



Newsletter November 2023

Message from our Ministers...

Hello!

It is great to be able to share this Newsletter with you. After a short break from our monthly newsletter, we are grateful that it has now been re-established, thanks to a couple of willing volunteers.

One of the things I truly love about Swan Bank is the way people respond to need. We asked for some Pot Noodles and biscuits to provide for those who are homeless and come for some help, we now have enough of both to see us through the next year! We need significant funding to employ a new Youth and Family Evangelist and we have a couple of people who have stepped forward to help to fill in grant applications. We have a wonderful soul who just quietly gets on and weeds the steps and the outside of the church.

In recent months we have had challenges around the building from both a security and ongoing maintenance point of view and we have some fabulous people who've stepped in and stepped up. Just a few months ago the day-to-day care of the building was a real concern to us and even more so as the one person who volunteered some time to help to clean was unable to do so due to a fall. Now we have a housekeeping team of eleven people, some of whom come in very regularly to keep this place clean and well looked after.

While much of this appears, on the surface, to be about a building it is so much more than that. This building is a God given gift and resource from which we can share the love of Jesus. The heart of our mission and purpose is to love God and love others and we do that in so many seen and unseen ways. The fact that we have a church where so many are stepping in and stepping up is just wonderful!



From our work with children and young people, to our work with adults. From welcoming people and stewarding, to the facilitating of our tech and live stream. From the more 'up front' worship and leading roles, to staffing the office. From leading small groups, to preparing rotas. From looking after our finance, to caring for our 'at home' people, praying and other pastoral care. We have a growing group of volunteers which is such a blessing and we love the fact that so many of you are playing a part in the life of Swan Bank. This is nothing new as some of you have served for many years and for this we are deeply grateful while others have more recently stepped up – thank you to each and every one of you - you are all much appreciated.

When each of us play our part in the life of the church, then we find ourselves well placed to be a church which sees others come to know the love of God for themselves - which is a beautiful thing.

If you are reading this thinking there are ways you can be more involved, then please do speak to one of us or Shirley Brooks our Volunteer Coordinator.

God bless you all,

Kathryn and Ruth



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Monthly Prayer Focus

God, as we walk through this life, help us to do so following your ways. May we be kind, loving and caring and so help others to see who you are. When we are tempted to be critical and harsh in our words, remind us Lord, that we can choose a different way; to encourage and build one another up. Help us to be a church that seeks to see the best in each other, and where people know they are loved and welcomed. In Jesus' name – Amen

Team's Corner

A quick snippet from the HKT (Housekeeping Team)!

We formed as a team in August and have grown in numbers quite quickly. Our aim is to work our way through Swan Bank tackling regular housekeeping duties, and planned deep cleans. Swan Bank, as we all know is such a wonderful place, and we want it to look its best for everyone to enjoy in all its glory. As a team we share skills and experiences, there's a fun element, great communication, great company, and we build beautiful friendships.

At Swan Bank we have many different teams offering many ways to help. If you have the time, we have the team and you're very welcome. There is always a place for you to join us – for as little or as much time as you want, the choice is yours. The payment is a six-figure sum and here it is: S-M-I-L-E-S! It really is a pleasure and a blessing to be a volunteer at Swan Bank.

Liz Thompson

Grocery Store Update

Just to say a massive thank you to everyone who donated to Burslem Community Grocery through the Harvest Appeal. We had so many different items to sort through. It was like Christmas for the staff and the grocery members! These donations will go towards feeding our local community and giving them more meal options so that they can enjoy full healthy meals. We rely heavily on donations in the grocery, big or small to help keep our shelves stocked and to keep families fed. If you think you can help, then pasta, rice and sauces are always appreciated!

Georgina Boden

United Celebration Update

A large number of Christians recently gathered at Swanbank for a United Celebration. Worship was led by an ecumenical group called Altar Worship and our own, Kathryn Stephens, spoke passionately about following Jesus. During the service the City Director of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Jon Rouse, was interviewed and highlighted some of the challenges facing the city including four specific issues:

Stoke-on-Trent UNITED CELEBRATION



Jon Rouse
(City Director of Stoke-on-Trent City Council)

1) PRAYER FOR TROUBLED FAMILIES, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO THE HIGH LEVELS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

2) PRAYER FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE - 1 IN EVERY 53 OF ALL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN STOKE-ON-TRENT IS IN CARE

3) PRAYER FOR THE ESTIMATED £25 MILLION WORTH OF SAVINGS THE CITY COUNCIL WILL HAVE TO MAKE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

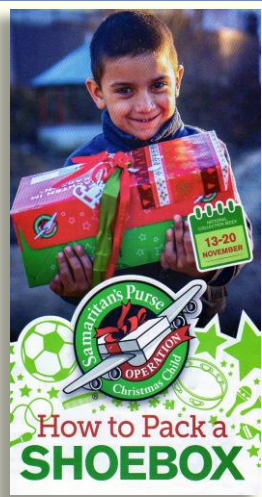
4) PRAYER FOR RESILIENCE FOR ALL THOSE IN LEADERSHIP AT THE CITY COUNCIL & FOR ITS 5,000 WORKFORCE

Watch in full on YouTube (starting at 47 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cj5EWtmNPg0&t=3457s>

Lloyd Cooke



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Christmas Shoeboxes

Leaflets for Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoeboxes are now available from the office. Collection dates for boxes are from 13th to 20th November.

Are You Crafty?

Do you know that we have over 50 church members who are in our 'At Home' group.

These are our members who can no longer physically come to church. It is so important that our 'At Home' members know they are remembered, loved and valued therefore four times a year they are given a hand delivered gift.



This Christmas we'd like to include a handmade heart. On Tuesday 28th November at 7.30pm you are invited to come meet in the Coffee Lounge and help us make these beautiful hearts. Fabric will be provided but if you have additional bits and pieces of fabric, thread, buttons and also equipment, needles etc, then please do bring them along. They don't all have to look the same, but they do all have to be lovely!! There will be lots of laughs and cake served too. This is also a good opportunity to bring a friend along with you!

Swan Bank Kids

This new term in Swan Bank Kids has been a time of change for both the children & young people and the volunteers. We started off with "Move-Up" Sunday where we were delighted to see five children move up from Live Wires to Whizz Kids and three children from Whizz Kids to Forge. They were all eagerly looking forward to "moving up" and are now enjoying their new groups. It has been a time of change for the volunteers as well, particularly with the recent staff changes and we have been pleased to welcome a significant number of new volunteers into the different groups. We are very grateful to all the volunteers, both old & new, for their commitment to this valuable, sometimes challenging, but very rewarding work with our children & young people.

In the sessions themselves, we have been following the church themes, but of course adapted to the world of our younger generation, firstly of giving in all its aspects and then looking at miracles in the early church.

Almost every week we are pleased to welcome new children into the groups as well as the good numbers who come on a regular basis.

David Potter

Swan Bank Links

Church Website :- www.swanbank.org.uk

Sunday 10:30am Service live stream links:-

www.youtube.com/@SwanBank/streams

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



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Engage and Encounter

The COVID 19 pandemic resulted in many people becoming isolated and lonely. When restrictions were lifted, Engage & Encounter was born at Swan Bank.

We provide light refreshments and mid-week activities in the Coffee Lounge for people aged 50+ yrs.

- Chatty Café - We chat, play tabletop games, and enjoy each other's company in a warm and friendly environment.
- Tuesday Club – This is a time of friendship & fellowship, including a guest speaking on a variety of very interesting topics.
- Knit & Natter – Bring along your own projects (knitting, crochet, craft ideas etc.) or just come along and enjoy the company and conversation.

See our weekly activities section for days and times of the different groups.

A story from one of our regular attendees

"After doing a little shopping, I was standing by the carpark of Swan Bank when a gentleman from the church saw me and asked if I was ok. I was a little tired and asked him where I could go for a drink. He said that he knew where I could get a warm drink, showed me into the Coffee Lounge and introduced me to the 'Chatty Café' group who were meeting in there.

I was made very welcome that day...I had a hot drink and joined in the group board game. They encouraged me to join them for a light lunch from the local sandwich shop, and I stayed for the 'Tuesday Club' session during the afternoon.

I now look forward to attending both Chatty Café and Tuesday Club every week – I don't feel so lonely, we chat, laugh, play, listen to, and support each other. I have made some really good friends."

Sue Simcoe

Crocheted Angels Appeal

After the appreciation of the Burslem community for the angels delivered last Christmas, we are busy making a second chorus of crochet and knitted angels to be given out to our neighbours.

We also hope to invite everyone to our Christmas services via a short message attached to angel.

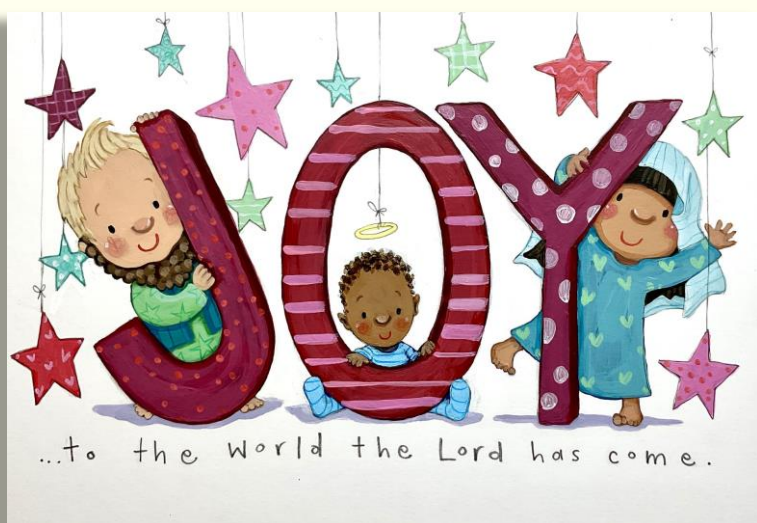
If there's anyone still available to help make or to distribute the angels in December please contact **Jane Sheeran** (or anyone in the pastoral team). Thank you.





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Christmas Cards



“Joy to the world” is my new Christmas card design for 2023 and is a perfect way to send a Christmas greeting which focuses on the joyful reason we celebrate Christmas.

The image will be available in postcard format in packs of 5 and as a signed, limited edition, A5 art print all ready to frame. They will make a fab gift and will be supplied in a sturdy cellophane, cardboard backed envelope and with a free matching postcard where you can write your own message. They are the perfect gift to pop into the post for friends and family far away (though you might like one to keep for yourself!)

Please contact **Ruth Hearson** at ruth.hearson@gmail.com on Facebook or Instagram @ruthhearsenillustrator or see me after the 10.30am service on Sundays.

A large version of the card will be available for everyone to sign in lieu of sending out cards to each other. You could donate the money saved to the church outreach activities over Christmas if you wish.

Weekly What's on at Swan Bank

Sunday

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

Monday

Prayer Time – Meeting Room 1, 9-9:30am

Bible Study – Meeting Room 1, 10-11:30am

Gospel Choir – Main Church, 7:30-9pm *2nd & 4th Mondays of each month*

Men's Bible Study – meeting suspended until the new year

Tuesday

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

Chatty Café – Coffee Lounge, 10am-12noon

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

Tuesday Night Youth (11-16 years old)– Youth Room, 7-8:30pm *(term time only)*

Wednesday

Knit & Natter – Coffee Lounge, 10am-12noon

Foodbank – Coffee Lounge, 2-4pm *(E-voucher required from a referral agency)*

Thursday

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

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

Saturday

Messy Church (Primary aged Children)– Lower Hall, 10am-12noon *(first Saturday of each month)*



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Dates for the Diary

Christmas Fairtrade Stall Sunday 26th November



After the 9:00am and 10:30am services **Ann Worthington** will be hosting a Fairtrade stall where you can buy Christmas gifts, cards and much more!

Please note, Ann can only take cash payments.

Craft Workshop Tuesday 28th November

Craft workshop in the Coffee Lounge starting at 7:30pm. This is to make hearts to give away to our 'At Home' members.



Swan Bank Social Event Saturday 25th November



With Beetle drive




Join us for an evening full of good food, great company, marvellous tunes and lots of laughter

Saturday 25th November 2023

Event starts at 7pm, doors open from 6:30pm

At SwanBank Church - Lower hall



-  **Make sure you get your tickets early as spaces are limited.**
-  **This is a free event however donations are gratefully received.**
-  **When booking your tickets, please make us aware of any dietary requirements.**

To book tickets please speak to a member of the booking team or ring the office during opening hours on 01782 575129

SWANBANK 

Burslem Light Switch On Friday 1st December.




The Burslem lights switch on event starts at 4:45pm. Please come along and support our Gospel Choir in singing Christmas Carols in Burslem. This is a great opportunity for Swan Bank to reach out to the local community. Help is also needed in staffing our Swan Bank Prayer Tree Stall.




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What's on in November - further afield...




Methodist Women in Britain
CHESTER & STOKE-ON-TRENT DISTRICT



LOVE AND LIGHT
To be held at
Wolstanton Methodist Church
on A527, High Street, Wolstanton, ST5 0HS
On
Monday 20th November 2023

Drinks at 10am for 10.30 start.
Please bring your lunch, drinks provided
Please choose two workshops on the booking form
Suggested donation of £5 will be collected on the day.
There will be a short service after lunch, followed by tea and cake



Contact Mavis Bailey for an application form on - mavisab164@gmail.com

The **Methodist Church**
Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District



Church at the Margins
To nurture new Christian communities amongst economically marginalised people

Church at the Margins
A day of exploration led by Deacon Eunice Attwood
(Church at the Margins Officer for the Methodist Church)

Saturday 25 November 2023 from 10:00am to 3:00pm
at Wellspring Methodist Church, Congleton, CW12 3AP
(Lunch will be provided)

Eunice brings over twenty years' experience of ordained diaconal ministry from a variety of contexts, including theological education and city and town-centred ministry amongst marginalised and vulnerable communities, where she helped start and grow many fresh expressions of church. Building on the Biblical connection between evangelism and social justice, Eunice is helping to start a movement of new Christian communities led by people experiencing economic marginalisation.

Please register to attend by emailing Rob
chester.stoke@btconnect.com
by 13 November 2023

Coming up soon...

christians
against
poverty

CAP

CAP Money Coaching
A new course to help you better manage your finances to start in the new year. Contact Howard Dobson via the Church Office on 01782 575129 if interested.

Future Articles

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

assistance@swanbank.org.uk.

Church Office Tel. 01782 575129