

# Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday January 28th

This Sunday Barbara and Geoff are leading and Ron is continuing the sermon series entitled "Who is Jesus?" The title of this week's sermon is "Jesus the Man", and the reading is from Hebrews 2:10-18.

## Ron's Reads

Phil 2:7, Gal 4:4, Jn 1:1, 14, Jn 5:19, Isa 8:1f

## For Your Prayers

We pray for Church Pastoral Group 7, please pray for: **John Lodge, Jean Lodge, Steven Pegg, Susannah and Sarah Pegg.** During January please pray for the residents of **Horse Barns, Wayford Road and Stepping Stone Lane.**

### Prayers for Coming Election

It seems too simple. And sometimes our voices feel too small. But when we pray, we allow God to start growing our capacity to love each other as Jesus does – even people who are the most different from us.

As we approach the next election, we're humbled that God saw our anger, confusion, and prejudice and still loved us enough to send His Son to be our Saviour. That perspective calms our frustration and calls us to prayer.

Our bold decision to kneel at God's throne when we're being pulled to one side or the other allows God to change our hearts – and the hearts of people we pray for. This possible election year, join us in praying for our country and its leaders, asking God to help them all see each other with His love.

Lord Jesus, forgive us for the times we've entered a conversation without really listening. Show us how to listen with open and humble hearts, especially to people different from us. Help our leaders to do the same. Teach us as a nation to focus less on getting our way and more on loving our neighbours, especially the most vulnerable among us. Lord, give our leaders and prospective leaders the strength to be humble, soft-hearted, and willing to listen to every voice.

Father God, we are grateful that You love each of us no matter our status or abilities. Thank You that You walk with children and families struggling against poverty and injustice, calling us to do the same. We ask that those running for election and those currently in power would speak out about poverty and listen to the voices of the vulnerable. Give our leaders wisdom to create solutions that empower people living in poverty to survive and thrive. Help us to answer Your call to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You.

## Virtual WhatsApp Prayer Room

**Friday 19th January** Diana posted "Hello my church Family. Went for my 1st post chemo check this morning. All seems to be good. My blood results are back within normal range. My lymph nodes normal and so is my spleen. As you know I had more aggressive treatment because of the PET scan showing something else going on. Although they couldn't biopsy, they are almost certain it was a transformation to high grade which does happen in 25% of cases. The upshot of that and my treatment is that its highly likely the high grade was cured but the low grade which was still showing in my bone marrow biopsy will at some point return. Professor Bowles is hopeful for at least a 5-year remission period. At least I now do know the early warning signs, which seem to start 3/4 months before it becomes necessary to treat. Thank you all for your prayers and your support.

**Saturday 20th** Jenny Payne posted "Please pray for my niece, Louise. She has stage 4, inoperable breast cancer (already spread to her lungs, liver and hip bone). Louise is 35, has a 16-month-old daughter and her mother died from cancer just over a year ago. She started chemotherapy on Thursday. Please pray that the treatment will be really effective and quickly before this aggressive cancer has a chance to spread further. Thank you."

**Tuesday 23rd** Jerry posted from Maureen "Please, can I ask for prayer? My hip replacement is due tomorrow. Please pray that it will take place and all will go well. Thank you, love Maureen x "



Pastor: Rev. Ron Skivington  
01692 582731

Assistant Pastor: Jerry Otieno  
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Secretary: Diana Gordon 07951949128

Ministry Team: The Whole Fellowship

## For your Diary

### Monday 29th January

10.30 to 11.30am in the Church  
Prayers for SBC and young people  
2 to 4pm Warm Space in the Stables  
7.00pm Deacons Meeting

### Tuesday 30th January

9.30am -12 Coffee and Chat in the Schoolroom

### Wednesday 31st January

Table Tennis  
9.30am to 12pm in the Schoolroom  
10-12pm Warm Space in the Stables

### Thursday 1st February

10 to 2pm Warm Space in the Stables  
10.30-11.30 Prayer Meeting in the Church  
2pm Messy Church planning in the Stables  
7.00pm Zoom Prayer Meeting  
All are welcome.  
Contact Diana

### Friday 2nd February

10.15 to 12.00pm Prayers for Revival & Israel at Three Windows, Brumstead Road

1.15 to 3pm Foodbank in Stables & Citizens Advice Service

### Saturday 3rd February

10.30am South Walsham St Mary FC v SBC FC at Britannia Barracks

### Sunday 4th February

10.45 Sunday Service  
Welcome: Magdalena & Teresa  
Flowers: Susannah Pegg

## Personal Prayer, Food Bank, & Citizens Advice

SBC will be open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive donations for the food bank and for personal prayer. The **Food Bank**: if you need help, or know someone in difficulty, either contact the Food Bank on 07826 376343, or contact Ron Skivington at [minister@stalhbaptist.org.uk](mailto:minister@stalhbaptist.org.uk)

The **Citizens Advice Service** is open on Friday in the Stables, 1.15 to 3.00pm. Contact Food Bank on 07826 376343

## 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.

**Thursday 25th** David posted. Iris has asked to let all to know that she came home from hospital last Monday and is recovering well from what was apparently a complex hip replacement. She wants to pass on her gratitude for all the thoughts and prayers from the church which was very much appreciated.

## Jerry's Bible Reading Blog

### Luke 6: 43-49 (MSG)

#### Work the Words Into Your Life

<sup>43-45</sup> "You don't get wormy apples off a healthy tree, nor good apples off a diseased tree. The health of the apple tells the health of the tree. You must begin with your own life-giving lives. It's who you are, not what you say and do, that counts. Your true being brims over into true words and deeds.

<sup>46-47</sup> "Why are you so polite with me, always saying 'Yes, sir,' and 'That's right, sir,' but never doing a thing I tell you? These words I speak to you are not mere additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundation words, words to build a life on.

<sup>48-49</sup> "If you work the words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who dug deep and laid the foundation of his house on bedrock. When the river burst its banks and crashed against the house, nothing could shake it; it was built to last. But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a dumb carpenter who built a house but skipped the foundation. When the swollen river came crashing in, it collapsed like a house of cards. It was a total loss."

As Christians have we always built solid foundations in our lives?

To listen to Jerry's short blog click [Jerry's Blog](#). Or go to [www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/](http://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/) and click on "Our Weekly Bible Commentary"

## BMS Birthday Scheme

Thank you to all the folk who generously donated to the Birthday Scheme last year. A total of £240 was sent to BMS which helps towards medical expenses in underdeveloped countries. If anyone would like to join, please speak to Jan Nicholson who is the Birthday Scheme Secretary who will send you a lovely card on your birthday with a donation envelope,

## Thursday Prayer Meetings

1st and last Thursdays in the month are church prayer meetings in the main church from 10.30 to 11.30am

## World Leprosy Day 2024 is 28th January

Barbara and Geoff are leading worship this Sunday and will be including references to The Leprosy Mission and using some of their resources. If you have a collection box do please bring it along so Stewart can include your donation in what is sent to TLM.

Thanks to everyone who bought from the TLM Christmas catalogue; purchases from the mission raised almost £400 for them and £75 for SBC.

## Warm Space Soup on Thursdays

Warm Space is open in the Stables Monday 2-4pm, Wednesday 10-12pm, Thursday 10-2pm until the end of March soup will be served 12 until 2pm.

## EBA Weekly Prayer Focus 28th January Maldon Baptist Church

Maldon is an ancient Essex town and was once a thriving port where the Rivers Chelmer and Blackwater converge before continuing their journey to the sea. The town is growing with new housing developments springing up on the outskirts. Maldon Baptist Church was founded in 1872 and has very large buildings near the town centre.

The current congregation is small and mainly older, and numbers, while stable, have not returned to pre-covid levels. The church is led by Secretary Richard Lewis and Moderator Rev Michael Child (from Witham Baptist Church). Sunday services are mainly led by Richard and Michael and a faithful group of visiting speakers from other churches. There is a weekday programme which include a Bible study meeting and a bi-monthly bereavement group. On Thursdays there is a TWAM meeting (Tools with a Mission – a Christian charity that primarily collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them, and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation).

Despite large and deteriorating premises, the church has big plans for revitalising the work in Maldon and have established a mission team from outside resources to look at new opportunities and the potential for mission in the town. Plans are currently at the feasibility stage to redevelop the church premises into a multi-use space for more than just Sundays and also convert part of the sprawling buildings to new residential properties to fund the project. And there are ideas being worked through to take on a pioneer minister to plant a new congregation among the people coming into the new housing developments or for a missionary to work in the town.

The church has an ambitious vision and requests prayer for:

- Wisdom in knowing God's leading about the buildings and premises.
- That the leaders and members may have boldness to accept the challenge of change.
- The members, deacons and mission team at this time of uncertainty.
- Activities and participation with Churches Together in Maldon.

## Quotes of the Week

"The only way to make sense, then, of the fact that Jesus came in the power of the Spirit is to understand that he lived his life fundamentally as a man, and as such, he relied on the Spirit to provide the power, grace, knowledge, wisdom, direction, and enablement he needed, moment by moment and day by day, to fulfil the mission the Father sent him to accomplish."

*Bruce A. Ware, The Man Christ Jesus: Theological*



**Fire Evacuation** In the event of a fire everyone should make their way to the fire assembly point which is outside Trett Phillips Residential in the High Street. For more information speak to Daniel.

## Reflections on the Humanity of Christ

“The very resource of Holy Spirit empowerment granted to Jesus for his life of obedience and faithfulness to the Father is now granted to Jesus’s disciples as they carry forward the message of Christ, living lives of obedience to Christ, all in the power of the Spirit.”

**Bruce A. Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ***

“Jesus was a man for simple people. He didn’t make his messages incredibly complex. If you were a person that had the eyes to see and the ears to hear... then his message was easily understood.”

**Brandon Andress, *And Then the End Will Come!: But Five Things You Need to***

“Rather than trying to prove our masculinity, we need to accept who we are in the spirit of the gospel. Instead of trying to live up to some cultural standard of manhood, we need to accept God’s grace, which says, “I accept you just as you are.” It is culture, not God, that alienates those who do not live up to the existing, narrow definition of manhood.”

**Nate Pyle, *Man Enough: How Jesus Redefines Manhood***

## The importance of giving and receiving challenge

**Few of us enjoy criticism or confrontation. Yet the limitations and shortcomings of our humanness mean that it needs to happen – for our own good and for the wellbeing of the people we lead, writes Alan Wilson**

It probably took at least as much out of him as it did out of me. He was (and still is) my friend and at the time was an elder in the church where I was a young pastor. To say I had embarked on the pastorate with little experience would be an understatement, and at the time of our conversation things were not going terribly well. It was a Friday morning and he had a little piece of paper on which he had written down a list of half a dozen or so areas where he felt I needed to improve. There was no vindictiveness, no desire to run me down. Just the genuine concern of a brother for a floundering leader.

### Giving and receiving challenge in Scripture

It’s not easy to embark on such difficult conversations with a friend. It’s not easy to confront a leader. And it is not always easy for a leader to receive challenge. Few of us enjoy criticism or confrontation. Yet the limitations and shortcomings of our humanness mean that it needs to happen – for our own good and for the wellbeing of the people we lead.

Scripture is clear, not least in the book of Proverbs, that our ability to receive correction is a sign of wisdom. The wise person will love the friend who brings reproof. The person of understanding will grow from it. Open rebuke is better than hidden love.

The New Testament leaves us with no allusions about the early church leaders. Acts doesn’t cover over the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas and Galatians lays bare another dramatic leader disagreement when Paul confronts Peter. In Paul’s view Peter had caved to peer pressure and lapsed into hypocrisy. The issue was who he would eat with during his visit to Antioch. At one point he happily shared with Gentiles, but when ‘certain men’ arrived from Jerusalem, fear led him to pull back. Paul called him out in front of the whole gathering.

## When is giving and receiving challenge needed?

Paul had two reasons for what he did and they are still relevant. For one thing Peter’s behaviour had an impact on others. Even Barnabas, renowned for his open-heartedness, wavered. The other reason was gospel-related: Peter’s conduct had drifted out of alignment with the gospel. Paul’s gospel was clear: grace came freely through Christ and had nothing to do with the food you ate or the people you ate with. Peter’s behaviour betrayed the simplicity and the radical nature of the gospel.

We’re left wondering how Peter must have felt about this, but it challenges us about the nature of our relationships and our willingness to engage in those hard conversations where the gospel has been jeopardised or where a leader’s behaviour is likely to harm others.

I’ve been reading a preview copy of a new book from Justin Irving on organisational leadership. He starts with the area of self-leadership, and challenges readers on their relationships. As leaders we need ‘relationships in which [we] can both challenge and be challenged, love and be loved, know and be known.’

### Importance of humility and courage

It seems to me that these relationships call for both humility and courage. We need the humility to realise our limitations and shortcomings and allow others to speak into them. We need the courage to lay ourselves open and genuinely invite the faithful wounds of friends. Similarly, if we find ourselves needing to speak into someone’s life (as my friend did all those years ago), we need the humility to check our heart

motives and not assume some kind moral or professional superiority. And we need the courage to risk the possibility of being on the receiving end of anger or rejection.

None of us is the finished article. When we assume we are, that we have arrived, that we have nothing more to learn, or that somehow we have graduated beyond the things that lesser mortals need to think about, we are in trouble.

### Seeking challenge

I remember a conversation I had a few years ago with a younger – though already quite accomplished – leader. He wanted to ask me something I don’t think anyone else has ever asked me. He was in a good place, fruitful and well-accepted in his work. But he wanted to know how could he intentionally leave space for the voices of those who might be critical of him or disagree with his work.

I wonder how many of us would risk that? How many of us have the kind of relationships where we are not threatened by the honest feedback of others, nor are we afraid to give it?

Wounds from a friend can be trusted. They are still wounds, but they can be the key to our growth.

**Alan Wilson is a freelance Bible College lecturer and host of *The Leadership Journey Podcast*, a series of conversations with Christian leaders. He has pastored churches in Switzerland and his native Northern Ireland. [@jsalanwilson](https://www.instagram.com/jsalanwilson)**

**He is the author of *The Crucible of Leadership: Learning from the Story of Moses (Instant Apostle)*, in which he explores nine striking leadership lessons from Moses’ remarkable life.**

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## Muzaffarpur Hospital - a refuge for the least, the last and the lost

Living in the shadows of society in Bihar - one of India's poorest State - are the least, the last and the lost. People affected by leprosy who are ignored and excluded. These are the very people Jesus showed love to and served in his earthly life. People like Rajisha.

Rajisha lives with her parents and three siblings in Nirmali in Bihar. Her future looked positive. Bright and eager to learn, her proud parents hoped Rajisha's intelligence and schooling would give her a route out of poverty.

But then Rajisha began to notice changes to her body that she didn't understand. Strange marks appeared on her face and her fingers stiffened and started to bend inwards. She had a bad open sore on her finger that just would not heal. Thankfully for Rajisha, her parents took her to a doctor who was visiting the village. He told her she had leprosy. Rajisha will never forget that moment. She had heard of leprosy, yet it was always spoken of in hushed tones. Suddenly the world was a dark place.

Rajisha started taking tablets to cure her leprosy. But sadly, the medicine came too late to prevent nerve damage which stole the feeling in her hands. By now, her fingers bent so far into her palms that Rajisha couldn't even feed herself.

In the midst of despair came a glimmer of hope. The same visiting doctor told Rajisha's parents about The Leprosy Mission's Muzaffarpur Hospital. Despite being 100km away, the doctor had heard of the exemplary medical care that was available free of charge.

Rajisha's parents couldn't go to the hospital with her. Her mother was too poorly to travel, and her father couldn't afford to take time off work. The journey was frightening, not knowing what was going to happen.

Rajisha waited anxious and alone for many hours outside the crumbling Outpatients building. Despite her exhausting journey, there was nowhere to sit inside. Instead, she waited in the oppressive heat. Hours later, a doctor saw Rajisha. He was kind and began tending to her severe medical needs. She was admitted and a week later, well enough to have surgery on her right hand to straighten her fingers. In time she will need to have the procedure on her left hand as well.

At just 18, Rajisha's dreams of escaping poverty disappeared with a devastating leprosy diagnosis. The

disease stole the use of her hands and left her depressed and hopeless.

Can you imagine the fear and anxiety she felt, travelling 100km alone to Muzaffarpur? She didn't know the place or if she'd get the care she needed. Thankfully, Rajisha was given a warm welcome at the hospital. She was so thankful for the loving and caring staff. They became like family to her.

But the hospital needs urgent attention so that the team can continue to give people the welcome and the treatment they deserve. The need is great, and it's increasing. Leprosy rates are three times higher in Bihar than anywhere else in India. Extreme poverty means leprosy cases are rising.

Every day over 600 people queue in the fierce sun or monsoon rains, desperate for leprosy treatment. The hospital was built 40 years ago and rooves have holes, walls are crumbling, and infrastructure needs to be modernised.

The current state of the Outpatient Department is alarming. It floods during monsoon, offers no proper shelter or seating for waiting patients, and is woefully cramped. It urgently needs rebuilding otherwise the future of Muzaffarpur Hospital is in jeopardy. This is the only place in Bihar where people affected by leprosy can receive free and compassionate care.

The Leprosy Mission is raising money to rebuild a new Outpatient Department at Muzaffarpur. By doing so the amazing medics can continue to rebuild the lives and hopes of people like Rajisha.

Your gift of just £36 will provide a tonne of bricks for the restoration. £188 would supply two tonnes of cement. If you're able

to give more, £442 would fund reconstructive surgery and hospital care for someone like Rajisha. A gift of £2,008 would cover a labourer's wages for the entire build. A gift of £9,275 will build and equip a new consultation room.

**Please visit [leprosymission.org.uk](http://leprosymission.org.uk) to find out more or to give.**

Source [Leprosy Mission](http://leprosymission.org.uk)

## The Leprosy Mission Prayer

Almighty Father, the giver of life and health, look mercifully on those who suffer from leprosy. Stretch out your hand to touch and heal them as Jesus did during his earthly life. Grant wisdom and insight to those who are seeking the prevention and cure of the disease; give skill and sympathy to those who minister to the patients; reunite the separated with their families and friends; and inspire your people with the task set before The Leprosy Mission, that it may never lack either the staff or the means to carry on its healing work, in accordance with your will, and to the glory of your holy name. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

