



November Magazine 2025

Message from our Ministers...

Hello!

I've been thinking recently about how busy and lively our church building is, and I just wanted to share a bit of that with you. I know it was very sad when the Coffee Lounge closed – it was such a lovely space where many friendships were formed over a cuppa and a chat. But when one door closes another often opens and the wonderful reality is that the Coffee Lounge – and in fact the whole building – is now being used more than ever before.

These days the Coffee Lounge is filled with all sorts of activity: Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Chatty Café, Tuesday Club, Hope and Hospitality ministry, the Dementia Activity Group, SwanBank Kids, Messy Church, Number 11, and more besides. And that's just the Coffee Lounge - the rest of the building is regularly filled with activity too. It can actually be quite hard to find a free slot in the diary sometimes!

What a great problem to have. It's a real sign of God's calling that our church is being used so fully to serve and bless our community. Every group that meets here is an opportunity for us to show a warm welcome. We also have opportunities to offer a listening ear, a place to belong and share the hope of Jesus Christ – sometimes in words, often through simple acts of kindness, presence, and hospitality. Our building is truly a hub of life and hope, and that's something to give thanks for. By the grace of God, we are so much more than a Sunday Church! Always, Jesus is our guide and inspiration.

Alongside this, I want to let you know that I will



be taking my sabbatical between Christmas and Easter. Every seven years, ministers are to take space for rest, reflection, learning and renewal – a period for spiritual and personal growth so that we can continue to serve effectively in the years ahead. I'll be away for twelve weeks, from the end of December and returning in time for Holy Week and Easter. I will miss being an active part of the life of the church during that time, but I'm really grateful for this opportunity to step back for a short while, and I trust I'll come back refreshed and ready for whatever God has in store next. We are blessed with a wonderful staff team and many dedicated volunteers who serve so wholeheartedly and so I can go, confident that the ministry of SwanBank will continue strongly.

Thank you for your prayers and for being such a loving, hardworking and welcoming community – it's a joy to be part of all that God is doing here. Thank you too for all the ways you make this church such a vibrant, caring, and Christ-centred community.

With love and blessings,

Kathryn

Our Network of Care Stories



Hilary Gregory

Hello,

I am still living in Sneyd Green and get out and about, shopping with my daughter and having lunch out with family and friends. I really enjoy Rachel coming to see me, we have lots of laughs and the occasional serious conversation!

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."
Hebrews 13:2



Marg Dunleavy

Hi, It's Marg Dunleavy,

I'm still living in Burslem, with my brother Terry, just around the corner from church. I enjoy reading detective stories and solving a good crime.

Terry and I go out and about three times a week shopping and for a coffee. Margaret Brown is my Pastoral Link, and we spend many a time reminiscing and putting the world to right.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13

Regular Activities at Swan Bank

Sunday

Sunday Services at 9am, 10:30am and 6:15pm.
Sunday Night Young Adults – Fellowship Room, 8-9pm.

Monday

Bible Study – Coffee bar, 10-11:30am.
Hope & Hospitality, Soup Kitchen – Coffee Lounge, 10am-12noon.
Dementia Activity Group – Coffee Lounge, 1-3pm.
Gospel Choir – Fellowship Room, 7:30-9pm
2nd & 4th Mondays of each month

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.

Wednesday

Friends in Fellowship (**was Knit and Natter**) – Meeting Room 1, 10am-12noon.
Changes – Coffee Lounge, 10am-1pm.
Community Lounge/Foodbank – Lower Hall, 2-4pm

Thursday

Prayer Time – Prayer Chapel, 9-9:30am.
Hope & Hospitality, Soup Kitchen – Coffee Lounge, 10am-12noon.
Younger Youth 'NOISE' (School years 3-6) – Upper Hall, 5:45-7:15pm (*term time only*).
Youth Club 'PULSE' (11-16 years old) – Upper Hall, 7:30-9pm (*term time only*).

Saturday

Messy Church (Primary school aged children) – Lower Hall, 10am-12noon (*first Saturday of each month*) – Breakfast included and only £1 per child!
Women's Walking Group – (*3rd Saturday of each month*). See Liz Thompson for details.

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

A Letter to the Church from Petra and Mickey

Dear Church,

I know that a few people have noticed that Sunday mornings have been a bit quieter recently, as Mickey and I have not been there. I wanted to explain where we have gone. Firstly, I want to thank you all for all the love, care, support and understanding you have all given us since Mickey arrived 3 years ago. It has meant so much, as I know it isn't a universal experience for people with children who can be challenging. Everyone in leadership and kids work have also gone above and beyond to help Mickey settle in and have a good experience of church, and have largely succeeded in that, and I couldn't ask them to do more.

However, there is one thing they can't do, and that is make the church smaller. The reason Mickey would run around the church is because he was overstimulated and overwhelmed by so many people, so when I found out a school friend went to another, smaller, church we decided to try it. Mickey went from not wanting to come to church to asking to go every week. That church wasn't as welcoming as we had hoped, but it made me realise that he needed a smaller church. So, we are looking around at some other churches and would appreciate your prayers that God would lead us to the right one for this season.



We still call Swan Bank "our church" and will show up from time to time. We will be at the Christingle even if I have to drag him there!! Hopefully, one day, when he is older and better able to manage being with so many people without becoming overwhelmed, we will come back. I hope so, but in the meantime, know that we still love and miss you all.

Petra and Mickey.

November 2025 - Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	2 nd November	9 th November Remembrance	16 th November	23 rd November	30 th November 1 st in Advent
Swan Bank	9.00am 10.30am 6.15pm	A Johnson A Johnson Stephens 🕯️	Mason Stephens Stephens/Jeffries	Worthington Stubbs Taylor	Stephens 🕯️ Stephens 🕯️ A Johnson	Wakelin Taylor Stephens
Potter's Church	9.30am 11.15am	Price Price	Price Price	Hancock Hancock	Price Price	Price Price
Oasis Ch	10.45am	Davies	Cooke	Nixon	Davies	Sproston
Wesley Hall	10.45am	Boateng	Hancock 🕯️	Tattersall	Own Arrangement	Nixon
The Gateway	10.45am	Wakelin S	Tattersall	Brooks	Tretheway	Leese
Mt Pleasant	10.45am	Commemorative Service at 2:30pm	Dutton	Tindale	Tindale	Stephens 🕯️
Packmoor	11.00am	Stephens 🕯️	Tindale	Boateng	Wilshaw	Wakelin 🕯️
Village Ch	11.00am	Cooke	Jeffries	B Barber	Brabbs	Law
Whitehill	10.30am 6.00pm	Leese Songs of Praise- Glynis Cooper	Cooper 🕯️ Cooper	Chapman Cooper Q & A	Andrews Cooper 🕯️	Cooke Cooper

What a Journey in the Community Grocery!



At the end of November 2025, I will have been in post for 12 months, and what a journey it's been! For the past 16+ years I have worked in the community supporting people, arranging courses, organising trips, running a luncheon club and putting on events across the North end of the city and even worked at Alton Towers. But the one thing I'd never thought about was working in retail, However, God had different ideas.

For the first few weeks I relied heavily on volunteers and Georgina for help and support. I spent a lot of time learning about how the Grocery worked, getting to know the volunteers and customers, building on the foundation that Georgina had laid. One thing I learnt very quickly was the importance of prayer and praying daily for the work of the Grocery. The verse from Zechariah 4:6, was laid on my heart – *"Not by might nor by power but by my spirit said the Lord"*. This was a reminder to me that I could not do this work in my own strength but only by leaning on God's grace and the power of his Spirit.

I have a great team of volunteers who support me and the work of the grocery. This enables me to network and promote the Grocery. One agency we work with is the Literacy Trust. They provide us with reading books for children and adults, which we give away for free with every shop. Their work inspires children and adults to enjoy reading and helps parents to support their

children's literacy skills.

The community grocery is more than just a shop. It's a place to find food at affordable prices, a place to find friendship, hope and support. These are 2 stories from members of the grocery.

"Thank you so much for our tickets to see Circus Starr at the Victoria Hall. My daughter loved it and asked when we could go again. I also kept it a surprise as I had my dad's funeral that day, so I was in two minds whether to go, but glad we did. It was a total pick-me-up and properly cheered my little girl up. It was very S.E.N.D friendly and very welcoming and entertaining. Evie really liked the clown and the hula hoops and especially when she could get up and dance. This was a great family event and will recommend it to anyone. Thank you so much and I can't wait till next time."

"I was recommended a two-week course through the Community Grocery run by Howard. It was really enjoyable and very educational. I now think about what I buy and what I am cooking. I now cook more meals for my family with healthy fresh produce and less snacking in between."

Every day is different, hard work but very rewarding. I look forward to the next 12 months and thank God for pouring his blessing over the work of the Community Grocery.

Nan Hulse



P.S. We're having a prayer evening for the Grocery on Monday 24th Nov. It'll be from 7:30pm to 8:30pm. Please see me for further details.

Fairtrade (What is it?)



Fairtrade is giving a FAIR PRICE to farmers or crafts people. It includes a SOCIAL PREMIUM for the farmers' community needs e.g. health, education, sanitation and transport. I will be hosting stalls at church on Sunday 23rd November and Sunday 7th December, at 10am and 12 noon on both days. I'll

also have a stall at the Church Christmas Fayre on Saturday 22nd November. Supporting the sales means you are helping to make a difference to those who live in extreme poverty in Africa, Asia & South America.

Ann Worthington



Volunteering in the Soup Kitchen

My wife Hazel and I have recently retired, and we were looking for a volunteer opportunity at Swan Bank. Keith Stubbs approached me and asked if I would consider the soup kitchen, and after much prayer and discussion we decided to try it.

After an initial session we agreed that the soup kitchen was the ideal place for us. We received a warm welcome, which made us comfortable and eager to join this exceptional service. This is a new area of community work for us, but we now feel confident in our role.

I particularly enjoy being 'front of house', serving meals, making refreshments, and engaging in conversations with the guests and team members. Hazel is happier behind the scenes, sometimes preparing the sandwiches for the take-away-bags or washing the dishes and ensuring there is enough toast for all!

Working with the team is extremely rewarding. It is great to see everyone coming together, using their time and talents to provide such a necessary and worthwhile service to the community. We work in a welcoming and easy-going environment, and we take pleasure in being team members.

Meeting the guests has highlighted for us the great need in our city. Speaking to them has helped me appreciate the circumstances and challenges they face, and to be grateful for all we take for granted. It is a privilege to hear their stories and to support them to the best of my ability.

The soup kitchen provides a welcoming and secure space that meets guests' physical needs, while also giving them the chance to feel kindness and acceptance from those around them. We hope their time there meets their expectations as it has met and fulfilled ours.

We can recommend volunteering as it is both rewarding and entertaining but can also be hard work. We feel we have been called to be part of this blessed service. Thank you, Keith, for planting the seed!

If you have any available time and are interested in volunteering, consider joining us. Who knows, the soup kitchen may just be the place for you – you have nothing to lose and plenty to gain! With Blessings,

Hadge Lawton



Advent Calendars



Advent calendars vary so much nowadays. When I was small, I enjoyed opening the windows on a stable scene or a Christmas

tree and I was excited to see small Christmas themed pictures. As our children grew up, chocolate advent calendars were very popular. We also had a calendar of a row of small Christmas stockings into which you put your own gifts - we filled it with fun-sized chocolate bars, coins, texts with Bible verses (telling the Christmas story as we travelled through December). We also had notes with 'favours' written on them e.g. choose what we would all have for tea, one extra hour on the computer (as the children shared access to a computer at that time), select a family activity or stay up for an

extra hour. I have seen advent calendars now with more sophisticated gifts at far greater cost offering a different perfume every day! You will have seen many others.

Last year we received a lovely Advent of Change calendar, which funded multiple charities raising awareness of their work. The giver had bought this calendar, which had 24 charity donations included in the price. We opened the doors each day to discover which charity we had helped and one way it had made a difference. We thought this was a super gift, helping to make the world a more fair, equal and sustainable place. For further information see www.adventofchange.com

Julia Hatcher



Pastoral Network of Care Supporting New Mums

Having a baby is exciting but also a huge change and upheaval in a family's life. It's an opportunity for us, as a church family, to show our support and to celebrate the new arrival!

We support new mums and families during pregnancy and up to two weeks after delivery. A phone call of congratulations at the beginning is supplemented by offers of practical help such as hospital lifts, advice and emotional support. I am a midwife by trade but will always signpost to the most appropriate Health Care professional and try not to cross professional boundaries in this role.

At delivery, a card is sent by me on behalf of our SwanBank family to welcome the new arrival. About two weeks after delivery, I visit the family at home taking a gift from our church family.

This currently consists of a porcelain heart keepsake, a baby blanket (knitted by congregation members), a handmade soap for the new mum and a giant bar of chocolate for dad. Any existing siblings enjoy a large pack of chocolate buttons, so they feel included and not forgotten.

I also liaise with Rachel Barnett who organises hot meals to be cooked and delivered by congregation members for the first ten days after they come home. This is especially appreciated at a time when they are exhausted and adjusting to sleepless nights with a new baby in the house.

All this demonstrates our love, support and practical help as a church during those early days of adjustment.

Dawn Adams



Prayer Focus - The Power of Why!

"Why daddy, are clouds white?"

"Why do I need my seatbelt on, daddy?"

"Why can't I fly, daddy?"

"Why do I need to wear socks?"

As you can tell, my youngest boy Jakobi is in the 'why' phase of life at the minute. It's endless and sometimes very funny, but also at times head-scratching. Yet it makes me think that, as adults, we often lose that curiosity. We drift into habits, routines, even patterns of faith without really asking *why*.

Jesus never lived like that. He was the master of intention. His movements, His words and His posture were all shaped with deep purpose. Every encounter was an opportunity to point towards His Father and His calling.

Tyler Staton, in his book *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, puts it this way: "Jesus was intentional and interruptible. There's a word for that posture: unhurried. Hurry is the great enemy of the spiritual life. Why? Because hurry kills love. Hurry hides behind anger, agitation, and self-centeredness, blinding our eyes to the truth that we are God's beloved and she is sister, he is brother."

Jakobi's questions force me to pause and reflect. Why do I do the things I do? Why do I pray (or not pray)? Why do I give time, or fail to give time, to those who matter most? His curiosity reminds me to become less hurried, more present.

That's not easy in today's world. Our phones buzz constantly, sporting schedules fill weekends, work deadlines creep ever closer. Distractions pile up. Yet discipleship isn't about squeezing God in around the edges — it's about recovering our *why*: loving God and loving neighbour with intention. So maybe Jakobi has it right. Maybe one of the healthiest things we can do in our walk with Jesus is to recover the childlike habit of asking *why*.

"Lord Jesus, You lived with intention, yet never in a hurry. Teach us to slow down and ask the deeper why in our lives. Strip away distractions that cloud our love for You and for others. Give us curiosity like children, patience to notice Your presence, and courage to live with purpose. May our every step, word, and choice point towards Your Father, and may our lives reflect the love that never fails." Amen.

Ali Johnson



Knowing God

Hi, my name is **Linda Price**, and I live in Middleport. I have 4 wonderful boys and 10 beautiful grandchildren. I used to work in a care home but had to retire due to ill-health.

I have always believed in God and as a child I went to St Paul's church in Dalehall. I used to sing in the choir (not a clue how). As an adult I feel ashamed to say I drifted from faith. God took the back burner in my life while I focussed on my children, work and looking after my parents.

I prayed so hard when I became very ill with multiple problems and found myself close to death a few times. I spent months in hospital on different occasions. During one of those times, a doctor said to me that I was a miracle. That really hit home! I knew God had not forgotten about me. He had answered my prayers and had other plans for me.

When I lost my mum and my best friend, I knew I needed God back in my life. I believed in God but I didn't 'know' Him, and there's a big difference. Now I know God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. It's like I have fallen in love for the first time. My whole days are full of God, the love of my life and I'm on cloud nine.

Swan Bank is where my mum's funeral took place. Ruth was very supporting and kind. Ruth and Kathryn are both lovely and this helped me to decide to choose Swan Bank as my place of worship. I have met some lovely people.

In Psalm 46, *'Be still and know that I am God'* helps me to bear my episodes of illness.

In Isaiah 53 v 5-6, *'But he was pierced for our rebellion, cursed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed'*. What a mighty gracious God we have. It breaks my heart to know how much God loves us.

I was baptised on Easter Sunday and was very blessed as it was on the day our Lord and Saviour rose.

Upcoming Event in the District

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

Watching and Waiting in Advent



A Quiet Day led by Revd Helen Kirk

Saturday 6 December 2025
10:00am to 3:30pm
at The Oblate Retreat Centre
Wistaston Hall, Crewe, CW2 8JS

Lunch will be provided
Retreat cost £10 per person

Please book with Rob via chester.stoke@btconnect.com
stating any special dietary requirements or access needs

Carol Singing in Local Care Homes

Would you like to join us singing carols in our local care homes? Since space is limited in the venues, please register your interest with me at shirley@swanbank.org.uk. The dates and venues are -

Mon 1st Dec. 11am - GOLDENPARK, Cobridge
Fri 12th Dec. 11am - BRINDLEY COURT, Longport
Mon 15th Dec. 10:30am - CAMOYS CT, Cobridge
Fri 19th Dec. 11am - GOLDENDALE, Tunstall
Fri 19th Dec. 2pm CHATTERLEY CT, Chell Heath



Shirley Brooks

SWAN BANK NOTICEBOARD

It would be very helpful if bags of any donated clothing are labelled for the use of the Hope & Hospitality team, when they are left at the church. This helps to ensure they end up in the right place! Also, our supplies of Pot Noodles are running very low as we give out many during each week, especially with the cold weather upon us. Many Thanks.

City Prayer Breakfast
Sat 29th November
from 8-10am



Sat 29th November
St. Mary's Trentham,
Trentham Park Drive (off
Whitmore Road), Trentham,
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 8AB

Contact

email@saltbox.org.uk
for more information



Whitehill Methodist Community Church
Wednesday Mid-Week Services in November

5th Nov - Mrs Ann Worthington
12th Nov - Pastor Alison Price
19th Nov - Martyn Leech
26th Nov - Rev. Peter Hancock
Whitehill Road, Kids Grove,
ST7 4DS, commencing at 10.15am.
All welcome!

Answers to Prayer

We'd love to hear about any experiences that you may have with regards to answers to prayer. Or, if there are any good news stories that you'd like to share, then please contact either Shirley or Nigel and we'll hopefully be able to include them in future editions of the Magazine.

OCTOBER 2025

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HOSPITALITY & HOPE
AT **SWANBANK** 

As Winter draws in, our stock of clothes is depleting. Please can you consider whether you can donate any other following items:

MEN'S

Boxers - medium / large
Joggers - medium / large
Coats - warm and/or waterproof
Hoodies - medium / large

WOMEN'S

Knickers - sizes 10, 12, 14
Joggers / jeans - sizes 12, 14
Coats - warm and/or waterproof

FOOD

Pot Noodles - Beef & Tomato / Chicken & Mushroom flavours only please!
Wrapped chocolate biscuits (kitkat/penguin type)
Bag of sugar

Gateway Coffee Morning, Goldenhill

The next monthly coffee morning will be on Saturday 8th November from 10am to 12noon. Everybody is welcome!

Foundation Safeguarding Training

The next course will be via a Zoom on-line session on **Tuesday 9th Dec. 19:00-21:00.** Please book via Shirley Brooks using shirley@swanbank.org.uk

Church Events or Articles for the Magazine

If there are any church groups or events (at Swan Bank or even further afield) that you would like advertising on the noticeboard or if you have articles for the Magazine, then please contact either **Shirley Brooks** or **Nigel Johnson**



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 or



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



SWAN BANK **CHRISTMAS** NOTICEBOARD

CHRISTMAS AT SWANBANK

22ND NOVEMBER**Christmas Fayre 11am-2pm**17TH DECEMBER**Advent Bible Study 7.30pm-9pm**3RD DECEMBER**Advent Bible Study 7.30pm-9pm**18TH DECEMBER**Family Film Night food at 5.30pm**5TH DECEMBER**Burslem Lights Switch On 5.15pm**21ST DECEMBER**Traditional Carol Service 10.30am**6TH DECEMBER**Christmas Messy Church 10am-12pm**21ST DECEMBER**Christingle 4pm and 6pm**10TH DECEMBER**Advent Bible Study 7.30pm-9pm**24TH DECEMBER**Christmas Eve Communion 11.30pm**15TH DECEMBER**Carols in the Community 6.30pm**25TH DECEMBER**Christmas Day Celebration 10.30am**
WWW.SWANBANK.ORG.UK

Christmas Treats!

It's that time of the year where we're starting to prepare for our Christmas activities! As part of that, it would be great if you could buy a box of sweets (the usual suspects – Celebrations, Quality Street, Roses etc..) that the church can then use over the Christmas period.



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Jon Boulton is pulling together a team to put up our church Christmas decorations and Christmas tree on Thursday 27th November (from 7pm onwards). If you are interested, then can you speak to Jon who would be very grateful for any help you can offer.

KIDS
ACTIVITIESFACE
PAINTING

Christmas FAYRE

Saturday 22nd November

11am-2pm

SwanBank Church, Burslem,
ST6 2AASANTA'S
GROTTOCAKE
SALECHOIR
PERFORMANCE

STALLS

Something to test those brain cells!

Nativity Sudoku

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STABLE



MANGER

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JOSEPH

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