



SWANBANK

April Magazine 2026

Monthly Message

I can't lie, the last month has been tough, however it's also been an equal amount of brilliant and exciting! The night shelter is now open overnight and ensuring that more folk are off the streets. Also, if the funding comes through, we have another huge project which will do even more than we are already achieving, working towards something that really makes a difference in reducing homelessness. So, prayers are appreciated that everything falls into place!

The tough has been myriad. Yes, the weight and challenge of being a team member down, yes, some personal and family stuff, yes some pastoral stuff, but particularly dealing with individuals whose lives are in the control of drugs and alcohol. The pure evil of the likes of monkey dust (the cheapest and most readily available psychotic drug within Stoke) leads to some challenging situations for us to manage and support.

Now, I'm not looking for any kind of pity in sharing this, but rather as a means for us all to reflect. There is a reason why we as a church do what we do, even when it's tough. Depending on when you read this, we're either about to, or are now celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, within the Holy Week story, it is the time between Jesus' death on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter Sunday in which we see, for those who were present, a tangible sense of utter hopelessness.



Sometimes the work that we do feels hopeless, with good stories being rarer than we'd like. In reality, hope is something that many we work with have never had, or they have lost it or they have simply abandoned it. It is in the light of this that I am deeply grateful that the story of redemption includes this very human moment of complete hopelessness. However, we are those who know that, because of Easter Sunday (and the gift of hindsight!), there is ALWAYS hope. For this exact reason, working within the 'tough' is a privilege, for we have the gift being able to hold hope. We hold it not only for ourselves, but we can hold it for others. We hold hope for those who find themselves in the darkest and deepest of pits of despair, as we get alongside and hold the light of Christ until they can hold it for themselves. And this is why we do what we do, so that all might truly know the Light that shines in the darkness, and that all are truly worthy of being cared about enough to be hope-full.

Ruth

Coming Home!

My life has been punctuated by music. When I was seven, my parents bought me a piano for £10, a big outlay for them at the time, and I was nurtured by an education authority who provided a brilliant music teacher at my local primary school and paid for my piano lessons. After joining the County Youth Choir, my eyes were opened to the wonders of performing with excellent musicians in amazing venues, including The Royal Albert Hall. It was a good time to be a young musician in Stoke-on-Trent.

However, my very first public performance as a pianist was in the Primitive Methodist Church situated at the bottom of the street where I lived in Pittshill. I have vivid memories of anniversary days, marching behind brass bands and singing at the front of the church, experiences that provided a springboard for what was to follow.

I went on to attain a music degree, gaining my piano diploma along the way, followed by nearly four decades of teaching, first in secondary and then in primary schools where I was the music co-ordinator, nurturing the next generation of musical talent.

Upon retirement, I achieved my ambition of joining the Halle Choir in Manchester and I became the organist at my local C of E church. I sang with two local choirs and dusted off my composing skills. But something was missing and, galvanized by a period of illness, I decided to shop around for another church and I happened upon SwanBank.

I cried throughout the whole of the first service as I felt that I'd 'come home.' Margaret Foster was sitting behind me and tapped me on the shoulder upon which we soon discovered that she had been in the same class as my mother at school. My mother had died when I was twenty-one, so this was an emotional encounter for me. "You see duck, you were meant to be here!"

I firmly believe that she was right! So, here I am, three years later, full circle, once again immersed in the musical life of the Methodist Church.

Alison Hendricken



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
 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

Keele Chapel & The Potteries Theological Society



‘I was a Stranger’: Theological Perspectives on Migration

April 18th
Keele University Chapel
10am – 3pm

For more information or to register:
<https://tinyurl.com/Hzbx5szz>



Keele UNIVERSITY

<https://tinyurl.com/Hzbx5szz>

The Edge

Here are a few photos from a recent session of The Edge, where we had another great evening together, including celebrating one of our young people’s birthdays with a bit of cake!

This particular week we were doing something a little different, a social night with games, snacks, and time to hang out together before the Easter break.



Step up to "The Edge" a place for young people who want to think, grow, and explore what following Jesus looks like in real life. It's a place for honest questions, good friends, and plenty of fun

Every Wednesday in term time
7pm-8.30pm

Open to all those in School years 7-11

Contact Nick@swanbank.org.uk for more details

If you're in school years 7 - 11, then why not come along and join us Wednesdays, 7 - 8:30pm (term time only). It's always a great space to relax and have fun. To find out more contact Nick Jeffreys.

The Night Shelter at No.9 Chapel Lane

As some of you will know, SwanBank are facilitating a nine-bed night shelter at our property at No.9 Chapel Lane in conjunction with Adullam Homes Housing Association who are running the project on a nightly basis. The aim is to help reduce the number of rough sleepers in the area and eventually help them to find long-term accommodation. The facilities are open from 8pm to 8:30am the following morning and clients will have access to self-contained sleeping areas where they can sleep in safety, with facilities to secure their belongings as well. There is a large lounge, kitchen area and bathrooms, so under the supervision of Adullam staff, clients can have an evening meal, breakfast and access to a shower. The neighbours at Number 11 have already agreed some joint training sessions with Adullam as well.








All referrals for places in the shelter come from the City Council's Rough Sleepers Outreach Team. Those using the shelter are helped by staff and partner-operated community hubs to initially engage in support to overcome any exclusions or barriers to housing. Shelter stays will be short-term as this is a stepping stone to more secure longer-term housing in the future.

Adullam Homes is a not-for-profit registered provider of support and accommodation, providing homelessness services in Stoke-on-Trent and 23 other local authorities in England since 1972.

The shelter opened at the beginning of March and here are a few photos following a friendly visit from our local Community Police Officers.



April 2026 - Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	5 th April Easter Sunday	12 th April	19 th April	26 th April Compassion Sunday
Swan Bank	9.00am	Jeffries	A Johnson	Stephens 	Andrews
	10.30am	Stephens 	A Johnson 	Stephens (Dedication)	Jeffries
	6.15pm	Stephens	Dutton	Jeffries 	Stephens
Potter's Church	9.30am	Price	Price	Hancock	Phillips
	11.15am	Price	Price	Hancock	Phillips
Oasis Church	10.45am	Davies	Dalton	Boateng	Community Sunday
Wesley Hall	10.45am	Tattersall	Brooks	Own Arrangement	Mason
The Gateway	10.45am	Wakelin 	Own Arrangement	Tretheway	Tattersall
Mt Pleasant	10.45am	TBC	Wilshaw	Worthington	Own Arrangement
Packmoor	11.00am	Tindale	Cooke	Own Arrangement	Andrews
Village Ch	11.00am	Jeffries	Andrews	Jeffries	Zinyemba
Whitehill	10.30am	Cooper 	Shaw	Dutton	Cooper
	6.00pm	Cooper	Wakelin	Q & A	Wakelin 

Memories of Romania

Hello ladies and gentlemen!

Today I am going to tell you about my story of receiving a Christmas Shoebox as a child in Romania. I was 12 years old when I first started going to a youth group called Veritas. There I would go every day after school. We would have a meal together and then we would go into another room and do bible study and pray. We would then play board games and have a lesson about Jesus and who he was.

Then one day some people came to visit from England and America. So, I took the advantage that they were there, and I would ask them to teach me English. I was very interested in learning a foreign language and I ended up taking lessons with these people. I really enjoyed it and I was so proud of myself because I had learned a foreign language.

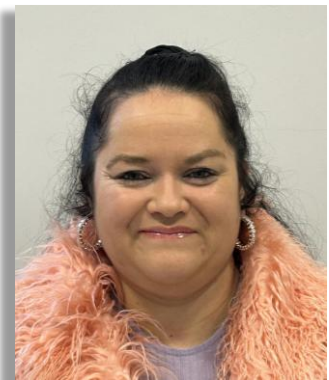
Then I went to a youth group and got to know more English people. One day one of them suggested a summer camp for the holidays. So, the youth team leader decided to take us all in that group to the mountains and they set us up in cabins. At the summer camp we would have 3 meals a day, then we would start doing activities during the day like football, basketball, board games etc. When evening came everyone would gather round in a room and we would sing Christian songs. One of my favourites was Blessed be the Lord!

We stayed 2 weeks in that summer camp then came back home. Every year we would go to these mountains and stayed in cabins.

Then Christmas came and the youth team leader suggested doing a Christmas play at their local church. So, they organised everyone's costumes for the play. We managed to put together a lovely nativity play. We sang lots of Christmas songs. After the play finished, one of the team leaders said to us, 'I have got a surprise for you'. We all got excited thinking what could it be? As we were waiting in the hall suddenly a tall man appeared with lots of shoe boxes and they were all wrapped in Christmas wrapping paper. When I saw them, I got so excited. We had to form a queue to receive one. I got one and then quickly ran in a corner to find out what I had got. I was opening it and saw it was filled with lots of girly things like make up, toothbrush, slippers, bracelets made from beads.

Everything I got in that box was appreciated and valued because it made me feel so happy and over the moon. I absolutely loved everything in that box, so I went home and showed it to my grandma, and she was happy to see me smile. Receiving a shoe box for me made a huge difference in my life because I appreciated those things. What most people take for granted, for me was a luxury. Every year since then, I would receive a Christmas shoe box filled with lots of goodies. And here my story comes to an end. It was my pleasure sharing it with you all.

Maria Ciocan



Prayer Focus

Gracious and almighty God, we are moving swiftly towards the final week of Lent heralded by Palm Sunday - that day when our Saviour was jubilantly welcomed into Jerusalem amidst Hosannas and much waving of palm branches. But we soon move from the palms to the Passion. And so, as we continue our journey Father, we pray that you would steady our hearts and help us to stay focussed at this most

poignant time. We thank you that you have already brought us this far and pray that you will keep our eyes fixed upon the cross and our hope anchored in Resurrection Sunday. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Glynis Cooper



View from the Church Council

I have been a Trustee on the Church Council for several years representing our belief in Enabling Church - a place where people of all abilities can be fully welcomed into our church family and take part as fully as they are able.

I am also representing our belief in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and would love to welcome some people from the congregation to help me as a member of a small working party to help us as a church to fully understand and embrace this agenda

As a Trustee I take my role very seriously, knowing that I hold a responsibility to make safe, lawful and beneficial decisions that will affect the people that attend our church and use our building.

If you have any thoughts or comments to help further my Enabling Church and EDI agenda then please contact me.



Sue Simcoe

officeassistance@swanbank.org.uk

Easter

AT SWANBANK

Palm Sunday

10:30am - Baptism & Membership service

Maundy Thursday

5:30pm - 8pm - Community Meal

Good Friday

10:30am - Service

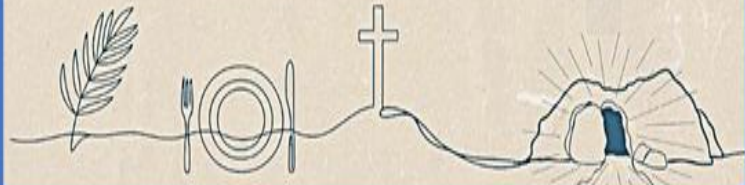
Easter Sunday

6:30am - Sunrise communion on Sneyd Hill

9am - Traditional communion service

10:30am - A family-friendly celebration

6:15pm - Reflective act of worship



Proposed Mental Health First Aid Course

As a church, we're looking at running a Mental Health First Aid course before July and would love to know who might be interested. This 2-day course (£60 per person) equips you to spot signs of poor mental health, have supportive conversations, and signpost to appropriate help. If you'd like to take part, please complete the short interest form below. There's no commitment at this stage, just an opportunity to express interest.

<https://swanbank.churchsuite.com/-/forms/sz7up9cc>

Ruth

SwanBank Preaching Themes in April

Date	Morning Theme	Evening Theme
12th April	The Compassion Code Defending The Poor Proverbs 31:8-9	Psalms 23:1-3a
19th April	The Compassion Code Imitating Christ's Humility Philippians 2:1-4	Psalms 23:3b-4
26th April	The Compassion Code COMPASSION SUNDAY Abundant Life	Psalms 23:5

Mental Health First Aid



Training - Expression of interest

- Learn to spot signs of poor mental health
- Build confidence to have supportive conversations
- Understand how to signpost to help and services



Scan the QR code or use the link in the post to find out more and register your interest.



message

Community Grocery

The Work of the Community Grocery

The work of the grocery goes on but you don't always hear or see what goes on, on a daily basis. During March we held a Coffee Morning, working alongside Chatty Café and 35 people from the grocery attended. A

thank you to all the members of SwanBank who made homemade cakes or donated money towards the event.

We also ran a Cook & Eat three-week course, supported by Howard Dobson, our MasterChef!



Eight people came to the course and here are a few of their comments,

➤ “Thoroughly enjoyed the course, learned a lot, good company. Howard who ran the course was very knowledgeable!”



➤ “I really enjoyed doing this three-week course. Meeting new people, learning new recipes and learning more about nutritional values and healthy eating. The group have been brilliant at bringing in new ideas and we have all worked so well together. I'm currently off work with anxiety and depression, finding some days really hard, yet I have looked forward to these sessions, feeling very comfy and relaxed.

Howard brought great ideas and knowledge in a relaxed atmosphere. Thank you to all who have put this course together.”

- “We made a wonderful omelette filled with lots of healthy vegetables, an easy way to enjoy your five a day.”
- “We made spaghetti bolognese, using many vegetables within the bolognese to expand the portions to feed more people on a budget.”
- “Slow cooked chicken chasseur, filled with vegetables. What a lovely three weeks, met lots of new people. Thank you!”
- “Great course for learning new ideas. Lovely cooking and eating together with new people, would recommend the course to anyone.”

Thank you to Vast and Affordable Foods for providing a new slow cooker to all who took part.



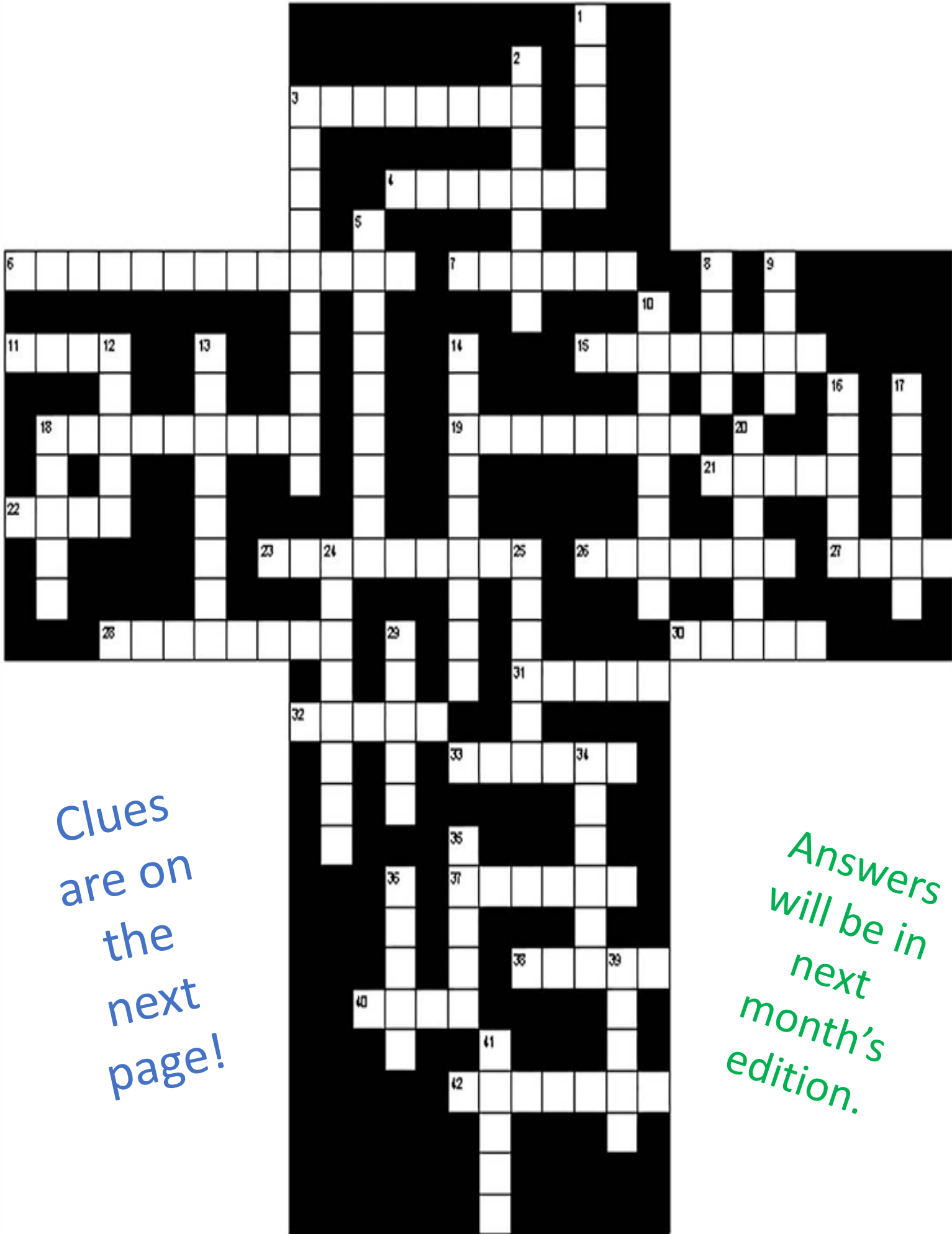
Also, a big shout out to all the agencies and friends of the Grocery who have provided Easter Eggs for us to give out for free with every shop during Holy Week.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Nan Hulse



The Easter Story Crossword



Clues
are on
the
next
page!

Answers
will be in
next
month's
edition.

The Easter Story Crossword Clues

Across

- 3. It means "A place of a skull;" Where He was crucified
- 4. These guys were crucified on each side of Him.
- 6. And He was numbered with the _____. *Begins with a 'T'*
- 7. Jesus was anointed with precious ointment in preparation for His _____.
- 11. This part of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom
- 15. And when the sixth hour was come, there was _____ over the whole land.
- 18. This Roman said, "Truly this was the Son of God."
- 19. The high priest who said it was expedient that one man die for all.
- 21. The _____ of blood was purchased with the betrayal money
- 22. The disciple that took Mary home as his own mother
- 23. He appeared first unto Mary _____.
- 26. "Father, _____ them; for they know not what they do."
- 27. He shed His blood so our _____ would be forgiven.
- 28. The Last Supper was a celebration of this Jewish holiday
- 30. The ruler of Galilee
- 31. This was sent to strengthen Him when He was praying in the garden.
- 32. This apostle denied that He knew Jesus three times.
- 33. This wealthy man of Arimathea buried Him.
- 37. The doubtful apostle
- 38. "A spirit has not _____ and bones as ye see me have."
- 40. And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet _____.
- 42. They gave Him this to drink when He was on the cross.

 A Kid's Heart • kidsheart.com

Down

- 1. The father-in-law to the high priest. Jesus was first brought to him
- 2. Another name for the place of His crucifixion.
- 3. The garden where Jesus prayed before He was arrested
- 5. And it was the third hour, and they _____ Him.
- 8. This was written and set over His head: "_____ of the Jews"
- 9. Judas betrayed Jesus with a _____.
- 10. "Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every _____."
- 12. Joseph took His body down and wrapped it in fine _____.
- 13. The prisoner released by Pilate instead of Jesus
- 14. The pharisee that brought spices for His burial
- 16. The apostle who betrayed the Christ
- 17. "Why seek ye the _____ among the dead?"
- 18. He was taken up; and a _____ received Him out of their sight.
- 20. Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of _____.
- 24. And they crucified Him, and parted His _____, casting lots:
- 25. He appeared to two disciples on the way to this village.
- 29. Jesus told Peter to feed His _____.
- 34. The Roman governor who washed his hands of the whole affair
- 35. This was rolled in front of the tomb and then sealed.
- 36. and His sweat was as it were great drops of _____.
- 39. The soldier pierced His side with this
- 41. He is not here: for He is _____ as He said.



Stoke-on-Trent
Foodbank
Together with Trussell

The work of the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank is vital in providing emergency food aid to so many in our local community. Typically, in the foodbank run from SwanBank, we provide 25-30 food parcels each Wednesday ranging from food for single people to families of 7 or more, often feeding 80-90 people. We also give out basic toiletries to everyone that comes along. A big thank you to everyone who supports us as we wouldn't be able to do this without your help.

You can also watch a Lent and Easter message from the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank by clicking on the link below.

https://youtu.be/9jHsqZj9JQM?si=NK2EaMZsAs72NO_c

SWANBANK NOTICEBOARD

Risk Assessments

Just a reminder that if you organise a church trip or outing for your team, please remember to complete a risk assessment and forward it to me and the circuit safeguarding officer (currently me!) prior to the event. If you aren't sure if the outing requires a risk assessment, or you need any assistance to write it, then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Shirley Brooks
Swan Bank Safeguarding Officer
Circuit Safeguarding Officer

Creating Safer Space Safeguarding Training

If you have been unable to attend any of the recent foundation or advanced safeguarding training, please inform me of your future availability. I will do my best to arrange sessions on days/times that suit you. Contact: 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. Also, the manger, **Nan Hulse**, is looking for extra volunteers, especially on Mondays.

Volunteering at SwanBank

We are always in need of new volunteers in our busy church. In particular, we are looking for people to work within the SwanBank Kids ministry as well as the Refreshments Team (other exciting vacancies are also available!). Contact **Shirley Brooks** if you would like to know more.

Mid-Week Service

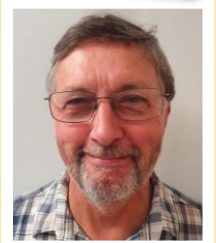
Stoke-on-Trent Circuit hold a mid-week service at Whitehill Methodist Community Church (at Whitehill Road, Kidsgrove, ST7 4DS) every Wednesday starting at 10:15am. All are welcome!

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**



Past issues can be also found at <https://www.swanbank.org.uk/newsletter/>

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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