



February Magazine 2026

Monthly Message

Just as the last of the Christmas decorations are packed away and life begins to find its usual rhythm again, we suddenly realise that February is upon us—and with it, the gentle invitation to begin thinking about Lent.

Since Advent, we as a church have been following an intentional journey through the story of Jesus. During Advent, we reflected on the gift that was coming. At Christmas, we celebrated the gift we receive. Throughout January, we lingered with the gift unwrapped, taking time to explore what that gift truly means for our lives. Now, as we move into February and onward to Palm Sunday, we are delving into the Beatitudes—Jesus' sermon that turns expectations upside down and invites us into a radically different way of living and loving.

Towards the end of this month, we will take our next step together as we begin our Lent journey towards Good Friday and Easter Sunday. From Wednesday 25th February, we will be meeting weekly in the evenings to study the Bible together, exploring the first steps and early moments of Jesus' ministry through the eyes of Matthew's Gospel.



These gatherings will be a space to listen, reflect, ask questions, and grow together in faith.

You are warmly encouraged to continue on this journey with us. Whether you have been part of every step so far or feel nudged to join in anew, there is a place for you.

Intentionality has been at the heart of this journey—choosing to slow down, to pay attention, and to walk thoughtfully through the good news gift of Jesus. As we do this, we are also called to be intentional about how we share that gift with others.

Perhaps this Lent is an opportunity to explore what intentionality looks like for each of us, both individually and as a church community, as we continue to follow Jesus together.

Ruth

Christian Aid Sponsored Walk



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 21st MARCH 2026
REGISTRATION FROM 9.15am

WALK STARTS AT 10.00am
The walk will be launched by
The Bishop of Stafford
and the
Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent

Please see **Fiona Willis** (fionawillis@live.co.uk) for further details if you are interested in doing the walk or sponsoring someone who is.

Prayer Focus

Heavenly Father,

We find ourselves at the start of another month, a month that will mark the start of another season of Lent. A time that we look forward as we prepare to remember your sacrifice and resurrection – the ultimate demonstration of your love for us.

A time that as members of your family, we will look to find new ways to grow our relationship with you. For some of us it will mean we will promise to give up some of the things that serve as distractions to that growth, for others it could mean doing something new as a sign to show your light in the darkness of our world.

Whatever that means to us as individuals, we ask that you keep our faith and our witness strong. Keeping our eyes focused on you helping us not to be distracted by everything this dark world throws at us, as individuals, families, church communities or events further afield. Thank you for loving us so much.

Amen

Dave Howe



Regular Activities at SwanBank

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.
SwanBank Community Choir – Fellowship Room, 7:30-9pm *2nd & 4th 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 – Meeting Room 1, 10-12pm
Changes – Coffee Lounge, 10am-1pm.
Community Lounge/Foodbank – Lower Hall, 2-4pm
The Edge (School years 7-11) – 7-8:30pm (*term time only*). See **Nick Jeffries** 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**
Youth Club 'PULSE' (School years 7-11) – 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 – (*3rd Saturday of each month*). See **Liz Thompson** for details.

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

What volunteering at the Grocery has meant to me.



I've volunteered here for over a year now after I first came in contact with the shop just before March 2024. I was in dire need of food at the time and luckily there was a food bank at SwanBank church every Wednesday. When I had arrived and received my food parcel, I was advised about the community grocery next

door. I went in for a quick look and was greeted by the manager at the time. She had noticed my immediate urge to sort out the leaflets on the counter and asked if I would like to be a volunteer. It was my first time properly being asked such a thing, so I had to think about it. Every now and then after that I would casually go to the grocery store and chat to the manager. Bit by bit I had gone from popping my head in for a chat to volunteering on a schedule.

Volunteering at the community grocery store has been more than a way to give back, it's been a deeply meaningful experience that's had a positive impact on my mental well-being. My role involves helping stock shelves, sorting donations and assisting community members with kindness and respect. Over time, I became part of a supportive team that worked together to meet a real need in the community.

Being in a space focused on helping others gave me a sense of purpose and structure, which greatly improved my mental health. The routine, the interactions and the feeling of making a difference all helped reduce stress and gave me something positive to focus on. I found comfort in knowing that even small actions, such as offering a smile and asking how a person's wellbeing to packing a bag could have a real impact on someone's day. On top of that, the manager at the time encouraged me to sit through a service at church one day which I eventually did and have been attending Swan Bank church every Sunday ever since.

During my time here, the experience has reminded me of the power of community, compassion and human connection. It has not only helped me grow personally but has also given me perspective and resilience that I will carry with me beyond the grocery store.

Mentally, volunteering here has given me something stable to hold on to, on days when I felt low or overwhelmed. Showing up and being useful helped quiet my mind. It reminds me that even small, consistent acts of care matter. Volunteering became a source of peace, routine and pride. Most of all, it taught me to be more empathetic for others and for myself. I've walked away not just with skills or memories, but with a deeper understanding of people and the power of kindness in everyday life.

Lewis Douglas

February 2026 - Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	1 st February	8 th February	15 th February	22 nd February
Swan Bank	9.00am 10.30am 6.15pm	Brabbs Brabbs Jeffries	Jeffries Jeffries Taylor	Brooks Stubbs Wakelin	Cooper Jeffries Cooke
Potter's Church	9.30am 11.15am	Price	Price	Hancock	Barber
Oasis Church	10.45am	Wyatt	G Davies	Law	Community Sunday
Wesley Hall	10.45am	Tattersall	Boateng	Own Arrangement	Own Arrangement
The Gateway	10.45am	Tretheway	Tattersall	Zinyemba	Mason
Mt Pleasant	10.45am	Tindale	Wilshaw	Tindale	Own Arrangement
Packmoor	11.00am	Wakelin	Mason	Own Arrangement	Tretheway
Village Church	11.00am	Jeffries	Hancock	Andrews	Brabbs
Whitehill	10.30am 6.00pm	Batho Cooper	Cooper Wakelin	A Johnson Q & A (Wakelin)	Nixon Cooper

Understanding Neurodiversity



Since joining your district as the aligned Learning Network Officer in September

2025, I've had the pleasure of travelling around the district to meet as many people as possible and find out what they were looking for in terms of training and development.

Suggested by one minister and then affirmed by everyone else, was the need to have a greater understanding of the needs of neurodivergent people and how to affirm and support their (our!) spirituality, discourses and ministries in every sense of the word. Having discussed this with the Chair of the District, Helen Kirk and receiving her enthusiastic support, we have decided to offer a full day session.

This session will be on Saturday 21st March, with a current estimated running time of 10:00am to 3:30pm. (Doors open at 9:30am.) The session will cover the following:

- Overview of five conditions that come under the banner of neurodiversity.
- Gain an understanding of the experience of people who are neurodiverse and how it effects their church life.
- Engage with some of the theology of disability and understand how this might have made people feel.
- Look at some Bible passages in the light of what we have learned.
- Consider the pastoral complexities of this field.
- Look at how to create safe environments within the church and some very basic accommodations that can be made as a starting point.

The location of this session is Wellspring Congleton (CW12 3AP). Please could you bring your own lunch. Drinks will be provided.

If you would like to attend, the Eventbrite booking link is: [Chester & Stoke District - Understanding Neurodiversity Registration, Sat 21 Mar 2026 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/chester-stoke-district-understanding-neurodiversity-registration-tickets-359000000000)

If you have any questions about this session, please email me at parra@methodistchurch.org.uk. Please also let me know if there is anything you need to enable the best learning experience. I'm very much looking forward to sharing this session with you!

Abi Parr (Learning & Development Officer)

Our Little Treasures!

Take a look at what we got up to at Little Treasures last month! The children had fun stamping painted fruit onto shopping bags, before we shared the story Baby Goes to Market. We'll also be exploring the story 'The Ark That Noah Built'. Lots of play, exploration, and fun together.

Little Treasures runs Tuesdays in term time, 9:30-11am, for toddlers up to 4 years old and their grown-up! Everyone's very welcome!



The Edge

The Edge is one of our youth groups for school years 7-11 and they meet each Wednesday from 7-8:30pm. Recently Lauren Brabbs came along and talked about science and Christianity and how they fit together.



SWANBANK NOTICEBOARD

Whitehill Methodist Community Church**Wednesday Mid-Week Services in February 2026**4th Feb – Ruth Jeffries11th Feb – Sue Simcoe18th Feb – David Bowers25th Feb – Martin LeechWhitehill Road, Kidsgrove,
ST7 4DS, commencing at
10.15am. All welcome!**Pot Noodles**

If possible, can you help with Pot Noodles as our stocks are running low, especially in these cold months.

Volunteer Safeguarding Training Dates

Just a reminder that all volunteers within the church need to renew their Safeguarding Training every 4 years. There are three dates for the Foundation Training sessions,

Monday 9th Feb, 5-7:30pmThursday 12th Feb, 7-9:30pmMonday 30th March, 7-9:30pm.

There is also an Advanced Training session on **Saturday 21st March (9:30am- 4pm)**. To find out more please speak to Shirley Brooks or email her on, shirley@swanbank.org.uk.

Community Grocery

Don't forget our Grocery is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm. Everyone is welcome to use it.

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 a future edition of the Magazine.

Coffee Morning

Come and join us for free cake, coffee and a chat.



Date - 3rd March

Time - 10am - 12pm

Location - The Coffee Lounge,
SwanBank Church, Burslem

Working in partnership with Chatty Café

**Magazine Past Issues**

For those of a curious nature, all past editions of the Magazine can be found on the SwanBank website. Follow the link below to have a browse!

<https://www.swanbank.org.uk/newsletter/>

JOIN US AT THE SUMMIT

**DISTRICT YOUTH WEEKEND AWAY
17 - 19 APRIL 2026
WHITEMOOR LAKES,
LICHFIELD**

Open to those in school years 7-11. Tickets only £20 per person.

Please keep an eye out for further details including how to book.

Any questions? Email: nick@swanbank.org.uk**Church Events or Articles for the Magazine**

If there are any church groups or events (at SwanBank 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**



A View from the Office

A view from the window, the office at Swanbank, where days never repeat,
No two are the same with each knock from the street.
Each morning brings faces, both familiar and new,
A door opened wide for a biscuit and brew.

Some come for our groups, some stop just to say,
Can you help? then quietly wander away.
A visit for no reason, yet reason enough —
A welcomed face to just talk stuff.

It's a busy, bright place where our guests gather near,
For groups that bring comfort, connection, and cheer.
From Chatty Café chatter to Fellowship in friends,
The Tuesday Club laughter that never quite ends.

The Soup Kitchen's warmth, the Community Lounge,
Where stories are shared as we sit and we lounge.
The Dementia Group too, with activities kind,
Each one a small joy, a lift for the mind.

And on it goes on—and the more that we see,
The happier we are, for community's key.
Each voice, every presence, a part of the whole,
Each visit a thread that strengthens the soul.

We're never alone, we're helped by so many,
By volunteers weekly—faithful, not any.
They serve and they show up, they help things run right,
Making moments of care from morning to night.

There's worship each Sunday, not once but three times,
Where voices lift hearts through prayer, song, and lines.
How good it can be to welcome a face,
Brand new to our doors, finding warmth in this place.

A safe space is offered, both gentle and true,
For those living in faith and those searching too.
Some come for belief, some hope to find peace,
All met with compassion that never will cease.

Yet daily there's pleas, the little things too,
Topping up loo rolls and finding spoons that are few.
Leaks from the roof and windows that creak,
Blocked drains and cracked glass, old carpets antique.

A broken door handle, cupboards overfilled,
Frames that are failing, yet hearts are all thrilled.
All signs of a building well-loved and well-used,
A place of great work that's never confused.

For many long years, it has welcomed, it's served,
A space full of hope, where kindness is preserved.
Though challenges come, the spirit shines through,
For Swanbank's a blessing, in all that we do.

With ministers guiding and lighting the way,
And heads of our teams who lead by display—
By kindness, by service, by actions sincere,
They show what it means to care year-by-year.

All-inclusive in spirit, in word and in deed,
Swanbank lives out what the world truly needs.
“Loving God, loving people”—that's more than a phrase,
It's lived out in abundance through ordinary days.

I couldn't think of a better place to be,
To work, serve, and grow in community.
It's a blessing, a gift— and though laughter may flood,
We do, in between it all, get some work done for good.

Liz Thompson



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

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