

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 20th March 2022



Sunday's "Live" Service

Pat is leading and Jerry is preaching from Hebrews 12: 1-3

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus"

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

2 Thessalonians 3: 6-15 "Listen up you idlers"

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

Mt 18:15, 1 Cor 5, 2 Cor 2:6

For Your Prayers

Please pray that the current peace talks between Russia and Ukraine will be successful and a cease fire will be agreed.

Pray for those in the community and the fellowship who are understandingly anxious about the impact of the invasion of Ukraine that is adding to the cost of living crises and also that the invasion may escalate leading to a third world war. Pray also that refugees will be able to settle in the UK and find peace and security.

Also pray for the children in Afghanistan who are dying of malnutrition and pneumonia as doctors do not have the resources to save them.

Pray for the fellowship joining us on Saturday April 2nd from Gunton Baptist church that they will feel welcomed and that we may enjoy fellowship together.

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **John Applegate**.

Virtual Prayer Room

On Friday 11th Maggie posted "Please would you pray for me. I am on the way to the hospital to have tests before my appointment with the new Cardiologist next Friday."

On Saturday Diana posted "Last minute request from the Church in Ukraine:

Dear friends, brothers and sisters from all parts of our world. We turn to you at this dark moment for all of us, when dark clouds of explosions obscure the sun over our capital.

Tonight, the elite special forces of the Russian Federation, together with Chechen troops, will attack one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in the world, the spiritual capital of Eastern Europe - the city of Kiev. Street brigades are already underway in Kiev, and the capital is defended by everyone who can wield a gun, even pensioners, students and schoolchildren.

The next night and tomorrow are critical, all that is at stake is everything the entire civilised world has believed in and built so far. With tears in our eyes, we ask you, no matter what time zone you are in, to spend all this time fasting and praying to God. Pray to the Lord to protect us from the hordes of madmen who want to mock God's faith and truth. Please send this message to all your friends, family and friends in Europe, Asia, America and all over the world! Prayer is stronger than the strongest enemy!

With love and hope in the Lord. Your brothers and sisters from Ukraine."

On Tuesday David posted "Please pray for Joyce Bowler who with her husband Elwyn the Organist at Happisburgh St Mary's Church did the Carol Service at Coffee and Chat just before Christmas. At the moment Joyce is suffering from a rare condition and would really appreciate our prayers that the current therapies will be successful."

On Wednesday David posted "Please pray for Fran's sister Angie whose husband Peter passed away on Tuesday after a fall and waiting 4 hours for an ambulance. Please pray for Angie's family and friends."

On Thursday DJ Steve asked "When you do the next Newsletter could you kindly put a little bit about me? Just to update people, I am having trouble with my right eye and my right ear. Love you all."

Matthew 5: 43-48 (ERV) Love Your Enemies

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour^(a) and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who treat you badly. ⁴⁵ If you do this, you will be children who are truly like your Father in heaven. He lets the sun rise for all people, whether they are good or bad. He sends rain to those who do right and to those who do wrong. ⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, why should you get a reward for that? Even the tax collectors do that. ⁴⁷ And if you are nice only to your friends, you are no better than anyone else. Even the people who don't know God are nice to their friends. ⁴⁸ What I am saying is that you must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

As Christians faced with the current invasion of Ukraine watching daily the death and destruction of a nation and the impact it is having on the ordinary people of Russia, how easy is it to love, pray and forgive those who instigated this disaster?

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.

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 March

9.00am Deacons Prayer Meeting

10.30am in the Church

Prayers for young people

Tuesday 22nd March

9.30am -12 in the Stables

Coffee and Chat

Wednesday 23rd March

9.30am -12 in the School Room

Table Tennis

7.00pm Zoom Bible Study

Contact Diana for link

Friday 25th March

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Saturday 26th March

Coffee Morning to raise

Money for Ukraine

Sunday 27th March

10.45am Sunday Service

Flowers: Mothering Sunday

Saturday 2nd April

10.30 am Visit from Gunton BC

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

Ukraine Donations

In light of the crisis that is developing in the Ukraine due to the invasion, people have asked how they can give to the Baptist Missionary Society appeal. If you would like to make a donation, please put it in an envelope marked Ukraine and either put it in the offering bag or hand to Stewart or Henry. We will also make a donation from church funds.

Ukraine Coffee Morning

Jane Skivington is organising a Coffee morning in the Stables on Saturday 26th from 10.00am to 12 noon. All the money raised will be used to support the Ukrainian refugees.

Selling like even hotter hot cakes

This time last week (Thursday) £395.50 of daffodils had been sold. On Thursday this week an amazing £573 had been sold Henry expects to have over £600 by the end of the day - the money is going to the Building Fund. You can pick up bunches at 50p each at Edna's or the Community Fridge. A big thank you to Barbara & Ben Mixer and Henry who have been picking the daffs and Edna and Eileen who have been bunching them up.

Gunton joint service and Meal

It would be good if SBC can have a good turn out to welcome the fellowship of Gunton Baptist Church. Ron has organised a joint service and light meal at SBC on Saturday 2nd April starting meeting at 10.30 - 11.00am for coffee.

Please book with Elaine on 07796 875785 so the catering can be planned.

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 Hollebon, 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, in writing and seconded, should be given to Diana no later than Wednesday March 30th.

Quotes from the latest BMS update

From Geoff Reynolds.

The response among Baptist churches in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries has been beyond inspiring to see. We've heard reports from our partners on the ground of volunteers helping to build temporary hospitals in the Ukrainian city of Lviv. And in the face of the largest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, Baptist churches in Poland, Moldova and Hungary have been crucial in providing safe beds and warm food for hundreds of refugees every night. At a recent prayer meeting for the Ukraine crisis, Pastor Igor, Vice-President of the Baptist Union of Evangelical Ukrainian Churches, reflected on 2 Corinthians 1: 8-10, sharing how through the uncertainty of war, Ukrainian Christians have made a daily decision to trust in God and his provision. "We continue to work. Why? Because God continues to work in us through his strength," Pastor Igor shares. When Pastor Igor shared a laugh during the meeting, he said that it was a sign that God was breaking through in Ukraine.

EBA Prayer Focus 20th February 2022 Vine Church Eye

Located four miles south of Diss in North Suffolk lies the small town of Eye with its population of just over 2,000 people. The fellowship at The Vine Church have the vision to reach their community for Christ.

Currently the Church does not have a Minister and so it is run by its very active leadership team.

During lockdown the fellowship moved onto Zoom and they continue to use the platform for prayer meetings. However, as soon as they were allowed, they moved straight back into the building, meeting as family! Well, a socially distanced family! Although small in number, the fellowship at The Vine Church

meet the community through a weekly toddler group called Little Doves, a social club, Friday night Art Group (on Zoom) and monthly Messy Church. In addition to the Sunday Morning services the Church hosts an evening worship encounter once a month.

The Vine Church are preparing for an upcoming event. The Restore festival will consist of three separate events. A breakfast with speaker (Adam Gompertz, a professional car and yacht designer turned Church of England minister and artist). An afternoon of Restoration showcase (repair demonstrations, stalls, up-cycling and stories of healing). Finally, Refresh (pamper and restoration stalls, testimonies and having a go at Kintsugi craft).

For Prayer

Please pray for wisdom as The Vine Church looks to future-proof its building and bring it up to 21st century standard.

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.

Quotes of the Week

"Let the first act of every morning be to make the following resolve for the day:

- I shall not fear anyone on Earth.
- I shall fear only God.
- I shall not bear ill will toward anyone.
- I shall not submit to injustice from anyone.
- I shall conquer untruth by truth. And in resisting untruth, I shall put up with all suffering."

— Mahatma Gandhi

"They want us to be afraid.

They want us to be afraid of leaving our homes.

They want us to barricade our doors
and hide our children.

Their aim is to make us fear life itself!

They want us to hate.

They want us to hate 'the other'.

They want us to practice aggression
and perfect antagonism.

Their aim is to divide us all!

They want us to be inhuman.

They want us to throw out our kindness.

They want us to bury our love
and burn our hope.

Their aim is to take all our light!

They think their bricked walls
will separate us.

They think their damned bombs
will defeat us.

They are so ignorant they don't understand
that my soul and your soul are old friends.

They are so ignorant they don't understand
that when they cut you I bleed.

They are so ignorant they don't understand
that we will never be afraid,
we will never hate
and we will never be silent
for life is ours!"

— Kamand Kojouri

Show me the country where bombs had to fall,

Show me the ruins of buildings once so tall,

And I'll show you a young land with so many reasons why

There but for fortune, go you or I you and I. You and I,

There but for fortune, go you or I you and I.

Song by Joan Baez and Phil Ochs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4BYOJ1tc-k>



An open letter to His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill, Moscow

From Baptist minister the Revd Dr Keith Clements, former General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches

March 2022

Your Holiness,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



During these recent days I have been recalling very clearly the visit which in May 1999 Your Holiness and I together with other church and ecumenical figures made to Belgrade. We met with President Milosevic to present and discuss with him a proposal, drawn up by the Vienna Group of which both of us were members, for ending the conflict over Kosovo. Belgrade at that time was under aerial bombardment by NATO forces. In Belgrade and elsewhere we saw at first hand the effects of such attacks and our visit involved not a little danger to ourselves. But we went willingly, with the aim of contributing towards a cessation of hostilities and the creation of an opportunity for peace. This remains with me as a very positive memory of ecumenical fellowship in pursuit of peace, for which I am deeply grateful.

Today, in Ukraine, we are witnessing attacks on a country and its people, on a far greater scale than anything seen in Europe since 1945. This time, it has to be said in plain truth and in sorrow, the military operations are being carried out not by NATO but by Russian forces under the orders of President Putin. The devastation being wreaked upon Ukraine, its people and its infrastructure, the displacement and flight of civilians now being numbered by the million, are being witnessed by the whole world. It is a situation which cannot be justified by any Christian spirit or conscience, and for the sake of the people of Ukraine and of Russia must be ended without delay.

In the same spirit which led us to visit Belgrade in 1999, I appeal to you for a word which acknowledges and addresses this situation in terms befitting a great Church of Jesus Christ. Thus far, we in the world outside have heard words about the desire for peace, but not about the things that make for peace: first of all an acknowledgment of the wrong that is being committed against the people of Ukraine, without which no genuine movement towards peace can begin. It is known that there are voices in your Church and in other Christian communities in Russia, which are already expressing these aspirations towards repentance and the hope which repentance brings. I and others hope and pray that you will hear, defend and uphold them.

Many of us are well aware of the real historical factors which are involved in the relationship of Russia and Ukraine. We also realise that all countries, including those in the West, will need to reflect on their policies in Europe over recent decades, and be ready to learn from past mistakes. Moreover we are aware of the constraints which Your Holiness experiences, as leader of a Church with such close ties to the Russian state. But "the word of God is not chained" (2 Timothy 2:9) and history shows us that there are moments when the Church is challenged to confess, perhaps at great cost but greatly strengthening its witness to the love of God for all people, where its truest and highest allegiance lies. Christians are called to place above all claims of earthly powers their loyalty to Jesus Christ to whom alone "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given" (Matthew 28:18).

With all those who eagerly await such a word from you, and with continuing prayers for the guidance and inspiration of God's Holy Spirit upon Your Holiness, I remain,

In Christ,

Keith Clements

Former General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches 1997-2005

Pictures Patriarch Kirill image | Kremlin.ru, CC BY 4.0

| [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Keith Clements being interviewed by Serbian media outside the Belgrade patriarchate about the NATO bombing in 1999



Source Baptist Times click [here](#) for more information



Open Doors

Since 2016, following the introduction of the Yaravoya law (also



Five ways to pray for Ukraine and Russia

As Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine, Open Doors joins with others across the world in being shocked and saddened by the news, images and videos emerging from the country highlighting the awful suffering facing millions of innocent people. It can sometimes be difficult to know how to pray, so we have put together five prayer points that you may find helpful...

1. Peace

Please pray for an end to the violence and tension, and that leaders on all sides will pursue diplomacy and peace in a way that allows people of all faiths to live in freedom and peace.

2. Protection and provision

Ask the Lord to guard people from harm – both those in Ukraine and those travelling to places of refuge – and provide for all their needs. Pray for a greater respect of human rights.

3. Politicians

Ask that God would open the hearts of leaders in Russia and in areas of Ukraine under Russian control, that they would not restrict the ability of believers to worship God freely.

4. Persecuted believers

Pray that believers facing pressure for their faith in Russia and Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine will be encouraged and strengthened in their faith and guarded from harm (see below for more information).

5. Powerful witness

Ask the Lord to use His church in Ukraine and Russia in powerful ways during this crisis. Pray that Christians in both countries will be bold, united and strengthened in their witness.

Are Christians persecuted in Ukraine and Russia?

Ukraine achieved independence from the USSR in 1991 and there is religious freedom in most of the country. However, in Russia and Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine, religious freedom is increasingly in decline.

Russia has appeared in the top 50 of Open Doors' World Watch List in the past, as recently as 2020. In the current list, the country lies just outside the top 50. The persecution largely stems from localised pressure and violence against believers in Muslim-majority regions, such as Dagestan and Chechnya.

known as the 'anti-missionary law'), opposition against Christians actively sharing their faith has intensified. This applies not only to Russia but to regions in Ukraine under Russian influence and control, such as Crimea.

The U.S. Committee on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) found that, 'in Russian-occupied Crimea, the occupation authorities continued to enforce Russia's repressive laws and policies on religion, which has resulted in the prosecution of peaceful religious activity and bans on groups that were legal in Crimea under Ukrainian law'. In fact, USCIRF even recommended that Russia be placed on the State Department's list of "Countries of Particular Concern".

Russia's support of breakaway regions is also troubling for Christians in Ukraine. Luhansk and Donetsk – two regions that have declared independence – have imposed rules requiring religious organisations to register. Complying with the rule has been difficult for many Protestant churches – for example, a December 2019 list of 195 registered religious organisations by the Luhansk authorities showed that no permission had been granted to any Protestant community.

In June last year, three Protestant churches were banned by authorities in Donetsk and others had their buildings confiscated. In August, books by Charles Spurgeon and Billy Graham were placed on a list of banned 'extremist' literature by a court in Luhansk.

Consequently, as far as Ukraine is concerned, while most believers can freely express and share their faith, there are some areas where Christians are feeling the pinch of persecution.

How is the church responding to the crisis? Despite pressure and persecution, and the wider crisis facing Ukraine, believers are united and determined. "Those [churches] that are in the western part of Ukraine... told our brothers and sisters in other parts of Ukraine that if something happens, we will open our homes and our churches to you," explains Yarsolav 'Slavik' Pyzh, president of the Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary.

Looking ahead, Yarsolav adds, "I think that we will rearrange, reorganise, and still do what we always do: still preach the gospel."

For more information about Opendoor click [here](#).

