



**Sharing the love
of Jesus**

Sandbach Baptist Church Newsletter

Sunday 23rd February 2025

Message from Alistair-

What if Jesus had chosen his disciples based on how qualified they appeared to be for future leadership roles? I don't think they would have done very well! Peter was emotional, unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew had absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, placed personal interests above Company loyalty. Thomas demonstrated a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. Matthew the tax collector was no doubt involved with plenty of shady business practices. And James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus definitely had radical leanings!

Fortunately, God doesn't choose perfect people to change the world! Instead, he includes others in his plan- sinners, the ungodly, and the imperfect. And if you ever wonder how God can use you to make a difference in the world, just look at those he's already used, and take heart!

No matter who we are and what we've done, God can use us. Because we're sinners, we can speak of forgiveness. God restores the broken and the brittle and then parades them before the world as trophies of his grace, love and strength.

Aren't you glad that God has always used and continues to use the most unlikely people for the work of his kingdom? And that can include us. Jesus is still saying, "Follow Me!"

Our Service- Sunday 23rd February 25-

Our service on Sunday 23rd February will be at 10:30am at Sandbach Primary Academy. Andrea Jones will be leading the service and Rev. Alistair Stewart will be preaching. The Bible reading is Psalm 96 and the title is 'Exalt his Name, Extend his Kingdom, Express his Greatness!'

Tea and coffee will be served after the service.

Our Activities- Week beginning Sunday 23rd February 25-

Monday- Welcome Bap-10:00am-12:00 Noon at Oasis. The Bap meal will follow the meeting.

Monday- Leaders Meeting- 7:30pm by Zoom.

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. Lent Study- Mark's Gospel- Stories of Jesus' Ministry outside of Jerusalem Part 2 (Mark 3:13-6:6).

Thursday- Thursday Evening House Group- 7:45pm by Zoom- The Romans Course- Session 5: Freedom- How can we avoid negative cycles?

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

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-

We love because he first loved us. *1 John 4:19*

Father, thank you for loving us more than we can ever know. Thank you for loving us so completely. Thank you for loving us so sacrificially. Thank you for loving us when we were still sinners alienated from you. But most of all, thank you for loving us first! May your love be reflected in our daily lives. Amen.

News for the Church Family-

From Ian Parsons Treasurer- financial update on the purchase of 36 Green Street-

I promised to give you an update regarding fundraising for the purchase of 36 Green Street (including Oasis and the two flats above) following our Pledge Sunday on 19th January.

You may remember that back in December when we first announced our interest in buying the property, I told you that we may need to borrow externally (i.e. from Banks or the Baptist Union) the sum of £85,000.

Between December and January when we held our Church meeting to vote on the proposal, we received many offers of financial support and I told you in January that the amount we may need to borrow externally had reduced to £23,400.

I can now tell you that following the Pledge Sunday and as a result of over 45 pledges of gifts and interest free loans from our fellowship and beyond, WE NOW DO NOT NEED TO BORROW ANYTHING EXTERNALLY. That's right- we are down to zero and we thank everyone for making these love offerings to maintain and extend God's mission work in Sandbach.

We have also had pledges from folk to increase their regular giving. This will help greatly towards being able to cover some new costs and also help repay some of the generous interest free loans offered sooner.

We are currently awaiting the survey report and once this is received and any financial implications have been understood, we should be able to start collecting your pledges in readiness for buying the property. I will let you know more about this in March.

We are so grateful for your generosity, and of course we give all the glory to God for the way he has been moving amongst us.

From Christine Hill and Ian Parsons- Tearfund Hunger Lunch and QUIZ on Sunday 2nd March 25-

On Sunday 2nd March after church, there won't be any tea or coffee served after the service. Instead, we will be holding our annual Tearfund Hunger Lunch at Oasis at about 1:00pm.

ALSO again this year, during and after the lunch, we have a special attraction, as Ian will again be running the Tearfund Big QUIZ for us!

You will receive a lunch of soup and bread rolls, so that you can donate the money you would otherwise have spent on Sunday dinner to Tearfund.

We would be very grateful if promises to make soup and provide bread could be given to Christine before the day, as it is difficult when people only tell us what they are bringing at the last minute. Thank you.

Tearfund has an urgent appeal out at the moment on behalf of folks in the war zone of the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo). Their team is delivering millions of litres of clean water daily to people in camps, along with hygiene essentials like soap, menstrual hygiene kits for women and girls, and emergency cash so people can buy food. We will probably donate our Lunch money to this appeal.

From George Hill- Tek Ura Albania fundraising-

We are enormously grateful for the support given by everyone towards the Tek Ura project in Albania (Dan and Annie Dupree).

As a church, we have pledged to donate £2500 to Tek Ura during this year. Our fundraiser in January when Dan and Annie visited us raised in total a staggering £1176.70 when Gift Aid is added. Adding the donation from our church mission budget to this money means we have already raised a wonderful £1976.70 for 2025, almost four fifths of what we have promised to give altogether. There will be one or two more events later in the year (slide shows) intended to get us over the line; but thank you all for such generosity already.

Donations and Gift Aid can still be added to our Stewardship page at-
<https://www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/sandbachbaptisttekura>.

(NB - the total shown on that page is not currently meaningful). A new system will replace the Stewardship page before long.

From George Hill- Church Family Events diary changes-

Apologies, but a couple of date/time changes are necessary to the Church Family Events programme sent out in January.

1. The Low Mobility Walk at Crewe Park will now be on Sunday August 10th (bad weather backup 17th), instead of Sunday July 20th.

2. By popular request, the Harvest Social with a Beetle Drive (raising money for Angel Tree) will now be an afternoon, not an evening event. It will still be on Saturday October 18th but will now run from 3:00pm to 5:30pm or so, with a light buffet tea around 4:45pm.

From Ian Parsons- Easter Eggs with a difference-

Every year our Church provides Eggs or Chocolate Bars to some of our Groups, which come from the Meaningful Chocolate Company. The Easter egg contains a 24 page Easter story/activity book and costs £6.20 (less for bulk buying) and the Blessing Bar contains an image of the resurrection and words of a blessing and costs £3.20 (less for bulk buying). Out of the 80 million chocolate Easter Eggs sold each year, the Real Easter Egg is the only Fairtrade one with the Easter Story in a box.

If you would like to buy any of these items to give to family or friends (or yourself!), please let me know by 2nd March and I will include it in the order. You only need to pay when the order is received.

From Alistair- Thursday Evening House Group-

The next meeting of our Thursday Evening House Group will be on Thursday 27th February at 7:45pm by Zoom. We are studying Paul's Letter to the Romans. This week is Session 5: Freedom- How can avoid negative cycles?

The small group resources section of the Bible Society website has the teaching videos and the testimony videos. You can access the participant's guide online using the following link:

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-romans-course/the-romans-course-home/small-group-resources/>

You do not need to pay to access the guide as the Church has made a donation. If you are struggling to download the guide, please let me know.

The Zoom link is in the email newsletter.

From Churches Together in Sandbach- World Day of Prayer- Friday 7th March and Sunday 9th March-

The 2025 service has been prepared by the women of the Cook Islands with the theme 'I made you wonderful'. Everyone is invited to join the local services-

Friday 7th March- 2:00pm at St John the Evangelist Church, Sandbach Heath.

Sunday 9th March- 6:00pm at St Mary's Church, Sandbach.

From Unity Methodist Church- Sandbach- An evening with Kate Doogan from Scripture Union- Wednesday 26th February 2025, 7:30pm-

You are warmly invited to an evening with Kate Doogan from Scripture Union on Wednesday 26th February 2025 at 7:30pm.

Kate will talk about the work of Scripture Union with children and young people and also give us a chance to talk about what's happening in our churches already and maybe gain some ideas which we can use in the future.

It will take place in the Hancock Hall, Unity Methodist Church (New Horizons), Crewe Road, Wheelock, CW11 3RT.

[The Hancock Hall is situated next to the car park, behind the chapel building at New Horizons].

To assist with catering, please let Alistair know if you intend to go.

And finally....

I tripped while climbing a tower in Paris. I fell!

Contacts-

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