

SWANBANK

February Newsletter



Message from Kathryn...

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of the SwanBank Newsletter. I hope you are finding this a useful point of contact and helpful in keeping linked in and informed. I am grateful to all who are contributing to the production of this letter.

This month our focus is on pastoral care. June Sargeant approached me earlier in the year to say she felt it was the right time to step down from her role as pastoral secretary. It's good to take the opportunity in this letter to thank June for her work, as we did, officially, at our Church Council zoom meeting before Christmas. Thank you to June for your time, commitment, and organisation in this role.

At the same meeting, we appointed Janet Bagnall as SwanBank pastoral co-ordinator. Thank you to Janet for stepping forward to take on this new challenge and for the years of time offered as safeguarding coordinator, a role Janet has now laid down.

Since this time, a number of people have been working towards creating what Janet has helpfully called a 'Network of Care'. We are looking at how every aspect of the life of SwanBank has or should have a pastoral element to it and building a comprehensive set of processes to help us in our pastoral care. We are very positive about the possibilities and opportunities pastorally as we move forward and would encourage you to think about your role in the pastoral life of the church. This newsletter shares some more information about particular aspects of the 'Network of Care'.

Finally, please know you are prayed for regularly and my hope is that we all know the presence and strength of God as we continue to cope with all that the COVID pandemic brings.

Remember, Jesus promises his presence with us always – this is Good News!

Take care,

Kathryn

Week to Week

Monday - Church Prayer Meeting @ 9.30am

Visit swanbank.org.uk/prayer for the Zoom link.

Tuesday - SwanBank Youth on Zoom @ 7.30pm

For young people aged 11+. Email rachel@swanbank.org.uk for more details.

Wednesday - Lent Bible Study @ 7am

You can find the videos on our Facebook page or YouTube channel.

Friday - SwanBank Podcast with Kathryn & Sam

Find it on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or on our YouTube channel.

Sundays

10am SwanBank Kids Online (swanbank.org.uk/kids)

10.45am Morning Worship (Facebook & YouTube)

6.15pm Evening Worship (Facebook & YouTube)

7.30pm SwanBank Youth Online (YouTube)

SWANBANK



February Newsletter

Testimony

When we first heard from the Government that the country would have to go into lockdown, I remember thinking to myself how strange it will be when everything closes down, I did not think for a minute that it would have such an effect on me as it did. I was struggling with this like a lot of people my age were. I was informed by letters and texts from the Government that I needed to shield, which included remaining at home as much as possible.

Alan & I would normally go to the 9am service at SwanBank every Sunday and were frequent visitors, to the Coffee Lounge. My first thoughts were what am I going to do without Swan Bank as part of my daily life. I was so used to this because the Church had been my second home for the last 60 years and I knew how much it would be missed.

I was asked if I would be interested in taking part in the churches pastoral telephone calls during the pandemic. I was very pleased to accept but at that time did not realise what pleasure I would gain from this myself and how much I would benefit from it myself. I telephone 15 church members each Tuesday and I have made some wonderful friends. We discuss all sorts of things, but mainly how much we miss the fellowship we all shared with our church family. I have never done anything quite like this before, but it has really helped me to overcome some of the problems associated with the lockdown. It has indeed been my privilege to have taken part in the Telephone Pastoral Network.

Rita Taylor

SwanBank Podcast

Each week, join Kathryn & Sam on a Friday for a weekly catch up, and some insight into something we've seen on the news. If you've enjoyed the style of our Sunday evening services, then the SwanBank podcast is definitely something for you to try! We're also putting a weekly sermon up there too in case you want to listen back.

You can find it on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or by clicking the link on our website.

Lent Bible Studies

Join us each Wednesday (starting 24th February) for our Lent Bible Study. This will be an online video series, and you can find the videos from 7am on Facebook & YouTube each Wednesday through Lent. Our theme will be **'The Week That Changed the World'** and we'll be exploring some of the stories of Holy Week. We'd really encourage you to engage with these studies.

Job Opportunity

District Safeguarding Officer
Chester and Stoke-on-Trent Methodist District
£25,350 pa pro rata
(full time equivalent £39,080)
6% Pension Contribution, Home based
24 hours a week

Do you have extensive experience of safeguarding in a voluntary or statutory agency? Are you able to work flexibly and independently, and open to working in the faith sector? If so, this post may be for you.

For an application pack, or more info, please contact Rob Glassonbury
(chester.stoke@btconnect.com)

Closing date: Friday 26 February

Month of Prayer

During the month of February we as a nation are being invited to a Month of Prayer. The Church of England has initiated this invitation and is supported in the initiative by other people of faith. The suggestion is that at 6pm each day a time is set aside for prayer. How each of us engages with pray will be as unique as our relationship to God is unique. So then the invitation to prayer may be formally setting aside time at 6pm in the quiet of your own home or it may be to hold in an intentional way God at the front of your thoughts wherever you are, or for others it will be to continue with the task at hand. God speaks to us in the silence of our being when we wait upon God but God also surprises us by speaking into the everyday situations we find ourselves in. May you be richly blessed by God in your silences and in your activities.

SWANBANK



February Newsletter

Pastoral Network Update

Throughout the Bible, we are told we should love one another and put others before ourselves. Anything we do for others, we are doing for Jesus. In the same way as the nets cast by the disciples spread out and covered all the fish, we believe a Network of Care will cover the Church family and beyond. The whole church will care for each other and for anyone else that needs our help. There are times in our lives when we will need a hand and other times, give a hand.

Support could be offered for a short period of time, to help people through a specific time of need e.g. illness or bereavement or for a longer period. We do recognise we are not an emergency service; our strength may be to signpost to other professionals. Our aim is also for people to become totally independent.

A small strategic planning group is being created and everyone is invited to prayerfully consider where they fit into the Network. We are hoping to develop a network of people who will respond at a point of need.

It may be, for example, (when we are able) visiting those who are in hospital or are house bound for prayer and chat, meeting for a coffee, hospitality support e.g. baking or cooking, delivery of magazines or gifts of support, shopping, gardening, letter writing or telephoning. All of these will be underpinned with prayer. The list of possibilities is endless and very exciting. We're sure more things will be added to the list as time goes by. Please pray that God continues to guide us and shows us how to be His hands and feet here in Stoke on Trent.

"God is our Refuge and strength. A very present help in times of trouble." Psalm 46:1

Janet Bagnall

Network of Care Questionnaire

Click [here](#) to find our Network of Care Questionnaire, which asks some questions about how you might fit into our network of care. We encourage everyone to fill out this questionnaire, even if you're not sure if this is for you! It will really help us grow and develop our work to care for one another.

Walking Blessing

'Teach us to walk in the way of blessings'

There is nothing that lifts my spirits more than getting outside, walking and enjoying God's beautiful creation. I find it a real blessing. During lockdown many have found welcome benefits to well-being from the simple act of walking. Reducing our stress, anxiety and fatigue is wonderful but walking in fresh air also helps with depression, attention and memory loss whilst reducing risk of dementia and cognitive decline. What an amazing list of benefits!

Experiencing God's awesome creation is what ticks the box for me. We have canals, parks, breathtaking countryside so close. Walking on your own is good but having someone to share the moment with can be the real blessing. Hours and miles can go by in a flash while taking in the beauty around us with a friend. If you're struggling to find someone to walk with we'd like to get you in touch with someone. If this is something you'd benefit from contact us using the details below.

Jane Sheeran