



**Sharing the love
of Jesus**

Sandbach Baptist Church Newsletter

Sunday 8 March 2026

Third Sunday in Lent

Reflection for the week

Lent Week 3: A desert encounter

There are many places in the Bible where God's people encountered the Lord in the wilderness. Many of them happened at a well or a spring of water. The first one recorded is in Genesis chapter 16, the story of Hagar. Hagar was Sarah's Egyptian maidservant, whom Sarah gave to Abraham in the hope she would bear a child for them because Sarah so far had not. When Hagar became pregnant, she began to despise Sarah. Sarah, angry, treated her harshly, and Hagar fled. Here, we join Hagar after she has fled from Sarah,

"Now the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness" (Gen 16:7)

The Hebrew word for "spring" here is "Ayin" which most of the time (around nine hundred times) in the Old Testament means "eye" or refers to sight and here it is used as an ancient word for something like an "eye" of the wilderness. It is a rare use of the word here and leads us into what happens next.

The Angel asks Hagar two questions, "where have you come from and where are you going?" (Genesis 16:8)

Hagar is only able to answer the first question that she is running away from her mistress Sarah. The Angel tells Hagar to go back and reconcile with Sarah. She also tells her that she will bear a son and should call him 'Ishmael' (which means 'God hears'), because the Lord has heard her affliction. It is here when Hagar realises she has been in the presence of the Lord,

"Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" (Genesis 16:13)

Let us be reassured as we go about our week, the reality that God sees us. He knows where we are. He knows what we go through. Immanuel – God with us!

Remember the line from that wonderful hymn:

"His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He is watching over me."¹

¹ *His eye is on the sparrow* by Lauryn Hill and Tanya Blount, 1993

Our Service Sunday 8 March 2026

Our service on Sunday 8 March will be at 10:30am at Sandbach Primary Academy (SPA). The service will be led by Andrea Jones and the speaker will be Rev Neil Brighton who is a Transitional Minister with the NWBA and is currently leading us through this period of pastoral vacancy. Neil's theme will be 'Being ambassadors for Christ' and his text will be 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

Our Activities for the week beginning Sunday 8 March 2026

Sunday: Church Family Stroll around Astbury Mere 2:30pm [See below for details]

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: House Group 7:45pm by Zoom [Contact Ian Parsons for further details]

Friday: Energize Seniors Small Group at Oasis 7:15-8:45pm

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

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light'

Matthew 11:28-29

News items

From George Hill: Church Family Spring Stroll around Astbury Mere Sunday 8 March

All are welcome to join a Church Family Spring Stroll around Astbury Mere on Sunday 8 March. Lifts will be available from Sandbach about 2:10pm, to arrive and walk around the mere at 2:30pm. There is a small pay and display charge in the car park. Please let me know if you plan to come.

From the Leadership: Tearfund Hunger Lunch Donations

Thank you to all who attended the Tearfund Hunger Lunch held on Sunday 22 February. Donations are still coming in so we will leave the donations box open for another couple of weeks and announce the final total raised after that.

From Ian Parsons: Manse update

Since the Church meeting in November approved the letting of the Manse, whilst we wait for a new minister, there has been a flurry of activity.

This included a complete re-decoration, some electrical and gas maintenance, garden work and a number of small maintenance jobs carried out by Howard for which we are very grateful. Thanks also to Andrea, Susie and Stu, Chris Nash and Melanie who did a final clean after all the work was completed.

The property was listed for letting a few weeks ago and there was quite a lot of interest. I'm delighted to say that all the paperwork has been completed and we welcomed new tenants (a couple) into the property from Monday 2 March.

Alistair, Eunice and Susie created a lovely home, which was very well looked after and we are pleased that we can now offer it to others on a temporary basis.

Please pray for our new tenants that they will be happy in the Manse

From Susie Warburton: Messy Church Saturday 14 March

Our next **Messy Church** event is fast approaching!

'Let's Get Ready ... for Easter' will be on **Saturday 14 March 2026 10:30am-12:00noon** at Oasis and there will be lots of fun to be had as we get ready to celebrate God's greatest gift to us.

We will be making Easter scenes in clay, 3D eggs and chocolate nest cakes, watching the Easter story and having snacks together. There just might be an Easter egg hunt too!

So bring along your friends and family and introduce them to our church family and to Jesus. Admission is free. Everyone is very welcome. Activities are for all ages and abilities. We would also really value your prayers for this event.

Dates for your 2026 Diary

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
19 April	<i>A Rocha Fine Trees Circuit Walk around the town centre 2.30pm at the Crosses</i>
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
17 May	<i>A Rocha Filter Bed Wood Trail Nature Stroll 2.30pm at the Crosses</i>
24 May	Pentecost Sunday
6 June	Summer Social Evening Fundraising for TEK URA 6-9pm at Oasis
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
28 June	<i>A Rocha St Mary's Dell, Dingle Wood and Park Nature Stroll 2.30pm at the Crosses</i>

Church Contact:

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