

Bolton & Salford Newsletter 4 Missional Partnership November 2025

Newsletter 4

BSMP Vision 2025

Churches.

GROWING, NURTURING & SERVING

Their Places As Part Of One Body

Sharing Faith

Community Transformation

Building Together Wellbeing (Shalom)



BSMP Vision Day, 25th October 2025 at St George & St Andrew URC

Bank Top URC





Village Fair 2025 (Sat.5.7.25)

This was our 18th year for the village fair the first one being in 2006. We had time off due to covid.

Once again, the fair was a success

and very well attended despite slightly gloomy weather. We made a profit of £2,530.22 thanks to all the hard work of the many volunteers and helpers on the day and in the weeks leading up to the event. A huge thank you to

> everyone for all your hard work.







On Sunday, 19th September, Bank Top URC held their annual **Harvest Service**. The service was a Family Service and was led by our Worship Group and you can see some of the members above. Food from our Harvest Table was taken to Bolton Hospice where it was very gratefully received. We also gave a donation of £125 to

Urban Outreach.



LIGHT OF THE WORLD

A new, wonderful, modern musical adaptation of the Christmas story

Performed by

The Eden Singers

The Cantata contains beautiful choral songs, solos duets and timeless bible readings

Bank Top United Reformed Church

Ashworth Lane, Sharples, BL1 8RX

Sunday, 30th November at 20m Tickets £7, including Mulled Wine/Chocolate Roll and Mince Pies/Hot Vimto BANK TOP
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

SUNDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 10:30am

TOY SERVICE



All toys donated will be distributed after the service by members of Bolton Lions.

Please come along and join us on the 23rd with your gifts of toys, games and books, or alternatively, they can be left inside church any time we are open. Thank you

BANK TOP

ADVENT BRUNCH

SATURDAY, 6TH DECEMBER

10:00am – 1:00pm

£6 adults/£2 children



Come along and get into the Christmas spirit. Doors open at 10am with singing from the Rainbows and Brownies, followed by egg, bacon, and sausage <u>barms</u> and mince pies or chocolate roll and a drink...

Also a visit from Father Christmas; Raffle, Cake Stall and Bottle Tombola

⊚ WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU **⊚**



Church at the Centre (Tonge Moor URC)

At the Church at the Centre (Tonge Moor) the children leave the congregation to listen, do craft and play games to help them learn more about the bible. During the last hymn they come back and share with the congregation what they have been doing before the closing prayer.









We played a game called 'May I cross'. After playing the game, we discussed and wrote down what we can do to show that we follow Jesus.







Deane URC

Once again, our congregation would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the generous support we have received from the Partnership. We were delighted to return to our church for worship on on Sunday, 27th July. Here are some photos of the refurbishment to show the wonderful progress made possible by your help.









Egerton URC

Egerton URC Film Club

Fortnightly Wednesday 6:30 pm. It's a wonderful opportunity to relax, reflect and connect with one another, with a thoughtfully chosen film and a time of warm fellowship.





Roma's retirement as Church Secretary at Egerton URC. She was thanked and presented with a gold cross in heartfelt recognition of her service. Thank you Roma!



Quiz Nights

On Friday, June 20th & Friday, September 26th 2025 we held Quiz Nights at Egerton. Both Quiz Nights were enjoyed by all and brought the local community together & to our church. There were Pasty & Pea Suppers at the intervals & excellent raffles.

We raised a total of over £800 over the two nights. Doreen herself provided the questions & she writes :- 'As Quiz master I had tremendous support from Lindsay & Lynn as well as the Ladies who helped with refreshments & the donors of the generous raffle prizes.'

Doreen Healey







Farnworth URC

Celebrating 163 Years of Faith and Service at Farnworth URC



In October 2025, Farnworth United Reformed Church joyfully celebrated its 163rd Anniversary Service, led by Revd Maria Lee. It was a warm and meaningful occasion, marking more than a century and a half of faithful worship and community service.

During the service, Revd Maria reflected on the theme of "One More Step Along the Road We Go", reminding the congregation that God continues to lead us forward with courage and faith, just as He guided our ancestors in faith. The journey of Farnworth URC is not just about buildings or milestones but about people, ordinary disciples who have served God with love, hope, and steadfastness through every season.

A special moment in worship included giving thanks for all who have shared in the ministry of the church across generations, and praying for those who will carry the light into the future. The celebration concluded with a joyful quiz and fellowship time, as well as a beautifully crafted anniversary cake, symbolising the church's continuing witness: "Serving God and the Community for 163 Years."

As we look ahead, we give thanks for God's faithfulness in the past, His presence with us today, and His promise for the journey still to come.

Beautiful Hand-Knitted Nativity Set for Sale

One of our Farnworth URC elders, Kath, has lovingly knitted this wonderful full Nativity set, complete with Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, shepherds, wise men, animals, and the manger.

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If anyone would like to purchase a set, please contact Revd Maria Lee. The elders have not fixed a price but are happy to receive donations. All proceeds will go towards supporting the ministry of Farnworth URC.

As we journey together through this Advent season, may these knitted figures remind us of the warmth and hope of that first

Christmas.

May they encourage us to share God's love in simple ways and to recognise His light among us and within our community.



(Kath's hand knitted Nativity set)

New Chapel URC

Coffee Morning

New Chapel have been very busy over the last few weeks, and it's all down to a wonderful team within the church.

On Saturday 30th October we held a Coffee Morning for McMillan and combined it with a 'New to You' sale. We had so many items brought to church to sell from clothes and bric-a-brac to toys and shoes, paintings and books.

On the other side we had some wonderful donations of cakes to sell, and teas and coffees were flowing freely - and frequently. The church was packed with people and we had to use the conservatory for the overflow café.

In total we raised £340.05 for Mc Millan and £ 426.60 for church – an amazing amount. So many, many thanks to all who came, bought and donated.

Harvest Supper and Quiz

On Friday evening, 26th September, New Chapel held its annual Harvest Supper and Quiz in church. It is a popular evening and each year our attendance is growing in numbers. Kathy Burkmar created the quiz as usual and thankfully she never makes it TOO hard, but enough to test our brains and memories.

Fun was had by all, with lots of whispering going on, and we were rewarded with pasties, peas and red cabbage, followed by pavlova, chocolate cake, apple pie, apple crumbles and custard or cream. Thanks to the organisers for helping us to raise another wonderful sum of money.

We always choose a charity to donate to at Harvest time and this year we have given £285 to Bolton Hospice (including donations at church from the Harvest Festival Service) and an extra £120 for church.

Harvest Festival Service

Sunday 28th September was our Harvest Festival Service, with food items being donated for Urban Outreach and money for Bolton Hospice.

It was a fun service with pass-theparcel being played as the introduction to the theme which was all connected to 'Sharing', from sharing sweets to sharing the Word of God, as well as the food gifts. People said how lovely it is to sing the Harvest hymns – shame it only seems to be once a year.

During all these events we feel the presence of God, spurring us on to open our church to the local community and inviting many people into our building so they too can sense



his presence among us and within the area. We thank Him and the Holy Spirit for always being with us, encouraging us to spread our mission in the world.



KINTSUGI WELL-BEING COURSE

'My Wellbeing Journey'

Explore aspects of your well-being that you <u>maybe</u> hoping to maintain, improve and understand a little bit more.

New Chapel United Reformed Church New Chapel Lane Horwich

BL6 6QN

Wednesday Mornings 11-00 am – 12-00 noon starting October 1st 2025

but feel free to join us any Wednesday



Red Lane URC



On Friday 26th September 42 Pilots and Leaders from Union Stockport and Red Lane Bolton made their way to Quinta Christian Centre in Oswestry for a weekend of fellowship and fun.

After finding their beds and hot dogs they split into groups named after our theme for the weekend which was the environment and they learned about the animal

that their watch was named after. Badger, Owl and Hedgehog and reported back what they had discovered. We had worship which was prepared by Ruth Watson who was unable to act as our chaplain this year due to family issues but sent what she had prepared and David led worship. Thank you, Ruth. After Tuck Shop it was time for bed.

I think that some did sleep for a while but Karen had them up at 7.00am for breakfast. After breakfast we had worship, room inspection and then the watches went outside and gathered stuff to make a collage of their animal. The results were fantastic (see pictures). After a variation of the Post Box Game, it was lunch time and then under 11s went swimming whilst the over 11s played games on the field and then swapped once we thought they were wrinkly enough. The evening was a selection of games then worship, tuck shop and bed. A very busy day!

Sunday morning, they were not quite so bright eyed and bushy tailed but after breakfast and worship launched themselves into the junk modelling where they were tasked to produce an appropriate shelter for their animals. There were

some 5-star properties made which I am sure would be a cosy home for them all.

Lunch and some quiz type games based on the weekend and then our final worship and

goodbyes before boarding our coaches and heading for home. I immediately fell asleep so it was a good journey. Handing them over to parents was a bittersweet time as we loved seeing their smiles all weekend.







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We had a fantastic time and the Pilots were great at engaging with the activities and on the whole well behaved.

My thanks to Ruth, Tracy, Dan, Daviid, Karen and Andy, and a special thanks to Claire

Downing for joining us for Friday night over to Saturday (if you need someone to do hot dogs....!)









Rose Hill

We will be holding another partnership children's Christmas party this year. All children connected to any of the churches are very welcome. We will have games and food etc.

This is intended as some fun and a get together and adults will stay with their children. It was a lovely afternoon last year so I encourage you to come along if you're free.

If anyone would like to help then that's always appreciated!



If you could let me know if any children would like to come either via email or text. I need the children's name and age and if there's any dietary requirements or allergies. I would need final numbers by 29th November at the latest.

Tracy

BSMP Newsletter (Issue.5)

The next issue of the BSMP Newsletter will be published just before Ash Wednesday in February 2026. **We invite you to share:**

- Stories and special moments from Christmas 2025 (with photos)
- General news of your church or members of the congregation;
- Plan for your church's Lent, Holy Week and Easter 2026.

Please send your contribution to Revd Barnabas Shin at (<u>barnabas.shin@nwsynod.org.uk</u>) by 31st January 2026.

Summer Lunch at Rose Hill URC & Red Lane URC

Another successful year supporting the ministry of the Urban Outreach! Between 29th July and 29th August, we distributed Summer Lunches at Red Lane URC and Rose Hill URC. A huge thank-you to Revd Mark Cowling and Tracy Garsden for organising this ministry at each churches, and to all amazing volunteers who made it possible.

Together, Red Lane and Rose Hill URCs provided a total of 2,650 lunches to 235 different children - representing 20% of all Summer Lunches distributed across Bolton this year. Well done!







Tracy also arranged the Uniform Swap at Rose Hill URC this year.





St Andrew & St George URC

For the past several months, as always, St AGs URC have generously offered their beautiful church for many of our partnership events, including all the BSMP Steering Group meetings, the



BSMP Summer Gathering in June, and the BSMP Vision Day in October. We are especially grateful to Jill Edisbury, Elizabeth McKinnon and more friends for kindly serving tea, coffee and cakes at the two recent major events. On behalf of our partnership, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the congregation of St AGs URC for their continued hospitality and support.

Worsley Road URC

Celebrating birthdays as the Fellowship know best with lots of delicious cake!! With the eldest - Walter being 95 and the youngest - Mike at 85 years old. The lovely Margaret and Audrey both celebrated their 90th





birthdays recently. And they had the pleasure of Maria coming to speak to them as well.







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The UN peace day was on 21 Sept with the Theme "Act now for a peaceful world" our young people from Sunday school took the service and also created a fabulous display of all ways to illustrate Peace - in all mediums. They were supported by the congregation who also contributed songs, poems, pictures. It was a beautiful service.









Our very own Ida with a gentleman from the Royal British Legion accepting a cheque after we raised money for them on our special **Veterans Day breakfast** held pre service on the 4th May.









Partnership News

Tom Miller, a student minister

Hello, I'm Tom! I'm a third-year student training to be a Minister of Word and Sacrament with the URC, and I'll be on placement at Bank Top URC, Red Lane URC, and Worsley Road URC for the next two years. I'm really looking forward to growing, learning and serving alongside you all in the Missional Partnership during this time.

I am married to my wonderful wife, Helen, who is a family lawyer. We've been married for almost three years, and she'll be around quite a bit too over this placement. We live in Salford with our two cats, Oscar and Cappuccino. Oscar is scared of everything, and Cappuccino knows no fear at all.

I'm originally from Oldham, having moved to Salford when I was 18, which means I have now been living in Salford for half of my life, which is a little crazy! My first degree was in Music, and I love to write, perform, and sing. I've just started writing hymns. I tend to play guitar

in church, but I can play most things with strings on, and I'm happy to get involved.

I'm really quite enthusiastic and tend to approach things with plenty of energy, and I hope to bring this to my student ministry alongside you all.



Outside of church and ministry, I have several interests. I tend to watch pretty much all sports, and for my sins am an Oldham Athletic fan. Music is a big part of my life, and I enjoy attending gigs. I also perform in a ceilidh band in Manchester on occasion. I'm a bit of a gamer, too, when I have the time. That aside, you can generally find me in the pub with friends having a few pints and talking the hind legs off a donkey.

Currently, I am engaging deeply with theology surrounding disability and LGBTQ+ issues. I love languages, having studied Biblical Hebrew in my first year, and I am currently studying Biblical Greek. I'm also learning Irish at the moment, just for fun!

I'm really looking forward to seeing how the Missional Partnership works and how churches engage with each other. I know how lucky I am to have Barnabas and Maria as my supervisors. Having experienced each church so far, I'm looking forward to being part of the wider community across the area.

If you see me at your churches, feel free to come and say hi!

BSMP Social Gathering - Bowing at Egerton Bowling Club























An Acorn story

In case you need reminding, Acorn is the spiritual practice of invitation that Michael Harvey (he of Back to Church Sunday fame) is working to embed as a natural culture throughout the Synod over the next two years.



Those of us who have been part of the initiative so far have committed to pray a simple prayer at the start of each day: "Gracious God, today, is there someone you 2ant to connect with outside the church?" If a name comes to mind, we trust that it is because God is at work in that person's life and we make contact with them to ask one simple question: "How are you?" Then we get together monthly with Michael to share our stories of what has happened and reflect on what God is doing.

I was on holiday in Cape Town in December/January. Being in a foreign country, I knew it would be senseless to pray the daily prayer because I wouldn't know anyone there. So I decided that part of my break would be to have an "Acorn holiday!"

On our first Sunday there (the fourth Sunday of Advent), I decided to go to Rondebosch United Church. It turned out to be almost a carbon copy of one of our churches—a predominantly older congregation made up of former Presbyterians and Congregationalists, focussed on discipleship and mission with a strong commitment to justice. Coincidentally, the minister trained with Revd Kevin Snyman, our Commitment for Life Programme Director and my best man!

We also decided to invite a friend I'd known from Youth Group in my teens in Zimbabwe and his wife for lunch. Just as I was hanging up, as an afterthought, I asked, "Would you like to join us at Rondebosch United Church before coming back to our place? It would give us more of the day together." "Yes," they said, "We'd love to!"

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It turned out that this was actually their local church – they lived 3 minutes' drive away – and which they'd never attended in the 10 years they'd live there, My friend's wife (let's call her Emma) is a Roman Catholic who has been struggling to find a church where she can combine growth in her vibrant, personal faith with her passionate commitment to justice. She was absolutely buzzing with excitement and enthusiasm at the end of the service – this was precisely the kind of church she'd been seeking.

The following Sunday morning, my phone rang. It was Emma. "Are you going to church this morning?" she asked. We're on the beach with friends near you, and I'd love to go, but I'd need a lift." I'd been tossing up whether or not to go to church, but Emma's request decided me. I duly picked her up, and we went to church. This time, it was my turn to be inspired and helped.

On the third Sunday, we a Sunday morning commitment and couldn't go. That evening, I received an email from Emma about how wonderful the service had been and a copy of the notes she'd taken because she thought I'd find them helpful: I did!

Finally, the next Saturday, when we had returned to the UK, we got a text from Emma hoping we'd landed safely (after circling for 20 minutes because the runway needed clearing of snow!) and telling me she'd been thinking of us because she was excited about going back to church ... and taking 3 friends she'd invited!

It summed up Acorn for me: God had been working in Emma's life; all I had to do was to invite her to church! I wasn't responsible for what happened next. What actually did happen was that I was encouraged and blessed by Emma's enthusiasm and the clear evidence of God at work in the situation. And thank goodness none of this depends on me; Emma is a far more effective inviter than I am!

Lawrence Heath-Moore



BSMP Vision Day 2025 (Sat. 25th October)

This year, we invited the BSMP Steering Group along with the elders and leaders of each local church, making a total of 35 participants, including ministers.



The day began at 10 am with an opening worship, and concluded at 3 pm, followed by a group photo (on the front page). We held four sessions, each led by one of our ministers, focusing on our shared vision through the lens of our four key priorities. After every two sessions, we gathered for group discussions - one for a partnership, the other for each local church.

Many shared how meaningful it was to enjoy fellowship with elders and leaders from other partnership churches. Others commented on the hopeful and positive atmosphere throughout the day.

With great anticipation for our next Vision Day in 2026, we hope to welcome all congregations across our partnership. Together, we continue to pray that we may **grow, nurture and serve** as One Body of Christ.









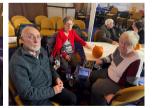
























Central Area of the North Western Synod Bolton & Salford Missional Partnership

Convenor: Vacancy

Ministers:

Rev'd Barnabas Shin (barnabas.shin@nwsynod.org.uk)
Rev'd Frin Lewis Smith (c.lewissmith@gmail.com)
Rev'd Maria Lee (maria.lee@nwsynod.org.uk)
Rev'd Mark Cowling (markcowling@gathermovement.org)
Rev'd Walt Johnson (walt.johnson@nwsynod.org.uk)

Mission Mentor: Lawrence Heath-Moore lawrence.Moore@nwsynod.org.uk

Partnership Churches:

Bank Top URC
Church at the Centre, Tonge Moor URC
Egerton URC
Deane URC

Farnworth URC New Chapel URC

Red Lane URC

Rose Hill URC

St Andrew and St George URC Worsley Road, Swinton URC Christ Church Little Lever LEP Cornerstone-Westhoughton LEP

Wharton & Cleggs Lane LEP

Emmanue



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