

# Stalham Baptist Church Weekly News

Sunday March 24th

This Sunday Ron is leading and continuing the sermon series entitled "Who is Jesus?" The title of this week's sermon is "Jesus the King"

The reading is from Matthew 21: 1-17 and Revelation 19: 11-16

The online service will also be available from Sunday.

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

## Ron's Reads

1 Tim 6:15, Rev 17:4, 1 Sam 8:1f, Jn 18:36, Isa 42:1f,35

## For Your Prayers

We pray for Church Pastoral Group 5, please pray for: **John Applegate, Barbara & Ben Mixer, Chris Bridgeman, Iris Clark, Maggie Patterson and Evelyn Eagling.** During March please pray for the residents of **Old Yarmouth Road and Ingham Road.**

Heavenly Father, we come before you today in humility and faith. We thank you for all you have given us and the many blessings in our lives. We ask for your guidance and strength. Show us the way and fill us with courage and wisdom. Help us to remember your love and grace and to be faithful in our service to you. Give us the patience and understanding to face life's challenges with grace. We ask these things in your name. Amen.

### Prayer for Protection

As we step into this new day, we humbly place ourselves under Your loving care. Surround us with Your shielding presence and let Your grace be our armour. Guide my steps and lead me along paths of righteousness.

Keep us safe from the unforeseen dangers of the day and guard our minds against negative thoughts. As we interact with others, let us be a beacon of Your love and peace, reflecting Your goodness in all that we do.

We entrust our loved ones into Your hands, knowing that Your watchful eyes are upon them too. As the shepherd watches over his flock, watch over us, protecting us from harm and leading us away from the snares of the enemy.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen. Source [www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/](http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/)

### Prayer for Christians in Israel

Lord we pray for the Christian citizens in Israel, some of whom have been attacked in their places of prayer and on the streets, and cemeteries have been vandalised. Christians in Jerusalem's Old City say they are often harassed, spat at, and even physically attacked by groups of religious Jewish youths.

Click [HERE](#) for CBN News YouTube video.

## Virtual WhatsApp Prayer Room

**Thursday March 21<sup>st</sup>** Geoff posted "Morning everyone we give thanks for our safe travels and return home.

Please could you pray for our Daughter-in-Law Julie. We are taking her to hospital for an operation at midday today. May it go well. Thanks."

Also on Thursday Hazel updated Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March post "The family are now out of hospital and though tired recovering."

Later on Thursday Geoff posted "Thank you for your prayers, just heard Julie out of surgery and back on ward feeling weird but okay and ready to see Phil who has arrived home from Stansted. We are "sitting" on smalls till he gets back. We keep J in our prayers for a good recovery.

## Ron's Bible Reading Blog James 1:3-8 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. <sup>6</sup> But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

**As Christians can we persevere when all is going against us?**

To listen to Ron's short blog click [Ron's Blog](#). Or go to [www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/](http://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/) and click on "Our Weekly Bible Commentary" Another brilliant blog from Ron, again he explores James's verse and brings it into the world we live in, with the doubts we experience, helping us to deal with what is thrown at us in life.



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Ministry Team: The Whole  
Fellowship

## For your Diary

### Monday 25th March

7.00pm Deacons Zoom Meeting  
10.30 to 11.30am in the Upper  
room

Prayers for SBC and young people

### Tuesday 26th March

9.30am -12 Coffee and Chat in the  
Schoolroom

### Wednesday 27th March

Table Tennis

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

### Thursday 28th March

10 to 2pm Warm Space in the  
Stables

10.30am Church Prayer Meeting is  
in the Upper Room

7pm Zoom Prayer Meeting.

All are welcome. Contact Diana for  
more information

### Friday 29th March

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

Brumstead Road

1.15 to 3pm Foodbank in

Stables & Citizens Advice Service

7.00pm Good Friday Reflective  
Service

### Sunday 31st March

6.30am Son Rise Service at How  
Hill

10.45 Easter Sunday Service

Welcome: Maureen & Rita

Flowers: Easter Sunday

### Sunday 7th April

12pm AGM in the Church

## Personal Prayer, Food Bank, & Citizens Advice

SBC is 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@stalhambaptist.org.uk](mailto:minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk)

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

## How Hill Sonrise Service

6.30am 31st March at How Hill next to the car park NR29 5PG (Don't forget the clocks go forward by one hour)

Everyone is welcome to the Sonrise service which lasts about 30 minutes.

The Easter Sunday services have been held at How Hill for over 30 years. John Applegate will be setting up the speakers. David Osborne and Ron Skivington will be playing guitars. "He has Risen" will be the shout, followed by readings and songs. At the end of the service the worshipper's can head back to the warm schoolroom for hot coffee or tea and breakfast.

If you would like a breakfast telephone Elaine 07796 875785 or email elainemsmith364@btinternet.com and leave a message to book breakfast.



## Easter Sunday and Flowers

Please bring a flower on Easter Sunday and pop it onto the cross outside the church [the chicken wire will keep it in place.] This will be one way we can witness to Stalham as the plain-ness of the wooden cross is replaced by the glorious colour of the flowers – the tomb is empty, Jesus has risen! Hallelujah!

## North Norfolk Food Bank

During March any of the following would be much appreciated: Long Life Milk, Tinned Fish, Tinned Meat, Tinned Vegetables, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Fruit, Squash, Fruit Juice and shampoo.

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

## AGM

Our AGM this year will take place on Sunday 7th April at 12.00. As usual it will begin with the election of deacons. Daniel Nicholson & Maggie Harpur are the deacons whose term comes to an end but are eligible for re-election.

## Daffs coming to an End

The daffodil picking season is coming to an end and so far, £520 has been raised. Many thanks to Barbara, Elinor, Henry, and Edna.

## EBA Weekly Prayer Focus 24th March Braintree Baptist Church

Located in north Essex approximately a twenty-minute drive from Stanstead Airport, is the town of Braintree. These days, it is perhaps better known for the Braintree Village (formerly Freeport) Shopping Centre than it is for its historic links to the wool and silk trade. Braintree Baptist Church is in a central location of the town. Rev Ayi Samson Ake has been the Minister of the fellowship for one year having moved from the West Midlands. Samson is supported by an excellent team of Deacons.

The fellowship is very active in their local community. A Bounce Café runs on the first Saturday of every month and selected school holidays. Using the large hall to house a bouncy castle and café seating, it aims to provide a suitable and safe provision for young families in the town centre. If Bouncy Castles and inflatables are not your thing, you could try the Crafty Café which runs every Monday morning throughout the year providing a warm space and friendly welcome. Both Cafés have given

Samson an opportunity to develop his links with the community and provided some ministry opportunities too. Around the Christmas period, the Church were excited to celebrate a service of baptism. Braintree Baptist Church is a growing and vibrant fellowship who give thanks and glory to God for all that is happening in their midst.

To continue building for the future, Braintree Baptist Church is undertaking a renovation project. Replacing boilers that have reached the end of their life and updating toilet facilities present some interesting challenges.

Please pray for:

- The finances for the building project.
- Wisdom for the leadership as they seek God's will for the future direction of the Church.

## Prayer Meeting

The Church Prayer Meetings are in the upper room with heating and are on the 1<sup>st</sup> and last of each Thursday of every month at 10.30am. The next one is on the March 28th

## Coffee Morning April 6th 10am -12pm

Gracie and Poppy will be running a coffee morning on Saturday, April 6th, from 10am-12 in the new school room to raise money for the **Nephrotic Syndrome Trust (NeST)**.

As well as selling teas, coffees, cakes and scones, etc, they will be selling NeST merchandise such as trolley coins, pens, wristbands, and teddy bears.

There will also be an Easter colouring competition for children with a prize for the winner.

Please let Gracie and Poppy know if you are able to bake/donate any cakes or treats for it. They would be very grateful! Thank you very much in advance Victoria.

Poppy was diagnosed with Nephrotic Syndrome 6 and a half years ago. It is a rare kidney disease that causes the kidneys to leak large amounts of protein into the urine. This can lead to a range of problems, including swelling of body tissues and a greater chance of catching infections.

Approximately 1 in 50,000 children are diagnosed with Nephrotic Syndrome a year. It is rare, has no cure, and can have life-threatening complications. For example, relapses can result in scarring to the kidneys, and for some children, this leads to kidney failure, dialysis, and waiting for a kidney transplant. One of the cruellest aspects of Nephrotic Syndrome is that in a high percentage of children who do have a kidney transplant, the disease returns to attack the new kidney – it is a treatment option but not a cure. A relapse means a high dose of steroids have to be taken, and then the dosage is lowered gradually over several weeks, hopefully putting Poppy into remission. High dose steroids have nasty side effects (in the past, they have killed a bone in Poppy's foot). Poppy has also been on second line immunosuppressant treatments too to try and keep her from relapsing and off the high dose steroids. These also come with their side effects.

Poppy unfortunately relapsed before Christmas (her 6th relapse since diagnosis), and the money the girls raise at the coffee morning will go towards vital research to hopefully one day finding a cure.

## Ladies Breakfast

Last Saturdays Ladies Breakfast was again another huge success with around 50 Ladies enjoying the lovely breakfast and listening to Zephney Kennedy's talk.

A big thankyou to Elaine, Maggie, June and Fran for all their work.

The pictures that Zephney wanted to show as part of her talk wouldn't work on the screen so those who wanted to catch up with them can find them on

[www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/](http://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/) attached to this newsletter found by clicking on top right hand box then going to publications and clicking on bulletin.

## Quotes of the Week

"The gospel isn't advice: It's the good news that you don't need to earn your way to God; Jesus has already done it for you. And it's a gift that you receive by sheer grace-through God's thoroughly unmerited favour."

"When the Bible talks about sin it is not just referring to the bad things we do. It's not just lying or lust or whatever the case may be-it is ignoring God in the world he has made; it's rebelling against him by living without reference to him. It's saying, 'I will decide exactly how I live my life.' And Jesus says that is our main problem."

"If you have a God great enough and powerful enough to be mad at because he doesn't stop your suffering, you also have a God who's great enough and powerful enough to have reasons that you can't understand."

"Nature is indifferent to you, but Jesus is filled with untameable love for you."

*Timothy J. Keller, Jesus the King Study Guide: Exploring the Life and Death of the Son of God*

"It is no great hermeneutic feat to recognize that Rome crucified Jesus because of His claim to be king. The charge was posted over His head, after all. What is often overlooked, however, is that it is precisely because of their allegiance to that king-Jesus-that Rome persecuted His followers.

That the God of the Jews should father a Son with magical powers was no more offensive to the Romans than the idea that Zeus should father Hercules. But what was intolerable was the fact that Jesus' followers did not stop with recognizing Him as divine; they had the audacity to claim He was their actual sovereign.

In short, while the Jews preserved their religion by shouting, "We have no king but Caesar," the early Christians sealed their fate by unabashedly declaring, "We have no king but Jesus!"

*Christopher Gorton, The Problem With Christ: Why we don't understand Jesus, His enemies, or the early Church*



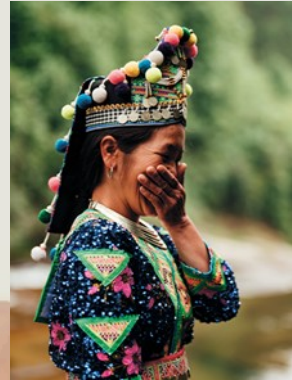
potential. But why is this campaign even needed? Here we explain why millions of our sisters are acutely vulnerable to persecution for their faith and their gender, and how you can help them see change.

Xuan\* (34) is a member of the Hmong tribe in Vietnam, living in a remote tribal village with her husband and two children. She evangelises in secret, often going to meet people in the dead of night, or travelling hours on her motorbike to reach those even further away.

When the village authorities confronted her about her ministry, they went to her husband first and demanded that he divorce his wife.

"Men in our society are superior and this is why, when their wives become Christians, persecutors first come to them," Xuan (pictured right) says.

When Xuan's husband refused, they killed off Xuan's animals - the family's source of income. They would have expelled Xuan from the village too, but her husband stepped in to save her. Despite the pressure against her, and the danger of her mission, many Christians in her village came to know Christ because of Xuan's perseverance. "I will not forsake my mission, my calling," she says. "Even if the authorities catch me, I will let them do everything they can to stop me - even if they kill me. I know I am going to die for the Lord."



Xuan's story is just one of many. Across the world, millions of Christian women suffer not only because of their faith but also their gender. This persecution tends to be violent, complex and hidden from public view.

## Violence against Christian women and girls

One of the most documented and visible forms of persecution against women and girls is violence - be that sexual, physical or psychological. Sexual violence can, for example, involve Christian women being abducted by militants like Boko Haram and used as sex slaves, or it can be covert, under the guise of forced marriage. Given the 'honour' culture of many societies, sexual violence is often used to intentionally shame and stigmatise victims as well as their families and communities. This can result in a breakdown in relationships - for instance, parents no longer want to be associated with their daughter.

One such country with an honour-shame culture is India. Here many of the methods used to persecute Christian women and girls result in stigma - indeed, this is often a key reason behind attacks. For example, rape victims are often viewed by society as sexually impure, making them vulnerable to rejection and limiting their prospects.

The threat of shame and stigma is a key reason why physical violence is also common against Christian women and girls. Women are attacked with impunity because victims often keep quiet for fear of the dishonour it will bring and poor legal frameworks mean wrongdoing often goes punished. This, in turn, makes women and girls increasingly vulnerable to psychological violence and many experience trauma for years after the persecution event itself.



26 February 2024

## "Worth less?" Why are Christian women and girls particularly vulnerable to persecution?

Open Doors' *See. Change.* campaign seeks to ensure Christian women and girls across the world are seen, valued and empowered to fulfil their God-given

**Fire Evacuation** In the event of a fire everyone should make their way to the fire assembly point which is outside the Staithe Surgery. For more information speak to Daniel.

## Compounding vulnerabilities make this a complex issue.

The persecution faced by millions of our sisters is complex because of the compounding effect one vulnerability has on another.

If Xuan's husband had divorced her as the authorities wanted him to, she would have been without protection and provision. Her source of income would be gone, she would have had no home and she would have lost her children. Left totally vulnerable, she could have been expelled from the village or subject to violent attack. While Xuan's husband stepped in to save her, other women have not been so fortunate. When Ayesha\*, a Somali believer in the Horn of Africa, became a Christian, her family tortured her cruelly and tried to forcefully remove her children from her. When Ayesha eventually left her home, she was attacked by three women and almost died – but when her family came to the defence of the women who stabbed her, they were released from prison.

In Egypt, Mariam's\* husband Omar\* was killed by local radical Muslims. The emotional and spiritual turmoil from his death took its toll on Mariam and her children's mental health – but without the income from Omar, Mariam found that she could no longer afford her children's school supplies, and so their education stopped.

### A hidden persecution

The persecution of our sisters is often hidden – in society, in the home, and in the data. It often takes place behind the seeming respectability of everyday life. Forced marriage, sexual violence and house arrest all take place against the backdrop of normalised behaviour, with little to suggest anything untoward. Sara\* from Iraq was imprisoned in her room without food by her father when he found out she'd become a Christian. After ten days, he told her that she was to marry her stepmother's Muslim nephew in an attempt to "fix" her.

In Nepal, Pramila\* (pictured below) was thrown out of her home by her family when she refused to renounce her faith in Jesus. She eventually married a man who initially said he was happy with her Christian faith, but very quickly changed his mind. "Later, he started verbally abusing me," she says. "In the middle of all this, I became pregnant and had a daughter. After that, he said he didn't need me and he went away and left me."

And finally, while statistics and information are available to demonstrate how much our persecuted sisters are at risk, often this doesn't tell the full story. Victims may hide details to protect their family. In turn, families may be reluctant to tell others for fear of reputational damage that could impact on social standing, work or access to communal resources. Men may be reluctant to give corroborative evidence because it implies that they've failed to protect their family. Furthermore, most



government data collection methods do not show female-specific freedom of religion or belief violations; instead, they aggregate incidents against both genders.

## Will you help our sisters see change?

In many cultures, women do not hold the same value as men. This undergirds much of the persecution faced by our sisters. And in many cases, being a Christian means they are regarded as having even less worth.

Open Doors' vision is that every woman who is persecuted for her faith and gender is seen, valued and empowered to reach her God-given potential. This is the heart behind Open Doors' See. Change. campaign, which seeks to raise support for our persecuted sisters and highlight their plight, not just among Christians, but also those in the corridors of power.

Thanks to your prayers and support, Xuan, Ayesha, Mariam, Sara and Pramila have all received spiritual care and aid from local Open Doors partners. They now know their true value in Christ – and you have the power to make that truth known to more and more women who are counting the cost for their faith in Jesus.

"I find that my life has already changed so much after allowing Jesus to rule my life," Xuan says. "I know that I can directly pray to the Lord and He will answer me. I know that my Lord is alive!"

For more about Open Doors click [HERE](#)



## Prayer and praise

### PLEASE PRAY

Pray that each persecuted Christian woman or girl would be seen, valued and empowered to fulfil her God-given potential.

Heavenly Father, thank You for the courage and perseverance of our persecuted sisters around the world. Draw near to them today to strengthen them and restore them. Remind them that they are made in Your image and that You call them precious and beloved. Refresh their faith and open doors where they can minister the gospel and Your love to those around them. Amen.

### GIVE THANKS

That God is using Open Doors partners to equip persecuted Christian women with livelihood projects so they can support their families.

### SUBSCRIBE

Subscribe to our monthly email to hear stories of courageous faith from the field and hear how you can make an impact for persecuted

Go to <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>

