

SWANBANK



December Newsletter

Message from the Minister...

Dear Church Family,

As we approach Christmas once again, a question: How are you at the moment?

My conversations and interactions with people currently seem to have a common theme of struggle. It is clear that so many are struggling in so many ways. The usual challenges of life plus the outworking of the pandemic, are taking their toll and it's no surprise that these things are affecting us in deeply significant ways.

People are facing so many challenges: loss, illness, money worries, adversity, anxiety, stress, depression, exhaustion....the list goes on and on. Sadly, one of the by-products of these challenges is that we can end up being quick to criticise and slow to encourage, quick to be negative and slow to be positive, quick to hurt and slow to be kind. Sometimes we might not even realise what we're doing.

As Christians, we are to be those who allow the fruit of the Holy Spirit to grow in us. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self control will mark us out as followers of Jesus. We won't always hit the mark, but our target is clear.

In the current climate, it is wise to expect that most of those we meet with are battling with something at the moment and as the saying goes, "if you can be anything in this world, be kind!"

How might we affect things for the good if we spread positivity, offer encouragement and remind one another of the importance of kindness, empathy and love?

Someone once said "Use your voice for kindness, your ears for compassion, your hands for charity, your mind for truth, and your heart for love." ~author unknown. I'm not sure who said this but I see Jesus in it.

At this special time of year, we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus and acknowledge the difference his coming has made in our lives. With this in mind, I encourage us all to commit to trying to reverse the current painful narrative we seem to see often at present and instead, be quick to encourage and slow to pick fault, quick to be positive and slow to be negative, quick to be kind and slow to hurt.

So many are struggling, so this Christmas and into 2022 let's rise up and offer a different voice into the world and maybe, just maybe, someone might catch a glimpse of Emmanuel, God with us, as we do so.

Some words of Jesus, "by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."

God bless you all this Christmas time and as you journey into the new year.

Kathryn



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Office Opening Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 10am-4pm

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Christmas @ SwanBank

For more information about all these events you can visit www.swanbank.org.uk/christmas.

SwanBank Nativity Service

Sunday 12th December, 10.30am

A great opportunity to see our kids re-enact the Nativity story, followed by our SwanBank Kids Christmas Party.

Let Alice know if you can come and join us!

Carol Singing

Tuesday 14th December, 6pm, Meet at Reception

Come and join us to sing carols around one of our local estates with chocolate coins and an invitation to our Christingle service. Please consider coming and playing your part or donate some chocolate coins!

Christingle Services

**Sunday 19th December, In-Person at 4pm & 5.30pm
Online at 5.30pm**

The best service of the year! We'd really encourage you to invite your friends and family along to sing some carols, make your own Christingle, and hear a relevant message about the truth at the heart of Christmas.

Booking is essential via the website.

Midnight Communion

Christmas Eve, 11.30pm, In-Person Only

A quiet and reflective service to begin our Christmas Day focussed on the story at the heart of it.

Christmas Day Service

Christmas Day, 10.30am, In-Person Only

A family celebration to kick off your Christmas Day. Christmas jumpers encouraged!

Boxing Day Service

Boxing Day, 10.30am, Online Only

Boxing Day was made for pyjamas and leftovers! So make your way down to your sofa and worship with us.

New Year United Celebration

We are joining with Christians across the city to celebrate the New Year on Sunday 2nd January at 6.15pm. Hosted by Kathryn Stephens & Robert Mountford, with a message from Alison Price, we encourage you to join us for this special service.

Christmas Day

As usual, we are gearing up to provide Christmas meals on Christmas Day for those who will be on their own or would otherwise go without. This is such an important part of our outreach every year, and as always there are plenty of ways you can get involved in making it happen.

Volunteer your time

Could you spare an hour on Christmas Day to help on Christmas Day? We are looking for people to pick up guests and bring them into the Centre, deliver meals, and help out in the Centre in a variety of roles to suit all skills and abilities. If you can spare an hour (or more) anytime from 9am – 4pm we would love to hear from you! Please phone the office to find out more.

Give Financially

We think it costs around £10 per person to provide a Christmas dinner. If you are able to donate towards this, then you can visit www.swanbank.org.uk/give and select the 'Christmas Lunch & Outreach Fund', or simply bring some money into the office and make sure it's clearly labelled 'Christmas Day'.

January Update

For the month of January, Sam Taylor will be away from SwanBank taking a four week sabbatical. This will be an opportunity for him to learn and grow by spending lots of time visiting other churches, experiencing worship in different places and meeting with church leadership teams to learn some different ways of working which will hopefully benefit the work we're able to do at SwanBank.

Please be praying for Sam through the month of January as he takes this opportunity to learn, grow, reset and recharge.

Church Clean Up

We would like to put together a crack cleaning team to go through the church after Christmas, ready for the New Year! If you could spare an hour or two please contact the office and let us know when you could be available. Thank you!