



## December Magazine 2025

### Message from our Ministers...

And once again, Christmas is upon us before we've even blinked! The year always seems to gather pace as December approaches, and suddenly we find ourselves surrounded by lights, carols, and that lovely sense of anticipation that Advent brings. I can't complain too much — I love all things Christmassy, especially the twinkly-ness that brightens our longer, darker nights.

But I'm also mindful that those same dark and cold nights bring real challenges. Isolation can feel heavier, and for those who are rough sleeping or facing hardship, winter magnifies every difficulty. One of the things I treasure about our church family is that we hold together both the joy and the responsibility of the season: we celebrate the sparkle, while remembering the One who is the Light of the World, and doing our best to meet the needs of the vulnerable in His name.



This year at SwanBank, our Advent and Christmas theme is "Gift." Throughout December we'll be exploring the generosity of God, who gives Himself

to us in Jesus — the greatest gift we could ever receive. We'd love you to join us for the Advent Bible Studies as we gather around scripture and reflect on the wonder of God's love shown in Christ.

Our Christingle service is also shaping up to be **a lot** of fun as we discover that Jesus is the greatest gift — with help from an elf or two!



Do come along, grab some invites to share - bring friends and family. Gifts come in all shapes and sizes, and many don't come wrapped. The time we give, the care we show, the kindness we offer — these are gifts too.

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, how might you embody the love of Christ and be a gift to others this Advent? And just as importantly, how might you recognise and give thanks for the God-given gifts that others are to you?

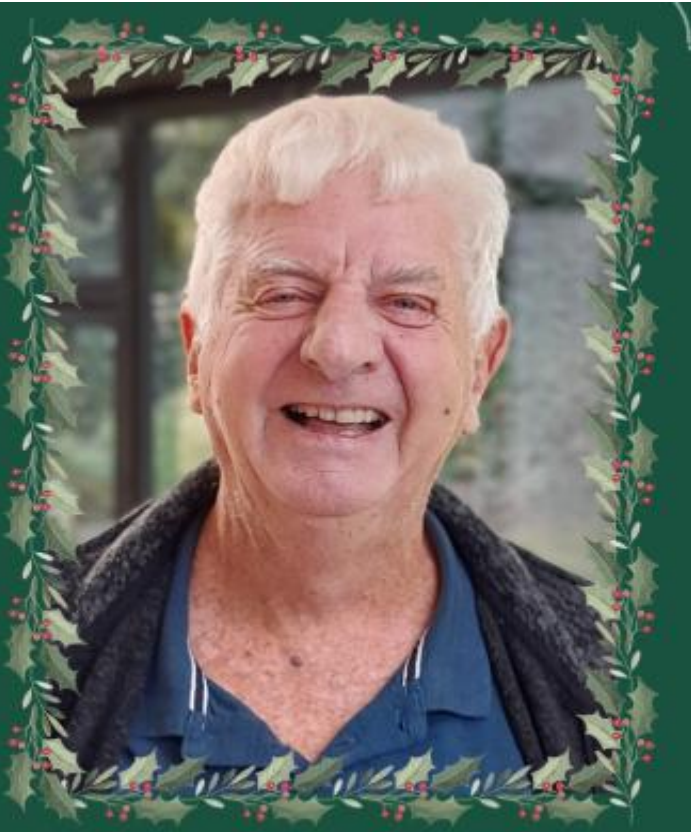
*Ruth*

It is also with a strange mix of heady joy and deep sadness that I write this note to you all. It was announced on Sunday 30th November that, despite planning to remain here in the Stoke Mission Circuit for a further three years, I have accepted a new post as Connexional Worship Renewal Team Leader. This is a national post which will mean that I have a leadership on worship as a whole across the British Methodist Church, particularly Music and Preaching: resourcing, delivering and training (and probably more that I haven't discovered yet!!) I did not want to leave here yet, but when a door that feels like it has your name on it presents itself — you have to push the door, even if the timing isn't the best. I do believe that this is a role in which I can make a big impact across Methodism and absolutely plays into not only my gifts and skills, but also my passions.

As a minister, the role still works on the basis of 'stationing' which means that I will still be here until August 2026, at which point I will cease to be a minister in the circuit. However, we have negotiated with the Connexion to allow us to continue to live in the area for a further year so that Abby can finish her GCSEs, and it also means that Nick can continue to work at SwanBank for a further year. We will then be moving to London in August 2027.

Of course, there are conversations already happening about what this means for the circuit and the churches within which I particularly minister and we will absolutely keep you in the loop about what things look like moving forward. But for now, please hear my gratitude to you all...and — I've not left yet, God always has work for us to do...so let's crack on!! *Ruth*

## Our Network of Care Stories



Rev John Hibberts

Hello, my friends and fellow members at SwanBank church. Like many of you, I am feeling more shut in and certainly feeling less active. It's been 18 years since I retired with my wife and wonderful partner in life, Val, who sadly passed away three years ago. I am now in my early 80's, living alone but fortunate to have my children and grandchildren along with many great friends. I do feel more on the receiving end of life whereas before I was much more often at the other end.

I do not want you to feel alone but, instead, loved and so much a part of a family. Our Pastoral care team at the Mission want you to know that everyone cares for you and that you are special. You are never alone. Of course, God cares, and we in our care team must always reflect His love. I do so hope we succeed!

Speaking as a widower now, I think about the widow mentioned by Jesus who bought her gift to the Lord. I think not so much about the actual gift but about her circumstances and whether she had a family who cared for her. The amazing thing was that I don't think she felt lonely at all, though she would often find herself on her own. She certainly loved God, and I feel that she knew He was very close to her and very much a part of her family. I do so hope that all who read these words, like the widow in Jesus' day, never feel alone but know that they belong to God.

LOVE to everyone and God bless.

John Hibberts

## Regular Activities at Swan Bank

Sunday

Sunday Services at 9am, 10:30am and 6:15pm.

Sunday Night Young Adults – Fellowship Rm, 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 *2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month*

Tuesday

Little Treasures (0-4 year olds) – 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

The Edge (School years 7-11) (**a new group**) – 7-8:30pm (*term time only*). See Nick for details

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*). See Nick for details

Youth Club 'PULSE' (11-16 year olds) – Upper Hall, 7:30-9pm (*term time only*). See Nick for details

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 – (*3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month*). See Liz Thompson for details.

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



### Volunteering at the Community Grocery

Hello my name is Dellah, and I've been volunteering at the Community Grocery since November 2022.

A friend of mine had been using the shop and told me about it, after I came to have a look for myself, I became a member and also started to volunteer the following week.

Volunteering at the grocery has enhanced my life by meeting all kinds of people. I have made some great friends with the other volunteers and the grocery itself helps with my weekly shopping.

Through volunteering I have been introduced to Swan Bank, and I really enjoy their bigger gathering like the Christingle service. I was also invited to celebrate the wedding of Georgina and Jamie. Through volunteering at the grocery it also opened an opportunity to volunteer in the Soup Kitchen on Monday mornings.

**Dellah**



### Pastoral & Outreach Vacancy

 The **Methodist** Church

The Dane and Trent Circuit  
Seeks a

#### Pastoral and Outreach Worker

Part-time (10 hours a week) £7,072 pa

The role requires a committed Christian to provide pastoral ministry in two small churches in the Congleton area, and to lead the congregations in community outreach, in collaboration with the Minister in pastoral oversight.

**For further information and an application pack please email:**  
office@danetrentmethodist.org.uk

**Applications** by noon December 10th 2025  
**Interviews** January 19th 2026

### Prayer Focus

*God of hope, who brought love into this world,  
be the love that dwells between us.*

*God of hope, who brought peace into this world,  
be the peace that dwells between us.*

*God of hope, who brought joy into this world,  
be the joy that dwells between us.*









*God of hope, the rock we  
stand upon, be the centre,  
the focus of our lives always,  
and particularly this Advent  
time.*

Every blessing

**Arthur Wakelin**



### December 2025 - Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	7 <sup>th</sup> December	14 <sup>th</sup> December	21 <sup>st</sup> December	28 <sup>th</sup> December
<b>Swan Bank</b>	9.00am 10.30am 6.15pm	F Hibberts Stephens/Jeffries A Johnson	Wakelin Nativity - Stephens Brabbs	<b>No service</b> Carols  Christingle - 4 & 6pm	Sheeran Jeffries No Service
<b>Potter's Church</b>	9.30am 11.15am	Price Price	Price Price	Hancock  Hancock 	Price/Hancock Price/Hancock
<b>Oasis Church</b>	10.45am	Boateng	G Davies	Nativity	Community Sunday
<b>Wesley Hall</b>	10.45am	Christingle - 4pm	Wakelin 	Tattersall	Own Arrangement
<b>The Gateway</b>	10.45am	Own Arrangement	Tattersall	Carol Service	Mason
<b>Mt Pleasant</b>	10.45am	Wakelin 	Friday Club - Carols	Own Arrangement - Carols	Own Arrangement
<b>Packmoor</b>	11.00am	Mason	Andrews	Tindale - Carols	Wilshaw
<b>Village Church</b>	11.00am	Own Arrangement	Jeffries	Jeffries	Own Arrangement
<b>Whitehill</b>	10.30am 6.00pm	Cooper Wakelin	Cooper  Christingle - 4pm	Dutton Carol service	Boateng  Cooper 

## Swan Bank Church Council - Update



As an overview, the Swan Bank church council comprises about 35 members of the church are appointed as trustees. The church council has authority and oversight the whole area of the ministry of Swan Bank. It also appoints committees that have authority, in their

areas of responsibility, to initiate action and co-ordinate work done in the church. The church council meets four times a year to discuss and make decisions in relation to its responsibilities. The last church council was on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and these are some of the key points from the meeting,

**Finance report** – Swan Bank church will support and underwrite the Community Grocery for up to £18,000 for the next three years.

**Property report** – Our property at No.9 Chapel Lane is to be made available for use as a night shelter and run by Adullam once the final paperwork is completed.

The upper hall windows need urgently replacing and must be made of wood to fit in with local planning requirements. Grants towards the £27,000 costs are being investigated. In addition, a grant bid for the upper hall refurbishment has also been made.

**Mission** – It's great to report that we have welcomed 29 new members in the last 12 months.

**Soup Kitchen/Food Support** – Coalfield Regeneration have donated £2,000 to the work of the Soup Kitchen. In addition, the Local Authority have donated £11,930 for the food support work of the church, some of which will be used for the Soup Kitchen.

**Safeguarding** – As a church we are DBS compliant, but it must be remembered that all volunteers require safeguarding training.

If you would like a full copy of the minutes, then please contact the office.

## A Christmas Invitation from The Nantwich Singers



A beautiful celebration of the Christmas Story  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 7pm at Tarporley Chapel and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 3pm at St Mary's Church Nantwich.

If you enjoy a mix of the old and the new, familiar words in brand new settings and a sprinkling of traditional carols, you will love this event.

Audience participation is invited in "See amid the Winter's Snow" and "Away in a Manger". We honour John Rutter's 80th birthday with his popular and delightful "Donkey Carol".

We continue to champion contemporary composers such as Cecilia McDowall, Amy Bebbington and Sarah Quartel with their glorious new music. This year we are also incorporating some Christmas poetry (Causley, UA Fanthorpe and Wendy Cope). Do join us for this heartfelt Christmas celebration.

For further information, please go to [www.thenantwicksingers.org](http://www.thenantwicksingers.org)



## Pastoral Network of Care – Card Ministry

Hello everyone! I've been a member here at Swan Bank since 1979 and over the years I've served the Lord in various ways. I am currently a member of the pastoral team.

Post-Covid I was praying about having a role at Swan Bank that I could do then and into the future, even from my home in Alsager. Then one morning Janet Bagnall called me asking if I'd take on the card ministry role, I agreed and that was in February 2021. So, what does the card ministry involve? The answer is threefold.

1. I send cards to members of our congregation and occasionally to their family members too. I keep a stock of cards which may say, for example, thinking of you, get well, new home, wedding congratulations, and sadly sometimes bereavement while Dawn Adams sends new baby cards. Often simple words of encouragement are sent in a suitable card.
2. We have a special group of people, some of whom for various reasons such as advancing age and or infirmity, can no longer attend worship. These folk currently receive four gifts each year, including a card at Christmas and at Easter. When these members are 90 or 90 plus, they also receive a birthday card and flowers. A few of this group are now in care homes being well cared for.
3. Our ministers, Kathryn and Ruth, are sometimes approached by people outside of our congregation requesting the funeral of loved ones. I have to exercise sensitivity here with their next of kin, who may be husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers or sisters of the deceased person. These folk each receive four cards, a bereavement card, Christmas and Easter cards, and a final card after one year. They also have an invitation from the church office to attend the evening memorial service on Remembrance Sunday.

This is a privileged role and I feel honoured to serve our congregation and the wider community in this way.

**Ann Worthington.**



## Christmas Fayre - Update

Not even the rain could dampen the festive spirit as friends and families joined us for some early Christmas cheer at our Christmas Fayre on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> of November. Many came in search of the perfect gift, browsing our wonderful array of stalls, offering everything from wax melts and baby clothes to handmade jewellery and even Pokémon cards. Others delighted in building impressive LEGO creations and crafting their own seasonal decorations.



Faces were painted, glitter tattoos sparkled, and more than a few delicious burgers and cakes were enjoyed. We were even honoured by a special appearance from the jolly man in red himself, Santa!

It was a joyful and heartwarming prelude as we enter the season of Advent and prepare to celebrate the greatest Gift of all.

**Nick Jeffries**





## Hope and Hospitality - Soup Kitchen Update

Swan Bank has been running a soup kitchen as part of our Hope & Hospitality 'Church on the Margin' strategy. By way of a quick reminder, the soup kitchen was started as a response to increasing numbers of folk ringing the church doorbell every day, asking for drinks and something to eat. At that time, the only thing we could offer them was a hot drink and a pot noodle.

Following a meeting with Kathryn and Ruth in October 2024, the decision was made to launch the Soup Kitchen. We opened on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in the coffee lounge from 12– 2pm. The plan was to run through to the end of March 2025. Hot food was served to rough sleepers, the homeless and anyone else in need of support. Funding was initially provided by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and a small team of volunteers were recruited.

In addition to being served drinks and a hot meal each guest was also offered a packed lunch and a portion of the day's meal to take away with them. Guests were also offered a shower and change of clothes if needed. By the end of March 2025, we were serving an average of 25 individuals each week.



Following feedback from both guests and volunteers it soon became clear that there was a desire and a need to continue beyond March. So, with the support of Kathryn and Ruth, we continued and expanded the work of the Soup Kitchen. From April 2025, we opened every Monday and Thursday between 10am and 12pm serving a full breakfast. We have secured additional funding from a number of organisations including the Local Authority, local businesses and charities and we recruited more amazing volunteers. In addition, we offer delicious cakes from members of the congregation who have joined a Soup Kitchen cake rota.

Since April, numbers have risen steadily, with the weekly average now reaching 68 guests, at a cost of approx. £130 per week. The total number of guests served since November 2024 is 2,370. Time after time we are told by our guests that it is the warm welcome and positive

atmosphere of our soup kitchen that has the biggest impact on them. To feel cared for, treated with respect and not judged is, for many, a new experience.

The Soup Kitchen could not operate without a truly fantastic team of 40 volunteers. I have asked two of them to share a few words about their soup kitchen experience.

**Olga:** *'As volunteers, we work as a team to make everyone feel welcome in a warm, friendly, relaxed atmosphere. I have found it so fulfilling and rewarding and by sparing a few hours every week I feel that I'm giving something back. It's more than providing food. By listening and talking about their experiences and hardship, we are providing a friendly, caring face that doesn't judge. It has been great over the past 12 months to build up a rapport with many guests.'*

**Lorraine:** *'It's been a blessing to be involved with the Soup Kitchen, and work alongside a great team of volunteers. We have got to know many of the vulnerable people who join us each week and provide an environment where they are cared for in a practical way and not judged.'*



To acknowledge our first anniversary, volunteers came together for a celebration meal in the coffee lounge the other week – a great time was had by all.

Sadly, data from the Council indicates that the number of rough sleepers continues to grow across the city which means the vital service we provide is likely to be needed well into 2026 and beyond.

On behalf of our Ministers and myself, I would like to express sincere thanks to all who have given their time to make the Soup Kitchen work so effectively over the past twelve months.

Finally, I am looking for two more volunteers to offer to bake cakes on a rota, and if you feel that you would like to join the soup kitchen team then please have a chat with me or speak to Liz in the office.

Thanks, **Keith Dubbs**

*Editor's note, we've even made it to the BBC News website!*

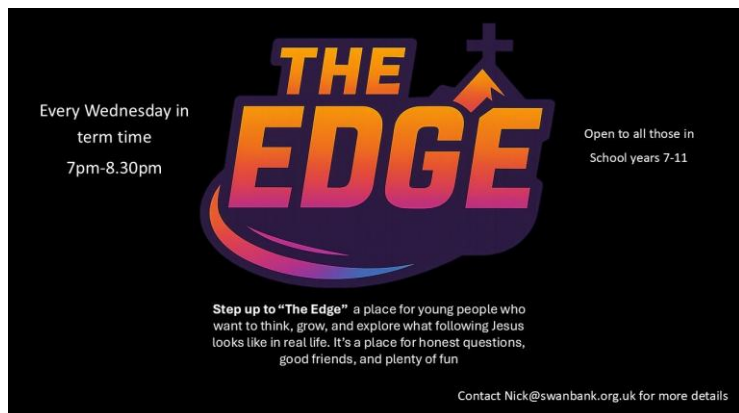
[www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdj0rkdzwo](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdj0rkdzwo)



## Youth Activities at Swan Bank

I can't begin to express how privileged I feel to do the work I do. It's a joy to share my faith with the young people of our church and local community, and to journey alongside them as they grow. I'm especially excited to tell you about some of the brilliant new groups and activities we have for secondary-school-aged young people.

Not long after I stepped into this role, we noticed a gap in our midweek programme, even though we had several fantastic groups that helped us build strong relationships and spark great conversations. However, we didn't have a dedicated space for deeper faith development and discipleship. So, at the end of the last academic year, we launched a Youth Alpha course. It proved to be a wonderful opportunity for young people to explore faith and understand what being a Christian might mean for them.



Building on that foundation, we've recently launched **The Edge** a welcoming space for young people in school years 7–11 to chat, ask big questions, explore faith, and, of course, have plenty of fun together. Expect games, laughter, and meaningful conversations. We meet every Wednesday from 7.00–8.30pm.

The next exciting venture I'd love to share with you is **The Summit**. Plans are well underway for a District Youth Weekend at Whitemoor Lakes Activity Centre from Friday 17<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2026. This will be a fantastic opportunity for young people across our District to come together for a weekend of:

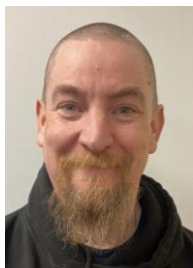
- Adventure activities such as archery, kayaking, and climbing
- Worship, teaching, and testimony
- Community-building through shared meals, accommodation, and small-group sessions

Our vision is to create an inclusive, transformative weekend where young people can explore faith, build lasting friendships, and grow through shared adventure—regardless of financial circumstances. Thanks to the District's generous support, we can offer places for just £20. If you know a young person who might like to join us, please encourage them to contact me at [nick@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:nick@swanbank.org.uk). We hope this weekend will become a springboard for more cross-district youth work. In fact, we've already had a fantastic time hosting the Chester & Stoke Methodist District's **Nerf Wars** event—it was an afternoon full of laughter, friendly competition, and an impressive number of flying foam darts! Finally, I ask for your prayers. Please pray that these events will point our young people to God's all-encompassing love.



Pray for those just beginning their faith journeys, and for the leaders who walk alongside them—may we be guided with the wisdom and words needed to help them grow as disciples

**Nick Jeffries**  
(Young People and Families Evangelist)





## SWAN BANK CHRISTMAS NOTICEBOARD

22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER

Christmas Fayre 11am-2pm

17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Advent Bible Study 7.30pm-9pm

3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER

Advent Bible Study 7.30pm-9pm

18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Family Film Night food at 5.30pm

5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Burslem Lights Switch On 5.15pm

21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER

Traditional Carol Service 10.30am

6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Christmas Messy Church 10am-12pm

21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER

Christingle 4pm and 6pm

10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Advent Bible Study 7.30pm-9pm

24<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Christmas Eve Communion 11.30pm

15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Carols in the Community 6.30pm

25<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Christmas Day Celebration 10.30am



### 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 include in your shopping one or more of the following items,

- Bottles of Schloer
- Mince Pies
- Bags of Chocolate Coins

Please leave any donations with the office.

### Volunteering on Christmas Day

As usual we are looking for volunteers to step forward for the following roles on Christmas Day.

- Delivery of meals and 'At Home' gifts
  - Collecting people from home to attend the Christmas Dinner at Church
  - Picking up after the Christmas Dinner and taking folk home
  - Kitchen – food preparation
  - Serving Dinner
  - Dishes, table clearing, room clearance
  - General cleaning and tidying, washroom checks and topping up supplies and cleaning
  - Checking in visitors
  - Chatting and making all welcome in the auditorium
  - Coffee lounge and quiet space, accompanying those who prefer this area
- Look out for the sign-up sheet at church.**

### Carols in Local Care Homes

There is a wonderful opportunity to support the Swan Bank Choir and the Care Home Ministry Team in singing carols in various local care homes.



The full list of dates, times and venues are below,

- ❖ **Mon 01<sup>st</sup> Dec. 11am**, Golden Park, Greyhound Way, Cobridge, ST6 3LR
- ❖ **Mon 08<sup>th</sup> Dec. 11am** - Scotia Heights, Scotia Rd, ST6 4HA
- ❖ **Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> Dec. 5pm**, 535 High Lane, ST6 7EP (Just near the Hayward Hospital)
- ❖ **Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 11am**, Brindley Court, Station Rd, Longport, ST6 4ND
- ❖ **Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 12noon**, The Floral Hall, Victoria Park, Tunstall (Scotia Heights Party!)
- ❖ **Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. 10:30am**, Camoy's Court, Moore St, Cobridge, ST6 2HF
- ❖ **Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. 11am**, Goldendale House, Plex St, Tunstall, ST6 5JQ
- ❖ **Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2pm** Chatterley Court, Chell Heath Rd, ST6 6FG

Please speak to **Shirley Brooks** if you would like to come along. Or email:- [shirley@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:shirley@swanbank.org.uk)



## SWAN BANK NOTICEBOARD

**Whitehill Methodist  
Community Church**  
**Wednesday Mid-Week  
Services in December**

3<sup>rd</sup> Dec – Pastor Lyn Tindale  
 10<sup>th</sup> Dec – Rev. Kathryn Stephens  
 17<sup>th</sup> Dec – Rev. Arthur Wakelin  
 Whitehill Road, Kidsgrove,  
 ST7 4DS, commencing at 10.15am.  
 All welcome!

**Foundation  
Safeguarding Training**

The next course will be via a  
 Zoom on-line session on  
**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December**  
**19:00-21:00pm.**  
 Please book via Shirley  
 Brooks using  
[shirley@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:shirley@swanbank.org.uk)

**ADVANCED  
SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

**For ALL volunteers within the  
 Stoke on Trent Mission circuit,  
 who MUST renew every 4 years**  
**Swan Bank Church,  
 Lower Hall**  
**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2026**  
**9.30am to 4pm**

[Advanced Safeguarding  
 Training \(21-Mar-2026\)](#)  
[ChurchSuite Events](#)

SCAN ME



To book a place  
 Scan the QR Code or email:  
[shirley@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:shirley@swanbank.org.uk)  
[officeassistance@swanbank.org.uk](mailto:officeassistance@swanbank.org.uk)

**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:

**At the moment, we are  
 in urgent need of warm  
 hats and gloves for both  
 men and women**

## FOOD

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

Why was  
 the snowman  
 looking through  
 the carrots?

Because he  
 was picking  
 his nose!

Why did  
 the choir have  
 to cancel their  
 carol concert?

Because  
 they caught  
 tinsel-it's  
 tinsel!

**Gateway Coffee  
 Morning,  
 Goldenhill**

The next monthly coffee  
 morning will be on  
 Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December  
 from 10am to 12noon.  
 Everybody is welcome!

Who  
 hides  
 in the  
 bakery at  
 Christmas?

A Mince  
 Spy!

What is  
 white and  
 minty?

A Polo Bear!

**Answers to Prayer?**

We would love to hear about  
 any experiences that you may  
 have with regards to answers to  
 prayer. If there is anything you'd  
 like to share, then contact either  
 Shirley or Nigel and we'll  
 hopefully be able to include it in  
 future editions of the Magazine.

**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](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](https://www.youtube.com/@SwanBank/streams) or



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



# The True Story of Christmas Word Search



Read the story below. Find and circle the words that are underlined. The words can appear in any direction: horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backwards.

## The True Story of Christmas

More than 2000 years ago, there lived a young woman named Mary. She was preparing to be married to a man named Joseph.

One day, an angel appeared to Mary and said, "Listen! You will soon have a son, and you will name him Jesus. The baby will be holy and will be called the Son of God."

Around the time for Jesus to be born, the Roman rulers ordered everyone to return to their hometown to be counted.

Joseph and Mary had to travel to the town of Bethlehem. When Joseph and Mary arrived at Bethlehem, the town was very crowded. They had to stay where animals were kept.

While they were there, baby Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him with pieces of cloth and placed him in a manger.

That night, in a field near Bethlehem, shepherds were looking after their sheep. An angel appeared to them and said, "I bring you good news of great joy for all people. Today in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord!" Then many more angels appeared, praising God for the birth of Jesus.

Sometime later, wise men from the east saw a bright, new star in the sky. They knew it was a sign that a great King had been born. The wise men followed the star to look for the child. When they found Jesus, they bowed down, worshiped him and gave him gifts.

This is the true story of Christmas. Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born on earth because he loves us very much.

*For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16







## TOUCHSTONE COUNSELLING

### Who we are:

- A small team of practitioners working together to provide support for people who have experienced trauma and abuse linked to faith, beliefs and spirituality.
- Counsellors are committed to upholding the unique value of each individual, are registered, accredited members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) (or working towards accreditation) and abide by the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (2018).
- Touchstone Counselling is funded by the Methodist Church and donations.

### Our aim:

to provide an affordable, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, hope-filled counselling service.

### We offer:

- Short-term counselling
- Longer-term counselling
- Sessions in person and online via Zoom

### Who we support:

Individuals, aged 18+:

- who have experienced trauma and/or abuse linked to their faith, beliefs and spirituality.
- whose faith, beliefs and spirituality are impacted now by experiences of trauma and/or abuse.

### Donations:

We believe counselling should be affordable for everyone and use a sliding-scale donation scheme based on your disposable income. We will discuss and agree this with you.

### Next steps:

- Visit Email the Therapeutic Coordinator, Sue Hill, at [sue.hill@touchstone-bradford.org.uk](mailto:sue.hill@touchstone-bradford.org.uk) to find out more and request a referral form. You can also request a paper copy by calling the District Office, T: 01274 442 670 and leaving your contact details.
- Return your completed referral form to [sue.hill@touchstone-bradford.org.uk](mailto:sue.hill@touchstone-bradford.org.uk) or by post to Touchstone Counselling.
- We will be in touch to acknowledge receipt and advise of the next steps.

*NB: We work Wednesdays and Thursdays and will respond to your communications as soon as we can.*



## SERVICES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN STOKE-ON-TRENT

**brighter futures**  
HOUSING • HEALTH • HOPE



### HANLEY CONNECT

Hanley Connect is a multi-purpose resource and advice hub for vulnerable adults in in Stoke-on-Trent.

We take a partnership approach to bring together key services from across the city as well as providing practical support to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

*No referrals necessary.*

### WHEN?

 **MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
FROM 10:00AM**

### WHERE?

 **HANLEY CONNECT  
23 HILLCREST STREET,  
HANLEY,  
STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST1 2AA**

 **07500 444 112**

Map data: Google, Maxar Technologies

### ACCOMMODATION

Are you looking for accommodation?  
Check out our list of providers who may be able to help:

#### Brighter Futures

Three Counties House, Festival Way, ST1 5PX  
Tel: 01782 406 000  
Homeless, single adults aged 18+

#### Housing Solutions

Stoke on Trent City Council  
Tel: 01782 233696 / 0800 052 8088  
Out of hours tel: 01782 234234

#### Newcastle Housing Advice Options

Tel: 01782 717717

#### Restart

Bemersley House, Gitana St, Hanley, ST1 2DY  
Tel: 01782 815879  
Homeless, single adults aged 18+  
Drop-in assessments on Tuesdays 11.30am – 1.30pm

#### The Lyme Trust

37 London Road, Newcastle, ST5 1LN  
Tel: 01782 634510  
Homeless, single Adults aged 18+

#### The Victoria Hotel (Macari)

2, Fletcher Road, Stoke, ST4 4FE  
Tel: 01782 845979  
Homeless, single Adults aged 18+

#### Concrete Destination Home

308 London Road, Stoke, ST4 5AB  
Tel: 0330 094 5558  
Homeless, single adults aged 18+

#### Gingerbread

Rothsay Court, Longton, ST3 4LY  
Tel: 01782 344740  
Homeless, lone parents and couples

#### Gingerbread Centre

Catherine Court, 30 Eastfield Drive, Hanley, ST1 3DJ  
Tel: 01782 215656  
Teenage parents and couples

#### Lifehouse - Adullam Homes

1 Vale Street, Stoke, ST4 7RN  
Tel: 01782 914916  
Homeless, single adults aged 18+

#### Open Door (referrals only)

32 Copeland Street, Stoke, ST4 1PR  
Tel: 07483 321738

### ORCHID WOMEN'S SERVICES

Our support staff are fully trained to provide emotional and practical support to some of the most vulnerable females in our community. We work with a range of partners across Stoke-on-Trent to advocate on behalf of our customers.

We offer a non-judgemental and confidential drop-in service in a warm and safe environment.

*No referrals necessary.*

### WHEN?

 **MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY  
9:00AM – 1:30PM**

### WHERE?

 **ORCHID WOMEN'S SERVICES,  
14A GARTH STREET,  
HANLEY,  
STOKE-ON-TRENT,  
ST1 2DA**



### ROUGH SLEEPER TEAM

We can help you to find accommodation, access services including GPs and healthcare, drug and alcohol support, and mental health support.

### GET IN TOUCH

Calls are FREE from landlines, payphones and mobiles. Lines are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

 **0800 970 2304**

### DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE

You can access support if you are concerned about your use of alcohol, drugs, or legal highs:

#### CDAS, Hanley

Tel: 01782 283113

#### Staffordshire Treatment and Recovery Service

(STARS), Newcastle  
Tel: 01782 639856

#### FRANK Confidential Advice

24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Tel: 0300 123 6600

### YOUNG PEOPLE

You may qualify for specialist services if you are aged between 16 and 30 years old:

#### YMCA Youth Campus

Harding Road, Hanley, ST1 3AE  
Tel: 01782 222376

#### Stay Well CYP (Changes, Mind and Dove)

Tel: 01782 418518

#### Catch 22

Child Exploitation and Missing Incidents  
Tel: 01782 418518

### SEXUAL HEALTH OR EXPLOITATION

You can access support if you are concerned about your sexual health, involved in sex work, or believe that you may be exploited.

#### Adult Sex Workers Service,

Orchid Women's Services, 14a Garth Street, Hanley ST1 2DA  
Support for street sex workers  
Tel: 01782 286 862

#### Savana, Hanley - 24 hour message line

Tel: 01782 433 204

### DOMESTIC ABUSE

#### New Era Domestic Abuse Service, Hanley

Tel: 0300 303 3778

#### National Men's Advice Line

Tel: 0808 8010 327 (office hours only)

#### National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Tel: 0808 2000 247

#### Glow - The Honeycomb Group

0330 0945 559

### FOOD, SUPPORT AND SERVICES

#### Hanley Connect

23 Hillcrest Street, Hanley, ST1 2AA  
Monday to Friday from 10:00am  
Refreshments, warm food, showers, laundry facilities, clothing, support, advisory services engagement activities.

#### Open Door - Christ Church

291 Waterloo Road, Cobridge, ST6 3HR  
Friday: 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Refreshments, warm food and support.

#### Open Door - Salvation Army

Heathcote Road, Longton, ST3 2LY  
Wednesday: 9:00am - 2:00pm  
Refreshments, warm food and support.

#### Newcastle Multi-agency Hub

Salvation Army, 45 Bridge Street, Newcastle, ST5 2RY  
Thursday: 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Refreshments, warm food and support.

#### Compassion Kitchen - Sacred Heart Church

Parish Centre, Jasper Street, Hanley, ST1 3DB  
Sundays: 12:00 pm - 1:00pm - take-away lunch

#### Night Shelter

11 Chapel Lane, Burslem, ST6 2AB  
Wednesday: 6:00pm - 8:00pm  
Saturday: 4:00pm - 6:00pm  
Refreshments, warm food, showers, clothing, support and advisory services.

#### Safe Harbour / A Place of Welcome Café

Temple St Methodist Church and Community Centre, 8 Temple Street, Fenton, ST4 4NW  
Thursday: 9:00am - 12:00pm  
Refreshments

### FOODBANKS

You may be eligible for free food from a foodbank. Ordinarily, you will need to be introduced by an organisation who will provide you with a voucher.

For locations and opening times of all foodbanks, you can visit: [stokeontrent.foodbank.org.uk](http://stokeontrent.foodbank.org.uk) or call:

 **01782 899 019**

### MENTAL HEALTH

If you or someone you know feels depressed, isolated, or at risk of self-harm, it is ok to ask for help.

#### North Staffordshire Mind, Hanley

Tel: 01782 262100

#### Samaritans, Burslem

Tel: 01782 213555

#### Harplands Crisis Centre Care

Tel: 0300 123 0907

#### 24/7 All Age Access Team (available day or night)

Tel: 0800 328 728 (option 1)

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

If you feel that your physical or mental wellbeing is at risk then you are entitled to an assessment of your needs. You are also entitled to access a GP practice.

#### Homeless Health Team

Tel: 07585597703

#### Healthwatch

Tel: 01782 683080

### ROUGH SLEEPERS TEAM

The Rough Sleepers Team cannot provide emergency accommodation but they can visit you on their next available outreach to provide support and guidance.

Support includes helping you to find accommodation and accessing services such as healthcare, drug and alcohol support, and mental health support.

 **0800 970 2304**

### OTHER USEFUL SERVICES

If you don't know where to turn, you can contact:

#### Social Care Contact Team, Stoke

Tel: 0800 561 0015

Emergency Duty Team: 01782 234234

#### Citizens Advice, Hanley

Local Advice line: 0808 278 78 76

Textphone: 0800 144 88 84

#### Emmaus Furniture Mine, Hanley

Tel: 01782 846111