



**Sharing the love
of Jesus**

Sandbach Baptist Church Newsletter

Sunday 19th January 2025

Message from Alistair-

Chester Zoo is home to thousands of animals, from tall giraffes to the tiniest of insects. In fact, there are over 37,000 animals from over 500 incredible species!

And that includes birds. And you can encounter Caribbean flamingos, a colony of Humboldt penguins, and some of the largest parrots in the world. And you can read all about them- the Southern Cassowary with its muscular legs and powerful feet that have given it the reputation of being one of the most dangerous birds in the wild. Grey Crowned Cranes are every bit as regal as their name suggests and are also the national bird of Uganda. The rhinoceros hornbill, one of the largest birds found in the rainforests of South-East Asia.

What also interests me is that there are often sparrows fluttering about inside the enclosures with the other birds. Somehow they've managed to get into the enclosure, maybe through the smallest of gaps. Of course they weren't important enough to put in an enclosure for everyone to admire. They didn't qualify for an explanatory plaque. Their picture didn't appear in the zoo guidebook. Maybe many people didn't even notice them. Yet of all the birds he created, God chose the sparrow to make a crucial point on the subject of fear. Jesus said, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.' Matthew 10:29-31.

How wise of our Lord to use the example of a sparrow. He could have chosen eagles, albatross, owls, or countless other birds. And yet of the world's 11,000 bird species, Jesus chose one of the most insignificant, least-noticed, ordinary birds flying around. Jesus obviously wanted to make his point clear. Those who believe and follow him mean more to the Father than anything else. If God notices every humble sparrow, where they are and what they're doing, we can be sure he knows all about us and loves us more than we can ever know.

Our Service- Sunday 19th January 25-

Our service on Sunday 19th January will be at 10:30am at Sandbach Primary Academy. It is an all-age service led by Rev. Alistair Stewart. The Bible reading is Ephesians 1:3-14 and the title is 'God's big plan for his world and his people.'

Tea and coffee will be served after the service.

Our Activities- Week beginning Sunday 19th January 25-

Monday- Welcome Bap-10:00am-12:00 Noon at Oasis.

Tuesday- Tots and Co- 9:30am-11:30am at Oasis. Sue, Alison and Chris F are on the rota.

Tuesday- Encounter with God- 7:00pm-8:00pm at Oasis.

Wednesday- Ladies Fellowship- 10:30am-12:00 Noon at Oasis.

Wednesday- Wednesday Group- 7:30pm at Oasis.

Thursday- Churches Together in Sandbach AGM- 7:30pm at St. Winefrides.

Saturday- Saturday Prayer Gathering- 8:30am-9:15am at Oasis.

Saturday-TEK URA Fundraising Winter Social Evening- 6:00pm-9:00pm at Oasis. [See notice later in the newsletter].

If you would like to join any of the midweek groups, please contact Alistair and he will put you in touch with the group leader.

Wisdom for the Week-

In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps. *Proverbs 16:9*

Father, thank you for caring about me, my life, my decisions and my struggles. Please guide me by your Holy Spirit as I seek to understand your word and discern your will for my life. Amen.

News for the Church Family-

From Alistair and the Leadership Team- Oasis-

We know that many of you were at our Special Church Meeting last Sunday when we had to make a decision about the future of Oasis. If you haven't yet heard, we are delighted to be able to share with you that the Special Church Meeting voted unanimously to proceed with the purchase of 36 Green Street (comprising Oasis and the two flats above).

We are so grateful to God for his grace, love and guidance to us throughout the journey. And as a leadership team, we also want to say how much we have appreciated the gracious and helpful way you have engaged with all the discussions around Oasis. We are very excited that this unanimous decision enables us to build upon the existing critical mission work carried out, and look to new mission initiatives in the future, knowing that our future at Oasis is now more secure.

We also want to share with you details of our Pledge Sunday which will be this Sunday- 19th January.

If you were at church over the last couple of weeks, you will remember that Ian said that we had already received very generous pledges of financial support from folk (both offers of gifts and interest free loans), which have significantly reduced the amount of money we would need to borrow on a commercial basis. Other people have very generously increased their regular giving to the church to offset the increase in monthly expenditure and help with the repayment of any loans.

We would now like to formally ask you all to consider prayerfully whether you are able to financially support this project and, if so, how much you feel God is leading you to give.

Pledge Forms have been sent out by email, but will also be available again on Sunday.

Please return your Pledge Form next Sunday 19th January in an envelope. There will be a bowl in the foyer at the school before the morning service in which to place them.

If you are unable to come next Sunday morning, please hand them to Alistair or Ian over the coming weeks or post them to Ian at 38 Adlington Drive, Sandbach CW11 1DX.

If you do not have a printer and would like a paper copy, please give Ian a ring on 07711 995016. Thank you so much for your consideration and support.

From Christine and George Hill- Fund Raising Evening for TEK URA, Albania (Dan and Annie Dupree)-

Our TEK URA fundraising Winter Social Evening is at Oasis on Saturday 25th January from 6:00pm-9:00pm. This year, it includes a visit from our special guests - Dan and Annie Dupree themselves!! Dan and Annie may present something but their main presentation will be at the morning service on the following day.

This is the first of our 2025 fundraising events for Tek Ura. There is no admission fee. Donations are invited. But we DO understand that because of our church Gift Day, this year donations may well come more throughout the year!

There will be food at 6:30pm - possibly including vegetarian and meat haggis! (It's Burns Night!). Offers of food to Christine Hill, please.

We invite you to enjoy any of the following:

- A little Scottish dancing
- Party games
- Quizzes
- Cake and Toffee sale. (Bakers of cakes are invited....)

As in previous years, please make donations (now or anytime in the year) to our dedicated SBC Stewardship page for Tek Ura (or contact George Hill).

Our page is at <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/sandbachbaptisttekura>. This page already shows the 2023 and 2024 amounts (totalling £5470 + Gift Aid = £5862) so whatever we add in 2025 will not include this figure. Enjoy!

From Churches Together in Cheshire- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity-

You are warmly invited to a 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service' with Andy Flannagan on Sunday 19th January 2025 at Hoole United Reformed Church, Hoole Road, Hoole CH2 3NT. The Service will take place at 3:00pm and will be followed by some refreshments. All are welcome! To find out more about Andy Flannagan please follow this link- <https://andyflan.com/>.

And finally....

A lorry carrying Marmite broke down on the M25 yesterday. It's on the yeast bound carriageway!

Contacts-

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