

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 18th December 2022 Service

This Sunday Barbara is leading and Jerry is preaching from 2 Samuel 7: 12-17

“God’s promise to David” Part two

The online service will also be available from Sunday. Go to

www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/

Then click on “Join Our Online Service”

Structure of Jerry’s talk:

God’s Promises to David were unstoppable; they could not be stopped by

(1) Death v 12-13. (2) Sin v 14-15 (3) Time v16-17

Jerry’s Reads

Psalms 89, Isaiah 9:6-7, Jeremiah 33:14-22, Daniel 7:13-14, Luke 1:30-35,

John 2:18-22 & Hebrews 12:5-6.

Message from Ron

Thank you to the whole fellowship for another year of commitment and hard work helping make SBC a place where Jesus is increasingly “at the centre” of who we are and what we do in His name and we especially thank Him for the many blessings He has given us.

For Your Prayers

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember Eileen Neill.

During January please pray for the residents of Weavers Close and Spinners Court.

Please pray for our community especially those who have been struggling with the cost of living crisis who will find having a Merry Christmas very difficult.

“God, our Creator, we offer this humble prayer on Christmas Day. We come to worship with a song of thanks in our hearts—a song of redemption, a song of hope and renewal. We pray for joy in our hearts, hope in our God, love to forgive, and peace upon the earth. We ask for the salvation of all our family members and friends, and we pray your blessings on all people. May there be bread for the hungry, love for the unlovable, healing for the sick, protection for our children, and wisdom for our youth. We pray for the forgiveness of sinners and abundant life in Christ. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love and power. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.” – Rev. Lia Icaza Willetts

Virtual Prayer Room

On Saturday 10th December Jerry posted for Sandy & Mike “Prayers for our friend Brian who has lung cancer. Thank you.”

On Monday 12th Jerry posted “Thank you all for praying for my visa application. I’ve just received an email telling me that my visa application has been processed and my passport has been sent to me by courier. WE are so happy. Many thanks.”

On Tuesday 13th Jenny posted “please could you pray for my sister-in-law, Gill, who is now very unwell, being cared for in a hospice, she is confused and unaware of those around her. Also for my brother Paul and their children Steven and Louise. Thank you.”

On Wednesday 14th David posted “Please pray for Michele, Dave and family, our missionaries in Peru, that they will be safe as protests and violence have broken out in Lima.” The same day Jerry posted “Thank you all for your prayers I’ve just received my passport and it’s got my visa on it. WE are so grateful to God for answering my prayers.”

Also on Wednesday Jenny posted “PRAISE THE LORD. More good news - we’re just leaving the hospital after a review with the surgeon. I’ve been discharged and only have to have an annual mammogram for 5 years. Praise the Lord.”

Warm Space

The Warm Space will be open on Wednesday 27th Dec 10am -12pm, Thursday 28th Dec 10am -2pm, then Wednesday 4th Jan. 10am -12pm and Thursday 5th Jan 10am -2pm, in the Stables.

Food Bank & Personal Prayer

SBC is normally open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive donations for the food bank and for personal prayer. However, the church will be closed on December 26/27th and January 2/3rd. The **Food Bank** is open on Friday in the Stables, 1.15 to 3.00pm as normal on 23rd December, 30th December and 6th January. If you need help, or know someone in difficulty, either contact the Citizens Advice Service 0344 411 1444, the Food Bank on 07826 376343, or contact Ron Skivington at minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk



Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno
07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon
07951949128

Ministry Team: The Whole Fellowship

For your Diary

Monday 19th December

2 to 4pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

7.00pm Carols in the Swan Inn

Tuesday 20th December

Coffee and Chat

9.30am -12 in the Stables

2.30 pm Funeral Betty Roskilly

Wednesday 21st December

Table Tennis

9.30am -12 in the School Room

10-12pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

Carols at Sydney House 2.30pm

Thursday 22nd December

10.00am Funeral of Mike Hurren

10 to 2pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

Friday 23rd December

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Sunday 25th December

10.00am Christmas morning service

Welcome: Eileen & Magda

Friday 30th December

10 .15 Prayer for Revival

Three Windows, Brumstead Road

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Sunday 1st January

10.45am New Year’s Day

All Age Service

Welcome: Jill & Elinor

Thursday 5th January

7.00pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

Details in online Diary

Friday 6th January

10 .15 Prayer for Revival

Three Windows, Brumstead Road

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Saturday 7th January

8.30a.m.Men’s Breakfast

Dan St. John will be speaking

Any profit will go to our BMS partners in

Thailand, the Browns

Sunday 8th January

10.45 Sunday Service

Welcome: Maggie & Henry

12.00noon Church Meeting

Wednesday 11th January

7.00pm Zoom Bible Meeting

Details in online Diary

Candlelight Carol Service

This Sunday's Candlelight Service offering will be split between North Norfolk Aid for Ukraine and our Missionaries in Peru, Michele and Dave Mahon. The money will be used to buy toys for the work they do with the local children. Teas and Coffee will be available after the service in the Stables.

A Big "Wow" Thank You

A big thank you to Edna, Barbara M and Henry who raised an amazing £952 for the building fund selling craft items on Sunday 4th Yuletide Fayre then Thursday and Friday last week. Edna is expecting some further articles to be sold.

Another Big Thank You

Another big thank you to Elaine, Maggie and Fran who raised £100 at Wednesday Afternoon Tea and Beetle Drive.

Newsletter on Holiday

This week's newsletter will be the last for 2022. A big thank you to all those who have contributed. On average around 97 people read the newsletter online or as a printed copy and 91 people receive it as an email. This includes people in South Africa and Boa in Vietnam. The next newsletter will be on the 8th January.

EBA Prayer Focus 18th December 2022

Renew Church

Renew is a pioneering church who meet in Lode Chapel, a historic building in the affluent village of Lode just a few miles north east of Cambridge. The pastor is Rev Alan Brand who has led this church for the past seven years.

On Sundays the members currently meet in an informal way sharing breakfast, fellowship and discussion, and on Thursdays each week they meet to share a meal together.

During covid the church stayed connected via zoom and since returning has seen a lot of changes with many people departing and the leadership team leaving. The church had been meeting in a school in Bottisham on Sundays but have now returned to the chapel and relaunched itself with a new vision which is about following Jesus together as a community of believers with four key values: hospitality, honesty, diversity and being community.

Those attending Renew come from the villages around Cambridge. The church is connecting with the local community and the coffee morning every Wednesday is a great opportunity to reach out to people in the local community, especially those who are lonely. Renew is considering adding lunch to the coffee morning to reach others who are by themselves.

The church is currently supported by a Home Mission grant and there are some concerns about the long-term financial sustainability of funding this pioneer ministry.

Please pray:

- That the depth of fellowship and unity will grow ever closer amongst those who are part of the church.
- For more opportunities for connections, contacts and impact with the local community.
- For wisdom and strength for Pastor Alan as he leads the church through challenging times.
- For clarity over finances and guidance from the Holy Spirit in leading the church forward.



Foodbank

Receipt and Thank You to Stalham Baptist Church

Dear Foodbank Supporters,

During November SBC contributed 246.9kg of food which helped towards a monthly total of 6216.35kg. We totally rely on donations, both food and financial, to operate and we are extremely grateful when people choose to support us. So, thank you for thinking of us and enabling us to serve people in crisis across North Norfolk.

This year demand is up by approximately 40% on the previous year, but thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are able to provide them with everything they need. During December, any of the following would be much appreciated:

Tinned Tomatoes, Long Life Milk – full fat or semi-skimmed, Tinned Vegetables, Pasta Sauce, Rice Pudding, Pot Noodles/ Mugshots, Squash/Fruit Juice, Laundry Detergent, Deodorant, Toilet Rolls, Cleaning Sprays.

Please note that we cannot accept any fresh food or items that contain alcohol.

Financial donations are always welcome. Please see our website for details.

Kind regards,

Tim

Project Manager

Carols at Sydney House

SBC will be holding a Carol service for the residents at Sydney House on Wednesday 21st December at 2.30pm.

Everyone is welcome. If you would like to take part have a chat with Diana or Ron.

Jerry's Quotes of the Week

"There are more than 14,000 promises in the Bible – God has not broken one of them." -- Anon.

"Yahweh's promise to David is [unalterable] because, death does not annul it (vs. 12, 13), sin cannot destroy it (vs. 14, 15), and time will not exhaust it (v. 16)."

-- Dale Ralph Davis

"David was the recipient of God's unmerited favour. That is, David did absolutely nothing to earn or merit the favour of God. God's grace is unconditional...The notion of God's grace coming to us free of charge, no strings attached, seems to go against every instinct of humanity. The Buddhist eight-fold path, the Hindu doctrine of Karma, the Jewish covenant, and Muslim code of law – each of these offers a way to earn approval. Only Christianity dares to make God's grace unconditional."

by Freddy Fritz

"Those who believe in God can never in a way be sure of him again. Once they have seen him in a stable, they can never be sure where he will appear or to what lengths he will go or to what ludicrous depths of self-humiliation he will descend in his wild pursuit of man. If holiness and the awful power and majesty of God were present in this least auspicious of all events, this birth of a peasant's child, then there is no place or time so lowly and earthbound but that holiness can be present there too. And this means that we are never safe, that there is no place where we are safe from his power to break in two and recreate the human heart because it is just where he seems most helpless that he is most strong, and just where we least expect him that he comes most fully."

-- Frederick Buechner

Bible Reading Matthew 2: 13-23 (MSG)

Escape

¹³ After the scholars were gone, God's angel showed up again in Joseph's dream and commanded, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him."

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness. They were out of town and well on their way by daylight. They lived in Egypt until Herod's death. This Egyptian exile fulfilled what Hosea had preached: "I called my son out of Egypt."

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills. (He determined that age from information he'd gotten from the scholars.) That's when Jeremiah's revelation was fulfilled:

A sound was heard in Ramah, weeping and much lament.
Rachel weeping for her children, Rachel refusing all solace,
Her children gone,
dead and buried.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Later, when Herod died, God's angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt: "Up, take the child and his mother and return to Israel. All those out to murder the child are dead."

²¹⁻²³ Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother, and re-entered Israel. When he heard, though, that Archelaus had succeeded his father, Herod, as king in Judea, he was afraid to go there. But then Joseph was directed in a dream to go to the hills of Galilee. On arrival, he settled in the village of Nazareth. This move was a fulfilment of the prophetic words, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

As Christians we celebrate the birth of Jesus, but do we remember He had to escape death by fleeing to Egypt and wait for a change in the leadership

to return to His homeland. As Christians how do we feel about migrants at times?

Listen to Jerry's talk on the passage with a short blog (less than 5 minutes) by visiting our [Scripture Reading Plan](#) Then click on [Public Area](#) then [Scripture Reading Plan](#)

A Pope's Prayer for Immigrants

Merciful God, we pray to you for all the men, women and children who have died after leaving their homelands in search of a better life.

Though many of their graves bear no name, to you each one is known, loved and cherished.

May we never forget them, but honour their sacrifice with deeds more than words. We entrust to you all those who have made this journey, enduring fear, uncertainty and humiliation, in order to reach a place of safety and hope.

Just as you never abandoned Your Son as he was brought to a safe place by Mary and Joseph, so now be close to these, Your sons and daughters, through our tenderness and protection.

In caring for them may we seek a world where none are forced to leave their home and where all can live in freedom, dignity and peace.

Merciful God and Father of all, wake us from the slumber of indifference, open our eyes to their suffering, and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centredness.

Inspire us, as nations, communities and individuals, to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters.

May we share with them the blessings we have received from Your hand, and recognize that together, as one human family, we are all migrants, journeying in hope to You, our true home, where every tear will be wiped away, where we will be at peace and safe in Your embrace.

- by Pope Francis



HOLY NIGHT



Joy to the World.

Eh? You kidding?

If we're honest, joy doesn't seem to be a dominant note across the world these days. But Christian joy is not a denial of darkness; it is an affirmation of the light of God in Christ. By Jim Gordon

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.*

I know. Once you read it the tune becomes an earworm. But that first word, sung with such faith and hope and, yes, joy! The idea that heaven and nature sing, that the Creation is an orchestra with choir, and that God reigns – that is pure Advent. But if we're honest, joy doesn't seem to be a dominant note across the world these days. In fact, the world is so lacking in joy that the Tesco Christmas advert is based around a joy shortage. The reassuring voice tells us they can sort it by offering affordable goodies.

I don't think so. Joy isn't created by buying more stuff. Joy comes from the deep places of love and being loved; joy needs charged batteries of hope; human joy is the response of the heart to good things happening. Which brings us back to Advent.

Advent is when we celebrate the best thing that has ever happened in the history of the world. Every year, an annual reminder. "Joy to the world! The Lord is come!" The birth of Jesus is the hinge point in history, "The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us."

This Advent, our world which is in the midst of a joy recession, hears again the words of the angels, "Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people...for to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour..."

Earth's deepest joy is that once in human history, on this green planet, on the ground we stand on, God came to us in the fragility of human birth,

"Emmanuel, God with us". Of course Christmas is about celebration, and singing, and parties, and food, and friends and family. And we'll do our best to share in that and be part of the joy-making. The birth of Jesus is a global event after all.

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come!" But what about the realities of our world, though? We don't need to be told there is a joy shortage, a joy deficit, even a joy recession. You can hear it relentlessly in the tone of voice of news readers, the angry arguments of politicians, the calls for strikes and the denials there's any money, and behind all this a cultural anxiety that something has changed for the worse. When you put it like that, Christians going on about joy seems a bit tone deaf to people who are struggling with the cost of eating and heating. Not to mention that world out there, where there is so much suffering, loss, anxiety about the future. And the fear that maybe the big problems are running beyond our human capacity to control.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Isaiah understood that joy is rooted in hope, and grows out of faith in God the Creator and Redeemer. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his name shall be called wonderful Counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father, prince of Peace."

Christian joy is not a denial of darkness; it is an affirmation of the light of God in Christ.

Advent joy celebrates the always truth that God is in control, that "the government is upon his shoulders."



*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.
So. "Let every heart prepare him room,"
Grace, peace... and joy,*

Jim Gordon is a former principal of the Scottish Baptist College. This article first appeared on [his blog Living Wittily](#) and is used with permission

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