

**As we hurtle towards the end of August it is time for a catch up.  
What has been happening, what is current and what is coming up.**

Many of you have been asking about the process as we seek to appoint a new moderator. A procedural matter (unrelated to the candidates) is being addressed prior to any appointment being made. We will send out an update as soon as we are able. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW SYNOD SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

We are delighted to share that Claire Partridge has been appointed as our Safeguarding Officer here in the South Western Synod. Claire will be starting her part-time post this week.

Whilst Claire undertakes her induction Carrie Kaunda will continue to oversee safeguarding matters.

To be in touch email: [safeguarding@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@urcsouthwest.org.uk)



## WE WELCOME REVD JESSICCA ASHCROFT-TOWNSLEY TO THE SOUTH WESTERN SYNOD

Who has taken up a pastorate in Dawlish & Kingsteinton. Her induction service will be held at Kingsteignton on Saturday 16th September at 3pm

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

A run down of this years General Assembly can be found in the Assembly Buisness Digest - click link below to read it.

<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Assembly-Business-Digest-2023-FINAL.pdf>

For the full book of reports click the link below

<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Book-of-Reports-2023-web.pdf>

And of course there was the exciting news regarding the Bristol Korean Church - see below

## BRISTOL KOREAN CHURCH FORMALLY WELCOMED INTO THE URC AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Bristol Korean Church was received as a new local church of the URC.

The Revd Yohan Song was then formally greeted by the Moderator of General Assembly who called the occasion "really exciting".

Fiona asked Yohan what prayers he would like as a "new limb within the URC body"? Yohan responded that he was truly grateful for the opportunity and that Bristol Korean Church regards itself as a seed planted in fertile soil, the URC. He asked for prayers that the Bristol Korean Church would be a proactive, fertile church, filled with hope and joy.





## The United Reformed Church: A Paradoxical Church at a Crossroads

Nathan Miladin



## CHURCH LIFE REVIEW

The Church Life Review Group have been tasked with looking at the future of the URC and the challenges we face at church, synod and denomination level. As part of this work In 2022, Theos and the United Reformed Church entered into a partnership to undertake an in-depth study of the URC.

The full report can be read here

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/URC-report-Final.pdf>

## CELEBRATING OUR SYNOD!

We have agreed to a different and very special Synod meeting this October. We'll meet from 9:45am-3:15pm at Westfield URC, Bridgwater. Essential Synod business will be limited to time in the afternoon. The bulk of the day will be devoted to Making Christ Known – our explorations of tools and resources to help congregations seek, serve and share Christ in our communities.

We are opening this gathering to up to 10 from each church. We want to share with a wider cross section of Synod in celebration (travel expenses can be reclaimed from the Synod for all attending, but please share transport as much as possible).

The heart of this synod gathering will be workshops we create. Our focus is upon ideas, resources, tools, organisations and more that any churches have tried or used that might be helpful for others to learn about.

So save the day and let's get together



The URC is a sponsor of National Estate Churches Network and you are invited to either Bristol or Sheffield for their 2023 NECN National Conference, 'God With Us: Sharing our journey' on 23 September. There will be practical workshops and time for fellowship. Lunch is included in the ticket price of £20. click on the link below to book your ticket.

[https://estatechurches.org/conference/?dm\\_i=2JB1,1YFB5,2VWOVW,6WZ8Z,1](https://estatechurches.org/conference/?dm_i=2JB1,1YFB5,2VWOVW,6WZ8Z,1)

# JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

*Touring to churches and schools this Advent  
Share the joy and wonder of Christmas with your local community*

**"... a magnificent production. Our church members and their guests were powerfully moved."**

Rev David Senior

**"A wonderful production, so accessible to every kind of audience, especially non-church goers. Opening up the meaning of Christmas."**

Rev Novette Headley

**"... the best of both worlds: a vibrant piece of entertainment and an opportunity to step back, to reflect, and to refocus."**

John Sherbourne, Moortown Baptist Church

**For more information and to book for Advent 2023, call our office on 07775 628442 or email: [touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk)**



**RECONNECT!: a URC event for 20-40s**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 10am-4.30pm**

**Westminster College, Cambridge**

We are delighted to be hosting the first URC event for those in their 20s-40s, generously funded by the URC's Discipleship Development Fund.

**Reconnect!** is a discipleship event with worship, Bible study, panel discussion and small-group discussions. It aims to provide a space for 20-40 year olds to make connections with other Christians, to share in fellowship, and to discuss church life and faith in the context of life in this age bracket. We are hoping to establish an ongoing supportive network that will nourish people in their everyday discipleship and local church life.

**Who is this for?** Anyone in their 20s-40s who is connected with or interested in the URC, particularly those who have recently left Youth Assembly and those who do not have much contact with a local URC.

**When will it be?** Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with the option of staying over from 6pm the night before (Friday 15<sup>th</sup>) if you are coming from a distance.

**Where will it take place?** At Westminster College in Cambridge, one of the URC's Resource Centres for Learning.

**Why is it happening?** The report from the 20-40s task group to General Assembly in 2018 explored the reasons for the lack of 20-40 year olds in traditional churches and emphasised the need to walk together in community. Lack of engagement with traditional church is not a problem that needs fixing, but rather a call to find new ways forward together.

Reconnect! will be an opportunity for those in their 20s-40s to worship and socialise together, but also to think together about future discipleship and fellowship events and how the URC might better support and encourage those in this age-group.

To book your place click here: <http://bit.ly/45WqyZ3>

## URC DISCIPLESHIP DEVELOPMENT FUND LARGE GRANT

Around £5,000 is available to recognised URC groups for the discipleship development of lay people. Grants can be put towards personnel costs, facilities, travel, courses and more. Multi-year projects can be supported for up to three years. Click below for more information

<https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/developing-your-faith/discipleship-development-fund/>



Torch Trust, the Christian Sight Loss charity, is offering a free audio Bible player to people in the UK who have sight loss. The audio player, which features actor David Suchet reading the New Testament and Psalms, includes an in-built speaker, preinstalled rechargeable batteries, and comes with a charging cable and in-ear headphones. Order yours by clicking the link below <http://torchtrust.org/pathway/?dm>





## GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR CHURCHES IN WILTSHIRE

Grants are given twice a year (June and November). Please do not be put off by the word "Historic" - all churches in the County are eligible if they have their own building. Grants can be sought for alterations, developments, roof repairs, heating systems, etc. with respect to their Church building.

Please look at the Trust's website for further details: <https://www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk/grants/apply/> - applications for a grant can now be requested via the [website](https://www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk/grants/apply/).



Click on the link Below to Read the helpful booklet produced by the URC Interfaith Enabling Group & the Baptist Interfaith Working Group.

[https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/1638/73/Church\\_buildings\\_booklet.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/1638/73/Church_buildings_booklet.pdf)

**Appreciating Church**  
**Annual Conferences**  
**Saturday 30 September 2023**

Onsite | Priory Rooms, Birmingham | 10:30 - 16:00  
Online | Zoom | 09:30 - 16:30

# Appreciating the tough stuff

**How do we.**  
**How can we.**  
**How might we.**

These two conferences will run in parallel  
as practitioner-led events  
with interactive workshops

Speakers from the church and beyond will reflect on  
using appreciative inquiry in challenging situations

How will you use  
this opportunity to  
deepen and share  
your appreciative  
inquiry practice?

Fee for either conference

Early bird booking  
by 30th June is  
£100  
After that the  
fee will be £130

[enquiries@appreciating.church](mailto:enquiries@appreciating.church)



[For the latest dates and events click here](#)

## AUDIO VISUAL SYSTEM AVAILABLE

Trinity Plymouth church has decided to close and are happy to offer their AV system to any church that might be interested.

The equipment is valued at around £12,-15,000 and can be dismantled by the installers and reinstalled in a new church subject to survey.

If any church is interested contact Dick Gray  
[synodtreasurer@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:synodtreasurer@urcsouthwest.org.uk)



**Rural Ministry Course**

**17-18th Oct 2023**

- New to rural?
- Fancy a refresher?
- Come & meet others
- Learn together

Booking & further details:  
<https://tinyurl.com/RMC2023>

£320 full board  
 King's Park

Arthur Rank Centre

## FUNDING SUPPORT FOR CHARITIES HELPING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Charities and community organisations working with vulnerable people are being invited by the Government to apply for a share of a Department of Culture, Media and Sport support package. The fund will support frontline charities and community organisations providing services such as the provision of food, emergency provisions, shelter, safe spaces, warmth and financial or housing advice. Organisations can apply for grants worth between £10,000 and £75,000 to cover project and core costs, including office rent, utilities, staff and volunteers, from now until the end of March.

Applications will be accepted until 16 October 2023. Further details on eligibility and the applications process can be found on The National Lottery Community Fund website, in its role as the intermediary grant maker.

Click her to go to the website

<https://www.nlccommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/community-organisations-cost-of-living-fund>

[Click here](#) to visit the Arthur Rank website & find out more about the Rural Ministries Course.



## COMING SOON

Have you ever stopped to reflect on where God has called you or where

God might be calling you? These were two of the questions considered at Assembly Executive in November 2022. As a result, a resource has been created called Conversation Starters - Vocation and Call.

This resource will be a way of thinking about how God calls us, sustains us, challenges us and continues to move us on. There will be questions, a theological reflection, worship, and video clips all exploring what we experience and understand as Vocation and Call that will be freely available and ideal for use in small groups.

Conversation Starters - Vocation and Call will be available on the URC Learning Hub, from September. To access this and other resources in the URC Learning Hub, click here: <https://www.urclearninghub.org.uk/>



URC BUILDINGS  
FORUM

## Local churches working towards Net Zero

for more information and to register for a link:  
[mission@urc.org.uk](mailto:mission@urc.org.uk)

Tuesday 26 September  
 8pm - 9.30pm





## Announcing the 23-24 Certificate in Theology & Discipleship for Mission

Join our 23-24 Cohort for the CTDM to participate in

- scholarly readings of Mark's Jesus movement led by the founder of UTU, Rev'd Dr. John Vincent
- sharing of stories in faith journey, evolution, change and discovery
- perspective building through liberation theologians, including Black liberation and Indigenous theologians.
- gain insight from guest speakers who are embedded in mission provide practical insight into what works, how to adapt, and how to flourish as a Kingdom Community.
- Our 15-sessions culminate in student led plans for local mission.

How long are sessions? We meet by Zoom about twice a month between October and July. Sessions last for 3-hours and include a mid-session break.

Click below to find out more

<https://utusheffield.org.uk/2023/06/12/certificate-in-theology-discipleship-for-mission-2023-2024/>



0114 2709907



utusheffield.org.uk



office@utusheffield.org.uk



Urban Theology Union, Victoria Hall  
Methodist Church, Norfolk Street,  
Sheffield, S1 2JB

## QUINQUENNIAL SURVEYS (QS) & PROPERTY GRANTS

Just a reminder from the Property Team here at the Synod Offices.

It is best practice to have a QS every 5 years, carried out by a professional independent building surveyor. We have recommendations at Synod if you need help finding someone suitable.

The QS will look at every part of the property and provide you with a comprehensive 5 year maintenance plan.

Synod will, upon receipt of the invoice and a copy of the QS, provide you with 50% of the costs of the QS.

Once you have the maintenance plan there may be things you need to do urgently to the buildings or in some cases larger issues need to be tackled. The Property Team can help with property grants.

Just email either myself or Colleen on [property@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:property@urcsouthwest.org.uk) for information and an application form.

You might be able to claim a 50% Face Lift Grant (25% for an LEP) up to the project/ item value of £20,000 (so in effect we would give you up to £10,000 (£5,000 for an LEP) for the project). These can be applied for every 5 years and are a great tool when planning your 5 year maintenance repairs for your building.

We also have 10% Property Grants (5% for an LEP) and Eco Grants.

Just pop us an email and we will help in whatever way we can... And remember a QS and various property grants are not just for churches but also for manses and any other buildings you may have too.

We look forward to hearing from you with your applications and QS surveys.

Best wishes

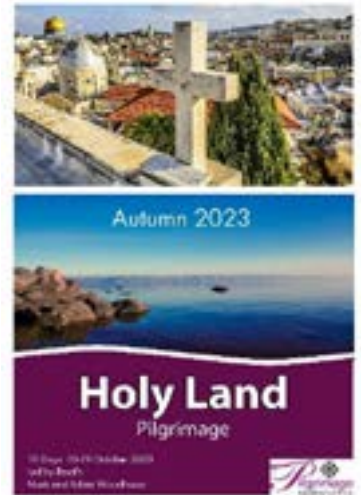
Diane & Colleen

# October Holy Land Pilgrimage

Have you ever fancied walking where Jesus walked? Seeing the same sights, smelling the same smells?

Or sitting on a boat on the Sea of Galilee, reading the story of Jesus walking on water?

Or what about standing in a cave similar to that which King David would have slept in when he was a shepherd boy?



All these experiences and more are what you can expect when you go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A wonderful land, a land that will enhance your faith – a trip of a lifetime. Adam Woodhouse (my son and also a URC Minister in Blackburn) and I are leading a small group of about 20 people there in October. We will be visiting many of the magnificent sites mentioned in the Bible; the sites that we hear about so often. We will be eating the food, visiting the places, meeting the people who live there and experiencing a little of what life is like now and then. Reading the Bible will never quite be the same again, when you can say I have walked (or sailed) in that place.

If you are interested in joining us, we have a few spare places. Follow the link below for more information, where you will find the dates, the full program and pricing for the trip.

<http://www.maranatha.co.uk/HolyLand2023-RevdsMark&Adam/>

Also, feel free to call or email me for a chat or more information if you would find that helpful (07851595578 / mark.woodhouse44@gmail.com)

If my experience is anything to go by, I promise you, you'll have an amazing time.

Mark (Woodhouse) Minister at Derriford URC, Plymouth

## URC CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK ONLINE

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>

Website <https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people>

YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/channel/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCUhcQnrk2N78c89wM9Rhow)

[UCCUhcQnrk2N78c89wM9Rhow](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCUhcQnrk2N78c89wM9Rhow)

Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/URCCYWD/>

Have you signed up yet to the new Facebook group for Faith Adventures for Children Together?

Why not have a look on

[www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)


## A few dates for the diary

- Please have all items to be considered by the Executive Committee with the Synod Office by the **12th September**.
- Please have all items to be considered by the Pastoral Committee with the Synod Office or your Synod Pastoral Advisor by the **6th September**.
- South Western Autumn Synod Meeting **21st October**.
- URC South Western Spring School will run from 22nd - 25th April 2024

Deadline for the September Issue of E-News **5th September** Please email your contribution to Rachel Leach, Synod Clerk at [synodclerk@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:synodclerk@urcsouthwest.org.uk)

**jlg<sub>GB</sub>** JOINT LITURGICAL GROUP


# LITURGY AS PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL



**Keynote Speaker: Dr Rowan Williams,**  
former Archbishop of Canterbury

A day exploring Liturgy and Worship as a way that many people hear the Good News, and deepen their journey of Christian discipleship.

**28 September 2023**  
11-5pm, Llandaff Cathedral  
Tickets £30 | £15 students  
including lunch and refreshments

Book your tickets here: 

[WWW.JLG.ORG.UK](http://WWW.JLG.ORG.UK)



**Group for  
Evangelism  
And  
Renewal**  
*within the United  
Reformed Church*

[Click here to find out more and book a place](#)

## REFRESHING YOUR MINISTRY

10-12 October 2023

High Leigh Conference Centre, Herts

These gatherings include teaching input, Bible studies and worship, space for prayer plus valuable down-time with colleagues away from regular responsibilities. They are for serving URC Ministers and CRCWs, and also include Synod-appointed Local Leaders, and retired ministers who are in pastoral charge.



URC Finance Department

9 August 2023

Ministry And Mission Fund - Annual Letter To Local Churches

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Click below to read the full letter

<https://urc-news.org.uk/2JB1-1YU2R-F6997347CE1F28C09YVP1HF4105499C1854728/cr.aspx>

## ASIST TRAINING

The first 3 dates are live for application on our website: [www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/mhfa](http://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/mhfa)

The dates are as follows:

28th & 29th September - Yeovil

26th & 27th October - Taunton

23rd & 24th November - Yeovil



The course is aimed at frontline workers in Somerset, typically from the following areas:

Statutory and voluntary sector workers in health, welfare or social justice, Adult education, leisure and community safety staff and volunteers, Emergency service workers, General Practice staff

## HOW CAN I TRAIN TO BE A PASTORAL SUPERVISOR?

URC Ministries Dept has partnered with Westminster College and Wesley House in Cambridge to provide training for the Certificate in Pastoral Supervision.

The next course is scheduled for:

November 20th – 24th 2023 at Westminster College.

To apply for the training contact: [ministries.pa@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries.pa@urc.org.uk)

