

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 27th March 2022

Mothers' Sunday

Sunday's "Live" Service:

Ron is leading and is preaching from Romans 15:13 "Bless you-again"

Today we will celebrate the Lord's Supper

Sunday's online service: Diana is leading and Jerry is preaching from Isaiah 49: 13-16 "We are not forgotten, God has a tattoo on us"



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 Reads

Hosea 11:3-4; Deut 32:18; Isaiah 42:14; 66:13, Psalm 27:10, Jer 31:20, John 10:28-29.

For Your Prayers

Please pray for Steve Smith who had a five hour operation on Saturday and was in ICU. Also pray for Dan and Sue StJohn, Dan's mum's funeral was held yesterday 26th. Please pray for the families of Janice Cray and Steve Harris who recently died. During April please pray for the residents of York Road and York lane. Lord we are now facing a cost of living crisis. The Resolution Foundation predicts 1.3 million people will not be able to afford basic necessities from April. Please Lord, reach out to our government, give them the wisdom to reassess the situation and protect those across the age ranges from absolute poverty and fulfil what should be their first priority. As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **David Ash**.

Virtual Prayer Room

On Saturday 19th Maggie posted "Hello and thank you for your prayers for my echocardiogram on the 11th March. I cannot let you know the outcome as my appointment was cancelled due to Covid staff absences. I will be getting another appointment in due course. Love Maggie."
On Sunday Jerry posted on behalf of Sandra Feek "Please pray for my cousin Jean who is 90 and fell backwards down her stairs 3 weeks ago. Her pain is no better. Jean is the main carer for her son Andrew who has severe learning difficulties. He is 60 and now has covid. It's so hard for Jean. Thank you."
Elaine posted on Sunday "Thank you for your thoughts and prayers Steve came out of ICU this evening and is now on a ward, hopefully good news tomorrow xx"
On Monday Jerry posted for Maureen K "Please could I ask for prayer? I came into James Paget lunchtime with chest pains and have tests etc. Now waiting for CT scan as something was picked up in the blood test, love Maureen." On Tuesday Jerry again posted for Maureen K "Thank you so much for your prayers. I'm now home. Nothing found on the scan they were concerned I had a blood clot, but praise God, none found, Maureen."

1 Corinthians 13 (ERV) Let Love Be Your Guide

I may speak in different languages, whether human or even of angels. But if I don't have love, I am only a noisy bell or a ringing cymbal. ²I may have the gift of prophecy, I may understand all secrets and know everything there is to know, and I may have faith so great that I can move mountains. But even with all this, if I don't have love, I am nothing. ³I may give away everything I have to help others, and I may even give my body as an offering to be burned. But I gain nothing by doing all this if I don't have love. ⁴Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. ⁵Love is not rude, it is not selfish, and it cannot be made angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it. ⁶Love is never happy when others do wrong, but it is always happy with the truth. ⁷Love never gives up on people. It never stops trusting, never loses hope, and never quits. ⁸Love will never end. But all those gifts will come to an end—even the gift of prophecy, the gift of speaking in different kinds of languages, and the gift of knowledge. ⁹These will all end because this knowledge and these prophecies we have are not complete. ¹⁰But when perfection comes, the things that are not complete will end. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, and I made plans like a child. When I became a man, I stopped those childish ways. ¹²It is the same with us. Now we see God as if we are looking at a reflection in a mirror. But then, in the future, we will see him right before our eyes. Now I know only a part, but at that time I will know fully, as God has known me. ¹³So these three things continue: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

As Christians living in a world of self-destruction created by human greed for obscene power and wealth at others expense, do we settle to sound like a clanging bell ringing out so much, but the truth is "when all's said and done theirs more said than done," do we puff our chests out and let everyone know how much we are doing but secretly we have lost hope and trust in God's power. How easy is it in these days to hang on to faith and hope and continue to thrive in the love of God and believe that Jesus loves you and that love never gives up?

Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno
07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon
07951949128

Ministry Team:

The Whole Fellowship

For your Diary

Monday 28th March

7.00pm Deacons Meeting

10.30am in the Church

Prayers for young people

Tuesday 29th March

9.30am -12 in the Stables

Coffee and Chat

Wednesday 30th March

9.30am -12 in the School Room

Table Tennis

1.00pm in the Stables

Ministers' Lunch

Thursday 31st March

7.00pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

Details in online Diary

Friday 1st April

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Saturday 2nd April

10.30 am Visit from Gunton BC

Sunday 3rd April

10.45am Sunday Service

Flowers: Magda

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. There will be daffs on sale to go to the Ukraine collection.

New Daff Record

This time last week (Thursday) £573 of daffodils had been sold. On Thursday this week an amazing £810 had been sold. Henry expects to be able to keep selling daffs through next week - 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.

Prayer Cards

The delivery of prayer cards has restarted. Anyone able to help with outreach work please speak to Monica (01692 580947) for further details.

Gunton joint service and Meal

Ron asks "re the visit from Gunton Baptist please consider whether you may be able to share a short testimony or prayer to encourage us all." 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.

EBA Prayer Focus 27th March 2022 Laindon Baptist Church

Laindon Baptist Church is a small church on the outskirts of Basildon, Essex. The congregation of 25 members are largely elderly, but have embraced technology during the pandemic; proving you can teach old dogs new tricks!

The church is led by Minister-in-Training Helen Harrigan, who was previously a member for several years. With her help the church switched to Zoom during the height of the pandemic, and continue to utilise it to enable some who cannot attend the services in person to meet on Sunday mornings and still feel a part of the church family.

Since reopening the doors to in-person meetings, a handful of individuals have not returned, but encouragingly a number of newcomers have started attending, including children and families. The monthly youth group has restarted, as has the Girls' Brigade and the popular Tuesday morning Tea and Chat group, which attracts both church members and others from the wider

community. Despite limited personnel, the church is now looking to see how it can better serve its community, and would value prayer from the EBA for wisdom in how to do this effectively.

Prayer Points

- That we will be able to discern the Lord's leading in what we should undertake as far as the church's outreach is concerned, bearing in mind our limited resources.
- We would also ask for prayer for new people to come and join with us – both those who need the welcome and support of a church community and those who are willing and able to play a full part in the life and work of the church.

Energy Needs

If you are, or know someone who is, struggling with their energy bills Cromer 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.

Quotes of the Week

"There is a mystical love between a mother and child. The child came from the seed of the father. But the child was a part of the mother. They were one as the baby formed in her womb. Everything a pregnant mother does affects two people. When the child is born, it comes back to the mother to feed on her breasts. A child's bloodline goes through the father, but a child's lifeline goes through the mother."—**H.B. Charles Jr.**

"God is for you. Had he a calendar, your birthday would be circled. If he drove a car, your name would be on his bumper. If there's a tree in heaven, he's carved your name in the bark. We know he has a tattoo, and we know what it says. "I have written your name on my hand," he declares (Isa. 49:16)."—**Max Lucado.**

"If you will think of those hands of which the Lord says, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," you may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands, but what infinite Wisdom directs, and infinite Love has ordained. Rejoice then, O Christian that God's love does not fail in the furnace, but is as hot as the furnace, and hotter still."— **Charles H Spurgeon.**

"If you are God's child by covenant, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the truth you must cling to when you feel abandoned: You are inscribed on the palms of His hands! For the feelings are just that feelings. Feelings that are very real, feelings that you must deal with. But remember reality. The reality is that a covenant has been cut on your behalf. Your feelings will betray you—overwhelm you cripple you if you do not decide, by the gut-level determination of faith, that "feel it or not" you will trust your Covenant God."— **Kay Arthur.**

"I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him because He first knew me and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, One Who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters (cf Mt 10:30-31)." — **J I Packer.**

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.



MUM'S BED & BREAKFAST

open 24 hours – all year round

ADDITIONAL SERVICES:

- caterer
- chauffer
- laundress
- moneylender
- seamstress
- psychologist
- tutor
- nurse
- etc., etc.

Gifts and other recognition greatly appreciated

Ukraine Baptists: responding to the war 'with compassion and open hearts'

Baptists in Ukraine continue to respond to the war in their country 'with compassion and open hearts', according to the European Baptist Federation (EBF)

The EBF is in close contact with the ALL-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (UCECB), and is sending [weekly bulletins](#) to update members around the region.

The UCECB numbers more than 2000 congregations, making it among the largest Unions in the EBF region. With fighting having spanned eight years in the contested Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Ukrainian Baptists have long been living with the reality of war - and have prepared for the possibility for it to worsen. Following the invasion on 24 February, many of its churches became refuge centres, and the Union is working to co-ordinate the distribution of aid.

The latest EBF update was sent on 11 March:

'Our brothers and sisters in Ukraine continue to respond to the war in their country with compassion and open hearts. 600 churches are actively responding to the needs inside of those fleeing, acting as beacons of refuge across the country, including one small church in Yaltushkiv that feeds nearly 800 people every day.

'As local food supplies start to diminish, Ukrainian Baptists have organised logistics centres ready to receive and distribute aid.

'In response to the increasingly dire supply situation, the Coordination Centre of the Ukrainian Baptists is working from Lviv to establish aid distribution warehouses in Eastern and Central Ukraine.'

Also in Lviv, Baptist volunteers have been helping to erect two mobile hospitals, the report continued, where local Baptist pastors will be providing 'spiritual and psychological support to patients and staff, as well as offering training to others to provide such support.'

The [report](#) highlighted that 300 people are taking shelter in the basement of Mariupol central church, with another 300 people in another city centre church - and included the following eye witness testimony:

From Mariupol, one Baptist writes, "There are terrible ruins in our city, factories are on fire, stores are closed. Russian forces are destroying houses, apartment buildings and complexes, there are lots of tanks, they are ruining everything. You can't get out of the city, they surrounded it with tanks. Many people lost their loved ones and relatives. There is no connection, no roads, the disaster is everywhere..."

Nevertheless, amid war, 'life continues to find a way', the update continued.

'A church in Odessa performed six baptisms this week by the hands of Pastor Igor Kucher, church services and prayer groups continue to meet and we received news of three people accepting Christ into their hearts while hiding in the basement of a church in Kiev.

'In Zaporizhzhia, church youth groups attempted to spread joy among the streets as they went from place to place handing out flowers and using the opportunity to share the gospel at the same time. While we also ask for your prayers for a church in Chernigiv, which was struck by a Russian shell earlier this week.'

A previous update mentioned baptisms, weddings, and even one report of a woman giving birth in the basement of a Baptist church Sunday services are held wherever

they can (some underground) with churches gathering to worship, pray, and serve communion.

Pastor Igor Bandura, the Vice President of the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, joined the most recent gathering, and shared the following prayer requests:

Pray for those trapped in churches in occupied cities, that even while surrounded by enemies, God would surround them with Christian love and care

Pray that Churches will be able to minister to all and that leaders will know the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit

Pray that peace will reign in Ukraine. Pray for those those fleeing - for safe passage, welcoming arms and hot food.

Register for the weekly EBF prayer gathering [here](#).

Subscribe to the email update [here](#).

'We ask you to continue to stand with and for us'

The All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists has been sharing its own updates, through its [website](#), [Youtube](#) and [Facebook page](#).

March to the international Christian community, giving thanks for the kindness and support already received, and asking for it to continue.

'From the very bottom of my heart I want to express my gratitude that through these extremely difficult days, and weeks, you have been showing the greatest kindness, openness and sacrifice in your willingness to support the Church of Jesus Christ in Ukraine, and all our people right now,' he said.

'Blood is still being shed in besieged Mariupol, in shattered Kharkiv, in the Sumy region, in ruined Chernihiv, in the surrounding towns of Kyiv.

'And now, I appeal to you from the very heart of our capital, and I ask you to continue to help us to keep our hands up in these difficult, uneasy times.

'We ask you to continue to stand with and for us in this spiritual breach and hold this shield of prayer over Ukraine.'

Access Valery's message [here](#):

Its Facebook page has many updates of church activities across the country, from those in occupied areas such as Kherson to updates from the humanitarian hub in Lviv in the west of the country. It included this moving post from Pastor Alexander Vyalov about why he stayed in Kharkiv:

I stayed in Kharkiv

There were several reasons. The most important thing is a strong inner feeling that I need here. To those who also stayed.

I have no vehicles to transport people/grocery/medicine. I am not seeking/ distributing humanitarian aid. I am not a firefighter/ electrician/doctor/ military who are currently on the frontline and carrying the biggest burden.

I am only a teacher and a priest. My mission is to encourage, play with children, write poems, comfort, pray and just be around the people who are here.

I don't consider myself strong and courageous. Struggling with fears, sadness, doubt. But at the same time, I feel some inner strength that comes from God these days.

To be safe is to be where He intended you to be.

And I still have a jacket. On it I saw a label that said in English: "Remain. Ultimate protection."

Ukraine: reflecting on the contrasts

Chaplain Adrian Prior-Sankey offered these thoughts, at the request of the Council Chair, with members of Somerset West and Taunton District Council at the start of their meeting on Thursday 3 March 2022

Mindful of the human suffering in Ukraine I invite you to reflect on the contrasts we have witnessed in recent days: We are horrified to learn of the disregard of international protocols by President Putin which has resulted in death, fear, suffering and instability in Ukraine and the potential for a wider impact on the lives of people across Europe and beyond.

In contrast we have seen the courage and determination of ordinary people to resist the military aggressors. We are deeply disturbed at the sight of a growing number of refugees seeking safety for the very young, the frail and vulnerable. People plucked from their homes and routine lifestyle are having to undertake perilous journeys to places where they have little or no shelter, aid or resources beyond that provided by their hosts at short notice.

In contrast we see a groundswell of human compassion including collecting points in our own communities and partnerships between governmental and voluntary bodies to transport aid to the refugee centres.

We witness the punishment of people within Russia who protest at the injustice and aggression and we see bans and restrictions placed on journalists of integrity and the distortion of truth and claims of fake news to suit the perverse purposes of Putin and his supporters.

In contrast we applaud the bravery of those who risk serious consequences because of their stand for truth and their commitment to shine light on dark practices. We admire those who sacrifice material benefit for the sake of integrity and a clear conscience.

We are sickened by the mealy-mouthed words of those who want to cow tow to the Putin regime for fear of personal loss and we are saddened by the reluctance to act by those who have the ability to take tough decisions to bring economic and other sanctions to bear.

In contrast we rejoice at the spectrum of support for efforts to bring the protagonists to the peace table. We are heartened by the coming together of politicians from across the party divide to confront the wickedness that has undermined democracy and respect for liberty and freedom of speech and expression.

We are fearful of pronouncements that threaten an escalation of the warfare and the consequent killing of thousands and perhaps millions of civilians. The impact on the mental health of many cannot be underestimated, all the more in the wake of the global pandemic of the past two years.

In contrast we are hopeful that the uniting of the hearts and voices of people of all faiths and none is providing an antidote to despair and seeing success for the efforts of a small but determined nation's people resisting overwhelming numbers akin to stories that are recorded in many sacred texts.

Standing in the line of those who united across ethnic, faith and cultural divides to defeat tyrants of the past, we determine to identify with all who choose justice, compassion and truth.

And we make our commitment in the name of Peace. Adrian Prior-Sankey MBE is Lead Chaplain, Taunton Team Chaplaincy, and a member of Halcon Baptist Church, Taunton

Ukraine: where is God?

I've written a short reflection on the atrocity of the invasion of Ukraine. It's not intended as an all-embracing answer, just some thoughts about where God is in all of this... By Nick Lear

Like so many people I have been looking with a breaking heart at the images of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. I

don't understand why it is happening. I can't begin to understand how it feels to be in a country as the leader of another country uses force to fulfil his ambitions and impose his will.

I am conscious that what I am about to write may seem trite or even patronising in the context of the suffering, death and destruction that is being inflicted on the Ukrainian people and land, but I have found it helpful and share it here in case you do. As I have seen images tanks crushing cars and shelling residential apartment blocks; footage of millions of displaced people fleeing for their lives and hear of people struggling to survive without food, water or power in cities that are under siege I have asked myself, "Where's God?" What I think I am asking is "Why isn't he stopping this?" And I don't have a fully formed answer to that, so I go back to the first question: "Where's God?" And this is a partial answer:

He's in the underground bunkers with those sheltering from shelling and air attacks, experiencing the fear and anxiety.

He's in the defensive lines of frightened Ukrainians – soldiers and conscripted men – knowing how indignant they are at the invasion and how public statements of bravery may mask dread of injury or death.

He's on the trains and in the queues of the millions of displaced people fleeing for their lives, sharing their terror and the pain of separation from loved ones.

He's in the refugee centres and temporary shelters being set up across the neighbouring countries – seen in the acts of sacrificial love and unconditional welcome for those who have nothing but the clothes they stand in.

He's in the Russian tanks with soldiers who are following orders they may not understand or agree with – feeling their conflicted nature. He is also with those who believe they are doing their patriotic duty and not expressing any doubts.

He's with the Russian people who are being fed disinformation and propaganda and not being allowed to see or hear the truth – refusing to blame them for believing the lies they have been told by their leaders. And he's even in the Kremlin – whispering words of peace in the ears of those who have ordered war.

He's everywhere. The difference may be whether or not individuals are open to experiencing his presence, listening to his voice and responding to his prompting, receiving the comfort of his Spirit. Because he has given us freedom to choose whether or not to be open to him he won't force anyone, but he won't stop whispering, being present by his Spirit, and loving. And that may be part of the answer to the second question – do we listen and respond to God's prompting or have we closed ourselves to him?

Nick Lear is the minister of Mutley Baptist Church, Plymouth. This reflection originally appeared on [his blog](#), and is republished with permission

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