



SWANBANK

August Magazine 2026

Ruth's Final Monthly Message to us 🙄 !

Dear friends,

This will be my last letter to you as your minister here at SwanBank (cue the tissue passing or the cheering – I'll leave that choice to you!). It's always tough to know what to say at this point: to look back over 5 years, to make observations about my time here, to highlight the highs and the lows, or even take the opportunity to say a final word or two. I think it'd be impossible to do any of these things without leaving something out, instead I choose to simply say, "THANK YOU".

I have known of SwanBank since John Hibberts (who by the way, baptised me) moved here from Preston, hearing in the annual Christmas letter from John and Val all about the work here. When, five years ago we found ourselves in a deeply challenging situation, with nowhere to go it was Kathryn, Helen Kirk and this circuit and church that came to our aid. If only for your willingness to say yes to me and my family: THANK YOU.

Being a minister is and should always be about service. An element of this is sometimes laying down or at least putting aside things that might be particular passions or interests, if only temporarily. Yes, we are always called to be ourselves, to lean into our giftings etc, but often that's not that easy or practical. Being at SwanBank has allowed me to use my musical gifts on a regular basis but has also enabled me to dig into my theatrical passions and to work with some incredibly talented and generous people, particularly with the Christingles, which has filled me with unspeakable joy! So, for the gift of being able to use my gifts alongside yours: THANK YOU.

Finally, (not that there aren't a billion and one other things to say – but I have a word limit here!) as a minister - I don't come alone. SwanBank is the



place where my husband has been encouraged and able to flourish in his own giftings, the place where our girls have been nurtured in their faith and been baptised, and it's the place we've been able to worship in the way that works beautifully for us! SwanBank is also the place where we have been loved, challenged, encouraged, held when things have been tough or painful and so much more. Moreover, it's a place where I have observed and experienced God at work: the Missio Dei (the mission of God) outworked in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked (sometimes a little too literally!), caring for the sick and more. I've seen lives changed, faith grown and relationships with Jesus established, developed and nurtured, and had the privilege of marking some of those journeys as they have reached the end of their earthly path. So once again, for my family and for the way you have loved us: THANK YOU.

Of course, I won't be disappearing quite yet until we move to London next Summer, though you will not see me at SwanBank for the next couple of months to enable good and healthy fresh starts. Please know that I will miss being your minister, and once again – thank you for the past five years.

With every blessing,

Ruth X

Prayer Events

Prayer vigil for Sue & Brian Tattersall

You are invited to light a candle and share in silent prayer for as long as you wish

Saturday 15th August, 10am to 4pm
at The Gateway, Goldenhill ST6 5QJ

New Small Group Meeting
16th August

A new Small Group is being created, and an introductory meeting is planned after the 10:30am service on Sunday 16th August in the Coffee Lounge. The meeting is for those already signed up to the new group or those thinking about joining a small group. **Phil Andrews**, our small group co-ordinator will be there as well as Kathryn our minister to answer any questions you may have.



SwanBank Praying Together

We're gathering as a whole church to pray for our church's life and mission. We really hope all who are able will join us in seeking God's direction as we offer the new church year into God's care and keeping.

Wednesday 2nd September
7pm for refreshments,
for a 7:30pm start.
SwanBank Church

August 2026 - Circuit Preaching Plan

Venue	Time	2 nd August	9 th August	16 th August	23 rd August	30 th August
SwanBank	9.00am 10.30am 6.15pm	Jeffries/Stephens Jeffries/Stephens Jeffries/Stephens	A Johnson A Johnson Stephens 🕯️	Stephens Stephens Price	Stephens Stephens A Johnson	Sheeran Stephens/Nick Stephens 🕯️
Potter's Church	9.30am 11.15am	Hancock Hancock	Price Price	Cooke Cooke	Graham Graham	P Barber P Barber
Oasis Ch	10.45am	Davies	Law	Tindale	Cooke	Davies
Wesley Hall	10.45am	Kirk 🕯️	Stubbs	Tattersall	Boateng	Own arrangement
The Gateway	10.45am	Mason	Andrews	Own arrangement	Tattersall	Wakelin 🕯️
Mt Pleasant	10.45am	Boateng	Tindale	Wilshaw	Wakelin 🕯️	Own arrangement
Packmoor	11.00am	Own arrangement	Cooke	Wakelin 🕯️	Tindale	Mason
Village Ch	11.00am	Zinyemba	Jeffries/Stephens	Brabbs	Wakelin 🕯️	Own arrangement
Whitehill	10.30am 6.00pm	Batho Wakelin	Cooper 🕯️ Cooper	Cooper (Baptism) Q & A-Wakelin	Andrews Cooper 🕯️	Brooks Tinsdale

Who is Dave Howe?

Most who come to the 10.30 service at SwanBank will have seen me (old fellow, balding white hair and a beard) - sitting next to my best friend and soul mate who I met at work in 1974, and to whom I have been married since 1976.

Like most, our relationship has faced many of life's challenges and tragedies – some expected – others not so, but we have been blessed with many more joyous occasions. Our three daughters enjoying relationships that have blessed us with eight grandchildren, ranging from 7 to 25. Our wider family includes seven young people who we fostered over a 25-year period – one is still living with us today!

Since January 2018, we have called SwanBank our spiritual home, hopefully the last part of our spiritual journey, which for me started over sixty years ago. I was five when our Sunday School paraded to the local church and I remember the minister looking straight at me and saying "God loves you". This scared me and put me off going again, until a new minister wanted a choir, and the lure of 6d per service was the incentive I needed.

I grew through my youth and teens, still attending church, before a new young minister kindled the idea

that there was more to it than just going to church, God really did love me! That he died for me, that he rose for me and is waiting to welcome me into his heavenly kingdom.

Our faith grew alongside our family, and we became involved with many aspects of church life including children and youth work, until we recognised it was time to pass on the baton to younger people who were more in touch with today's kids.

In 2016, some decisions were taken that made many leave our former church, and in 2018 that included us. Even though I still am involved with services there, SwanBank is now our home. After enjoying a settling in period, we now lead a Bible Study, I'm part of the Pastoral Team, the Tuesday Club Team, and soon to part of the Church Council. I love the style of worship and music used here, as it reflects my own as I listen to Christian Radio stations.

Gods plan for my life hasn't always been what I expect or had prayed for – but wow what a journey – with the promise of hope and eternal life to follow.
God Bless

Dave Howe



Tunstall Methodist Church on Queens Avenue are looking for new members to join a small painting group. No experience is necessary and as a starter basic materials will also be provided. They meet on Fridays from 9am till 12 noon – with refreshments!



For more information contact:-
Sue Key – 07378 354116 or
Malcolm Price – 01782 824015



Unexpected Links

On 26th July, Sue Simcoe spoke to the 9am congregation on well-known hymns and Biblical psalms and verses that had inspired her. She mentioned how the song 'O, for a thousand tongues to sing!' was inspired by Charles Wesley hearing that sentiment, adapted from the Bible and expressed by a clergyman. Wesley turned it into a song.

Sue moved on to change and redemption, taking Victor Hugo's 'Les Misérables' as a vivid example. Jean Valjean, a convict brutalised by suffering, eventually reforms under the influence of a saintly bishop and because he becomes, accidentally, the guardian of a little girl born almost literally in the gutter. When on the run he steals a couple of silver candlesticks from a bishop who had already given most of his goods to the poor, Jean was arrested. Instead of demanding his despatch to the guillotine the bishop forgave him and helped to rehabilitate him.

This story galvanised me, taking me back to the past. At Clayton School we had a textbook 'One Act Plays for Children' and in it was a playlet 'The Bishop's Candlesticks', based on this episode. I clearly remember our surprise that the bishop forgave Jean and set him on the right path. The memory had remained for 70 years in my mind. Had this playlet and its message survived in other children's minds? Stored away with the possibility of recall?

A second and connected memory was brought to the surface by Sue's talk. Sue's sister, Shirley

Brooks, once said to me that you never know how far what you say or write will spread or what effect it might have on the future. Sometimes apparent defeat turns into eventual victory if the cause is right. In the 18th Century the idealistic young Habsburg Emperor, Joseph II, abolished serfdom. The aristocrats who had owned the serfs rebelled. 'I have failed in everything I have attempted,' he grieved before he died prematurely. But in fact, his reforms had revitalised Austria and enabled it to survive Napoleon's attacks. The freed serfs fought for Austria. In the same period in France, Olympe de Gouges demanded equal rights for women. The French revolutionaries, as traditional as the monarchists, were horrified and guillotined her in 1793. Her son, serving in the army, disowned her. It took another 153 years for Frenchwomen to get the vote, but she had introduced the idea.

So, we never know what effect our lives might have. Make sure that any effects, known or unknown to us, are good. Let the fictional French bishop be an example. There was only a baker's dozen in the congregation on that Sunday, but from later comments, it was obvious that Sue's talk had made a deep impression. It will be interesting to see if there are any repercussions in the near future...

Margaret Brown



Lloyd Cooke Receives Honorary Doctorate

Congratulations to our Circuit's friend and Saltbox Chief Executive **Lloyd Cooke** who has received an honorary degree from the University of Staffordshire this summer. Lloyd, who has led Stoke-on-Trent charity Saltbox for almost 38 years as its Chief Executive, received the Award of Doctor of Letters (Hon DLitt) in recognition of his tireless work supporting vulnerable communities and fostering collaboration across the public, voluntary and faith sectors. We give thanks for Lloyd and celebrate this well-deserved honour.

Shirley Brooks



Colour Splash 2026 Highlights



What an Amazing Three Days! Colour Splash 2026 was a spectacular success, with 60 children joining us as we stepped into Professor Puzzlebottom's Laboratory. There we met Pip, the Professor's slightly (shall we say!) inept apprentice, and the incredible Truth-o-Tron 3000, a machine designed by the Professor that could transport Bible characters through time and space.

Over the three days, this amazing invention introduced us to three very different Bible characters. However, thanks to Pip's unfortunate habit of not reading the instructions properly, each story became a little muddled! Poor Daniel was thrown into a den of very hungry... sheep! Jonah was swallowed by a goldfish! And David found himself facing a rather short giant!

Thankfully, our brilliant Lab R.A.T.S. (Revealing Amazing Truths with Science) were on hand to set the stories straight. As they did, we discovered wonderful truths: God is with us wherever we go, God never gives up on us, God can use absolutely anyone, and He is bigger than all our problems.

The three days were packed with unforgettable moments. On Wednesday, we were delighted to welcome our resident science teacher, Lauren, who delivered an exciting, fun-filled, and interactive science workshop. We're pleased to report that no children exploded or were accidentally set on fire during the session!

Thursday's epic water fight left everyone thoroughly soaked but full of smiles, while Friday brought glorious sunshine as the children hopped, skipped, and jumped their way through a fantastic sports day.

We are incredibly grateful to our amazing team of volunteers, who worked tirelessly to create such a joyful and memorable experience for every child. Thank you also to everyone who gave financially—your generosity enabled many families to take part in Colour Splash. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who prayed for the event. We truly saw God's blessing over these three wonderful days, and we couldn't have done it without your support.

Now... time to start planning for Colour Splash 2027! 🥰 **Nick Jeffries**



Prayer Focus

Jesus said "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11 verses 28-30).

We can come to Jesus when we need to rest and restore our body, mind, and souls. Jesus knows this world can not restore us so let us pray,

"Father

Heal my Body

Heal my Mind

Heal my Heart

Heal my Emotions

Father, you know every pain I have carried quietly. You know every burden that has affected my peace. You know every place in me that needs your touch.

I place myself in your hands.

I surrender every ache; I surrender every worry.

Lord let your healing power move through me.

Bring peace where there has been pain.

Bring strength where there has been weakness.

Bring comfort where there has been heaviness.

Bring restoration where there has been exhaustion.

I declare that my body belongs to God.

My heart belongs to God.

My life belongs to God.

Thank you Lord.

Amen."

Sarah Dobson



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 – Fellowship Rm, 10 -12noon

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 **RESTARTS in October** – 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.

One Step Forward (Men's Walking Group) – (2pm on 2nd Saturday every other month – May, July, Sept, Nov etc..) See Matt Nixon for details.

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

SWANBANK NOTICEBOARD

Date for the Diary – A chance to meet our new minister!

At the 6:15pm service on Sunday 13th September we will be welcoming our new minister **Leslie Newton**, alongside his wife Gill and daughter Laura to SwanBank. Please come along if you are able and get the chance to say hello!

**Tricky Brain Teasers?**

Q: I'm orange, I wear a green hat, and I sound like a parrot. What am I?

Q: A tree doubled in height each year until it reached its maximum height over the course of ten years. How many years did it take for the tree to reach half its maximum height?

Q: It belongs to you, but other people use it more than you do. What is it?

Q: What building has the most stories?

Q: The day before yesterday I was 21, and next year I will be 24. When is my birthday?

Answers next month!



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

Gateway Coffee Morning

The next Gateway Coffee Morning in Goldenhill is on **Saturday 8th August** (10am till 12 noon). All are welcome!

**MESSY CHURCH**

Please remember there is no Messy Church in August nor in September. It will restart on **Saturday 3rd October**.

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

Issue No. 34



DBS - Ask the Experts

Expert Guidance on
Applications and Checks

Supporting volunteers
serving in Methodist Church
settings

Available 'in person' or via Zoom

To book your place

Choose your session and scan the QR code
or email shirley@swanbank.org.uk

Join whichever session suits you best!

Please state your preference on the booking form.

ZOOM link will be forwarded prior to the session.

Swan Bank Church or ZOOM

Burslem Stoke on Trent

ST6 2AA

Date: 14/09/2026

Time: 7pm to 8.30 pm



Swan Bank Church or ZOOM

Burslem Stoke on Trent

ST6 2AA

Date: 28/09/2026

Time: 7pm to 8.30 pm



DBS checks help ensure safe volunteering
within the Methodist Church community.



Different volunteer roles may require
Basic, Standard, or Enhanced level checks.



Always follow Methodist Church safeguarding
guidance for your volunteer role.

