

Synod Moderator Nomination process

The Synod Executive Committee and Trust Officers of the South Western Synod and the Officers of General Assembly, have released the following statement:

A process took place to nominate a candidate as Moderator of the South Western Synod for the Officers of the General Assembly to confirm on behalf of the General Assembly. This resulted in a nomination but shortly after the process was complete, a complaint was raised about the process by a panel member. An independent investigation followed which took some time to conclude due to the need to hold conversations with all involved. As a result of that investigation, and various issues that were raised about the process, within and beyond the Synod, the Officers of the General Assembly determined they could not with confidence accept the nomination that had been made.

Representatives of the Officers of the General Assembly met with the Synod Executive on 26th September, and together we have reflected on what needs to be learned from the experience and the investigation report. We know that this is a very difficult situation for all concerned and also that it adds very great pressure for many people within and beyond the Synod. We deeply regret that we are where we are. Together, we are now working towards a new process that will allow us to discern a nomination with confidence.

It is our hope that it will be possible for an advert to appear in the issue of Reform that will be circulated in late January. The Synod Executive is taking steps to support and sustain Synod staff and the wider life of the Synod during this extended vacancy. We ask for your understanding that much of the detail of this situation must remain confidential and that no concerns were raised at all about the candidates who were interviewed, and they have been encouraged to reapply.

It is never easy in Church life when things go wrong, but it is important that when they do, it is acknowledged and put right. The Officers of the General Assembly and the Officers of the Synod apologise that whilst we work to ensure the process is run with confidence, the Synod will remain without a Moderator for longer than we all might have hoped. We ask for your prayers and encouragement for all who have been involved in the process to date, and for all who will serve in the next phase of seeking a nomination.

AUTUMN SYNOD MEETING



Saturday 21st October 9.45am - 3.15pm at Westfield URC, Bridgwater



The heart of this gathering will be workshops sharing resources for mission, worship and outreach. Please bring up to 10 people from your church to explore *"Making Christ Known"*.

Essential Synod business will be limited to time in the afternoon

All Synod papers will be available on the website

Safeguarding update:

Training:

09 October 2 - 4pm: Safeguarding for Ministers Supporting Survivors

12 October Safeguarding Symposium - Eventbrite tickets

20 October 2 - 4pm: Elders as Trustees

22 November 1.30 - 3.30pm: DBS Verifier and Safer Recruitment

21 November 7- 9pm: Adult Safeguarding

27 November 6.30 - 8:30: Elders as Trustees

Email emma.pearce@urc.org.uk to book these and get joining instructions

We have dates for Intermediate training that other Synods are running. Please contact Dinah on secretary@urcsouthwest.org.uk for dates and how to book.

If you require Foundation training please contact safeguardingofficer@urcsouthwest.org.uk for a link to the e - learning that can be done at your own convenience.

Do you know what roles in your church need a DBS check? Or what level of DBS?

The link below shows what was agreed at General Assembly. **Do contact us for advice if you need help with this process.**

[Paper T6 - SAG - URC roles eligible for a criminal record check](#)

Stepwise Facilitator Training sessions – October 2023

If you are interested in finding out what Stepwise has to offer, what's involved in facilitating Stepwise and how you might go about setting up a group, then these two online sessions are for you!

Over two evenings, on the 16th and 23rd October 2023, from 7.00pm – 8.30pm, we will introduce Stepwise, learn some facilitation skills and talk about what's involved in facilitating a Stepwise group. In the second session we'll also give you the opportunity to work with some of the material from Faith-Filled Life so that you can experience facilitation for yourself.

So why not come and learn more about Stepwise and be enthused and equipped to facilitate Stepwise in your church, community or wider context. It would be great to see you!

For further details and to register for these sessions please contact

David Salsbury david.salsbury@urc.org.uk or **Marion Brown** marion.brown@urc.org.uk





Church and Society

Synod Update Autumn 2023

Church and Society helps the URC to engage with the most pressing issues facing society

Tel: 020 7916 8632 // tweet [@URCcass](https://twitter.com/URCcass)

church.society@urc.org.uk
www.urc.org.uk/church-society

You can find PowerPoint slides to accompany each item below at bit.ly/casupdate.

Let's End Poverty

Be part of a new movement of faith groups and charities who are united in calling for an end to poverty in the UK. Individuals and organisations are welcome to sign up to find out more: letsendpoverty.co.uk/



Let's End Poverty Founding Assembly

Saturday 14 October, 11am-1pm

Online or in Cambridge, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle and Nottingham.

Everyone who is passionate about seeing an end to poverty in the UK is invited to come. Whether your motivation to take action comes from your personal experience of poverty, volunteering to support your community or working as part of a charity committed to tackling UK poverty, we need you to be part of shaping how we build the movement together.

letsendpoverty.co.uk/assembly/

Just Economics



What should the goal of the economy be? Why isn't our current system enabling people to flourish, especially as the cost of living continues to rise? Could a change in approach help us solve the climate crisis? What does our Christian faith have to say about the economy?

'Just Economics' is a six-week, Bible-based course written by the Joint Public Issues Team, using non-technical language to help

individuals or small groups explore how the economy might be re-shaped to enable the wellbeing of all people and the planet. jpit.uk/justeconomics

Politics in the Pulpit



Preaching ‘with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other’ gets a lot easier with JPIT’s ‘Politics in the Pulpit’ podcast. Released every Tuesday morning during term-time, guests and our host unpack the Revised Common Lectionary readings for the coming Sunday, reflecting on how they relate to contemporary justice issues, news and current affairs.

It’s a great launching point for ministers, lay preachers and worship leaders. Available as an audio podcast or a YouTube video. jpit.uk/politicsinthepulpit

10 minutes on...

Hear Christian responses to major news items, topical issues and current affairs affecting our society on the *Ten Minutes on...* podcast from the Joint Public Issues Team. To listen, search for ‘Ten Minutes on’ in your podcast app, or go to our website to listen directly: jpit.uk/podcast.

Ukraine Briefing

The conflict in Ukraine after Russia’s invasion in February 2022 is a tragedy that continues to devastate the lives of millions of people.



The Joint Public Issues Team has produced this briefing and supporting resources to help churches engage with the challenging questions posed by the ongoing war. jpit.uk/ukraine

Greening your church

The URC’s Environmental Policy has set a target of the Church being net-zero in our carbon emissions by 2030, as part of our commitment to caring for God’s creation.

There are lots of ways that your church can move towards this goal. Our 5-minute video gives advice on starting and continuing your eco journey. linktr.ee/ecovideo

We have a **second video** now available to watch or download, where Simeon Mitchell, Secretary for Church & Society, introduces the URC’s Environmental Policy.

We’re delighted that 35% of URC congregations, including LEPs, have registered with Eco Church (or Eco-Congregation in Scotland), but we’d like that to be 100%, and for all congregations to be working towards their ‘Bronze’ award or beyond.

The most recent recipients of a Bronze award are Ashton on Mersey URC, Denholme Shared Church, Primley Church, Southernhay URC and Taunton URC – congratulations! We have 66 churches that have reached Silver and four have received their Gold award.

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Dates for the diary:



- **Deadline for next E-News is 3rd November**
- Please send all items to be considered by **Discipleship & Service Committee** with the Synod Office or Neil Thorogood by the 12th October.
- Please send all items to be considered by the **Executive Committee** to the Synod Office by the 24th October.
- Please send all items to be considered by **Pastoral Committee** to the Synod Office or your Synod Pastoral Advisor by the 2nd November.
- Please send all items to be considered by the **Property & Trust Committee** to the Synod Office by the 7th November.

Thank you

The **Church Times Green Church Awards** is now live.

Applications and more information can be found on the website: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/green-church>

The awards are open for entries until June next year, to give projects time to showcase them at their best, as different projects will be at their peak at different times (eg flowers in the spring, tree planting in autumn, measuring a new heating system in winter).



Spring 2024 Holy Land Pilgrimage

Revd. Paul Snell, County Ecumenical Officer for Devon and a URC Minister, and his wife Linda, are leading another pilgrimage to the Holy Land Israel/Palestine from **3rd – 11th April 2024**, and invite you to join them.

This trip will include all the major biblical sites associated with the ministry of Jesus including a visit to the Dead Sea, Ein Gedi the Jesus Trail, Jaffa (Joppa), Mount Carmel and a special sound and light show at Beth Shean. A good standard hotel accommodation - 1 night in Bethlehem followed by 4 nights in East Jerusalem and 3 nights in Tiberias overlooking the Sea of Galilee. There will be time for quiet reflection and we will share the experience of fellowship with other pilgrims as we travel in our own coach accompanied by our own local guide. The cost based on half board and 2 people sharing is £2281 which includes flights from Heathrow.

All the details are on our website at www.thesnells.org.uk or call Paul on 07735 603553.

Printed brochures are also available.