existence and have no financial resources to cope with the cost-of-living crisis. Remember also the poorest pensioners whose pensions will increase by less than the current inflation figure.

Please pray that the generous donations to the Foodbank will continue as everybody's costs will grow and more people will be relying on the charity.

Pray that SBC can develop more ways of supporting those in the community in difficulties.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **John and Pauline White**.

Virtual Prayer Room

On Tuesday 15th Julia Maile posted "Hi,. Thank you for your prayers and support. As an update, David has a new date for his back - Friday 4th March. We are not sure what they are doing but at least it's a step in the right direction Jx"

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 Lamentations 3: 10-24 (MSG)

As Christians how close in our life have we been to this verse and clung desperately to

10-12 He's a prowling bear tracking me down,

a lion in hiding ready to pounce.

He knocked me from the path and ripped me to pieces.

When he finished, there was nothing left of me.

He took out his bow and arrows and used me for target practice.

13-15 He shot me in the stomach with arrows from his quiver.

Everyone took me for a joke, made me the butt of their mocking ballads.

He forced rotten, stinking food down my throat,

bloated me with vile drinks.

16-18 He ground my face into the gravel.

He pounded me into the mud.

I gave up on life altogether.

I've forgotten what the good life is like.

I said to myself, "This is it. I'm finished. GOD is a lost cause."

It's a Good Thing to Hope for Help from GOD

19-21 I'll never forget the trouble, the utter lostness,

the taste of ashes, the poison I've swallowed.

I remember it all—oh, how well I remember—

the feeling of hitting the bottom.

But there's one other thing I remember, and remembering, I keep a grip on hope:

22-24 GOD's loyal love couldn't have run out, his merciful love couldn't have dried up.

They're created new every morning.

How great your faithfulness!

I'm sticking with GOD (I say it over and over).

He's all I've got left.

Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno
07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon
07951949128

Ministry Team:

The Whole Fellowship

For your Diary

Monday 21st February

9.00 Deacons Prayer Meeting

10.30am in the Church

Prayers for young people

Tuesday 22nd February

9.30am -12 in the Stables

Coffee and Chat

Wednesday 23rd February

9.30am -12 in the School Room

Table Tennis

7.00pm Zoom Bible Study

Contact Diana for link

Friday 25th February

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Sunday 27th February

10.45am Sunday Service

Flowers: Cynthia Meale

Saturday 2nd April

11am Gunton BC Visit

Sunday 10th April

12 noon AGM

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

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.

our faith in God and survived, but look around us, at all those suffering in so many ways without knowing God, how can we bring them to faith so they can survive?

AGM

Our AGM will be held on Sunday 10th April this year at 12.00. As usual it will begin with the election of deacons. This year Josh Holleb, Stewart Marsh and Elaine Smith are the 3 deacons whose terms come to an end. Please be prayerful about who should be nominated to serve us as deacons as we continue to go through interesting times. All nominations writing and seconded should be given to Diana no later than Wednesday March 30th

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.

Church Open

We would like to maintain a covid secure environment in the church so although we no longer require people to book for services we still recommend masks be worn for the time being.

EBA Prayer Focus 20th February 2022 Kingswood Baptist Church

Based in Basildon in Essex, Kingswood is a diverse church family drawn from a number of nationalities, church backgrounds and ages. Its Minister is Rev Stuart Elmes.

The church desires to be a place to grow in loving Jesus, in following and living for him, and in leading people to him.

It seeks to be a church where lasting relationships can be made, a place of rest for those gathering to worship and be encouraged through Bible teaching and prayer. It desires to be a family that welcomes others.

The church's ministries include Raindrops, a parent and toddler session, Project 58 providing meals for the homeless and marginalised, Jubilees for over 50s, a CAP course, and a children's and youth ministry. The church runs two Sunday morning services and home groups.

Specific prayer points are:

- To give thanks for God's provision and guidance during the last two years.
- To pray for wisdom as the church seeks to call an additional minister to work alongside Stuart.
- To pray that the church may live out its vision and values that it may be a place to grow in worship, in discipleship and mission.
- To pray for the town of Basildon, that it may be transformed by the power of God's Spirit.

The church has produced a video for us and it can be found on the EBA YouTube site at <https://youtu.be/8cN5Xmj6tIU>

Food Bank

During January you contributed 449.55kg (991lbs) of food towards a total of 5153.35kgs. We totally rely on donations, both food and financial, to operate and we are extremely grateful when people choose to support us. Thank you for thinking of us and enabling us to serve the people in crisis across our district. Thank you for your support and generosity without which the foodbank work would not be possible.

During February, the following would be much appreciated:

Long Life Milk – full fat or semi-skimmed, Tinned Meat, Tinned Vegetables, Tinned Fruit, 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.

Details of accessing Foodbank on front page.

Leprosy Mission Easter Catalogues

The **Leprosy Mission Easter catalogues** are available at the back of the church. They include Easter cards and the Fairtrade chocolate Easter eggs.

Orders sent via Barbara Reynolds (Stalham Baptist's "trading partner") will save you postage, make a donation towards church funds (in many cases 20% of your order) and enable the leprosy mission to assist folk with this awful disease. You pay the same prices seen in the catalogue and can also order anything you see on their website www.tlmtrading.com Please either give your order to Barbara along with payment by cash or cheque to me [Leprosy Mission request this] or pop it in the box at the back of the church. Happy Shopping!

Gracie's fundraiser

To raise money for the building fund Gracie will be selling hama bead crosses that she has made, for £1 each, after this Sunday's service. This was completely her own idea!

Quotes of the Week

By Richard Wurmbrand, Tortured for Christ

"In the ensuing years, in several different prisons, they broke four vertebrae in my back, and many other bones. They carved me in a dozen places. They burned and cut eighteen holes in my body."

"Matchevici answered, "I don't wish to remain alive and be ashamed to look in a mirror, because I will see the face of a traitor. I cannot accept such a condition. I prefer to die." The officer of the secret police shook Matchevici's hand and said, "I congratulate you. I didn't expect any other answer from you. But I would like to make another proposal. Some of the prisoners have become our informers. They claim to be Communist and they are denouncing you. They play a double role. We have no confidence in them. We would like to know in what measure they are sincere. Toward you they are traitors who are doing you much harm, informing us about your words and deeds. I understand that you don't want to betray your comrades. But give us information about those who oppose you so you will save your life!" Matchevici answered, as promptly as the first time, "I am a disciple of Christ and He has taught us to love even our enemies. The men who betray us do us much harm but I cannot reward evil with evil. I cannot give information even against them. I pity them. I pray for them. I don't wish to have any connection with the Communists." Matchevici came back from the discussion with the political officer and died in the same cell I was in. I saw him die—he was praising God. Love conquered even the natural thirst for life."

"Often, after a secret service, Christians were caught and sent to prison. There, Christians wear chains with the gladness with which a bride wears a precious jewel received from her beloved."

"Persecution has always produced a better Christian—a witnessing Christian, a soul-winning Christian. Communist persecution has backfired and produced serious, dedicated Christians such as are rarely seen in free lands. These people cannot understand how anyone can be a Christian and not want to win every soul they meet."

"I tremble because of the sufferings of those persecuted in different lands. I tremble thinking about the eternal destiny of their torturers. I tremble for Western Christians who don't help their persecuted brethren. In the depth of my heart, I would like to keep the beauty of my own vineyard and not be involved in such a huge fight. I would like so much to be somewhere in quietness and rest. But it is not possible... The quietness and rest for which I long would be an escape from reality and dangerous for my soul... The West sleeps and must be awakened to see the plight of the captive nations."



Release International warns 'world must wake up to rise in violence against Christians'. One-in-seven now persecuted for their faith.



The Church of England has condemned the growing persecution of Christians around the world and called on its churches to pray and offer practical support. Release International, which supports persecuted Christians worldwide, has backed the call, warning 'the world must wake up to the rise in violence against Christians.'

On February 11, the Church of England General Synod gave its unanimous backing to a call for prayer and action. It went on to urge the UK government to implement in full all 22 recommendations made by the Bishop of Truro report on persecuted Christians in 2019, to which Release International was a contributor.

'One in seven'

Synod: 'Shocked by scale, scope and severity of persecution'

The Synod debate heard that 360 million Christians – roughly one in seven around the world – now face persecution. And members were given powerful accounts of how Christians maintain their faith amid threats, violence, imprisonment and murder. Bishop of Truro Philip Mounstephen, who in 2019 carried out a review of Christian persecution for the Foreign Office, warned the situation has deteriorated even over the past year.

He highlighted the 'disastrous fall' of Afghanistan to the Taliban, 'now making it the most dangerous country on earth to be a Christian'. And turning his attention to India, another country of concern to Release International, recalled the 'outrageous murder' of Pastor William Siraj, as he was returning home after Sunday service in Peshawar on January 30.

Persecution Trends

Afghanistan and India are

highlighted as countries of concern in the recent *Persecution Trends* report by UK-based Release International, which supports persecuted Christians around the world. The *Persecution Trends* report identifies the Sahel and Nigeria as emerging troublespots for Christian persecution.

'The wholesale denial of freedom of religion or belief in today's world is a great evil,' Bishop Philip told the Synod. He said he had been shocked by the 'scale, scope and severity' of the persecution his Report had found.

'That people should be targeted simply because they believe different things and organise their lives accordingly is a monstrous evil,' he said.

'Wake up call'

Release International CEO Paul Robinson (pictured) welcomed the unanimous call to prayer and action: 'The world must wake up to the scale and scope of the persecution of Christians, who are targeted for violence and discrimination in growing numbers. 'And the Church in the free world must waken from its slumber to make the very best of the precious freedom we still have. We owe that to our persecuted brothers and sisters.'

Father Damian Feeney, from the Diocese of Lichfield, who co-presented the debate, said: 'We pray that

today a spark which ignited an individual conscience can blaze into a fire of prayer, advocacy and practical concern for our sisters and brothers for whom danger and vulnerability are the daily reality carried for allegiance to Jesus Christ.'



RELEASE RAYMOND KOH' – 5YRS SINCE PASTOR ABDUCTED IN MALAYSIA

It's five years since Malaysian pastor Raymond Koh was abducted in broad daylight on the streets of Malaysia. The pastor was kidnapped in a military-style operation in February 2017 and hasn't been seen since.

Responsibility for his kidnapping, which was captured on CCTV, has been laid at the door of the Malaysian Special Branch. Release International is calling for a secret official report into the abduction to finally be released.

Susanna Liew, Pastor Koh's wife, holds on to hope that her husband is still alive. She has called for international efforts to be stepped up to set him free. Malaysian Christians held a candlelit vigil on the anniversary of his abduction on February 13 to pray for his release.

In 2017 Pastor Raymond Koh was abducted in broad daylight by a disciplined snatch squad. CCTV cameras captured the moment when black SUVs surrounded and boxed in Pastor Koh's car, forcing it to a halt. Several other vehicles were involved in the kidnapping. Hooded men ran towards the pastor's car and shattered his windscreen, before the entire convoy was driven away. Up to 15 men were filmed taking part in the abduction, which was completed in just 40 seconds. In 2019 Malaysia's Human Rights Commission accused the police of carrying out the kidnapping. They said Pastor Koh and others had been 'abducted by State agents, namely the Special Branch [of the Royal Malaysia Police].'

'Five years have passed, yet there has been no word whether Pastor Koh is dead or alive,' says Paul Robinson, CEO of UK-based Release International which supports persecuted Christians around the world. 'Malaysia must secure his release and account for his disappearance, which by any standards is a crime. After all these years still no-one has been held accountable.'

More than 80,000 people from 190 countries have signed a petition calling for Pastor Koh to be set free and for the government to release a report on the abduction, which has been kept under wraps. According to the rights group Civicus, the report 'is classified as "secret" under the Official Secrets Act 1972 and [the Malaysian government claims] its public release would be against "national interest".'

Death threats

Raymond Koh, an Evangelical Free Church pastor, set up Hope Community to help the poor in the capital Kuala Lumpur. He helped people with HIV/AIDS, recovering addicts, single mothers and children. The authorities suspected him of attempting to convert ethnic Malays to Christianity and raided a fundraiser in 2011. Death threats were made against Pastor Koh and his wife Susanna. The pastor was sent two bullets, while his wife, Susanna, received white powder, which she was later told was anthrax. Susanna Liew has vowed to take 'relentless action' to

press for his release. Paul Robinson, CEO Release International Christians make up about nine per cent of the population of Malaysia, where proselytising Muslims – attempting to convert them – is forbidden by law. Christians from a Muslim background can face severe persecution. The state bars its Muslim citizens from converting to another faith. And those who change their religion could be charged with apostasy.

In October 2021, Malaysia was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council. 'What could be more fundamental than the freedoms of faith and to live in peace?' asks Paul Robinson of Release International. 'For Malaysia to put itself forward as an arbiter of human rights,' he adds, 'it must show the world it can truly live up to those standards.'

Petition

Release International is pressing the Malaysian government to investigate the disappearance of Pastor Koh and bring about his release. The petition to the Prime Minister and the Inspector General of Police states:

'One of your country's loyal citizens... Pastor Raymond Koh was kidnapped off the streets on February 13, 2017, and has not been seen since. His wife and children have been left to wonder what happened to him and whether he is still alive.'

'We, Pastor Raymond's fellow Christians from around the world, call on your government to release any and all information related to the forced disappearance... including any involvement of Special Branch.'

You can sign the online petition [here](#)

Articles from Release International

Release International is active in around 30 countries. It works through partners to prayerfully, pastorally, and practically support the families of Christian martyrs, prisoners of faith and their families, as well as Christians suffering oppression and violence, and Christians forced to flee.

Release International is a Christian ministry working through local church partners in around 30 countries, helping persecuted Christians prayerfully, pastorally and practically.

We were founded in 1968, inspired by the testimony and ministry of **Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand**. Following the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe and the increase in the persecution of Christians elsewhere in the world, the Ministry broadened its activities and changed its name to Release International. Our ministry is based on Hebrews 13 v 3: 'Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.'

