

# Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday 22nd January 2023 Service

This Sunday Jerry is leading and Ron is preaching from  
Philippians 4:1, 4-9 "Joy for real?"

We will also celebrate the Lord's Supper

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

[www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/](http://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/)

Then click on "Join Our Online Service"

## Ron's Reads

2 Cor 11:24f Ps 145:18, Heb 12:2 Ps 55:22

## For Your Prayers

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

## Prayer for Equal World

Lord, the world's top 1 percent grabbed nearly two-thirds of the \$42 trillion in new wealth created since 2020, Oxfam says in a new report released to coincide with the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The share was almost twice as much money as the amount obtained by the bottom 99 percent of the world's population, according to Oxfam's "Survival of the Richest" report released on Monday. Billionaire fortunes are increasing by \$2.7bn a day, while at least 1.7 billion workers now live in countries where inflation is outpacing wages, the report said.

Oxfam said a 5 percent tax on the world's multi-millionaires and billionaires could raise \$1.7 trillion a year, enough to lift 2 billion people out of poverty. "While ordinary people are making daily sacrifices on essentials like food, the super-rich have outdone even their wildest dreams. Just two years in, this decade is shaping up to be the best yet for billionaires – a roaring '20s boom for the world's richest," said Gabriela Bucher, executive director of Oxfam International.

"Taxing the super-rich and big corporations is the door out of today's overlapping crises. It's time we demolish the convenient myth that tax cuts for the richest result in their wealth somehow 'trickling down' to everyone else. Forty years of tax cuts for the super-rich have shown that a rising tide doesn't lift all ships – just the superyachts."

We pray for an equal world Lord, use Your power to break through the stone hearts of those controlling economies and focusing on greed and power. Bring Your wisdom to governments to share through proper taxation so a new equal age can begin. Source [Oxfam Fight Inequality](#)

Watch again last week's [World In Union Songs of Praise 2008](#)

## Virtual Prayer Room

**Saturday 14th January Jerry posted** "Here is an update from Angela on Lee's progress. I am pleased to tell you that Lee had an appointment with his surgical team in London on Tuesday, and they have said "the bone graft appears to have taken well", and they are pleased with how things look. He also had a visit from some of his paratrooper comrades, which boosted his spirit. The rehab centre has said he can have more weekend home visits which have really given everyone a huge boost. Long, long road ahead, they have told him, but what an absolute miracle he is. He is in a much better place mentally; he has a few low days but getting this news Tuesday has had a positive effect."

**Tuesday 17th Jane posted** "Please continue to pray for Kevin. He has another operation tomorrow afternoon as his aorta has torn again. Thank you." Magda later said "Kevin is now off the ventilator, is making slow progress but still has a long way to go. Many thanks."

Also on Tuesday Maggie posted "Good morning some of you may have seen Tony Barber carrying out maintenance work around the church. In his words he would be so pleased if people would pray for him. He is having hip surgery today. 30 years ago he was knocked over by a car and had extreme damage to his pelvis so has a few metal plates. So the surgeon will have more work to do in addition to replacement hip. Thank you."

## Matthew 6: 25-34 (ERV) Put God's Kingdom First

"So I tell you, don't worry about the things you need to live—what you will



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## For your Diary

### Monday 23rd 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 24th January

Coffee and Chat

9.30am -12 in the Stables

### Wednesday 25th January

Table Tennis

9.30am -12 in the School Room

10-12pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

7.00pm Zoom Bible Study Meeting

Details in online Diary

### Thursday 26th January

10 to 2pm Warm Spaces in the Stables

### Friday 27th January

1.15-3pm Foodbank in Stables

### Sunday 29th January

10.45 Sunday Service

Welcome: Barbara and Maggie

Flowers: Barbara Reynolds

## 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](mailto: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.

eat, drink, or wear. Life is more important than food, and the body is more important than what you put on it. Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Don't you know you are worth much more than they are? You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it. "And why do you worry about clothes? Look at the wildflowers in the field. See how they grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that even Solomon, the great and rich king, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. If God makes what grows in the field so beautiful, what do you think he will do for you? It's just grass—one day it's alive, and the next day someone throws it into a fire. But God cares enough to make it beautiful. Surely he will do much more for you. Your faith is so small!"

"Don't worry and say, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' That's what those people who don't know God are always thinking about. Don't worry, because your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. What you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what he wants you to do. Then he will give you all these other things you need. So don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries.

*As Christians how easy is it when things are heading in the wrong direction to just leave the situation to God when anxiety and stress is filling your mind and body?*

Listen to Jerry's short blog based on this passage click [Jerry's Blog](#).

## EBA Prayer Focus 22nd January 2023

### Bluntisham Baptist Church

Bluntisham is a beautiful village about 25 minutes north of Cambridge on the edge of the fens. The church is led by its minister, Rev Tim Williamson, a team of Elders and Deacons and an amazing group of servant-hearted disciples. The church only returned to meeting in its building in May last year, following Covid closures and a major building refurbishment. There are now multiple flexible church spaces that enable the church to better provide a base for missional connections within its community. The main focus of the church since the reopening has been reconnecting in meaningful ways with one another and those within the community. Existing ministries have been able to restart using the refurbished building and exciting new ministries have arisen: a monthly men's ministry, a women's ministry and a Saturday morning dads and kids session with bacon rolls – a big hit! At the beginning of January 2020 in what was designated the year of evangelism, the whole church participated in the Talking Jesus Course, designed to equip disciples to reach out to those around

them with the gospel. Covid lockdowns severely hampered those plans. However, the church has faithfully been praying for those non-believers the Lord had laid on our hearts. To that end, this month marks the start of an Alpha Course, and many of those who have been prayed for are signed up to attend.

For Prayer:

- That we will continue to reconnect with those on the periphery of the church that haven't re-engaged with us following Covid and us not being able to use our church building.
- For our missional activities, that they would meet the needs of those within our community and also provide fruitful relational bridges allowing these people to become more aware of God's love for them and his amazing plans and purposes for their lives.
- For the Alpha Course starting with Alpha Sunday on the 8<sup>th</sup> January and then every Monday evening for 12 weeks from the 9<sup>th</sup> Pray that the Holy Spirit would be powerfully working in the hearts and minds of those attending the course. Please pray that they would come to know Christ as their Saviour and Lord and then be used by God to bring others to Christ.

### 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 of the Week

"The devil is not after your money or properties, he is after your joy, your faith, your love for other people, your peace. To think that satan comes to steal your money or car is like assuming armed robbers would break into your house to steal old newspapers."

**Kingsley Opuwari Manuel**

"Be the kind of person with so much joy that your presence brings joy to others."

**Germany Kent**

"There is no greater sin than to hate and kill the Son of God. There was no greater suffering nor any greater innocence than the suffering and innocence of Christ. Yet

God was in it all. "It was the will of the Lord to crush him" (Isaiah 53:10). His aim, through evil and suffering, was to destroy evil and suffering. "With his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5). Is not then the suffering of Jesus Christ meant by God to show the world that there is no sin and no evil too great that God, in Christ, cannot bring from it everlasting righteousness and joy? The very suffering that we caused became the hope of our salvation. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)"

**John Piper, For Your Joy**





Valentines Supper and Quiz Night

Friday 17th February

In the SBC Stables Starts 6.30pm

Jacket potato with a choice of fillings, selection of puds tea/coffee

£7.50

Contact Elaine on 07796875785 or [elainemsmith364@btinternet.com](mailto:elainemsmith364@btinternet.com)

To book

# Who is my neighbour?

There is no person on the face of the earth to whom I don't have the responsibility to be a neighbour. By Colin Sedgwick. Source Baptist Times.

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Luke 10:25-37

A pet hate of mine is when people refuse to answer a plain question. I think of it especially in relation to politicians who, to my ear anyway, often seem to squirm and wriggle their way out of a straight answer when interviewed on radio or television. So annoying!

But perhaps I need to be careful. First, because no doubt there are times I do the very same thing myself. And second, and far more important, because Jesus often seems to do it too.

The wonderful story of "the Good Samaritan" is a case in point. An expert in the law asks Jesus a question: "Teacher... what must I do to inherit eternal life?" That seems straight and direct enough, doesn't it? But does he get a straight answer? No: he gets another question in reply: "What is written in the law?... How do you read it?"

As if to say: "Well, given that you are an expert in the law and I am just an unqualified wandering rabbi from Galilee, that's a very strange question to ask! What do you think, Mr Lawyer?"

The lawyer comes back with two quotations from the Jewish law: *Love God* (Deuteronomy 6:5) and *Love your neighbour* (Leviticus 19:18). Upon which Jesus congratulates him on a correct answer and says, in effect, "Well, just get on and do it, then".

But the lawyer is a little miffed (perhaps a bit like me) at not getting a straight answer. He's wanting to "test" Jesus – to catch him out – and Jesus isn't rising to the bait. So he puts a second question: "And who is my neighbour?" Again, does he get an answer?

Again, no, he doesn't. What he gets this time is... a story.



And what a story it is! "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers..." (Luke 10:30-35). Yes, the "Good Samaritan", surely one of the greatest stories ever told. It forces the lawyer to answer his own question, and as a result it is he and not Jesus who is "tested"; he ends up embarrassed and looking rather foolish.

The story depends on a fact that no Jew of the time would have been comfortable with: *the man who showed compassion to the victim of the attack was... a Samaritan*. And the Samaritans and the Jews were, to put it mildly, enemies. Jesus, by coming at the debate in this rather roundabout, indirect way, leads the lawyer to a point where he is forced to admit that it is the Samaritan who stands out as the hero, not his fellow-Israelite priest or Levite.

But he can't bring himself to acknowledge this openly: when Jesus asks the innocent-seeming question "Who was a neighbour to the victim?" he chokes on the honest reply, "The Samaritan, of course", and mumbles instead, "The one who had mercy on him".

By not answering questions directly, and by posing questions of his own, Jesus has forced the lawyer to face up to a truth which he would much prefer to brush aside: God recognises goodness and compassion in anyone, not just among his own chosen people.

We can't help noticing, too, that Jesus even declines to answer the lawyer's second question "And who is my neighbour?"

That is where the punch of this parable lies. He is saying to the lawyer, in effect, "You are asking the wrong question! What matters is not 'Who is my neighbour?' What matters is 'Who can I be a neighbour to?' And that is a very different question!"

By asking "And who is my neighbour?" the lawyer was probably wanting to know who he could safely ignore – who he didn't need to bother about. And probably he was assuming that the gentiles as a whole, and the hated Samaritans above all, would

fall into that category: “Surely God doesn’t expect us to show kindness to them!”

I find this enormously challenging, for if I’m honest with myself I have to recognise that I have an inner list – if only a subconscious inner list – of people I’m not responsible for, people I can “pass by on the other side” with a clean conscience. That woman in the shopping centre selling the Big Issue magazine... that homeless man sitting with his dog under a huddle of blankets outside the tube station... that starving child staring at me from the charity poster...

An uncomfortable memory comes back to me...

I was visiting friends in Texas, and I took a walk along the San Antonio river. It was a pleasant day, so when I came to a seat I decided to sit down and enjoy the scene. I was joined by an elderly man who obviously enjoyed chatting to people he met. That suited me fine, and we got along well.

A young woman came up behind our seat and started to talk: “Sorry to bother you – I promise I won’t ask for money...” She looked very ill; her eyes were strange and I suppose she had a serious drugs problem. But my neighbour – my friendly neighbour – turned on her with a truly shocking, vicious ferocity: “Clear off! Or I’ll call the cops!”

And clear off she did. She slunk away, shoulders bent, like a whipped dog (not that I’ve ever seen a whipped dog, but you get the point). It had all taken just a few seconds, and I was in a bit of a daze. It was only a few minutes later that guilt kicked in...

Why hadn’t I chased after her, if only to offer a word of kindness, to let her know that I felt for her? Why did I make excuses for, in effect, being hard-hearted? – I was a stranger in their country... It was none of my business... I didn’t want to offend my new-found friend... I didn’t have any means of offering the practical help she obviously needed... I was out of my depth in a totally unexpected situation... Above all, *that young woman was no neighbour of mine, was she?*

And I knew – What paltry, shabby excuses these were! No, she was indeed no neighbour of mine. But, with the benefit of hindsight, I couldn’t help but hear the voice of Jesus: “Who acted as a neighbour to that young woman?”

Not my friend, that’s for sure. But was I any better?

Father in heaven, please help me to absorb and act on the great lesson that there is no person on the face of the earth to whom I don’t have the responsibility to be a neighbour. Amen.

Colin Sedgwick is a Baptist minister with many years’ experience in the ministry.

He is also a freelance journalist, and has written for The Independent, The Guardian, The Times, and various Christian publications. He blogs at [sedgonline.wordpress.com](https://www.sedgonline.wordpress.com), where this reflection originally appeared.

## NHS Strategic Prayer

With publication of the 2023/24 operational guidance (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/.../2023-24-priorities-and.../>) we will pray into the 3 priorities to be delivered at pace:

1. Recover our core services and productivity.

To improve patient safety, outcomes and experience we pray that systems will:

- improve ambulance response and A&E waiting times

- reduce elective long waits and cancer backlogs, and improve performance against the core diagnostic standard

- make it easier for people to access primary care services, particularly general practice

2. As we recover, make progress in delivering the key ambitions in the Long-Term Plan (LTP), and; praying into the prevention and self-care agenda

3. Continue transforming the NHS for the future praying that integration with social care and wider partners will enable this.

4. Workforce; pray for:

- wise and compassionate leadership
- staff that will provide innovative delivery of the national NHS 2023/24 Objectives
- improved working conditions that enable staff retention
- resolution of the industrial action

Source <https://www.facebook.com/NHStrategicPray/>

## Mobile-friendly new look for Network Norfolk The Christian Community Website

The Network Norwich and Norfolk website has launched a modern refreshed design and responsive web system to give users a better display and experience on mobiles as well as laptops and tablets.

Have a look at the new format click below:

<https://www.networknorwich.co.uk/>

