

An aerial photograph of a winding river cutting through a dense, lush green forest. The river flows from the top right towards the bottom left, curving in an S-shape. The trees are vibrant green, with some hints of yellow and orange, suggesting early autumn. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Winter 2020

PARTNERSHIP

||| The magazine of the North West Gospel Partnership

Finding new ways

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BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

The North West Gospel Partnership is passionate about the extraordinary message of Jesus Christ.

We are not a denomination, but a network of people and churches committed to supporting, encouraging and equipping each other in the task of getting this message out across our region.

- Training
- Conferences
- Networking lunches
- Resources
- Church Planting support
- Events for 14-18s
- Residential holidays for 8-18s

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Please consider partnering with us by supporting us financially

North West
Gospel
Partnership



DEAR FRIENDS...

Hello everyone, welcome to the latest news from the North West Gospel Partnership.

Have you heard the phrase, 'you don't know how important something is until it's taken away'?

Doesn't that feel true at the moment? I can't tell you how much I am missing live football matches and real crowds on TV matches and live concerts. I wonder what it is for you? When they start again, it will be amazing. In some ways I wish that my hobbies included gardening and DIY (no chance) because at least they could have continued.

But what about church? Did you miss face to face meetings during national lockdown?

Maybe for health reasons you haven't been able to go back yet?

Maybe you have gone back but without singing and mask-less communication, things aren't quite the same? Maybe the smaller numbers at services mean that you aren't seeing as many people?

How much do we miss church? How important is it to us?

How much do you miss proper interaction with brothers and sisters in Christ?

I do think that this time is giving us an opportunity for a spiritual health check in this vital area of our Christian discipleship.

We should be missing church, if we are not then there is a problem!

Partnership in ministry with our Christian family in the local church is not an add on to Christian discipleship, it is at the very core.

Partnership in ministry with other local churches is also fundamental to who we are as the people of the living Lord Jesus.

Actually, because the church is the Body of Christ, my claim to love Jesus will be an empty claim if I do not also love the church.

How do we do this at the present time?

We must keep meeting together - virtually and face to face.

We must keep praying together and for one another.

We must work hard to keep in touch with one another and share one another's burdens.

This is not a time to take a break from church, it is time to rejoice in church family and work hard to encourage one another to keep trusting Jesus.

With love in Christ and for the sake of his church,

Tim Hanson
Chair of NWGP

*The North West Partnership is a registered charity no. 1104423.
Trustees: Paul Baxendale, Mark Cawson, Alan Kellard,
Maurice McCracken, Tim Hanson, Brian Elfick and Gerry Straker.*



Partner Profile

LAYTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Layton Community Church is an FIEC church located in Layton, a suburb of Blackpool. We are less than a mile from the famous Tower and close to Stanley Park, voted best park in the UK.

The church was established 17 years ago as part of an FIEC church planting initiative. Originally a small group of believers met in the local Salt & Light café, but over time, the Lord provided a former pet shop and hardware store to be used as a church building. For many years the church was overlooked by the infamous Queenstown high-rise flats but after local regeneration, the area has been transformed into a new housing development.

Today the church is made up of people from a variety of ages, backgrounds and nationalities from across the Fylde Coast. Our emphasis is to preach the good news about Jesus and teach the Bible. We know that nothing short of the word of God, in the power of the Spirit, will bring about changed lives.

Blackpool may be an oasis of fun to visitors, but it has 8 out of the ten most

deprived neighbourhoods in England. It has unusually high rates of homelessness, alcoholism, drug abuse, children in care, poor health and mental illness. Pastoring a church in this environment is very challenging and perplexing.

Blackpool is a poor seaside resort with few professional jobs. This impacts our ministry in the following ways: Firstly, we rely heavily on outside financial support. Secondly, few believers move to the town for work - each ministry is resourced by a handful of very dedicated but overstretched workers. Please pray that the Lord will 'send out workers into his harvest field.'

In recent years, we've been encouraged by the number of children and teenagers who've heard the Gospel - most are from non-church families. Before the Coronavirus pandemic, we regularly saw 25-30 primary age children attending our monthly kids club. And the growing children's ministry led to the setting up of new groups for teenagers and a Toddler group.

We praise God that through events like Community Fun Days, Easter/Christmas

themed activities and Holiday Bible Clubs, many families have heard the Gospel. Please pray that 'God may open a door for our message' in our community, particularly on the new estate.

Ministering in a deprived community like Blackpool has its unique challenges. But we rejoice that God's glorious gospel is transforming lives, bringing hope and light in a place of real darkness. The church is pastored by Mark Walters and Dave Lewis.

Layton Community Church



Prayer points:

- That contacts with the unchurched will not be lost because of Covid 19.
- Wisdom to know how to reach children/families in the 'new normal.'
- People to move to Blackpool to join the work.
- An outpouring of the Holy Spirit – that we would see more Gospel fruit.

Mark Walters



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

David Gibson

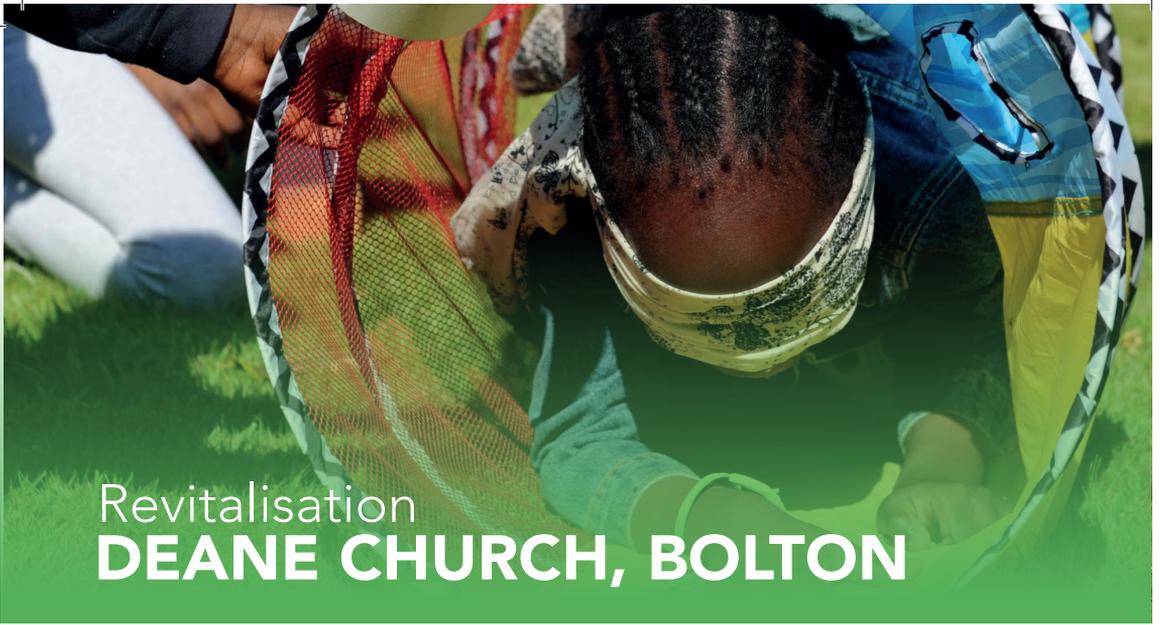
I attended the NWGP Training Courses between 2016-2019. At the time I was attending Holy Trinity Platt in Manchester whilst working as a freelance musician, and with a flexible timetable I was able to attend the Thursday training days. I'm so grateful for the teaching and training I received at NWGP. At the time I had little idea of how beneficial it would be in my spiritual life and in my work.

In September 2019 I moved to London to take up the role of Music Minister at Christ Church Cockfosters. It was a big move - new city, new job, new church! But I have been blessed in many ways by my first 12 months here. The church has been well equipped with lots of skilled musicians throughout the years and it is a privilege to work here, leading the church in corporate worship to our glorious God and equipping the music team to serve. I've learnt lots of new skills, particular in PA & AV, and in lockdown, video-editing and audio mixing for our online services! My prayer is that as the church grows in love and knowledge of Christ, we respond in joyful song and music.

As well as this, I've been involved with New Irish Arts, a Christian organisation based in Belfast. I was Associate Music Director there till last January, directing the Youth Choir and getting behind their overarching vision to encourage people to worship God. I'm also keeping up my classical piano playing with some sporadic concerts here and there.

Please be praying for the ministry at Christ Church Cockfosters and that I would continue to settle well in North London.





Revitalisation **DEANE CHURCH, BOLTON**

Deane became a NWGP partner church in November 2018. In 2020 Deane's Youth Pastor, Daniel Booth, completed Year 2 of the Ministry Training Course and has just started the Year 3 evening course. It has been good to work with NWGP partner church St Philemon's, Toxteth in welcoming Iranian asylum seekers, who are mostly choosing to stay with us after receiving leave to stay in the UK.

To plant or to revitalise... or both?

For some years now, we have been praying towards a church plant on a council estate in Deane Parish. Attempts to get something off the ground have nevertheless been repeatedly thwarted. What was God saying to us?

In 2016 I agreed to additionally take on oversight of the neighbouring parish of Lostock with its congregation of around 90 adults and 25 children, many families attending for school entrance points and then leaving. Lostock was, and still is, a friendly church with a heart for social action, but it lacked theological and missional focus, and it was a 'Sunday only' church where the congregation didn't really know each other, and only a few studied the Bible together. By God's grace, and a

lot of prayer, Lostock is now a much more focussed church, engaging evangelistically with the wider community, and working in close partnership with Deane. A significant tipping point for Lostock congregation was the 2019 Lent Course where we went through the Gospel Coalition's 'Gospel Shaped Living' Course. Following that there was a big uptake on mid-week group membership which our curate Ben Wilkinson has skilfully overseen and developed. Much energy went into getting Lostock to a better place, which left the Deane church plant on hold, but we haven't taken our eyes off that one!

Encouragements and challenges

At both churches we are much encouraged by people responding well to Bible teaching and study, including the use of 'The Word One to One'. Lockdown put some of us on a steep learning curve as we were suddenly preaching to a video camera rather than people in the room. The distracting mannerisms you notice when you see yourself on video! Historically, we have relied rather too much on curates, retired clergy and Readers emeritus (as brilliant as they have all been) across the two churches and raising up new leaders,

pastors and Bible-teachers 'in-house' is perhaps our biggest challenge and a main prayer point. It was encouraging to see someone from Deane start training last year for stipendiary ministry, but that meant he and his family moving on from us. As things stand just now, 2021-22 is going to be a tough year here, particularly to keep our Sunday services at both churches up and running. Beccy (my wife) and I are however trusting in God, his presence, his goodness and his provision.

Ministry beyond Bolton

As well as being a NWGP church, we also count it a privilege to be a Crosslinks partner church, to have members of the congregation trained or in training with Biblical Counselling UK, and to be supporting and involved with the CPAS Arrow Leadership Programme.

Personally, I continue to chair the Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship here in Manchester

and it was encouraging to welcome Ian Paul as our guest speaker at the annual meeting in July. Beyond the Diocese I am a member of the Church of England Evangelical Council (www.ceec.info) and we would very much appreciate prayer support from you and your churches as we plan for, and engage nationally with, the particular challenges on the horizon. In March this year, I had 'Simeon's charge to his trustees' read to me as I became a Simeon's Trustee. I have a particular responsibility for our 33 parishes in the North West.

Do pray for us trustees as we play our part as patrons, especially in working with parishes when there is a vacancy, and in shortlisting and interviewing.

Terry Clark

terry.clark@simeons.org.uk



CHILDREN'S & YOUTH LEADERS
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021

Reaching
the
Lost

Saturday 20th March 2021
Livestreamed to 5 local venues - to be confirmed

REGIONAL GROUPS

Over the last 12 months or so, the Trustees have revisited the vision and purpose of the NWGP, which has provided an opportunity to look again at our 'regional groups' in the Partnership. The NWGP covers such a large area that it is helpful to break this down into smaller regional groups, presently we have 8 such areas and in recent months we have appointed or 're-appointed' regional 'reps' for each area. Smaller, localised groups help provide a better network of support, prayer and communication in gospel partnership. Our regional groups will provide the framework for our annual conference in January.



North Cumbria
Andrew Towner



Andrew is married to Katie (a Town Planner) with whom he parents Jonathan (10) Joshua (9) and Naomi (7) and looks after Java (Working Cocker Spaniel, aged 2). Andrew serves as Vicar at Houghton & Kingmoor, Carlisle, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education and Chair of Church Society Council. Rest time tends to include books, meals, music, walks and making things with the kids. His favourite Bible verse is John 19:30, where the Man who cannot lie hung on the cross until he could say "it is finished" - our only hope in life and death, and his greatest joy is introducing people to this Jesus, or seeing them grown and persevere in loving and serving Him.



South Lakes
Paul Baxendale



Paul is currently the pastor of Parr Street Evangelical church in Kendal where he has served for the past 8 years. Prior to that he spent 16 years ministering in Anglican churches – first as a curate in Kendal itself and then as the vicar of two rural parishes just south of Kendal. A native of South Lakeland, Paul grew up in Ulverston and is married to fellow Cumbrian, Jane, with whom he has two adult sons. He dreams of there being more Jesus-centred, Gospel-preaching churches established in this part of our region and of Blackpool returning to (and winning?!) the Premier League one day.



Lancashire (Central & West)

Dave Lewis



Dave is co-pastor at Layton Community Church, Blackpool. Originally from the Isle of Man, arrived in the North West "mainland" in 1993 and has been in Lancashire for 17 years, having spent 10 years wandering in the wilderness of the South. By God's grace, converted at some point. By Gods grace, have been discipled and grown through godly ministers and churches in both Anglican and free church circles. Married to Kate. Two children. Enjoys family fun, Arsenal, motorbikes, good food, real ale and his brother's canal boat. Constantly misjudges his abilities at DIY, going to the gym, biblical languages, reading books and training the dog, but enjoys them nonetheless.



Lancashire (Central & East)

Andrew Raynes



Andrew serves as regional rep for the East Lancashire area, which includes Chorley, Blackburn and Burnley. He is married to Chantal, and they have two adult children, who are both members of NWGP churches. Andrew is vicar of Christ Church Blackburn, an Anglican church in the heart of a largely Asian heritage area of the town. One of the joys of ministry over the past couple of decades has been to see the way that the church family has become increasingly diverse in its cultural makeup. Before ordination, Andrew worked with UCCF in central London. He and Chantal met in Pakistan working with Operation Mobilisation.



Manchester Area

Paul Jump



Paul has been the minister of St Clement's Church Manchester since 2012. He was born and raised in Blackburn. He became a Christian at 18. After four years as a teacher he was ordained in 2007 and served his curacy in south Manchester. Paul is married to Gill and they have four boys and one girl. He enjoys following Blackburn Rovers and spending time with his family doing whatever they like to do.



**South Manchester, Cheshire
& North Staffordshire**
Tim Hanson

Tim is the Vicar at Christ Church Wharton and Chair of NWGP Trustees.



Merseyside
Maurice McCracken

Maurice is Lead Minister of Christ Church Liverpool and is happy to be a trustee of NWGP because the contribution to the cause of the Gospel is unique. CCL belong to FIEC and the City to City network, but they love NWGP because it helps them focus on the whole region, and to learn across denominations and networks.



Wirral & North Wales
Darren Jones

Darren is the pastor of Bromborough Evangelical Church in Wirral. He enjoyed two years of the NWGP evening ministry training course while still working in the corporate world, and then began both his pastorate and part-time theological degree with Oak Hill and NWGP in September 2011. As a pastor of a smaller church, Darren appreciates the encouragement and collaboration of Wirral churches and leaders working in partnership for the gospel.

He's been married to Julia 30 years this year and they have 3 adult sons, 3 dogs, 5 cats, 2 guinea pigs and 4 fish. Originally from North Wales, Darren & Julia have come to love living near the sea and walk their dogs along the shore almost every day.

Loves chocolate; hates cheese.





A PASSION FOR LIFE

Passion For Life is a nationwide initiative in which Bible believing churches up and down the country partner together to share the good news of the Lord Jesus through all kinds of different events. Many of the churches in Partnership have taken part in previous Passion For Life initiatives.

In March-April 2022, there will be another nationwide Passion For Life. The NWGP is delighted to be a part of this and we are looking forward to this time of national mission.

The real work of evangelism takes place of course through local churches but as a national initiative and partnership, Passion For Life provides both a focus but also resources that can help support the mission of the local church.

In preparation for Passion For Life, our Partnership Conference in January 2022 will be on the theme of evangelism, in which we will be looking to encourage, enthuse and motivate us in evangelism. We are best equipped to share the gospel, when we as

Christians, are most gripped by the love of Christ and the wonder of his grace to us. As John Piper says, "Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You cannot commend what you do not cherish...where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak" (Let The Nations Be Glad: J Piper). My prayer is that the Conference will fuel our love for Christ and our desire for others to come to know him.

The very heartbeat of the NWGP is our desire to reach more and more people in our region with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Passion For Life 2022 provides an opportunity and a focus for our partnership in evangelism.

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" John 10:10

Mark Pickles





Church Plant **REDEEMER, CHORLTON**

The temptation for church planters and their teams is to frame their own story as the hero story. We are the brave ones who move into new places, who endure the marathons of planting. We are the ones doing all the work. But this is all wrong. Just like Moses in the desert, David as Israel's king, or Paul travelling and planting churches, we are merely servants. Maybe middle management at best. God is always on His mission to reveal His glory to a people that will reflect that glory back to Him and to others. He has been at work in Manchester long before we showed up to plant Redeemer. We don't start a mission, we get to join His.

Redeemer was planted two years ago in Chorlton, a neighbourhood in south Manchester. Chorlton is bohemian and artsy, known for its liberal ideals. In a way unlike other places in Manchester, there is a hunger for and interest in spiritual things. This hunger is rarely satisfied through Jesus and His church, but then again, few people here have experienced what a community of people following Jesus is really like.

Our first meeting had nine people gathered around a table in our living room. We ate together, prayed, and learned from the Word together. This was the beginning of

our first Missional Community (what we call our small groups).

Eventually this led to Sunday worship at our house. Some months later we found our first public venue for Sundays, after going through over 40 different venues that were either not available or unsuitable. We met in the first floor of a bar on Sunday mornings before they opened.

Our nine people became around 20 and our Missional Community became two Missional Communities. We outgrew the bar and upgraded to a function room of a pub. Redeemer now has three Missional Communities and we average 35 people for Sunday worship.

Through lockdown, these three Missional Communities are thriving and we have more people in on Sunday mornings than ever before. God is indeed at work, and in ways we didn't expect.

Before and through lockdown, we've made good relationships with local charities and have been able to partner together for ministry. One charity helps people who are homeless get accommodation, food, and back on their feet. We get to be part of ministering to these people through this charity and have put on some events

together. We also partner with a skatepark, and, most recently, a charity that helps asylum seekers get the accommodation they need.

In a world that doesn't readily get the gospel, we've found it much easier to talk about Jesus with someone after we've demonstrated what those words mean in practice. As we participate in acts of justice, compassion, and generosity, we get opportunities to discuss why we do this and what it means.

God was at work before Redeemer and God will be at work after. We are blessed to be able to join Him in this work whilst we're here, and we look forward to seeing what He will do in the future. Middle management is indeed an enjoyable place to be.

Greg Wilson



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

James Greenfield

I spent ten very happy years in Manchester, firstly as a student before moving to work in the engineering sector. It was during this time I was persuaded to think more and more about paid ministry work. From 2017 to 2019 I had the immense privilege of working as a Ministry Trainee for Holy Trinity Platt while studying on the Leyland training course. At the time I wasn't sure what the future held for me, but those two years were invaluable. Undertaking the course was fantastic in equipping me for a life of ministry wherever I ended up next, as well as helping me to work out whether this was something God was calling me to further. I also loved building relationships with brothers and sisters from across the North-West through the course.

At the end of the course in 2019 I have been fortunate enough to go to Oak Hill with my wife Helen to study as an Ordinand. I won't lie living in London still feels very weird (the accents are weird, the water is weird, the weather is weird!) but I have learnt so much in such a short amount of time and loved getting to know the people here. I even had the chance to set up a prayer meeting 'Pray for The North' to encourage us northerners down here. Keep an eye for it on the Oak Hill twitter feed! We look forward to being back with you all in 2022.





celebrating the joy of gospel partnership

NWGP Annual Conference - 22-23 January 2021

Sadly but not surprisingly, our conference this January is going to be held online. The conference is a real high point of the year for the Partnership, it's the time when we can get together and share fellowship, encouragement, renew friendships and be reminded of our partnership in the gospel.

However, in the Sovereign Providence of God, holding the conference online (hopefully as a one-off!) provides us with opportunities for creatively experiencing other aspects of our partnership in the gospel with some distinct advantages.

This year, again different to normal, all our speakers are from within the Partnership which is really exciting. We have revisited and reinvigorated our 'regional' groups to help us provide more focussed support and encouragement in our goal of reaching the North West with the gospel of Christ.

The 8 sessions will reflect the 8 regions, with our speakers coming from different areas in the partnership, and then some news, updates and encouragements from each region, and also a time of prayer. Our intention is to have each talk live-streamed from every region in the Partnership, so that we will literally hold our conference from every part of the North West.

This I hope, will be a very tangible expression of our partnership throughout the region. The Conference will be an exposition of Philippians, which provides a master-class in gospel partnership.

True fellowship in the gospel comes not from intense naval gazing but through standing side by side standing firm in the faith and partnering together to reach a lost world,

"(that I may hear of you) that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 1:27)

Philippians also exudes the mutual care and concern that we as Christians and churches ought to have for one another as an expression of our partnership in the gospel. Paul plans to send Timothy to the Philippians because he is "genuinely concerned for your (their) welfare" (2:20) whilst commending them for their concern for and commitment to Paul "no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only"(4:15).

This January's conference provides a great opportunity for us to hear about, renew our concern for and pray for one another throughout our region.

The conference is not a 'leaders' conference, but rather a conference for all our churches and congregations throughout the Partnership, please do encourage folk to follow online and participate in the conference.

More details to come shortly.

Mark Pickles





celebrating the joy of gospel partnership

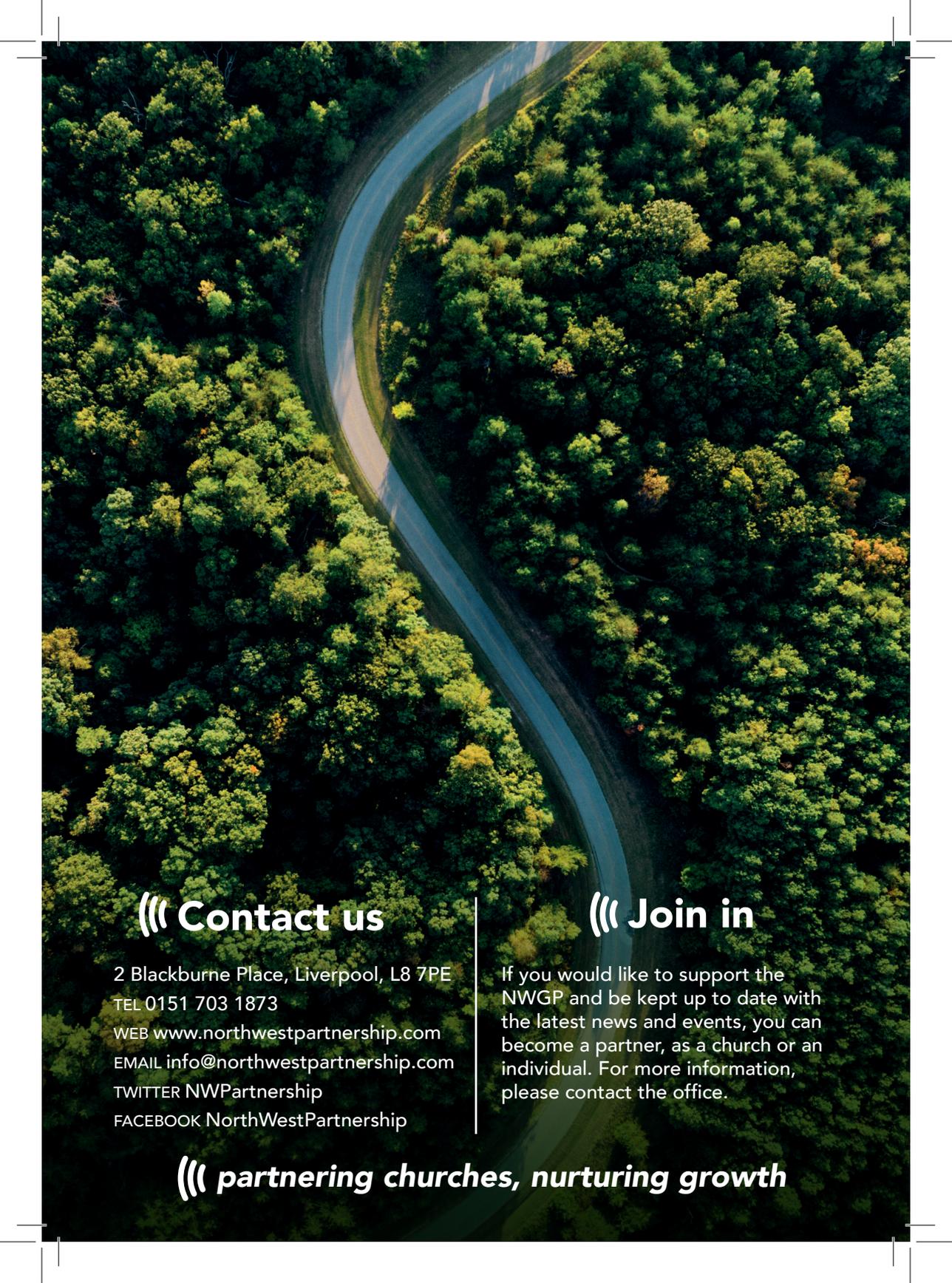
A series of online talks from
church leaders across the North West
unpacking Paul's letter to the Philippians

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 22 JAN | Mark Pickles & Paul Mathole |
| 27 JAN | Dave Lewis |
| 3 FEB | Andrew Towner |
| 10 FEB | Gerry Straker |
| 17 FEB | Andrew Raynes |
| 20 FEB | Peter Roberts & Tim Hanson |

Contact sara@northwestpartnership.com to register



annual
conference
2021



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If you would like to support the NWGP and be kept up to date with the latest news and events, you can become a partner, as a church or an individual. For more information, please contact the office.

(((*partnering churches, nurturing growth*