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**StAG’s NEWSLETTER**

**September – October ‘23**

**Footprints**  I dreamed I was walking along the beach, with the Lord...Across the sky flashed scenes from my life and I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand. .... “When you saw only one set, it was then that I carried you!” ....We are never alone and some of us need reminding of this regularly!

**Missional partnership**



Revd. Walt Johnson

My name is Walt Johnson, and I was ordained and inducted on 29 July 2023 as a Minister of Word and Sacraments into the Bolton and Salford Missional Partnership, a group of 13 churches which includes St Andrew and St George URC.

However, I have been in the Partnership and at St Andrew and St George URC since Autumn 2021, when I undertook my major placement from Northern College (Luther King Centre). I am grateful to all those who welcomed me and have given me support.

I serve as a non-stipendiary minister, which means that I am effectively a volunteer. Presently, my limited time is spent working with three churches in the Partnership, but I am also available to do some things with other churches, or groups of churches in the Partnership.

For St Andrew and St George, this means that I will be leading worship on average once a month.

A little about me… I will be 52 next birthday, and I live alone in Bolton just off Ivy Road. I originate from Silverdale, a small former-mining village in North Staffordshire. I was the first in my family to go to University, and I studied German and Russian in Manchester. I trained to become a secondary school teacher, a job which I did for almost 18 years.

In 2012, I changed career and became self-employed which gives me the time to pursue my calling to serve in the church, which was tested and confirmed in 2018.Since 2015, my day job is being the co‑owner of a small IT services business, which specialises in supporting not-for-profit organisations and charities.

I also volunteer with the Royal Air Force Air Cadets as a Civilian Instructor at 80 (Bolton) Squadron on Nelson Street; and I serve as a Magistrate as a Presiding Justice in both the Adult and Youth courts.

I have always loved to learn languages, and my theological training introduced me to Biblical Hebrew, and Greek. My other interests include DIY, watching sci-fi series and going on long walks with my friend’s dog.

I very much look forward to being alongside you in our shared faith journey.

**Commitment for Life Service**

On **Nov 5th** there will be a service reminding us of the work done through Commitment for Life. This department of the URC started as the 1% Appeal over 30 years ago.

Since then our congregation has been helping to put into practice actions that make the church Christ-like through caring for widows and orphans, releasing debt captives, working for environmental justice and advocating for the poorest people.

After the service envelopes for your annual donation to Commitment for Life will be distributed. Please return them the following week at our Remembrance Service on **Nov 12th**, when we think of those who committed their lives for us.

*If you are unable to attend the service on Nov 5th your elder will send you an envelope*.

Jill Hollyman

**Family and friends**

I am sorry to have to tell some of you the sad news that Enid Swarsbrick passed away peacefully in hospital on Wednesday, 9th August. Her service of remembrance was held at church, following the Committal, on Tuesday 22nd August. She was remembered with much love and we hold John, Andrew and Philip in our prayers.

Three amazing rides secured three world titles for Gwynneth’s grandson, Matt, at the Cycling World Championships in Glasgow last week. He was the sighted pilot to Neil Fachie in the visually impaired tandem races.

It was lovely to be greeted as ‘one of our reliable donators’ as I took our bags to the Destitution Project! Our supplies are so very much appreciated both there and at the Emmaus Pantry. Thank you, all! Keep it up!

***Reform***

Reform is a magazine exploring Theology, ethics, spirituality and Christian perspectives on social and current affairs, for those who enjoy reading about Christian ideas from a wide range of viewpoints. Published by the U.R.C. it features news, interviews, features, regular columns, reviews, letters and is read by all: Christians, people from other faiths and those with none. Please borrow the complimentary issue at the back of church and consider subscribing. Speak to Margaret Allen.

ECO CHURCH

Margaret asked me to say what we could each do to help the church in its efforts to become a fully accredited ECO church. One simple thing at the moment is to tell me, via an email or piece of paper on a Sunday, what your mileage is to and from church each Sunday, and how you travel – walking, by bus, by car or taxi.

I also need to know what sort of car you travel in – petrol, diesel, hybrid or electric. It’s part of the information I have to put together to calculate our carbon footprint as a church, so that, in future we can measure how we are reducing it.

But there’s something much more urgent needing action about climate change

New research from the United Nations Environment Program shows the world has already fallen drastically behind in adopting the changes needed to avoid a future with even more extreme storms, heat waves and floods than we have at the moment.

Collectively, countries have promised to reduce heat-trapping emissions by about **3%** by 2030, compared to 2020 levels. That's far from the **45%** drop that's needed, according to the new report.

Cutting emissions nearly in half by the end of the decade would put the world on track to limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100. But at the current pace of emissions, the planet would heat up to levels we would find it almost impossible to live with, leading to [more deadly heat waves and storms and the flooding of coastal cities due to polar ice melt](https://www.npr.org/2021/11/08/1052198840/1-5-degrees-warming-climate-change).

Some of us will not be around to suffer, but think of our children and grandchildren.

What can we do? Apart, from doing our bit in our own homes and in the church, It’s our leaders, locally, nationally and internationally who need to take drastic actions.

So let’s take every opportunity to contact the Prime Minister, MPs and leaders of business and industry. And let’s support organisations which are working hard to persuade our leaders of the urgency. Jim Hollyman

**PREACHERS, SEPT -DEC., 2023**

3-9 Mr Alan Nuttall

10-9 Rev Tony Burnham

17-9\* Rev Jacky Embrey

24-9 Rev Alan Kennedy

1-10 Mrs Gill Dascombe

8-10 Rev Alan Kennedy

15-10\* Rev Walt Johnson

22-10 Rev Jim Hollyman

29-10 Mr George Grime

5-11 TBA

12-11 Mr Leo Roberts

19-11 Rev Walt Johnson

26-11 Rev Tony Burnham

3-12 Rev Jim Hollyman

10-12 Mr Alan Nuttall

17-12\* Rev Walt Johnson

24th and 31st Dec to be arranged.

May God guide and bless us.

**SHALOM**