



**Sharing the love
of Jesus**

Sandbach Baptist Church Newsletter

Sunday 8 February 2026

Reflection for the week

Abounding in kindness by Hilary Forbes

"... longsuffering and abounding in kindness and truth." (Exodus 34:6)

One of my mother's favourite amusing stories was of how her mother, my grandmother, never bothered using any punctuation when she wrote a letter. Mum would point this out on regular occasions to her, saying it was hard to make sense of her letters at times. After once such 'telling off,' Mum received a letter from Grandma with, as usual, no punctuation. Then, right at the end of the letter was a whole row of full stops, commas, apostrophes, and other punctuation marks with a little note, which read, "put these where you like."

The first translators of the Bible into English had the same problem. The original languages of the Bible used ways of punctuating sentences, word orders, and ancient expressions that are different from the way the English language is constructed. The first translators had to learn the languages, the cultures and what different expressions meant. For example, in Exodus 34 verse 6 the English (NKJV) translation is "longsuffering", but the original Hebrew expression is "long nosed" or rather, "long nostrils". From the context and familiarity with Hebrew language, its grammar and vocabulary, the translators interpreted this as "longsuffering."

When we come to read the Scriptures, we do so, knowing that Jesus Himself is The Word of God, and that the Scriptures testify of Him. We come asking God to speak through the Scriptures written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We come also knowing that those who wrote under the inspiration of God, wrote in their own language, speaking to their own people within and from their own specific cultural ways. The Pharisees fell into the errors of legalism and placed more emphasis on the words than on the grace and mercy of God, to the extent of accusing Jesus of breaking the law of God when he healed a man on the Sabbath, because they interpreted 'healing' as 'work' (Mark 3:1-6).

As we read the Scriptures, let us ask God to give us the same abundance of love and grace as Jesus, and let us be open and prepared for the Holy Spirit in us to enlighten the scriptures in new ways individually and as a church.

Our Service Sunday 8 February 2026

Our service on **Sunday 8 February** will be at 10:30am at Sandbach Primary Academy (SPA). The service will be led by George Hill and the speaker will be Rev Jane Henderson who is our Regional Minister from the NWBA. Jane will be speaking on Matthew 25:14-30 Parable of the Talents. The service will include communion.

Our Activities for the week beginning Sunday 8 February 2026

- Sunday:** Zoom Prayer Meeting 2:00pm-3:00pm [see below for link]
- Monday:** Welcome Bap 10:00am-12:00 Noon at Oasis
- Tuesday:** Tots and Co 9:30am-11:30am at Oasis
Encounter with God 7:00pm-8:00pm at Oasis
- Wednesday:** Ladies Fellowship 10:30am-12:00noon at Oasis
Wednesday Group 7:30-9:00pm at Oasis
- Thursday:** No House Group this week
- Friday:** No Energize meeting this week
- Saturday:** Morning Prayer Gathering 8:30am-9:15am at Oasis
'Exploring the Future' Meeting 10:00am-12:00noon at Oasis

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

A Refrain for the Week

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: 20-21

News items

From the Leadership: 'Exploring the future'

Our first 'Exploring the future' meeting is happening **next Saturday 14 February!** This is the first of three meetings which Rev Neil Brighton (a Transitional Minister with the NWBA) is leading for us. These will help us all think about where we are as a church and the things which will be important as we start the process to look for a new minister. Here is a bit more detail about the first meeting:

Saturday 14 February 10:00am – 12:00noon at Oasis
Session One: How are we doing?

"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Hebrews 10:24

The purpose of this first session is to reflect together on *how we're doing as a church community* using Robert Warren's **Seven Marks of a Healthy Church**. A healthy church isn't simply one that's busy or well-attended; it's one that reflects the character and mission of Christ in its worship, relationships, and witness.

Warren's prompts are not about evaluation alone - they are about vision, discernment, and encouragement. Working through them will help us to grow in spiritual vitality and missional clarity; to develop fresh insight, renewed purpose, and gently name areas where God may be calling us to grow.

Everyone is welcome to come along (you don't have to be a church member or a long-time member) ... and **there will be cake!**

The next sessions will be held on:

Sunday 22 March 2:30pm – 4:30pm at Oasis
Session Two: What are our values?

Our second session will look at the things we value as a church. Those things which give our church its character and vibe. As part of the discussion we will try and identify some key priorities for the future.

Monday 20 April 7:00pm – 9:00pm at Oasis
Session Three: What sort of ministry?

Our third session will dig into the question of what sort of minister(s) might the church need for the future? Partly to identify the core strengths a future minister will need, but also to ask questions about how we balance the need for a pastor, with our desire to reach the community and grow our work with young people.

From Andrea Jones: Prayer Days to support our 'Exploring the future'

As you know, we are planning to wrap the 'Exploring the future' meetings with a season of focused prayer sessions to fully seek God's direction for us. We held the first one at Oasis on 17 January, and the theme which emerged from that one was that we were a 'building site' and not a 'museum' – a church which had a heart to keep moving forward with God. A couple of us saw the church as a (moving) circle which was a gathering of God's people for worship and communion with Jesus, so that we could then radiate the love of Jesus outwards to the community. It was a lovely time and we would encourage everyone to try to join one of the sessions if you are able. The next one will be on **8 February**, and we have now added two more which will be on **11 April** and **9 May**:

Sunday 8 February 2:00-3:00pm by Zoom

Zoom Prayer Time which will be an opportunity to reflect and pray about our future, from your own home. The Zoom link is available from Ian Parsons.

Saturday 11 April 9.30-11.30am (ish) Prayer Walk

This will be an opportunity to pray more broadly for our place in the town (physically and spiritually). We will gather at Oasis after the usual morning prayer gathering, and then we will spend an hour walking (in 1's or 2's) around the streets surrounding Oasis (as we each feel led) praying silently for the areas we

pass, the people who live and work there, the town generally etc. We will then reassemble at Oasis around 10:30am for some refreshments and to share anything which we feel has been revealed to us.

Saturday 9 May 2:00-4:00pm Time of Quiet and Shared Prayer at Oasis

This will be a meditative style of prayer at Oasis which will be a further chance to reflect and pray about our future. This will be a mix of quiet personal prayer interspersed with shared prayer slots every half hour, much as we did on 17 January.

Dates for your 2026 Diary

14 February	Exploring the Future Session 1 10:00am-12:00noon
22 February	Tearfund Hunger Lunch and Quiz
28 February	TEK URA 10 th Anniversary Celebration Whetstone Baptist Church, Leicester
1 March	Sunday Service guest speaker is Rev Steve Hodgkinson from New Life Congleton
6 March	World Day of Prayer 2pm at Oasis
8 March	Sunday Service guest speaker is NWBA Transitional Minister Rev Neil Brighton
8 March	World Day of Prayer 6pm at St Mary's
14 March	Messy Church
15 March	Mothering Sunday
22 March	Sunday Service guest speaker is Nick Gerrard from Open Doors
22 March	Exploring the Future Session 2 2:30pm-4:30pm
27-29 March	Energize Juniors House Party at Cae Canol
30 March	Quarterly Church Meeting
11 April	SBC Prayer Walk 9:30-11:30am
20 April	Exploring the Future Session 3 7:00pm-9:00pm
9 May	SBC Prayer Session 2:00-4:00pm at Oasis
22 June	Quarterly Church Meeting

Church Contact:

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If you have any items for inclusion in the Newsletter please pass these to Andrea Jones at andrea.jones200@gmail.com by 9am on Thursdays.