



Message from our Ministers...

Dear friends,

What is it about February? After the hustle & bustle of Christmas and New Year, frumpy February seems to suffer a character bypass and stubbornly drags its feet while we anxiously wait for better weather and more daylight. Apparently in the UK during February – apart from the obvious Valentine's Day – we can also celebrate British Yorkshire Pudding Day (Feb 4th); National Sickie Day (5th); Ice Cream for Breakfast Day (6th); and Drink Wine Day (18th).

Of course, that doesn't mean that nothing happens at SwanBank in February! All the usual activities continue with the addition of the construction of our new hospitality area in the foyer. We continue to preach the gospel in word and deed, supporting the most vulnerable in our community and caring for our church family and beyond.

As was mentioned in last month's newsletter, throughout Lent we will be setting aside time to pray and focus on our journey with Jesus. Each Tuesday evening, beginning on Tuesday 11th March, we will be gathering from 7pm for prayer, Bible study, discipleship and fellowship. We ask that all small groups attend this, maybe instead of your normal groups. All are welcome and we do encourage as many as possible to come along. It is incredible the difference that attendance at these groups can make, not only to the individual, but equally, the whole church family.



We will also be kicking the whole of Lent off with a day of prayer & fasting on Ash Wednesday (5th March) where the church will be open and resources provided to come and pray between 7am and 7pm. There will also be three 30 minute opportunities for gathered, led prayers at 7.30am, 12pm and 6.30pm.

So what are we doing in February? Well, the encouragement is to prepare for the journey of Lent, by both getting dates in your diary, and also making a decision to commit to attending as many as possible of the events that are happening.

Hebrews 10:23-25 teaches,

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Ruth

9am Service

Each Sunday morning at 9am, between 30 and 40 people meet for a Traditional Worship Service in the Fellowship Room at Swan Bank. We are a friendly group of people aged between 40 and 80+, and there is always a warm welcome waiting for anyone who attends.

We use a mixture of live piano/organ music and recorded video accompaniment during the service and would love to have live music more often.

If you are a keyboard player and think you would be able to offer one Sunday each month, please speak to **Ruth** (ruth@swanbank.org.uk) - to discuss what is involved and to try out the keyboard and style of hymns.



SWAN BANK CHURCH BURSLEM
SUNDAY WORSHIP
9 AM SERVICE

VOLUNTEER PIANIST NEEDED

TRADITIONAL HYMNS & WORSHIP SONGS
ONE SUNDAY EACH MONTH 8:30AM - 10 AM
TO TRY OUT CONTACT ruth@swanbank.org.uk

ALL ROLES ARE SUBJECT TO 'SAFE RECRUITMENT' PRACTICES



New Year City Celebration Update

A really encouraging New Year United Celebration took place at Swan Bank on Sunday

5th January. Despite the snowy weather, it was so encouraging to see so many Christians come together from many different churches to worship & pray for the City in its centenary year. Paul Critchley assembled a band from different churches to help lead a powerful time of worship.

Robert Mountford, the Staffordshire County Ecumenical Officer, reminded people that 2025 is the City's 100th centenary. The first application for city status was originally refused by the Home Office because Stoke-on-Trent had fewer than 300,000 inhabitants - the usual minimum population for city status - even after becoming a federation of six towns in 1910. However, a direct approach to King George V changed that and,

on 5th June 1925, Stoke-on-Trent gained city status in recognition of its considerable contributions to the pottery industry.

The Bishop of Stafford, Matthew Parker, concluded the celebration by bringing a timely message based on the prophecy from Isaiah 60: "Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen on you."

He encouraged us to not to be afraid to look for opportunities to be salt and light in our communities.

Every Blessing, **Lloyd Cooke**



Women's walking group

I was invited along to join the women's walking group after having a conversation about how, as a super introvert, I find it difficult to get to know other people in the Swan Bank family.

Last November however I bit the bullet when I realised that the walk was taking place only a ten-minute drive from Cheadle, where I live. I packed up my daughter for moral support and headed to the meeting place. I quickly realised that my first error was not bringing a coat for myself, so the light drizzle and cooling air meant I was keen to get going. Once the other ladies arrived, we all introduced ourselves and headed for a leisurely stroll along the old train track between Oakamoor and Alton.

It was lovely to be able to chat to people who aren't in my normal 'church circle' and to encourage my 7 year-old daughter to build those social skills as well.

Eventually we arrived at the Ramblers Retreat where a warm outdoor 'potting shed' had been



booked to accommodate all of us, plus furry friends. We spent a good couple of hours chatting and getting to know the others in the group before it was time to head home.

I was made to feel so welcome and would 100% join another local walk if I've got no plans on a Saturday. So, if like me, you find it difficult to get to know others in the church, the women's walking group is a great non-threatening opportunity to mingle, chat, and expand those social circles. And the promise of cake always helps too!!

Jenny Coverley

STOKE ON TRENT MISSION CIRCUIT

We invite you to come along to learn together at a

RISK ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

SWAN BANK CHURCH, BURSLEM, ST6 2AA
TUESDAY 18.02.2025
7PM - 9PM

Speakers :

Thomas Simm	District Safeguarding Officer
Shirley Brooks	Circuit Safeguarding Officer
Elizabeth Whitehurst	Safeguarding Officer
Dave Stubbs	Support Safeguarding Officer

OPEN TO ANY ONE INTERESTED

INCLUDING MINISTERS / PASTORS / SAFEGUARDING TEAM / PROPERTY TEAM / STEWARDS / PASTORAL TEAM / CHILDREN & YOUTH TEAM

To book your place follow the link below or contact your church Safeguarding Officer

<https://swanbank.churchsuite.com/events/tsihdimk>

FOUNDATION SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

For ALL volunteers within the Stoke on Trent Mission circuit, who **MUST** renew every 4 years

Swan Bank Church, Lower Hall
Saturday
8th March 2025
9:30am to 12pm

Book your place ← **CLICK HERE**

[or email liz@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:liz@swanbank.org.uk)
[or email shirley@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:shirley@swanbank.org.uk)

Swan Bank Kids

Swan Bank Kids continues to thrive, and the children and young people particularly enjoyed all the events running up to Christmas, ranging from being part of the church Nativity, to the party afterwards and then onto the Christingle.

We are already well into a new term following the church evening theme of the Fruit of the Spirit and seeing how we can show Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility and Self-Control to others as the fruit of God in our lives.

Live Wires (aged 3-7), Whizz Kids (7-11) and Forge (11-16) all follow the same theme, albeit presented in very different age-relevant ways. We always seeking to learn together in an informal setting about walking with Jesus in a new or deeper way, whilst making time to have fun together and develop both new and existing friendships in our church family.

We do also of course have provision for the under threes within our Stay & Play area. This is in a designated area within the main church auditorium. In addition, a creche is available in the Fellowship Room (where the morning service is also live-streamed) unless there is All-Age Worship. Parents or carers do need to stay with and supervise their children in the Stay & Play area and in the creche in the Fellowship Room.

None of this would be possible without our wonderful team of volunteers – both leaders and helpers. We are however, currently in particular need of those who are willing and able to lead sessions, either on a regular basis or to cover existing leaders when they take a well-earned break. Unlike many churches, Swan Bank Kids runs during the 10:30 service every Sunday of the year, including school holidays, with the only



exception being when we have All-Age worship. Please pray for us as a team of volunteers and consider prayerfully if you could join that team. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me (David), Nick or Shirley (Volunteer Co-Ordinator). Standard safeguarding procedures and documentation would of course then need to be completed.

We would of course love to see even more children and young people coming in to Swan Bank Kids work on a Sunday morning. Parents or carers are very welcome to come in with their child, particularly if it is for the first time – but only if they want to. Do please however, make sure that one of the Swan Bank Kids leaders are aware of any allergies or special requirements. Forms are available for this purpose. We look forward to seeing further children and young people joining in the fun time we have together, learning more about God and our walk with Him.

God Bless

David Potter



February 2025- Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	2 nd February	9 th February	16 th February	23 rd February
Swan Bank	9.00am 10.30am 6.15pm	Worthington Law Stephens	Stephens Stephens Jefferies	Boateng Stephens/A Johnson Stephens 🕒	Stephens 🕒 Stephens 🕒 Cooke
Potter's Church	9.30am 11.15am	Price Price	Price Price	Cooke Cooke	Price Price
Oasis Church	10.45am 6.00pm	Hancock	Tindale	TBC	Community Sunday
Wesley Hall	10.45am	Tattersall	Cooke	Own Arrangement	Tattersall (Baptism)
The Gateway	10.45am	Tretheway	Tattersall	J Johnson	Own Arrangement
Mt Pleasant	10.45am	Tindale	Harrison	Tindale	Wakelin 🕒
Packmoor	11.00am	Dutton	Mason	Leese	Nixon
Village Church	11.00am	Jefferies	Jefferies 🕒	Brooks	Brabbs
Whitehill	10.30am 6.00pm	Brooks Mason	Andrews Cooper	Batho Q&A	Shaw Cooper 🕒

'Wholehearted Monthly' Mission Series Launches

The Methodist Church is thrilled to announce the launch of Wholehearted Monthly, a free, online mission series starting in March 2025 on the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm - 9:00pm. People from all traditions and countries are welcome.

What is Wholehearted Monthly? Think community organising rally meets immersive spiritual laboratory. It's for anyone committed to a vibrant friendship between "Church" and "World" — and a desire for both to flourish. Each month, testimony from local innovators, input from a renowned guest speaker, and wisdom-sharing in networks around Gospel justice, inclusion, evangelism, and growth.

Speakers for the first three gatherings are now public!

Nadia Bolz-Weber is a best-selling author, public theologian and pastor, and is the founder and church planter of House for All Sinners and Saints. (Tuesday 11th March).

Rowan Williams is a theologian, poet and former Archbishop of Canterbury, and is author of fifty



books on literature, politics, and being Christian. (Tuesday 8th April)

Chine McDonald is a writer, broadcaster and author, and is Director of Theos, the religion and society think tank. (Tuesday 13th May)

Get your seat at the online table here:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wholehearted-monthly-tickets-1082365166349?aff=evangelismgrowth>

Hosted by The Methodist Church in Britain and open to all.

Prayer Focus

I have recently discovered the context of Darlene Zschech's song "Shout to the Lord".

Darlene was given this song by God whilst experiencing a cancer diagnosis and treatment. The meaning of the song now has more relevance to me and is more powerful when I sing. The truth of the words have a bigger impact.

"My Jesus, My Saviour" suggests a close bond. The song reminds us that whatever we are facing Jesus is close by and he walks every step with us. He lifts our spirits and gives us his peace.

The words of the song are based on Psalm 100 v1-3

*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.*

So today let's use this song as a prayer, responding with gratitude and love to our Sovereign, ever present Lord and best friend.

My Jesus, my Saviour, Lord, there is none like you; all of my days I want to praise the wonders of your mighty love.

My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength, let every breath, all that I am, never cease to worship you.

Shout to the Lord all the Earth, let us sing power and majesty, praise to the King: mountains bow down and the seas will roar at the sound of your name.

I sing for joy at the work of your hands, for ever I'll love you, for ever I'll stand; nothing compares to the promise I have in you

Amen

Sarah Dobson

Regular Activities at Swan Bank

Sunday

Sunday Night Young Adults – Fellowship Room, 7:30-9:00pm

Monday

Bible Study – Coffee Lounge, 10:00-11:30am

Dementia Activity Group – Coffee Lounge, 1:00-3:00pm

Gospel Choir – Fellowship Room, 7:30-9:00pm
2nd & 4th Mondays of each month

Tuesday

Little Treasures (0-4 years old) – Lower Hall, 9:30-11:00am (*term time only*)

Chatty Café – Coffee Lounge, 10:00am-12noon

Tuesday Club – Coffee Lounge, 1:30-3:30pm

Wednesday

Knit & Natter – Meeting Room 1, 10:00am-12noon

Community Lounge/Foodbank – Lower Hall, 2:00-4:00pm (*To receive a food parcel an E-voucher will be required from a referral agency*)

Thursday

Prayer Time – Prayer Chapel, 9:00-9:30am

Homeless Hospitality – Coffee Lounge, 12noon – 2pm (*until end of March 2025*)

Younger Youth (School years 3-6) – Upper Hall, 5:45-7:15pm (*term time only*)

Youth Club (11-16 years old) – Upper Hall, 7:30-9:00pm (*term time only*)

Saturday

Messy Church (Primary school aged children) – Lower Hall, 10:00am-12noon (*first Saturday of each month*) Breakfast included and only £1 per child!

Women's Walking Group – Rendezvous usually at Swan Bank before going to the start of the walk (*3rd Saturday of each month*). See Liz Thompson for details.

Contact the office on 01782 575129 for further details of all our regular activities

SWAN BANK NOTICEBOARD

**Whitehill Methodist
Community Church
Mid-Week Services**

Whitehill Road, Kidsgrove, ST7 4DS
Every Wednesday commencing at 10.15am

5th Feb. – Rev. Ruth Jefferies
12th Feb. – Rev. Kathryn Stephens
19th Feb. – David Bowers
26th Feb. – Shirley Brooks

**Church Welcome Team Meeting
12:00 Noon, Sunday 16th February**

The Church Welcome team are having a meeting after the 10:30am morning service on 16th Feb. See **Howard Dobson** for any further details.

Dates for your diary

Ash Wednesday 5th March

This will be a day of prayer and fasting with the church open throughout the day from 7am-7pm.

There will also be gathered half hour prayer sessions at - 7am, 12noon and 6.30pm.

Also, each Tuesday starting from the **11th March** onwards, Small Groups are encouraged to replace their usual programme for whole Church Discipleship Gatherings. They will be starting at 7:30 (but tea and coffee will be available from 7pm beforehand).

In addition, on **Saturday 12th April** there will be an Easter Fayre at church. More details to follow in the March edition.

On **17th April (Maundy Thursday)** there will also be a Community Meal at church (booking will be required).

Swan Bank Church, Swan Square, Burslem, ST6 2AA

Office hours:- 10am - 4pm, Tuesday - Thursday



01782 575129



admin@swanbank.org.uk



www.swanbank.org.uk

Sunday 10:30am Service, live stream links:



www.youtube.com/@SwanBank/streams



www.facebook.com/swanbank/?locale=en_GB

Future Articles

If anyone has any stories or articles to be considered for inclusion in future magazines, please contact **Shirley Brooks** or **Nigel Johnson** directly or email :-

officeassistance@swanbank.org.uk.