



**Sharing the love
of Jesus**

Sandbach Baptist Church Newsletter

Sunday 22 February 2026

First Sunday in Lent

Reflection for the week

Lent Week 1: 'In the wilderness with Jesus' by Hilary Forbes

"Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness ..." (Luke 4:1)

The word 'Lent' comes from an Old English word 'Lencten' which was the word used to mean the season of new growth. Over the years this has been woven into the tradition some Christians follow of 'giving something up for Lent' in the forty days before Easter Sunday, as a kind of echo of Jesus' forty days in the desert, fasting and tempted by the devil.

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness ...". The wilderness of Judea was a wild, rocky, craggy, mountainous scrubland, not like the Sahara Desert that may come to mind of endless sand and sand dunes.

One moment Jesus was being baptised by John with a voice from Heaven declaring that "This is my beloved Son ..." and the next He was in a strange kind of arid exile, in increasing discomfort, including extreme hunger. His mind and body were subject to an onslaught of temptation. Temptation to do the wrong thing we know can be real, powerful, and raw and can even twist the mind to try to justify it. Jesus went through all of this, but he did not succumb, he overcame and "returned in the power of the Spirit ..." (Luke 4:14).

Deserts can be alien and bewildering places, and we can find ourselves in a wilderness suddenly, and unexpectedly. They can also become places where we develop a deeper relationship with God, so let us explore the desert over the next few weeks.

If you feel you are in or find yourself in a lonely wilderness where you cannot seem to get your bearings or are tempted to question whether God has forgotten you. Jesus sees you. He is with you.

"Behold, I will do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it?
I will make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." (Isaiah 43: 19)

Our Service Sunday 22 February 2026

Our service on **Sunday 22 February** will be at 10:30am at Sandbach Primary Academy (SPA). The service will be led by Ian Parsons and the speaker will be Rev Sue Thompson. Sue will be speaking on Matthew 4:1-11. There will be a 'Hunger Lunch' at Oasis after the service, to raise money for Tearfund, followed by the Tearfund BIG QUIZ.

Our Activities for the week beginning Sunday 22 February 2026

- Sunday:** Tearfund Hunger Lunch 1:00pm at Oasis followed by the Tearfund BIG QUIZ
- Monday:** Welcome Bap 10:00am-12:00 Noon at Oasis [11:00am for visitors wanting to join the Welcome Bap for cake and memories of Harold Jinks].
- 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:** Energize Juniors Small Group 6.45-8.15pm at Oasis
- Saturday:** Morning Prayer Gathering 8:30am-9:15am 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

'And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'

Micah 6:8

News items

From George Hill and Ian Parsons: Tearfund Hunger Lunch and QUIZ Sunday 22 February

On Sunday 22 February, there will be no 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 Hill before the day, as it is difficult when people only tell us what they are bringing at the last minute. Thank you.

From George Hill: TEK URA Tenth Anniversary Meeting

We and Lynn are going to the TEK URA (Albania) tenth anniversary celebration at Whetstone Baptist Church in Leicester on **Saturday 28 February**. We have at least one car space free and would be delighted to have more company.

TEK URA is our main aid support project from Sandbach Baptist Church, working in needful areas of Albania in Christian care and outreach. Most of the team from TEK URA (At the Bridge) in Tirana, Albania are coming to the UK and this is a huge opportunity to meet them and share their vision, and to celebrate ten years of God's faithfulness to Annie and Dan Dupree and all who they have worked for and with. People from many churches around England will be there. It will be a celebration of stories, people and impact; a reflection, a strengthening of partnerships.

Please ask me or Christine if you might be able to come and would like a lift with us, and/or to see the programme. As a fundraising event, it costs £25 with meals provided. We will be leaving about 8.00am and will be back sometime in the evening.

From the Leadership: 'Exploring the future'

We held our first 'Exploring the future' session last Saturday 14 February. This was the first of three sessions being led by Rev Neil Brighton (a Transitional Minister with the NWBA), to help us on the path of appointing a new minister. In this one we explored the health of our church and it was a very productive and enjoyable time. There were about 18 of there so we gathered into four groups (with drinks and cake) to discuss the different 'signs of life' in our church. These signs seemed to fall into *activities* (which included many of the mid-week groups) and *attributes* (such as a strong sense of unity and a welcoming heart). There were some themes starting to emerge too (such as the positive and negatives aspects of meeting in a school, a desire to better connect Sunday worship with the rest of the week) so it was a very positive session and we are looking forward to the next two sessions which will meet on:

Sunday 22 March 2:30pm – 4:30pm at Oasis

Session Two: What are our values?

This 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.

Testimonies

We really appreciate the testimonies people have shared recently, and in the past, (either on Sunday mornings or in mid-week meetings) of how God has worked in their lives. These testimonies are a huge encouragement and a blessing to us all. It often takes a lot of courage to do, but they are so valuable to the heartbeat of our church. If anyone ever wants to share a testimony on a Sunday morning please do speak to one of the leaders or if you prefer to put it in writing in the newsletter please send it to Andrea.

Brian Chamberlain has recently written an article about the value of testimonies and has shared an abridged version below. If you would like to read the full version please speak to Brian or email him at brian.chamberlain@bv-ma.co.uk

When I became a Christian some 40 or more years ago, if someone was asked to give their testimony, they would tell the story of how they became a Christian. However, as I have grown in the faith my understanding of Testimony has become much broader. I now see testimony as a touch or intervention from God and it may be to a person or it could be to events. A testimony is of course something which we choose to speak out and share with others. Although it maybe something that we have experienced it does not become Testimony until it is shared. Why share?

- *We are giving God the glory for what He has done.*
- *We are publicly accepting that God has touched our lives.*
- *It is an encouragement to other believers.*
- *What God has done he can do again.*

Testimony as we would define it has a basis in scripture and a search revealed over 50,000 references to the word testimony in the Bible.

The Biblical meaning of testimony extends far beyond mere recounting of events; it embodies a deep spiritual significance that is woven throughout the Scriptures. Testimony in the Bible often symbolises truth and witness. It serves as a declaration of faith and a proclamation of God's works in an individual's life. The act of giving testimony is not merely about sharing personal experiences; it is about affirming the truth of God's presence and actions.

At a recent meeting during a time of listening, I had a picture of a small market stall above which was written the words "Testimony Exchange". I thought this a bit strange at the time but in sharing this I realised that sharing out a testimony is an exchange, in speaking or sharing a testimony we are saying that God has touched my life. In exchange we give Him the glory and pass on a faith building, spiritual message to others that they too may have similar experiences.

By Brian Chamberlain

Dates for your 2026 Diary

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
2 April	Maundy Thursday Service 7:30pm at Oasis
5 April	SBC Easter Day Service 10:30am at the School
11 April	SBC Prayer Walk 9:30-11:30am
18 April	TEK URA Fundraising Slideshow with George Hill
20 April	Exploring the Future Session 3 7:00pm-9:00pm
9 May	SBC Prayer Session 2:00-4:00pm at Oasis
10 May	Christian Aid Sunday
24 May	Pentecost
6-7 June	Visit of Dan & Annie Dupree from TEK URA
20 June	Messy Church
21 June	Father's Day
22 June	Quarterly Church Meeting

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If you have any items for inclusion in the Newsletter please pass these to Andrea Jones by 9am on Thursdays.