

NEW DATE FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE APRIL 15TH 2023

There will be an Open Church House event on the same day from 10am to 12noon. Volunteers are welcome to join the Anniversary Choir and to act as Stewards. Tickets are still valid but if you are no longer able to attend, please cancel your ticket.



SYNOD MEETING & FAREWELL TO OUR MODERATOR

Synod Meeting
Saturday 11th March
In person at Taunton URC, Paul Street, Taunton
10am - 2.30pm

Synod papers will shortly be available on the Synod website.

Tea, coffee & biscuits will be available on arrival and at lunchtime.

Please bring your own packed lunch

(Taunton URC is adjacent to Marks & Spencers for anyone wishing to purchase a packed lunch)

Synod Meeting will be followed at 2.30pm by a chance to say farewell to Ruth Whitehead, our outgoing Moderator, at the presentation/afternoon tea.



CONGRATULATIONS TO MUDDIFORD URC IN DEVON AND GLASTONBURY URC IN SOMERSET

- both have been awarded the Bronze Eco Church Award. This is very encouraging progress at a time when we are all focussed on reducing energy consumption in order to afford our electricity and gas bills. In the last few weeks, an Eco Grant was awarded by the synod towards double glazed window installation in Swindon, which will make a significant difference to their heat loss. Grants are available to all churches in the synod, so please do get in touch with the property team. We are delighted to report that Chris Baillie, who retired recently from his stipendiary ministry role, has agreed to continue as one of our Green Apostles.

Rob Weston and Chris Baillie
Green Apostles South Western Synod



2023 HOLY LAND VISIT

In October this year (2023) we have a fabulous opportunity to visit the land where Jesus walked. A 10 day pilgrimage to Israel / the Holy Land. The pilgrimage will start from Heathrow on the 10th October and finish on the 19th October. Adam (my son, who is also a URC minister in Blackburn) and myself are leading the trip with the help of local guides and is organised by Maranatha, a Christian travel company.

As well as visiting some of the most amazing 'Jesus' sites, seeing the places that the Bible speaks about and walking in His footsteps we will also see some of the land's Christian history and architecture. After a visit to the this land you will never read the Bible quite the same again, with new insights to the Biblical stories that we all love.

It is also planned that we will meet local people living in the land today, often called the 'living stones'. We will hear their stories of life residing in this very divided land; both Palestinians and Messianic Jews. Their stories, will brings the gospel message alive and make it very relevant for today.

I promise you, you won't regret a trip to the Holy Land. I have been there four times and every time I have come back blessed and my faith, my understanding of the Bible and of God has grown massively.

If you are interested and want more information, follow this link:

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

There is also an opportunity on the 28th March (7pm) to hear more about the trip and to ask questions. Join us on Zoom. The link is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82413287849?pwd=YUVuYzhMc0hmOEhxMVdhNG53Wkxxdz09>

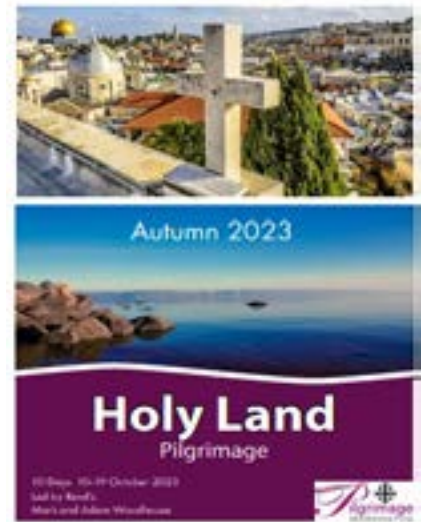
Or feel free to contact me for a chat. Mark.woodhouse44@gmail.com / 0785 1595578

As I said previously you won't regret it. It is an opportunity of a life time, to come and listen, smell and see a land that was Jesus' and one that has been very special to God throughout history.

Love & Blessings

Mark (Woodhouse)

Minister Derriford URC, Plymouth



Spend 3 months in Palestine and Israel

MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS

**FULL TRAINING GIVEN
EXPENSES COVERED
LIVING ALLOWANCE PROVIDED**

FINAL CLOSING DATE: 9 MARCH 2023 at 5PM

- Monitor human rights abuses for the UN and others
- Stand in solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli peace activists
- Advocate for justice, equality and an end to the military occupation of Palestine

For more info visit: quaker.org.uk/applyeappi



EAPPI UK & Ireland



'A LONG SERVICE MEDAL ...'

On Sunday 26th February, six people who had started the TLS Lite Course well before the 'pandemic pause'! ... celebrated having completed the course, being accredited as Lay preachers by the Synod and offering their service in the Wiltshire United Area.

Each outlining the journey of faith that had lead them to explore a calling to lead worship and preach they shared their testimonies with the gathered congregation. Five of them were then commissioned and will join the Local Preachers meeting for the United Area.

Pictured here, with Revd Sue Henderson who had been their local tutor, David, Geoffrey, Gillian, Patti, Shirley-Anne and Pam, were delighted to have reached this milestone. In the United Area we look forward to them leading worship in our churches.



BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH! Commitment for Life

TAFFLES INCREDIBLE WORKING

ROWENA

A WITNESS TO LIFE UNDER OCCUPATION

MONDAY MARCH 13 2023 13H00

contact commitmentforlife@urc.org.uk for ZOOM link



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

Crucible Courses

This module will be taught in-person to participants in Exeter, using the training room of the South West Baptist Association. This room has the facilities needed to livestream the teaching, making it accessible anywhere. This means that you can participate in any of three ways:

In person in Exeter

Together with others in a local hub with an experienced facilitator

Online as an individual

As always, the course is open to anyone interested in exploring faith, discipleship, mission and church in a changing culture.

The cost per module is £80 (£40 if unwaged). Some bursaries are available by contacting admin@urbanexpression.org.uk

The East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church is looking to appoint a
SYNOD CLERK



The Synod Council is looking to recruit a new Synod Clerk for 20 hrs per week. The role holder is required to spend time in the Synod office in Nottingham but will be mainly home based with travel across the geography of the EM Synod. Salary: £30,000 to £35,000 per annum FTE for a lay URC member. A URC minister will receive a scoping of 0.45 of a current ministerial stipend, a manse and related benefits in accordance with the Plan for Partnership. This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure. The role of the Synod Clerk in the East Midlands Synod has four principal elements:

- To serve as Clerk to the Synod and Synod Council
- To be responsible for enabling Synod engagement with General Assembly
- To provide advice, guidance and support on the structure, governance and procedures of the URC
- To serve as one of the Synod Officers alongside the Moderator and Treasurer.

For an application pack (no CVs) please contact: East Midlands Synod Office

1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA, Tel: 0115 9609241, Email: admin@urc5.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 22nd March 2023 Interviews to be held: 4th April 2023

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is an occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian. We are committed to diversity and equality of opportunity. We especially welcome applications from women and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups who are currently under-represented in this area of work in the Church.

MILTON MOUNT FOUNDATION

(Registered Charity No. 306981)

Secondary Education

The Milton Mount Foundation offers bursaries to assist with the cost of secondary school fees to the children of Congregational and URC ministers, and also to the daughters of members of these churches. Subject to the availability of sufficient funds, it may also be possible to provide grants to assist with the cost of school uniform and educational trips for ministers' children at both state and fee-paying schools.

Higher Education

Bursaries are offered to daughters of Congregational and URC ministers starting their first undergraduate degree in autumn 2023. Bursaries are also offered to those beginning a first postgraduate degree, for up to three years. Subject to sufficient funds being available, similar grants may also be available for sons of ministers.

For further information and application forms, please contact the Secretary, Mrs Rosie Hopkins, at miltonmountfoundation@gmail.com or on 01252 715087.

The closing date for all applications for the 2023-24 academic year is 10 May 2023.



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

THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

The Church Leadership Programme (CLP) is a comprehensive programme to refresh experienced lay and ordained leaders in authentic leadership, helping church leaders to develop external skills from their core sense of being. A mix of physical and virtual learning, the course threads from September to June every academic year. Each year, participants form into a faith community, committed to each other for encouragement and support.

[To find out more click here](#)

HOLIDAY FORUM IN A DAY

Join us online on Saturday 18th March for your chance to meet our theme and worship leaders and get a taste of what to expect at our summer conference in August.

The morning will feature worship led by Rev Ruth Watson, a taster theme session with Michael Harvey and a virtual farm tour with Forum's resident farmer, Abi Howl. The evening will see a family quiz and breakout rooms to socialise with Forum friends.

[Use this link to join us](#) - all are welcome!

[Click here to find out more](#)



WOOD CARVER

Lavington URC in Bideford is searching for a wood carver who could update their list of Ministers. Finding a sign writer is hard enough these days, but finding someone who can update a plaque that has names carved in the wood is even harder! If anyone in the synod can recommend an individual or company, please contact the Minister Rob Weston using email address lavingtonurc@gmail.com or phoning 01566 784990.



Plan to attend!

Wednesday 15 March 2:00-5:30

on Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85184771951>

'SHAPING WORSHIP: CREATION'S CLIMATE CRISIS – RESPONDING IN FAITH'

We have arrived at, or passed, our Earth Environment's Crisis/Kairos Moment – how can worship help us wake up?

Spring Conference sponsored by the Joint Liturgical Group of Great Britain

Everyone is welcome to attend.

No registration fee; donations appreciated

"Themes & Presenters:"

- Creation Power -- Can scientific truth wake us up?
 - o Dr. Kim Holmén, Special Advisor at Norwegian Polar Institute
- Bible Power – Can the Bible wake us up to Climate Chaos?
 - o Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, former Principal of Northern College and Biblical Tutor at Luther King Centre, Manchester
- People Power – Can we wake up our congregations?
 - o Steve Hucklesby, Policy Advisor for JPIT, Joint Public Issues Team
 - o Revd Dr Tamas Kodacsy, European Christian Environmental Network, leads the Eco-congregation movement in Hungary
- Worship to wake us up
 - o Phillip Mellstrom, Worship and Development Worker, Church of Scotland
 - o United Church of Zambia, Liturgy from 'Sensitization Sunday on our Environment'
 - o David Williams, Composer - 'We hold the Key', a new hymn

...the land mourns, and all who live in it languish --Hosea 4:3a NRSV <https://jlg.org.uk/>

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85184771951> (Meeting ID: 851 8477 1951)"

URC LEARNING HUB

Come and discover the Hub via the 'Take a Look...' page which allows you to view information about programmes, courses, and resources currently available including...

1) Safeguarding - a self-paced course explaining why safeguarding and good working practices are vital to make churches safe spaces and how we can all contribute by following simple guidelines.

2) Exploring Eldership - a useful programme designed to help you learn more about the ministry of eldership. It is for Elders wishing to support their church and for those who are just starting their eldership journey.

If you wish to be registered onto the Hub to access these courses, contact [David Salsbury](#), [Philippa Linton](#) or [Marion Brown](#).

A poster for the Rural Ministry Course. The top half features a photograph of a group of people sitting on the grass in a wooded area, engaged in a meal. A large green circle with the text 'Rural Ministry Course' is overlaid on the photo. Below the photo, there is a green box with the dates '25-26th Apr 2023' and '17-18th Oct 2023'. To the right of the dates is a circular inset photo showing people sitting around a table indoors. Below the dates is a list of bullet points: '• New to rural?', '• Fancy a refresher?', '• Come & meet others', and '• Learn together'. At the bottom left, there is a blue box with the text 'Booking & further details: https://tinyurl.com/RMC2023'. Below that is a green box with the text '£500 full board', 'King's Park', and 'Northampton'. At the bottom right, there is a green box with the text 'Arthur Rank Centre' and 'CONSIDER RURAL CHRISTIANS'.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Event for General Assembly attendees who are under 26 years old

The 'What Do You Think?' (WDYT) event is held immediately before General Assembly - normally a residential from Wednesday lunch time to Friday lunchtime inclusive, with General Assembly then starting after lunch on Friday.

What Do You Think is an opportunity for the under 26 reps to General Assembly (GA) to get together before GA to explore the Book of Reports and to prepare for the business of GA. There is also an opportunity to join some sessions over zoom for those not able to attend in person. People are automatically invited once the roll of members of General Assembly has been agreed.

This is a great opportunity to get your head around all things General Assembly, practice using the technology and taking part in discussions, and get to know the other under 26 reps. There will be time for fun and fellowship as well, and lots of lovely meals!

The purpose of WDYT? is to help you, the under 26 reps, prepare for GA. To do this we will:

- learn a little about the structures of the URC, its governance and the work of the standing Committees;
- look at how GA works and how business will be conducted online this year, using the different voting systems etc;
- spend time on the reports, clarifying our understanding of their content and discuss the reports themselves;
- look at our participation in GA – speaking in the discussions, suggesting and writing amendments, protocol, etc.

Regarding funding, WDYT costs will be paid for by the General Assembly. The Children's and Youth Office will sort all arrangements. All meals during WDYT will be catered for. Travel to WDYT will need to be claimed back from your Synods. If this is likely to cause any difficulties, please let us know.

For more information, please contact children.youth@urc.org.uk

LEGACIES OF SLAVERY

Telling It As It Is – Confronting Racism in the Church, is a short film by the URC Mission Committee and is part of the URC's aim in taking active steps to become an anti-racist Church. The film is about uncovering white privilege in the Church and features a range of interviews with ethnically-minoritised members who serve in a variety of positions. Watch it, click the image.



**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.

'NO. 84', REDCAR, CLEVELAND

Is New Monasticism catching your attention? Does being part of a small innovative residential missional community appeal?

Does taking time out to think and pray through new possibilities, or taking a gap year feel timely?

Are you excited by new ways of being and doing Church?

From Spring 2023 onwards for those aged 18 and over, Redcar has a rare opportunity in the Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church to become part of a household of three living within a simple Rule of praying, eating, studying and serving together while accompanying Redcar United Reformed Church & Redcar Baptist Church in missional presence in Redcar.

If needed, a modest maintenance allowance is available.

You are invited to register your interest by Friday March 31st 2023.

Information Packs available from
Lisa McAvoy, Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church, 4 College Lane,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8JJ. Tel 0191 232 1168 lisa.mcavoy@urc-northernsynod.org

HOW CAN I TRAIN TO BE A SUPERVISOR?

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

Further courses are scheduled for:

November 20th – 24th 2023 at Westminster College.

To apply for the training contact: ministries.pa@urc.org.uk

DISCIPLESHIP DEVELOPMENT FUND

as highlighted in this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQ8ODOW3rA0>

Around £5,000 per award per year is available to recognised groups within the URC which can apply to the Discipleship Development Fund: Large Grant. Grants can be put towards any purpose that will contribute to the discipleship development of lay people in or connected with the URC. Multi-year projects can be supported for up to three years and a tapered approach to funding is encouraged. Read about it here on the URC website:

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

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH WALDENSIAN FELLOWSHIP

The URC Waldensian Fellowship is planning a visit to the Waldensian Church in Italy, to take place in the period from 4th to 18th May, 2023.

The visit will be based in comfortable and well situated Church Centres in two areas of Italy. The programme for the visit is as follows:

Part 1. A week in the historic Waldensian Valleys in the Cottian Alps, west of Turin, visiting historic sites set in dramatic alpine scenery;

Part 2. Four days at a Waldensian Centre on the Ligurian coast, a few miles from the French border, where we will see something of the Waldensian Church's witness in wider Italian society.

We would be delighted if you were interested in joining us!

It is possible to join the group for the entire visit, or for one or other of the two parts.

Total cost of the visit (excluding travel to and from Italy) will be around £750.

Part One of the visit on its own would cost £400 and Part Two would cost £350.

For more information please contact Revd. John Bremner on ecumenical@urcscotland.org.uk

REFORM MAGAZINE

News from Andy Jackson – Head of Communications for the URC

Subscriptions to Reform are back with Church House, to save the church a sizeable amount of money.

We have set up a new website to manage subscriptions, and have phone and email support during office hours:

- Phone: 020 7520 2721
- Email: reformsubs@urc.org.uk
- www.reformsubs.co.uk
- Cheques and correspondence: Reform, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT



DIGITAL RESOURCES

The national URC has many digital resources you may find helpful. Some have been going for a while, some are quite new on the scene.

[Click here to go to the URC digital resources](#)

Deadline for the April Issue Thursday 23rd March. Please email your contribution to Rachel Leach, Synod Clerk at synodclerk@urcsouthwest.org.uk