



January Magazine 2026

Message from our Ministers...

Happy New Year!

As we step into a new year together, my heart is full of gratitude for this community. The life of SwanBank Church is shaped by our love for Jesus Christ and our desire to make him known and take our calling to serve him seriously. An expression of this are the many people who faithfully show up and serve. Ruth, the staff team and I thank each and every one of you who give so generously of your time, energy, resources, prayers, and love.

I want to offer a particular word of thanks to all who served over the Christmas season. Christmas can be a demanding time, (to say the least!!) yet so many of you quietly and joyfully gave yourselves in ways that make a real difference in the lives of many people. Through acts of welcome, caring for and decorating the building, wrapping hundreds and hundreds of gifts, wrapping tons of cardboard boxes, practical service, shared meals, cooking and cleaning, troubleshooting, admin, tech, pub singing, teaching and preaching, leading and worship, and in simple kindness. You offered hospitality and hope to young and old alike. These moments matter more than we often realise, and they are a beautiful expression of Christ among us and our hope that others will come to know His love for themselves.

As many of you know, I will be absent from SwanBank Church for the next 12 weeks as I begin a period of sabbatical. This is part of a minister's discipline in ministry: every seven years we intentionally make space to step back, to rest, to be refilled, and to learn and grow. It is a gift that I do not take lightly.

This sabbatical is a blessing to me personally, allowing time for renewal, reflection and learning but my hope is that it will also be a blessing to the church. Seasons like this remind us that that leadership is shared and that the Spirit is active in every member of the body. No-one is indispensable! I feel very ready for this 'gift' more than I ever have before.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your care for one another, and your commitment to following Christ together. I hold you in my prayers during this time. I will miss you but hope to come back grateful for all that God has been doing among you and refreshed and renewed for the next season.

With every blessing for the year ahead,



Kathryn

Christmas in the Grocery

Christmas 2025 was my first full Christmas in the grocery. Last year I had only just started so we didn't do Christmas hampers or invite our customers to the Christingle service.



This year has been very different, I have seen SwanBank, the local community, councillors, Cygnet Health Care, the Literacy Trust and Number 11 all coming together to support

the work of the grocery. We were able to make up 50 hampers with reading books and toys.



On the day of the Christingle, it was amazing to see 40 families from the grocery attending one of the services and hearing about the true meaning of Christmas. The other 10 hampers have gone to support the work of Christmas day at SwanBank.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued love, help, support and prayers.

Nan Hulse



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.
Gospel 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.
(restarts 13th January for initially social gatherings)

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** 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' (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!
(next Messy Church will be on Sat. 7th Feb)
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

Job Vacancies



Cheshire South Methodist Circuit
requires a
Church Centre Coordinating Officer
for
Nantwich Methodist Church

20 hours/week, £14.95 per hour (= £15,548 p.a.)

Length of contract – 2.5 years

The Cheshire South Methodist Circuit is seeking a Church Centre Coordinating Officer for Nantwich Methodist Church, to work with the Church trustees to coordinate users and activities in this vibrant and busy Church and to develop further links within the community to ensure that our offer reflects the needs of the people of Nantwich.

For more information, or an informal chat about the post, please contact:

David Maidment
(maidmenttrail@aol.com, 01270 627170)

Request application packs and submit completed applications via: 1108info.cheshireouth@gmail.com

by 15 January 2026
Interviews 5 February 2026
Role to begin as soon as possible



Cheshire South Methodist Circuit
Require a
Property Administrator

10 hours/week, £13.45-£14.95 per hour/£6994pa/£7774pa

(depending on experience) Length of contract-2 years.

The Cheshire South Methodist Circuit is seeking a Property Administrator to manage property on behalf of the Circuit

We are looking to appoint an organised person who is a good communicator and who can keep clear, accurate records to ensure that the Circuit looks after their property in accordance with Methodist guidelines.

The position is home-based.

Travel across the Circuit is an essential requirement of the post.

For more information, and an application pack, please contact:

1108info.cheshireouth@gmail.com

Applications by 10 February 2026 12 noon, interviews 4 or 5 March 2026.
Role to begin-1 April 2026 (or as soon as possible thereafter).

If you would like an informal chat about this post, please email our Circuit Administrator to arrange this at: 1108info.cheshireouth@gmail.com

Prayer Focus

Having just celebrated Jesus coming to earth as the Light of the World, let us consider and reflect on the words Jesus speaks to us in

Matthew 5 v 14-16

'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven'.

Let us pray.

Dear Lord, thank you for being with us in all that has happened over the last year. As we enter 2026, whatever that holds, please remind us that you know and understand every situation and that we never walk alone as you are always with us.

Help us to carry your light into our community so that more people will see that you are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Amen.

Megan Potter



As we begin a new year, we think about what we can look forward to in 2026. No need for pressure in making New Year resolutions, if like me these will already be broken by the 2nd January.

I'm going to look forward because I know we belong to a church who will welcome everyone who enters. Family, friends & people who care will gather in the church to offer their blessings. This happens all year round, not just at Christmas. Thanking our Great God for being ever present.

Lord, please grant us wisdom in the New Year. Help us to discover where You are leading and what opportunities You have placed in front of us. Give us eyes to see those who You have placed before us to share Your love and truth. Guide our steps as we seek to shine Your light wherever we may go.

Amen

Sue Woodward



Volunteering for the Community Grocery

I quite like volunteering! Since retiring from full time work 10 years ago, I've tried to keep busy by trying to help and assist other people. From driving patients to the Dougie Mac Day Care Centre in Blurton, picking and packing food parcels at Wesley Hall Foodbank and brewing up for the Dementia Group at Whitehill it is sometimes quite full on. Sadly, the role at the Day Care Centre was curtailed by Covid and the Wesley Hall Foodbank is temporarily closed due to an ongoing roof repair.

However, just when I thought I could have a rest, a chat with Kathryn put a stop to that about 18 months ago, when she said the Community Grocery at SwanBank needed help in a bread collection from Warburtons in Stone. So, before I could have my rest, I was on a rota with Rob Tunnicliffe collecting 80 loaves for the Community Grocery and Swanbank Foodbank. I find Nan and her staff very friendly and they're always willing to help unload the car. I am proud to be part of her team and look forward to continuing to help in the ongoing success story of the Community Grocery.

Bernard Rushton



Care Home Ministry

As a young child my fondest Christmas memories were of carolling around the local neighbourhood with my Methodist church friends. My teenage years took me to Bucknall hospital where we sang the patients' favourite carols like Silent Night and Once in Royal David's City.

Joining the Salvation Army in my thirties introduced me to Christmas carols in pubs, playing timbrels, and singing with the brass band 'up 'anley duck.' Maybe it's easy to see why I am so committed to sharing the gospel message with our local community. SwanBank Church has a heart for mission, and it is from here, Janet Plant and I take the gospel message all year round to our local care homes. After each service Jan always says, 'I just love it, Shirl!'!

This Christmas period we have been carolling in nine care homes supported by members of SwanBank choir, congregation, family members and even Santa himself. It has to be said that the services have been predictably unpredictable. On one occasion we ended with a resident's favourite song! ...'Show me the way to Amarillo'.

If you feel called to join our care home ministry you can email me on shirley@swanbank.org.uk or ask a steward to introduce you to me on Sundays.

Shirley Brooks



January 2026 - Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	4 th Jan	11 th Jan	18 th Jan	25 th Jan
Swan Bank	9.00am 10.30am 6.15pm	Jeffries (Covenant)  Jeffries (Covenant)  City Celebration	Worthington Law Jeffries	Taylor Taylor Jeffries	Jeffries Jeffries A Johnson
Potter's Church	9.30am 11.15am	Price	Cooke	Hancock 	Graham
Oasis Church	10.45am	Wakelin	G Davies	K Davies	Community Sunday
Wesley Hall	10.45am	Andrews	Brabbs	Tattersall	Hancock 
The Gateway	10.45am	Kirk (Covenant) 	Tattersall	Andrews	Own Arrangement
Mt Pleasant	10.45am	Tindale	Tretheway	Tindale	Dutton
Packmoor	11.00am	Batho	Tindale	Boateng	Tindale (Baptism)
Village Church	11.00am	A Johnson	Jeffries (Covenant) 	Stanyer	Wakelin
Whitehill	10.30am 6.00pm	Mason Wakelin	Cooper  Cooper	Brooks Q&A Chapman	Shaw Cooper 

Our Answers to Prayer

About 20 years ago we were on holiday in North Wales and promised the children that on the following day we would take them to Rhos-on-Sea where they could ride their bikes along the promenade. The next day the rain was so bad that we told them not only would we be unable to go to Rhos, but it would be for the best if we packed up and went home.

It would be an understatement to say the children didn't take this well. By way of an alternative, Lorraine and I prayed the weather would change. We started to drive towards Rhos-on-Sea as the rain poured down. Remarkably as we approached Rhos we noticed a small patch of blue in the sky. As we parked up the rain stopped. The children had a great time on their bikes for an hour or two followed by an ice cream.

I put the bikes back into the car and as I started the engine, raindrops started to appear on the windscreen. It threw it down all the way back to our accommodation and for the rest of the day, but for all the time the children rode on their bikes, the weather was lovely.

On another occasion last November, the electricity went off at our house and the house next door. With nothing amiss in the fuse box, I rang National Grid who sent a couple of guys around in quick time to address the problem. Ten hours later at 12.30 on Monday morning the power was restored.

National Grid returned the next day to tell us that to fix the problem long term they would need to dig up our drive. As we had recently paid for a new drive it's fair to say we weren't thrilled at the prospect. Lorraine and I prayed. 5 minutes later National Grid knocked on our door to tell us they now wouldn't need to dig up the drive as they only needed to dig up the front garden. Another 5 minutes passed and another knock on the door.

They now wouldn't need to dig up our garden as it would be easier to dig up the neighbour's garden instead. It was sobering however to spend a number of hours without light and heat and with no means of having a hot drink or meal.

Ian Clarke



Tuesday Club Christmas Service

The attendance at the Tuesday Club Christmas service reflects the ongoing popularity of this meeting (or could it have been the mince pies on offer afterwards?)



Shirley once more did a fantastic job leading the worship, lovely carols, meaningful worship plus a few giggles as always with Shirley, who was ably assisted by Sue, working her magic with the laptop.

This carol service brought our Autumn/Winter session to an end, and we don't meet again officially until Tuesday 3rd March 2026.

You may be wondering "What is the Tuesday Club"? The answers is, we are a small group of mainly retired people, who meet between 1:30pm-3:30 pm on Tuesday afternoons.

We aim to offer a warm, safe place where we can chat, socialise and share some simple refreshments. We are not limited to folk who call SwanBank their spiritual home – all are welcome, with many finding that the group helps to relieve boredom or isolation, particularly important if you find yourself living alone.

During the months of March to July and September to December we welcome a wide range of speakers who delight us with their talks – with us often amazed at what they share. Outside those months we remain open to socialise and have a drink. To that end we will be re-opening on January 13th in Meeting Room 1, purely to socialise. So, if you feel yourself at a loose end on a Tuesday afternoon, please pop in and say hello – you will be very welcome.

God Bless,

Margaret Capey



Our SwanBank Christmas Diary

Thursday 27th November

Thanks to our great team who beautifully decorated the church ready for Christmas. Thanks also to Tudor Davis for the donation of the Christmas tree.

**Friday 5th December**

Our intrepid choir braved the weather for the Burslem Christmas lights switch on. Well done!

**Saturday 6th December**

The Messy Church Christmas party was brilliant with a visit from a "donkey" who had travelled a very long way to tell the story of that 1st Christmas.

**Friday 12th December**

Our choir was busy singing at the Floral Hall in Tunstall for the Scotia Heights Christmas party.

**Sunday 14th December**

The Nativity service was unusual in that the congregation came as various characters in the story. Some great costumes, but the 'star' was certainly Dave Howe!

**Tuesday 16th December**

The Tuesday Club were in fine voice for their carol service which was led by Shirley. Everyone had a wonderful time.

**Thursday 18th December**

Our Soup Kitchen were in a festive mood today with all the volunteers in their Christmas finery (well almost all).



We've also had a fantastic donation of £1,000 from the Sentinel Football Charities Group who doubled their original donation after they saw all that we do.

Sunday 21st December

Today started off with a lovely carol service at 10:30. Then in the afternoon we had our 2 packed Christingle services. In the words of Anton Du Beke "WOW, WOW, WOW". What a joyful and brilliant way to tell the true meaning of Christmas! Some very impressive elves were also on hand to help out.



Christmas Eve

Midnight Communion is always a special part of our Christmas celebrations.



Christmas Day

What a great day sharing the joy of Christmas with lots of people. Thank you to everyone on the amazing team who made today possible (one helper even comes up every year from Wolverhampton to help out on the day).

Nearly 100 people were served a Christmas dinner at church with about 300 meals and gift boxes sent out to folks at home. Twenty rough sleepers were also given a hot turkey bap, treats and small gifts at the front of the church.



SWANBANK NOTICEBOARD

Whitehill Methodist Community Church

Wednesday Mid-Week Services in January 2026

7th Jan - Chris Mason
 14th Jan - Ann Worthington
 21st Jan - Pastor Alison Price
 28th Jan - Rev. Arthur Wakelin
 Whitehill Road, Kidsgrove, ST7 4DS, commencing at 10.15am.
 All welcome!

Messy Church

Don't forget there is no Messy Church in January so the next one will be on Saturday 7th February from 10am till 12noon. It's open to all primary school aged children

Gateway Coffee Morning, Goldenhill

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

Thank You!

A big thank you to all at Hempstalls Hall Care Home for the wonderful donation of £250 for the work of SwanBank over Christmas!

**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 still in 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

Christian Aid Walk - Tittesworth

This year's Christian Aid sponsored walk at Tittesworth starts at 10am on Saturday 21st March. Please see **Fiona Willis** for more information if you want to do it or are willing to sponsor someone. More details to follow in next month's edition.

**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.

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**



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

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



01782 575129



admin@swanbank.org.uk



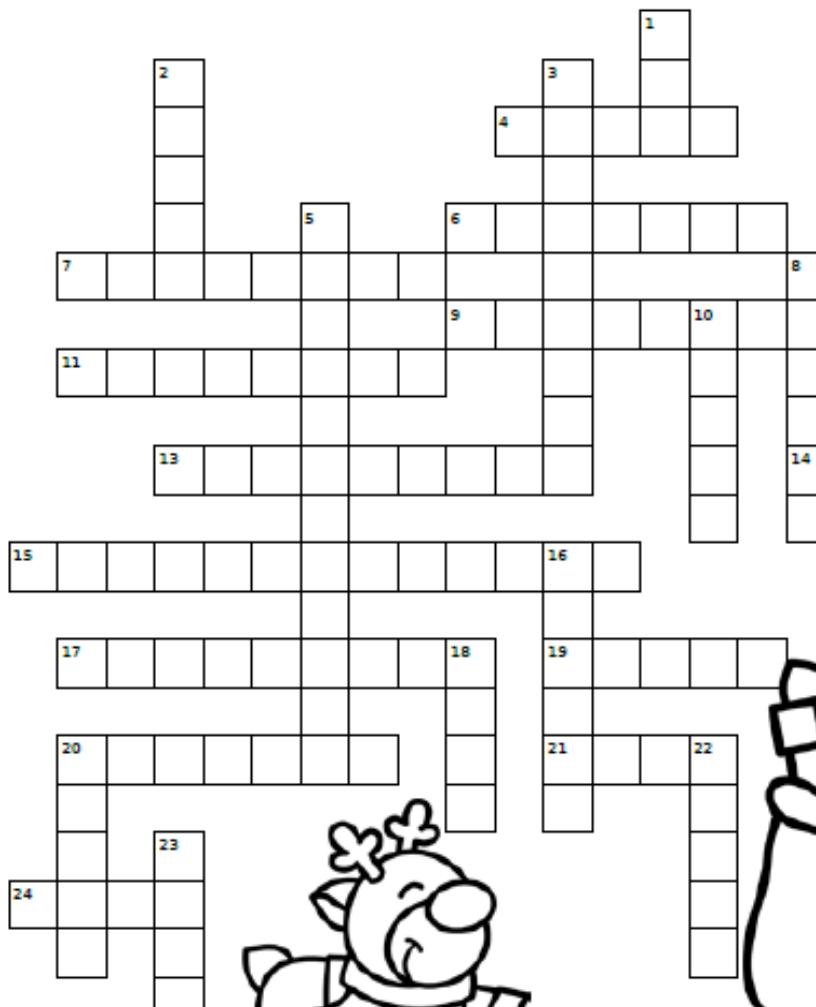
www.swanbank.org.uk

Sunday 10:30am Service, live stream links:-

www.youtube.com/@SwanBankstreams orwww.facebook.com/swanbank/?locale=en_GB

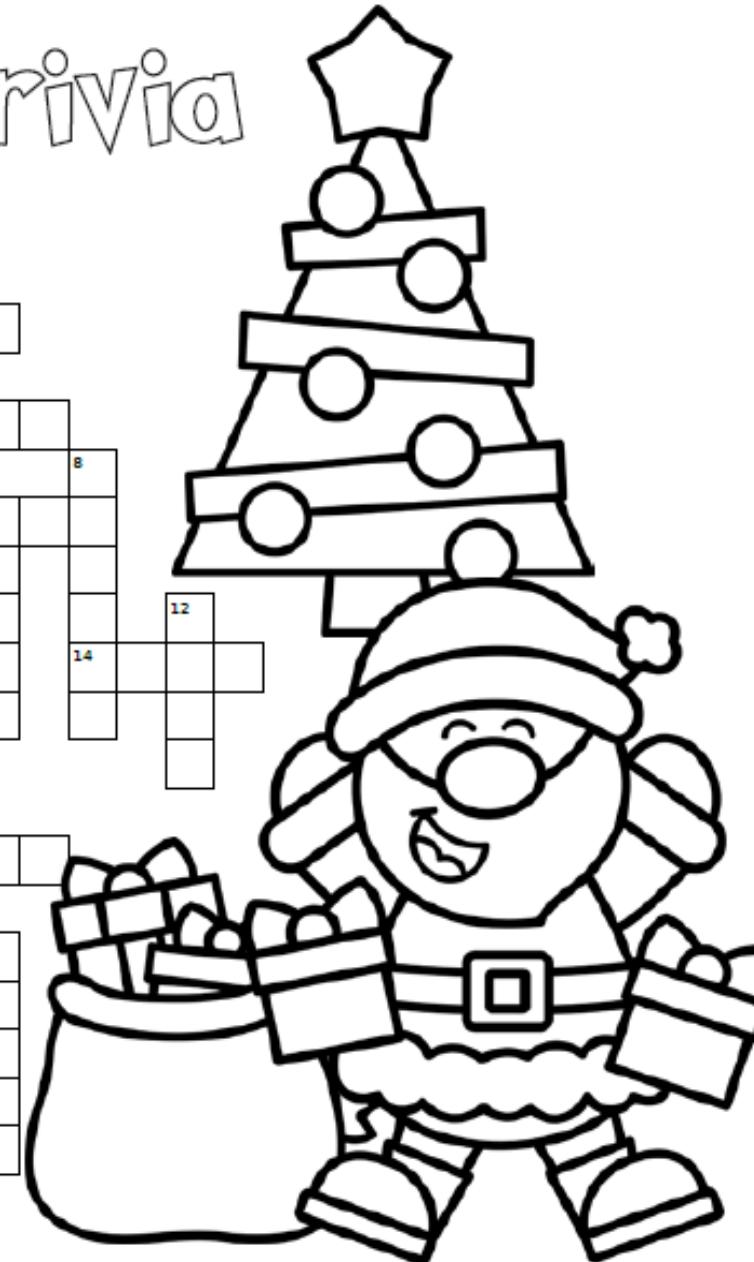
Christmas is over but it doesn't mean we can't keep the fun going into January!

Christmas Trivia



Down:

1. The color of Santa's suit.
2. The presents are usually _____ the tree.
3. A striped Christmas treat.
5. The day before Christmas.
8. A famous snowman.
10. Something on Santa's face.
12. Look at a present before you should.
16. The bright decorations on the tree and house
18. A common decoration for the top of the tree.
20. A Christmas song.
22. The jolly man in a red suit with a beard.
23. Santa's helpers.



Across:

4. Something people send to each other to say "Merry Christmas".
6. The reindeer with a red nose.
7. The place where Santa makes toys.
9. The month of Christmas.
11. A sock that hangs by the chimney.
13. Where Santa's workshop is located.
14. Something people decorate.
15. Food and drink left for Santa.
17. The decorations on the Christmas tree.
19. What people give each other.
20. The entrance Santa uses to get into houses.
21. What Santa gives to good girls and boys.
24. What Santa gives to bad girls and boys.

Christmas Carols Cryptogram

Here is a list of 18 Christmas carols whose titles have all been written in the same secret code. Can you figure out what the titles are? (Hint: replace the letter P with a C.)

1. Q PQOR WYY VR JWFNSJBY
2. AFYRUN UFTSN, SQYV UFTSN
3. IRPZ NSR SWYYA DFNS MQBTSA QJ SQYYV
4. SWXZ! NSR WUTRYA AFUT
5. NSR JFXAN UQRY
6. DR DFAS VQB W ORXXV PSXFANOWA
7. FN PWOR BLQU NSR OFIUFTSN PYRWX
8. F'0 IXRWOFUT QJ W DSFNR PSXFANOWA
9. WDWV FU NSR OWUTRX
10. AWUNW PYWBA FA PQOFUT NQ NQDU
11. AFYERX MRYYA
12. YFNNYR IXBOORX MQV
13. TQI XRAN VR ORXXV TRUNYRORU
14. XBIQYLS NSR XRI UQARI XRFUIRRX
15. F AWD OQOOV ZFAAFUT AWUNW PYWBA
16. KFUTYR MRYYA
17. SWER VQBXARYJ W ORXXV YFNNYR PSXFANOWA
18. Q PSXFANOWA NXRR

