



## February Newsletter 2024

### Message from our Ministers...

It is a consequence of the beautiful mathematics (and to some of us therefore an absolute mystery!) of the heavens that our date for Easter changes quite dramatically each year. This is something that the powers that be are looking to change, but for now, and certainly for this year, we find ourselves no sooner having finished celebrating Christmas than we're launched into Lent.

Lent and Holy Week are gifts to us from the heritage and tradition of the church; times of preparation, focus and seeking. Throughout Lent we are reminded of the time that Jesus set apart to be alone in the desert as he prepared himself for his years of leading, teaching and healing. The tradition of the church is that something is given up; a means of drawing closer to God by shifting our focus from the things of this world to gaze more upon God and our relationship with him. During Holy Week, this time of preparation is intensified as we remember the days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

In contemporary society, it seems impossible to imagine that we might stop and take time out. Moreover, as a time of reflection, Lent asks us to do more 'navel-gazing' than we may be comfortable with, or used to; taking stock of our own lives, our fears and failures and seeking ways in which we may be 'better' people. But this is entirely in-keeping with the counter –



cultural message of the gospel and gives us a great excuse to take time for ourselves. This year, at Swanbank, we are journeying through the Gospel of Mark and spending some focussed time on prayer with the opportunity to fast too. There is a sheet available with daily readings and guidance. A key opportunity for our learning and growth will include our Wednesday evening Bible study, starting on Wednesday 21st Feb 7pm coffee, 7.30pm start. Please do join in with this.

May you find blessing in your journey through Lent and Holy Week, through the recognition that Christ died to forgive us our sins on Good Friday and then the celebration of Christ's victorious resurrection on Easter Sunday: the pinnacle of Christian faith.

*Kathryn and Ruth*

### STOP PRESS! - New Member of Staff Appointed

On 27th January we interviewed for the Young People and Family Evangelist post. After a robust and prayerful process, we are very pleased to confirm that Nick Jeffries was appointed. His start date is to be confirmed and we do ask you to pray for Nick as he prepares to step into this calling.



### A Worship Testimony

Having joined Swan Bank in the early 1980s I have seen worship progress from a few Cliff choruses being sung before a traditional service; then being asked to become involved in the first small, acoustic praise band that offered a four-song worship set from Junior Praise; and subsequently evolving into the many diverse worship styles we have today.



I am still learning how to play my part, whether as a member of the congregation, leading on the piano or keyboard, playing the violin in a prayer setting or seeing what can be added through my violin to the wide variety of praise band styles. As I shared with the Tuesday Club recently, whilst being prompted by God, I would not be in the place I am now without the many words of encouragement, scriptures, prayers and

prophetic pictures that have been given to me over the years by members of the Swan Bank Family, so thank you everyone.

I often smile as I recall one particular citywide worship/prayer event that God has used to keep me grounded. That night there were significant challenges to the sound quality, so much so that I stopped playing the violin and worshipped quietly. At one point I heard a lovely saxophone solo but only realised whilst driving home that the small worship team had no saxophone. When sharing this with Paul the worship leader he said it was 'interesting' as at one point he had heard a beautiful violin solo, but when he looked across, I wasn't playing. This serves to remind me that there are other violinists in this world and the next!

I look forward to worshipping with you all this year and discovering what God's plan is for us individually and corporately.

**Megan Potter**

### Community Grocery Store, Burslem

We are an affordable grocery store, where you can get lots of everyday grocery items, working out at less than 42p per item! We sell fruit and veg, bakery items, chilled and frozen items, store-cupboard items, and non-food items too, all at your own personal choice!

Most of our stock is surplus food which means that supermarkets were throwing it away and we've saved it from going to landfill! And also the grocery is open to ALL people. If you're keen to reduce food waste then come and get yourself signed up, where you'll be greeted by

### Community Grocery Burslem

You can get...

- 12 items for £5
- 18 items for £7.50
- 24 items for £10

Items include chilled and frozen, fresh fruit and veg, bakery, shelf and non food items



E-mail [burslem@communitygrocery.org.uk](mailto:burslem@communitygrocery.org.uk)  
for more information

one of our friendly staff. Annual membership is a one-off fee of £5 and you can then start shopping straight away. We look forward to seeing you soon! We are now open Sundays too.

**Georgina Boden** 😊



# SWANBANK

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### Update on New Year's United Celebration – Swan Bank Church

A fabulous New Year's United Celebration was held at Swan Bank on the evening of Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January. Christians from many different local churches gathered to fill the auditorium for a powerful evening together. Kathryn hosted the event and warmly welcomed all visitors. Worship was led wonderfully by Paul Critchley and his band included Swan Bank's Megan Potter and Sam Taylor. Prayers for the churches in the city were led by Lloyd Cooke & Ruth Jeffries. The guest speaker was Robert Mountford, the Staffordshire County Ecumenical Officer, who spoke about the baptism of Jesus and gave a timely challenge that in 2024 we should draw close to God and be open to the working of the Holy Spirit.

**Lloyd Cooke**



### Swan Bank Choir sings for Robbie Williams' birthday!

We were so excited when our Swan Bank Community Choir were asked by Radio Stoke to join in with other choirs to record the song

'Angels', in celebration of Robbie Williams' 50th Birthday! When the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> January arrived, we weren't disappointed! Lots of willing church attenders and friends turned up to join the choir for the recording. It was a real privilege and great fun to sing together.

Our recording will be combined with four other choirs and broadcast on Radio Stoke and social media at 08:45am on Tuesday Feb 13<sup>th</sup>.





### Update on Baptism Service – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January

We had such an amazing and blessed time on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January as we baptised and reaffirmed the baptism of 8 people and welcomed 15 into membership. "I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." - Isaiah 43:1



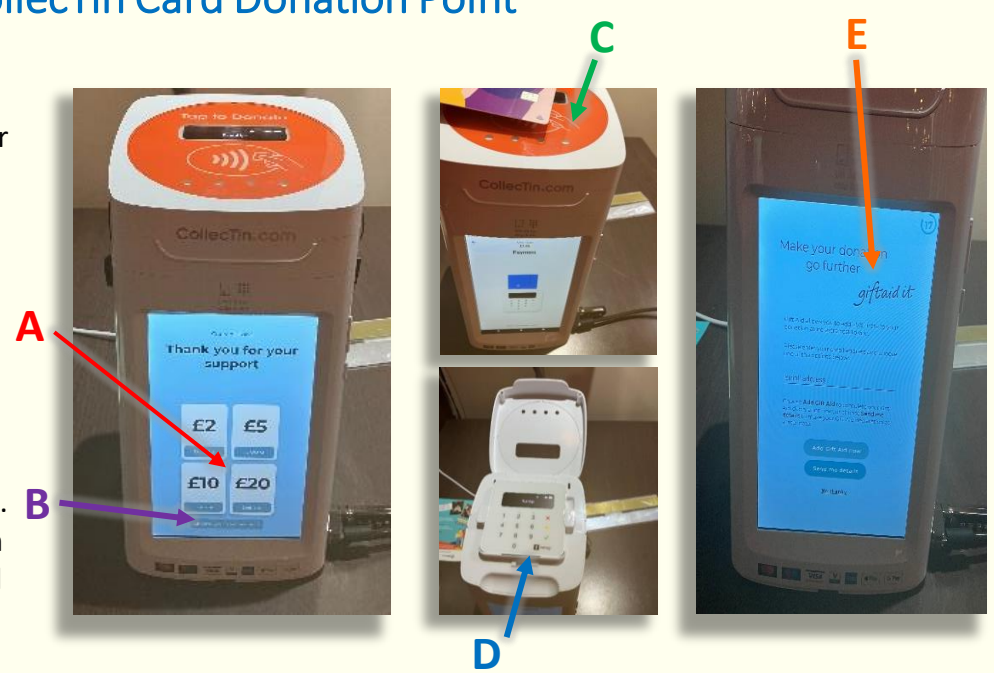
### CollecTin Card Donation Point

Our new card donation point is up and running and it's very easy to use. Either **tap a preset donation amount (A)** or **choose your own amount (B)**

Then either **tap your card on the top of the CollecTin (C)** or **flip open the top lid and insert your card into the reader and enter your PIN (D)**.

#### That's it!

If you wish to give gift aid then **select this option and complete the authorisation (E)**. You will only need to do this once for each card you use. (Please note that the gift aid option is not available for credit card donations)





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### Swan Bank Youth Clubs

Our Younger Youth and Youth Clubs have started back up after the Christmas break, with a freshly stocked tuck shop as well! Free entry and toast every Thursday!



### Regular Weekly Events at Swan Bank

#### Sunday

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

#### Monday

Prayer Time – Meeting Room 1, 9:00-9:30am

Bible Study – Meeting Room 1, 10:00-11:30am

Gospel Choir – Main Church, 7:30-9:00pm

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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

Tuesday Night Youth (11-16 years old)– Youth Room, 7:00-8:30pm (*term time only*)

#### Wednesday

Knit & Natter – Coffee Lounge, 10:00am-12noon

Foodbank – Coffee Lounge, 2:00-4:00pm (*E-voucher will be required from a referral agency*)

#### Thursday

Younger Youth Club (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 aged children)– Lower Hall, 10:00am-12noon (*first Saturday of each month*)



### Dates for the Diary

**Stoke-on-Trent United Celebration**  
6:15pm Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March



**Stoke-on-Trent UNITED CELEBRATION**  
Sunday 3 March - 6.15pm  
Swan Bank Church, Swan Square, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 2AA

Join with Christians from across North Staffordshire for an evening of worship, prayer and fellowship

**Host:** Ruth Jeffries - Swan Bank  
**Worship Leader:** Paul Critchley - Presence Worship  
**Guest Preacher:** Sam Taylor - Saltbox

For more information contact [email@saltbox.org.uk](mailto:email@saltbox.org.uk)

**CITY VISION MINISTRIES** | **WELCOM HOUSE OF SPIRIT** | **SALTBOX** Strengthening Our Communities

**Safeguard Training**

24th Feb (at church) or 18th March (online)

### 'Creating Safer Spaces' Foundation Safeguarding Training

If you need to complete your Safeguarding training due to your role in the church, the following opportunities are available:

**In Person** – Sat 24th Feb – 10am-1pm – Lower Hall :  
<https://swanbank.churchsuite.com/events/rxclmbvf>

**Online** – Monday 18th March 7pm – 9pm -  
<https://swanbank.churchsuite.com/events/gqjrdwv6>

Booking is required

Either book via the links above or contact the office on  
01782 575129

### Weekly Lent Bible Study

Why not join us for our weekly Lent bible study. Running for 5 weeks from Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February to Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March. Meetings start at 7:30pm and will be held in the Fellowship room. All are welcome!



### Potters Church Vacancy



**WE ARE LOOKING FOR A CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LEADER**

**PT 28 HOURS PER WEEK SALARY £18,250 FOR (£24,442 FTE)**

Do you have vision and drive to enable children to flourish and grow in faith knowing the risen Jesus Christ? Potters Church is a thriving Christian fellowship based in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent. ST2 8DD

**HEAD TO [POTTERSCHURCH.CO.UK](https://potterschurch.co.uk) FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND AN APPLICATION PACK**



# SWANBANK

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What's on in February/March - further afield...

 **Methodist Women in Britain**  
for women, for justice, for Chris.

### District MWiB Day



**Building Bridges in Rome**  
with **Tim and Angela Macquiban**  
Former mission partners in Italy

**Wednesday 21st February 2024**  
from 10am to 3.30pm

at **The Heath Methodist Church**  
Vista Road, Runcorn WA7 4PB  
Parking available at the church

Please bring a packed lunch, drinks  
provided

Resources stall

All are welcome



**We believe in life before death**

**NORTH STAFFS CHRISTIAN AID  
SPONSORED WALK**

To be held at  
**TITTESWORTH WATER**  
*(Three miles north of Leek, just off the A53)*

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**WALK STARTS AT 10.00am**

The walk will be launched by  
**The Bishop of Stafford**  
and the  
**Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent**  
Special guest the High Sheriff of Staffordshire  
**Mrs Victoria Harvey**

Sponsorship forms and more information from your local church or  
phone John Bamford (01782 516137) or contact Mike Willmot at  
[mwillmot@talktalk.net](mailto:mwillmot@talktalk.net)

By kind permission of Severn Trent Water

Please see **Fiona Willis** ([fionawillis@live.co.uk](mailto:fionawillis@live.co.uk)) for  
further details if you are interested in doing the walk  
or sponsoring someone who is.  
Last year the walk raised over £30,000!

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

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



01782 575129



[admin@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:admin@swanbank.org.uk)



[www.swanbank.org.uk](http://www.swanbank.org.uk)

Sunday 10:30am Service, live stream links:



[www.youtube.com/@SwanBank/streams](http://www.youtube.com/@SwanBank/streams)



[www.facebook.com/swanbank/?locale=en\\_GB](http://www.facebook.com/swanbank/?locale=en_GB)

### 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 :-

[officeassistance@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:officeassistance@swanbank.org.uk).