



**Sharing the love
of Jesus**

Sandbach Baptist Church Newsletter

Sunday 11 January 2026

Reflection for the week

'Do not be afraid!' by Andrea Jones

It always amuses me that one of the memorable phrases of Christmas is *Do not be afraid!* The angel to Zechariah in Luke 1:13; Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:30; the angel to the shepherds in Luke 2:10. The latter is probably most memorable as many a small angelic figure in the school nativity has taken great delight in shouting it over a crowd of bewildered class-mates wearing tea-towels!

Or maybe Luke thought it was how all angels should start their greetings!

There are many other 'do not be afraid' references in the Bible, and in fact some people say there are 365, so one for each day of the year! Others say there are no-where near that many and I certainly haven't counted! Different translations obviously use different language, but it doesn't matter. Scripture is scripture and the heart of its message is what matters ... and what matters here is that God does not want us to be a people who live in fear!

I'm reminded of when I believe I was assisted by an angel. It was some years ago when I had a rather unreliable car. I'd just returned from Spring Harvest and had popped to Halfords on the Retail Park in Crewe to get a new windscreen wiper of all things, and on the roundabout leaving the retail park my car died – just died and wouldn't start again! I was certainly in fear - stuck in the middle of the road on a busy roundabout! But no sooner had I ended a phone call to my earthly angel (Howard!) when a policeman appeared out of no-where and knocked on my window saying he would push me into a side street, which he did. He then poked his head in the window again to say if I was OK he would be going and he just disappeared again. I truly believe he was an angel in a policeman's uniform. He came and went so quickly and although he didn't declare 'do not be afraid' ... he certainly took my fear away with him!

So how are you feeling at the beginning of a new year? Are you excited, ambivalent ... or are you fearful? Fearful of the unknown; fearful of issues you know need to be addressed this year; fearful of changes which are coming; fearful of declining health. Whatever you're feeling don't let it be fear! Be assured that the Lord has you covered! It may not be in the way that you want him to have you covered but he has you covered just the same! Trust in his strength and provision and love for this year ... and do not be afraid!

'I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears'. Psalm 34:4

Our Service Sunday 11 January 2026

Our service on **Sunday 11 January** will be at 10:30am at Sandbach Primary Academy (SPA). The service will be taken by Rev Tony Togneri and will include Communion.

Our Activities for the week beginning Sunday 11 January 2026

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

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 Housegroup

Friday: Energize Juniors Small Group at Oasis 6:45pm-8:15pm

Saturday: Morning Prayer Gathering 8:30am-9:15am at Oasis
Prayer Time 2.00pm-4:00pm 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

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.
He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40: 28-31

News items for the Church Family

From the Leadership Team: Exploring the future

As mentioned at the last Quarterly Church Meeting, we have engaged Rev Neil Brighton (a Transitional Minister with the NWBA) to help us whilst we are without a minister and particularly with the process of appointing a new one. Our next step in this process is that we are planning to hold three sessions to help us all think about where we are as a church and the things which will be important as we start to think about the future.

These three sessions are open to everyone (so you don't have to be a member to come along), and we will use a mix of group activities so that everyone can have a chance to contribute. They are deliberately spaced out over several months so that there is also a chance for people to reflect on the process and feedback other thoughts, and we have tried to offer a mix of days and times to make them as accessible as possible. If people are not able to attend but have comments or thoughts please do share these with any member of the leadership team. We want this period of exploration to be as consultative and open as possible. The key parts will then be brought to Church Meetings for any formal decisions to be made.

The sessions themselves are only a part of the journey. Above all else we want to seek God's heart and vision for our future, to be attentive to the Spirit's direction, and to discern the mind of Christ for each step we take. Prayer, Church Meetings and gathering to worship on a Sunday are all important parts of this process as we listen to the Lord and to one another.

So the sessions are:

Saturday 14 February 10:00am – 12:00noon at Oasis

Session One: How are we doing?

Our first session together will reflect on how we are doing as a fellowship. A healthy church is one that reflects the character and mission of Christ in its worship, community and witness. Our session will explore how we live by faith, live as a community and look to draw others in.

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 30 March 7.30pm at Oasis

Quarterly Church Meeting

This will be an opportunity to review discussions so far.

Monday 30 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 the Leadership Team: Prayer Days

We plan to wrap the 'Exploring the future' meetings with a season of focused prayer, using different types/locations to fully seek God's direction for us. The first two will be:

Saturday 17 January 2:00 – 4:00pm at Oasis

Prayer Time at Oasis which will be a 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. We will obviously pray as the Spirit leads but the programme we are aiming at is:

- At 2:00pm Bernie will open the Prayer Time and we will start with a period of quiet personal prayer.

- At 2:30pm, 3:00pm and 3:30pm we will gather together for a short time of shared spoken prayer and reflection – as the Spirit leads but aiming at around 10-15 minutes.
 - At 3:45pm we will end the Prayer Time with a short period of sung praise.
- Please feel free to come to all of the time or just some of it.

Sunday 8 February 2:00-3:00pm at Oasis

Zoom Prayer Time which will be a further chance to reflect and pray about our future. The Zoom link will be shared nearer the time.

Dates for your 2026 Diary

22 January	CTIS AGM
24-25 January	TEK URA Albania focused social evening and weekend
1 February	Sunday Service guest speaker is from Healing Rooms
1-7 February	SBC Bible Reading Week
8 February	Sunday Service guest speaker is NWBA Regional Minister Rev Jane Henderson
8 February	SBC Prayer Time on Zoom
14 February	Exploring the Future Session 1 10am-12noon
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
8 March	Sunday Service guest speaker is NWBA Transitional Minister Rev Neil Brighton
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
20 April	Exploring the Future Session 3 7.00pm-9.00pm
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