

Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 8th January 2023 Service

This Sunday Diana is leading and Ron is preaching from

Numbers 13: 1-3, 17-33 "Great Expectations"

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

www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/

Then click on "Join Our Online Service"

12 noon Church Meeting

there is no tea and coffee this Sunday in the stables

Ron's Reads

Genesis 12:7, Genesis 15:5, Exodus 3:8

For Your Prayers

As we pray through the Church Directory, please remember **Magda Nicholls**. During January please pray for the residents of Weavers Close and Spinners Court.

A PRAYER FOR LETTING GO OF THE PAST AT NEW YEAR

Dear God, On this day I ask You to grant this request?

May I know who I am and what I am, every moment of every day.

May I be a catalyst for light and love, and bring inspiration to those whose eyes I meet.

May I have the strength to stand tall in the face of conflict, and the courage to speak my voice, even when I'm scared.

May I have the humility to follow my heart, and the passion to live my soul's desires.

May I seek to know the highest truth, and dismiss the gravitational pull of my lower self.

May I embrace and love the totality of myself. My darkness as well as my light.

May I be brave enough to hear my heart? To let it soften so that I may

gracefully choose faith over fear.

Today is my day to surrender anything that stands between the sacredness of my humanity and my divinity.

May I be drenched in my Holiness and engulfed by Your love.

May all else melt away.

And so it is. – Debbie Ford **Woman's Day**

Virtual Prayer Room

Monday 1st January DJ Steve sent an audible message saying "I would like to thank everybody for their get well wishes its not nice when you have covid, lots of love DJ."

Bible Reading Philippians 4: 4-9 (MSG) Final Exhortations

Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, *revel* in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life.

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

As Christians we have celebrated Jesus's birth. With the uplifting services, and Candlelight Carols and Carols in the Swan there was so much joy to fill us but how easy is it to maintain that joy when things rapidly deteriorate, and you're faced with the darkness of a New Year?

Listen to Ron'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.



Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington

01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno

07733837687

Secretary: Diana Gordon

07951949128

Ministry Team: The Whole Fellowship

For your Diary

Monday 9th January

9.00am Deacons Prayer Meeting

10.30 to 11.30am in the Church

Prayers for SBC and young people

2 to 4pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

Tuesday 10th January

Coffee and Chat

9.30am - 12 in the Stables

Wednesday 11th January

Table Tennis

9.30am - 12 in the School Room

10-12pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

7.00pm Zoom Bible Meeting

Details in online Diary

Thursday 12th January

10 to 2pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

3.15pm Messy Church

Friday 13th January

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

Sunday 15th January

10.45 Sunday Service

Welcome: Julia and Fran

Flowers: Monica

Thursday 19th January

10 to 2pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

3.15pm Messy Church

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.

The **Food Bank** is open on Friday 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 07826 376343, or contact Ron Skivington at minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk

Community Fridge Open

Mondays 2.00 pm - 4.00pm Tuesday to

Friday 10.00am to 12 noon

If you are reading this newsletter as a PDF or online you can click on the red highlighted links and you will be taken to the relevant websites.

Thank You From Edna

The final total from the Craft Fayre is £1,030. A big thank you to all the helpers and customers who made this possible.

Editor's comment: What an amazing effort by Edna and also Barbara M and Henry. As a church we are blessed by so many people who work to raise money for the refurbishment of the schoolroom, help reach out to the community showing "Christianity in Action" and look after the fellowship at services. Not to forget all those who lead, sing and perform on Sundays we are blessed indeed.

Has baptism been on your mind?

Believer's baptism is a very special moment on the journey of faith. It is a moment when God's presence and blessing meets us, and when we make our personal commitment of faith in Jesus as Lord.

It signifies the end of our old life and of being born again to new life in Christ. It speaks of repentance and cleansing, of being united with Christ in his death and resurrection, and of witnessing to the call of God upon our lives. Baptism is also about receiving God's Spirit for service in the church and in the world. Please speak to Ron if baptism is on your mind.

EBA Prayer Focus 8th January 2023

Rushmere Baptist Church

Rushmere St Andrew is a village on the eastern edge of Ipswich and Rushmere Baptist Church is a community-minded church at the heart of the village. The church recently ordained and inducted as Minister the Rev'd Hazel Hunting, who was Minister in Training under the previous ministry.

There is a video which accompanies this at <https://youtu.be/K6rj-ljtLQw>

Since the pandemic, the church has resumed its community-based activities and continues its vision to be a hub for the village, working with the other local churches, local organisations and the Parish Council to serve the needs of the community. It has a range of activities, reflecting the age range of the church, from a baby and toddler group (Ducklings), through children and young people's activities, to a friendship club and a lunch club for older people.

The church has grown significantly in recent years and the buildings are heavily used, so there is pressure on space even though the premises were reconfigured a few years ago.

Rushmere is a rural area and the church has been conscious of the local environment and has started to explore ways in which the church has a minimal impact upon the environment and a significant impact on mission.

This has included a regular litter-pick around the village and the development of Wild Worship, their expression of Forest Church, around the village pond which is close to the church.



Prayer Points

- That they may get to know the new people they are meeting more and introduce them to faith.
- That more children and young people will come, particularly on Sundays, and that there may be a deepening of their relationship with our heavenly Father.
- For a positive collaboration with the local Parish Council and other organisations in relation to young people's and children's work.
- In these difficult economic times, that the church will have strength, boldness and unity in the community as the church cares for those who are struggling.
- That the church will continue to grow together, building their own discipleship and getting to know Jesus more.

Foodbank

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.

Quotes for the New Year

Consult not your fears, but your hopes and your dreams.

Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential.

Concern not yourself with what you tried and failed in, but what it is still possible to do.

Now is the time to put aside past and present setbacks and failures and look with confidence to the new day called tomorrow.

– Pope John XXIII

As the dawn breaks on a new year, let us give thanks for all we hold dear: our health, our family and our friends.

Let us release our grudges, our anger and our pains, for these are nothing but binding chains. Let us live each day in the most loving ways, the God-conscious way. Let us serve all who are in need, regardless of race, colour or creed.

Let us keep God of our own understanding in our hearts and to chant God's name each day. Let us lead the world from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth and from wrong to right.

Let us remember that we are all one, embracing all, discriminating against none.

May your year be filled with peace, prosperity and love. May God's blessings shower upon you and bestow upon each of you a bright, healthy and peaceful new year.

– Rev. Marcy Sheremetta - a prayer for gratitude

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life.

- Philippians 4:6-7 (MSG)



Responding to a 'permacrisis'

What word would you use to sum up 2022? And how does it relate to the Christmas story? By Nick Megoran

Each year Collins dictionary publishes a list of its top ten 'Words of the year,' that tell us something about the past 12 months.

The entry at number ten on Collins list for 2022 is 'vibe shift', a change in how we think. One vibe shift is that due to the Covid-19 pandemic people are less work-obsessed, leading to 'quiet quitting' – not actually leaving a job or refusing to do something, but just doing the bare minimum.

Maybe we 'quiet quit' to watch football – I'm sure many readers enjoyed Newcastle United's success this year, or went through the usual ecstasies and agonies of following England at a football tournament. Was this spoiled by the knowledge that it was all part of another word on the list – 'sportswashing' – spending loads of money buying a football team or staging a world cup to cover up human right abuses?

The oddest word for me was 'splooting' – according to Collins, this is 'lying flat on the stomach with your legs stretched out' and apparently it's become a thing this year. My black Labrador Molly does that but I don't know why people would.

Half the words on Collins' list are about how bad 2022 has been. 'Partygate' was a scandal over government ministers telling us all to stay indoors while they were having a whale of a time with wine and cheese parties, suitcases full of booze, and Christmas quizzes. Because of both the awful war in Ukraine and poor government policies at home, we've got a cost-of-living crisis, so the term 'warm bank' entered the dictionary. It's a heated building where people can go if they can't afford to heat their own homes. [Like many churches](#), we at Wallsend Baptist Church have started opening our doors once a week to welcome people into our warm building for a cuppa and chat.

All these crises – war, politics, poverty, pandemic – led to the number one word of the year, 'permacrisis,' meaning lots of crises going on together that never seem to end. It's an apt word for how life feels at the moment. Maybe splooting does make sense after all.

Permacrisis is also a very good word to help us understand the Christmas story. The gospel writer Luke opens his account of the first Christmas with the words '*At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria*' (Luke 2: 1-2). These Roman names are meant to sound jarring after we have just read, in chapter 1, a vignette about Jewish worship in the temple of Israel's holy God. It is under enemy rule. The Romans had invaded and occupied Jesus' homeland. They were making people desperately poor by stealing their money in taxes. Their oppressive policies led to numerous uprisings, which were put down by Rome's ruthless legions

leading to further resentment, and more uprisings. New Testament scholar Richard Horsley describes this as a vicious 'cycle of violence.'

The Romans, like all occupiers, rewarded collaborators. Their local henchman, King Herod, was a particularly nasty piece of work. Because he saw the baby king Jesus as a threat to his rule, he ordered all baby boys in Bethlehem to be killed – adding genocide to war, poverty and oppression. This was a permacrisis.

What, according to the Bible, did God do about that? Did he send a new prime minister (or three), an Elon Musk-type techie-businessman-saviour, or shipments of high-tech weaponry to arm the brave resistance? Those are the sort of solutions we turn to, as 2022 has shown. But they don't solve the permacrisis – so often they even exacerbate or prolong it.

No, that first Christmas, God himself stepped into our world as the baby Jesus. He didn't leave us alone to suffer. Instead, because of his great love for each and every one of us, he came into our world, lived amongst us, taught us how to live, and that first easter died on the cross and rose again to forgive all the bad things we've done, wipe the slate clean, and reunite us to God. All who receive him now can live a new life, knowing his life and love in our hearts every day and living under his counter-cultural rule of peace, forgiveness and love. At the end of time he will come back and will remake the universe, ending the permacrisis: there will be no more coldness, fear, exam-stress, poverty, bullying, disease, oppression, war, tears, loss, or death. And that's why Christmas is such good news. It shows us that there is hope, that life is rich with meaning and is worth celebrating, and that everyone is loved by God. It tells us that life can be lived differently, that we can cast off the dreary logics of calculation, achievement and retaliation and embrace instead the reckless abandon of gracious generosity. So Christmas parties, jumpers, movies, dinners, gifts and carol services are good and hopeful things to do. They remind us of Jesus' first coming, and also point forwards to his return. Celebrating Christmas is just so much better than 'splooting.'

Therefore, even in 2022, even in a permacrisis – especially in a permacrisis – we can join with the angels, and Mary, and the Shepherds, and the wise men, and with all the saints of every nation who have gone on before us and all who will come afterwards, and say, happy Christmas, peace on earth, goodwill to all.

Image | Freely

Nick Megoran is minister of Wallsend Baptist Church and Professor of Political Geography at Newcastle University

His latest book *Big Questions in an Age of Global Crises - Thinking about Meaning, Purpose, God, Suffering, Death, and Living Well during Pandemics, Wars, Economic Collapse, and Other Disasters* is published by Wipf and Stock

Last Sunday Songs of Phrase with a Welsh Male Choir sang World in Union



There's a dream, I feel
So rare, so real
All the world in union
The world as one

Gathering together
One mind, one heart
Every creed, every colour
Once joined, never apart

Searching for the best in me
I will fight what I can be
If I win, lose or draw
There's a winner in us all

It's the world in union
The world as one
As we climb to reach our destiny
A new age has begun

We face high mountains
Must cross rough seas
We must take our place in history
And live with dignity

Just to be the best I can
Sets the goal for every man
If I win, lose or draw
It's a victory for all

It's the world in union
The world as one
As we climb to reach our destiny
A new age has begun



To watch six of the top school choirs of 2008 sing on Songs of Phrase click on below red.

[World In Union Songs of Praise 2008](#)

All those young people singing for hope then, are now adults, 15 years on can they and us sing it as a prayer for the world in 2023. Can we pray that those lyrics impact on a world much of which is in meltdown as full democracies are only found in 6.4% of the planets population, 39.3% have flawed democracy, 17.2% a hybrid regime and 37.1% live under authoritarian regimes.

Our world has nearly 3 billion people living in countries where they have virtually no say in how it is governed, only 500,816 million live in true democracies.

The world we live in is driven by power and greed £2.35p was the weekly earnings of 22% of the world's population in 2022. The super rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, the richest one percent in the world own more than the other 99 percent put together.



People are dying in wars and confrontations. They are being executed, imprisoned or persecuted for standing up for their rights, their gender, their faith, their culture or tribal background and others suffer destruction of their lives by changing weather patterns.

All over our world catastrophes are regularly happenings but there is little coverage for us in a media bubble driven by the western culture and often dominated by happenings in the USA. Throughout 2022, floods affected **most of Africa**, killing over 2,100 people. The worst affected country was Nigeria, with over 610 deaths. In Pakistan since the monsoon season began in mid-June, floods have affected at least 33 million people and killed **at least 1,739**. As of November 18th 20.6 million people require humanitarian assistance, including around 8.2 million in flood-affected areas who need health services.

Let's pray that one day we can sing:
It's the world in union, the world as one, as we climb to reach our destiny, a new age has begun