



SWANBANK



May Magazine 2026

Monthly Message

Hello!

It is such a joy to be back with you.

Having returned to SwanBank just a month ago after these past 12 weeks of sabbatical, my heart is full—full of gratitude to God, and full of thankfulness for this church community. The life of SwanBank continues to be shaped by our love for Jesus Christ and our desire to make him known, and it is a privilege to step back into that shared calling together.

My sabbatical has been a deeply meaningful time — a season of listening, resting, travelling, refreshment, learning, discerning, and growing. I have been so very grateful for the space to step back from the usual rhythms of ministry. It has truly been a gift; one I have not taken for granted.

There have been particular moments of blessing along the way. Time spent on retreat with much-loved friends who are also in ministry was encouraging and life-affirming. Also, space to pray, reflect, and listen together. I realised early on, how tired I was, meaning I was really struggling to focus on the reading I intended to do. Instead, I decided to focus on listening to a set of audiobooks from a Christian author. I did get a little obsessed and listened to the whole series, and in fact have just finished the second series too. These books have been deeply meaningful and thought-provoking, helping me to see things afresh and reflect more deeply on some of



the sometimes 'tricky' aspects of faith, life, and ministry.

I want to thank you, as a church, for making this time possible. Your generosity and encouragement have been a real blessing to me. I am also so thankful to my colleagues, Ruth, Nick, Liz and all who have led, served, and carried extra responsibilities during these months.

Seasons like this remind us again that leadership is a shared task and the Holy Spirit wants to be active in every member of the 'body.'

As I come back, I do so refreshed and renewed, with a sense of expectancy for what God will do in the season ahead. I look forward to listening, serving, and discerning together as we continue to follow Jesus.

Thank you again for your faithfulness, care and commitment to the life of this church. I am so glad to be back among you as we follow Jesus together.

With every blessing, *Kathryn*

Civic Prayer Breakfast - Friday 5th June



2026 STOKE-ON-TRENT ANNUAL
**CIVIC PRAYER
BREAKFAST**

Friday
5 June, 2026

Kings Hall, Kingsway
Stoke, ST4 1JH

Run time
07:30am - 10:00am

Join us to celebrate 'Stoke-on-Trent Day'



Guest Speaker
Jon Rouse CBE
Chief Executive

Stoke-on-Trent City Council
*"The importance of the faith and
voluntary sector in the city"*



Guest Interview
Laura Nicholls
Director of Stoke City
Community Engagement



Guest Interview
Naomi Parton
Head of Port Vale
Foundation

Event hosts

Lloyd Cooke & Sam Taylor (Saltbox)

Worship led by

Paul Critchley (Presence Worship)
St. Peter's CoE Academy Gospel Choir

**Tickets £15.00 including
an updated
breakfast menu,
individual table service
and free car parking**

Book your place:

By Card - Call 07825 745142

By Cheque - Made payable to Saltbox - Send to: Saltbox, Bemersley House, Gitana Street, Hanley, ST1 1DY

In Person - Buy from: The Christian Book Centre, Gitana Street, Hanley, ST1 1DY

General Enquiries - email@saltbox.org.uk



Retreat – Saturday 30th May



Upcoming retreat

**'A DAY OF PERSONAL SPIRITUAL
RENEWAL'**

led by Rev Helen Kirk (Chair of District)

SATURDAY 30TH MAY

10AM - 3PM

A day of prayer, quiet time
and guided reflection,
including lunch and refreshments

Ashley Methodist Church
Wesleyan Road, Ashley. TF9 4JT

**£20
per
person**



We have a small number of funded places available for the day if finances are a barrier, so if you would like to access one of those, please mention on enquiry.



Enquiries / Bookings
retreats@ashleymethodist.co.uk

For more information
www.ashleymethodist.co.uk/retreats

May 2026 - Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	3 rd May	10 th May	17 th May	24 th May	31 st May
Swan Bank	9.00am	Taylor	Stephens	Jeffries	Chapman	Stephens
	10.30am	Taylor	Stephens	Jeffries	Stephens/Brabbs	Stephens
	6.15pm	Brabbs	A Johnson	Cooke	Stephens	Jeffries
Potter's Church	9.30am	Price	Price	Hancock	Cooke	Jolley
	11.15am	Price	Price	Hancock	Cooke	Jolley
Oasis Ch	10.45am	Davies/Stephens	Cooke	A Price	TBA	Community Sunday
Wesley Hall	10.45am	Tattersall	Andrews	Tretheway	Boateng	Own Arrangement
The Gateway	10.45am	Own Arrangement	Tattersall	Mason	Own Arrangement	Brooks
Mt Pleasant	10.45am	Tindale	Dutton	Stanyer	Wakelin	Own Arrangement
Packmoor	11.00am	Stanyer	Tindale	Own Arrangement	Wilshaw	Mason
Village Ch	11.00am	Jeffries	Brabbs	Stephans	Own Arrangement	Jeffries
Whitehill	10.30am	Brooks	Cooper	Boateng	Andrews	Cooke
	6.00pm	Cooper	Chapman	Q & A (AW)	Cooper	Cooper



Prayer Chapel

Some people who are new to Swan Bank may not realise that there is a small Prayer Chapel in the foyer where coffee is served. It is open throughout the week and is where the Thursday morning prayer often

takes place. It is a space for quiet reflection, prayer and taking time out to be with God with resources that may help with your journey, so please pop in and take a look. If you sense God has spoken to you through a Sunday service or want to share anything that you feel may be encouraging or helpful to the Church family, please write it into the journal on the table.

So, what happened to the Maundy Thursday footprints and Easter Day prayer hearts? A hole punch was used to take the DNA of each one, whilst preserving confidentiality, to produce 'blossom' that is now hanging on leaves of the prayer tree. All the microdots were prayed over generally and there was a sense of God validating each thought and prayer behind the footprints and prayer hearts when the hole punch was being used.

'Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'

Ephesians 3 v 20-21



Foodbank Update

Thank you from the foodbank team, for your continued donations and prayers throughout the years. It's hard to believe we are coming into our 13th/14th year.

The Community Hub is also doing great things to help people move into a better situation a along with Nan & the Community Grocery

We had a wonderful donation of Easter Eggs from our friends at Alkegen in Burslem. They are a great team who support us regularly. They already have a gift box started ready for next Christmas! We thank them for all their support and friendship.

If you would like to visit and see what the Foodbank is about or if you want to volunteer, please speak to **Sue Woodward** or the church office.

Sincere thanks, Foodbank team.



Prayer Focus

Dear Lord,

We thank you once again for the freedom your sacrifice on the cross bought for us. Thank you that You hear the groans of our hearts when we are unable to put our prayers into words. We ask that the reality of your resurrection life would be known by all those who have been on our hearts over the Easter period. We pray that as we move into the coming months, it would be a

transforming time, and we remember those who face significant upcoming challenges and changes. We pray that You would give us eyes to see and ears to hear You, that You would give discernment and clarity to all those in authority and that in all situations You would be glorified.

May Your kingdom come and Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.

Soup Kitchen Update

The SwanBank Soup Kitchen has been operating since November 2024, so we are now coming up to 18 months of offering a warm welcome and serving hot food for rough sleepers and the homeless from the Burslem area.

The number of clients per session during the first few months was around 15 to 20, however, we now regularly serve 45 to 50 individuals every Monday and Thursday morning in our coffee lounge. This is all made possible by a team of 45 volunteers who are the best people I've ever volunteered with. Their continued dedication and passion for this work is inspiring, and I want to thank each and every one of them for their support.

Some weeks, our volunteers have to deal with and manage some challenging situations. But they turn up with a big smile and sleeves rolled up, ready to get stuck in serving an amazing plate of hot food or washing dishes or taking individuals for a shower etc etc. Oh, and not forgetting to spend time simply chatting with our guests over a cup of tea.

On the 20th April, we served 70 guests, our busiest day since we started, meaning that our costs are inevitably going up. It was my intention from the start that the soup kitchen running costs would not be met by SwanBank and this still remains the case. All costs are met by external funders from local

organisations. As an example, Paul Molley from the Masons joined the team a couple of weeks ago to volunteer his time to serve breakfast and he recently presented the soup kitchen with two cheques. The amazing support from local groups is ensuring that the work of the soup kitchen is funded to continue well into 2026 and beyond.



Finally, I am always keen to recruit additional volunteers to add resilience to our team, therefore please have a chat with me or Liz Thompson if you would like to discuss volunteering for the soup kitchen. It can be for as little as 2 hours per month. I am also after any keen bakers out there who would be willing to provide cakes once every 6 weeks.



Keith Stubbs

'One Step Forward'

'One Step Forward' is SwanBank's new walking (strolling) group for men. If like me you feel that you are constantly on the go and finding or making time to connect with others is difficult (even on a Sunday at church), then I encourage you to step forward and join me. No sign up, planning or preparation is required, and there is no agenda or expectation, simply be ready to step forward at 2pm for a leisurely local stroll for just an hour or so with perhaps a drink too! We will meet on the 2nd Saturday of **every other month** at 2pm. Our first walk will be on **Saturday 9th May** at Westport Lake, meeting by the Cafe's main entrance. For more details, please come and have a chat with me.



Matt Nixon

Cliff College Celebration (22nd -27th May)

Towards the end of May, our family will be setting off for Cliff Festival! Set in the lovely Hope Valley in Derbyshire, Cliff Festival is held in the grounds of Cliff College - the Christian theological college. We have participated in the Festival over many years, initially just on the bank holiday Monday when our children were very young, but for the several years we have camped for the entire weekend. We now commit to going every year as it is like an oasis in our busy lives to spend several days in God's presence. Being able to spend quality time together as a family in such a beautiful setting is a blessing to us all and we encourage you to take a look for yourself at what Cliff Festival has to offer at:-

<https://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/cliff-festival>

A team from SwanBank will also be leading some of the worship and Bible studies as well.

Matt Nixon

Young People’s Weekend Away - Update

Wow—what a fabulous weekend! Around 100 young people gathered from across the District for “The Summit”... and it absolutely lived up to the hype. Adventure? Check. Fun? Definitely. Friendships? Everywhere. Faith? At the heart of it all.



From the moment things kicked off, it was full speed ahead. Our young people threw themselves into every challenge—whether that meant conquering fears with some fairly death-



defying leaps, learning new skills, or working together to crack problem solving tasks (with varying degrees of success, but plenty of enthusiasm!).

There was also the small matter of raft building... let’s just say

creativity was high, floating ability slightly less so. While a few managed to stay dry, many became rather well-acquainted with the rather chilly lake!



We were also delighted to welcome some fantastic guests over the weekend. Antidote, an R&B band, brought a fresh and powerful style of worship that really got everyone engaged. Genesis Padgett, Youth President of the Methodist Conference, spent time with the young people throughout the weekend, helping them step out of their comfort zones. And we were privileged to have Matthew Forsyth the Vice President of the Methodist Conference as our special guest speaker on Saturday evening, sharing an inspiring and encouraging message.



Add into the mix some amazing food, an eerily quiet (yet highly energetic) silent disco, a wonderfully chaotic quiz, countless games, thoughtful Bible studies—and yes, perhaps just a slight lack of sleep—and you’ve got all the ingredients for an unforgettable weekend.

But more than anything, at the centre of it all was this simple truth: our young people were reminded that they are deeply loved by God, called by name, and that they belong. Because, just as they are... they are enough.

Nick Jeffries

SwanBank EASTER Update



The Easter holidays brought a spirit of joy and togetherness to our community, beginning with a meaningful gathering on Maundy Thursday. We shared a warm community meal with both known and new faces from the community, reflecting on the significance of the Last Supper. As communion was taken, there was a strong sense of unity, reminding everyone of the message of love and sacrifice at the heart of the season.

This celebration continued on Easter Sunday, beginning with a peaceful 6:30 am service up on Sneyd Hill. As the sun rose, we shared in communion together, giving thanks for the beauty of the world God has given us and reflecting on the depth of his love in sending his only Son so that we

could be forgiven. Later, the church was packed for a special all-age service. The atmosphere was uplifting, with people of all generations coming together to celebrate the resurrection. The message of hope and faith was shared widely, making it a truly joyous occasion.

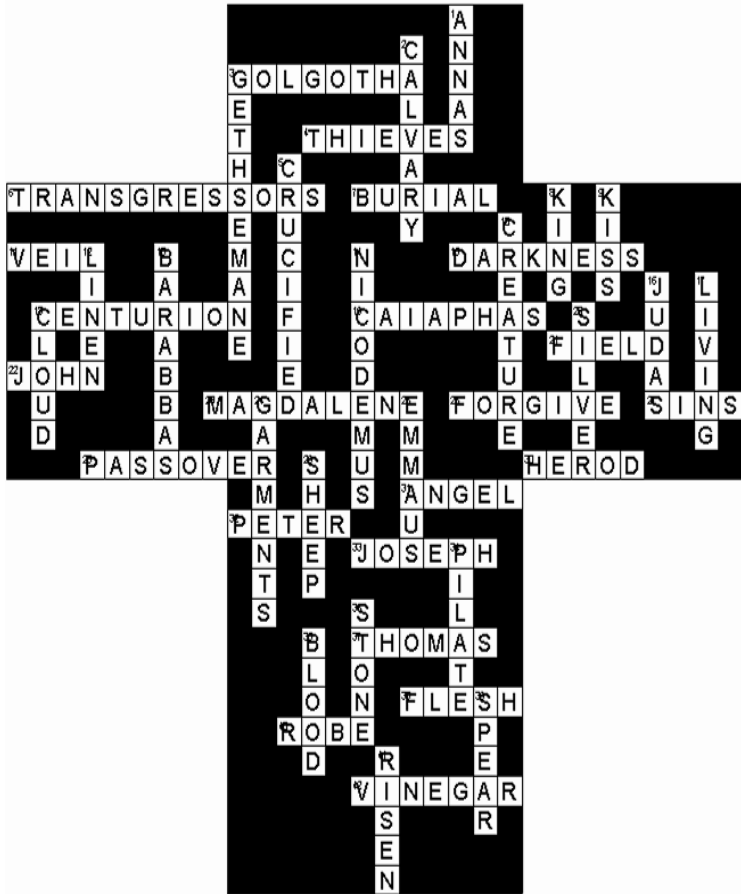
Beyond church, the holidays were made even more special with a family trip to Whitby. Blessed with glorious sunshine all week, we enjoyed stunning coastal views and memorable time together. From walks along the harbour to enjoying incredible fish and chips, it was a week filled with gratitude, faith, and cherished family moments.

Abby Jeffries



The Easter Story Crossword - SOLUTION

The Easter Story



©Roxie Carroll - A Kid's Heart
akidsheart.com



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.
'NEW' One Step Forward (Men's Walking Group) – (2pm on 2nd Saturday of every other month starting on 9th May). See Matt Nixon for details.

SwanBank Preaching Themes in May

DATE	Morning Theme	Evening Theme
3rd May	No Greater Story He Created Us Genesis 1:26-27	23rd Psalm v6
10th May	No Greater Story He Rescued Us Colossians 1:13-14	Paul's Top Ten Ephesians 2:8
17th May	No Greater Story He Perfects Us Hebrews 12:1-3	Paul's Top Ten 2 Corinthians 5:17
24th May	No Greater Story He Equips Us 2 Timothy 3:16-17	Paul's Top Ten Romans 1:16
31st May	No Greater Story He Sends Us Matthew 28:19-20	Paul's Top Ten Romans 6:23

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



SWANBANK NOTICEBOARD

Safeguarding Training

There are plenty of opportunities to complete your necessary safeguarding training coming up!

There's two Foundation sessions available on **Friday 8th May** and **Monday 1st June** (both 7pm to 9:30pm).

In addition, there's an Advanced session on **Monday 18th May** (5pm to 9:30pm).

Don't miss out! Speak to **Shirley** to book you slot.

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.



SCAN ME!

TO HELP US TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE AND TO PROVIDE THE BEST EXPERIENCE WE CAN, PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE AND REGISTER THEIR DETAILS WITH US

These details will be securely held, according to our data policy which you can find on the website www.swanbank.org.uk

FOUNDATION SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

For ALL volunteers within the Stoke on Trent Mission Circuit, (also open to volunteers in the Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District), who MUST renew every 4 years

VENUE:

The Fellowship Room
Swan Bank Church,
Burslem, ST6 2AA

DATE:

Friday 8th May 2026
7pm to 9:30pm

To book a place
Scan the QR Code
Click LINK

or email: shirley@swanbank.org.uk



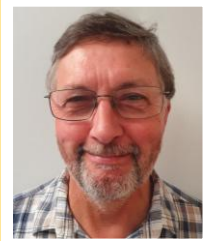
Mid-Week Service

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!



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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