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SYNOD STAFFING UPDATE



We are delighted to announce that Colleen Lewis has been appointed to the post of Synod Property & Trust Administrator. She starts on 1st September. No doubt many of you will get to say hello over the coming weeks and months.

A NEW SHORT COURSE FOR SMALL GROUPS



ECLAS (Educating Christian Leaders about Science)

Co-director Tom McLeish and his wife Julie have created and piloted a fabulous new [small group course](#) on science and faith. Containing Bible readings, videos, and discussion questions, this is a great introduction to thinking theologically about science.



BATH CENTRAL URC

Looking back - Looking forward

A Service of Thanksgiving
Sunday 25th September 3pm

Join with the congregation for their final worship service in their present sanctuary. Refreshments will be served. Bath Central URC, Argyle Street, Bath, BA2 4BA.

TRAINING FOR PRESIDING AT COMMUNION



We are planning training for those authorised to preside at communion.

On Saturday 10th September
at Trinity Henleaze, Bristol

For further details or to book a place, please contact:
Revd Neil Thorogood
ministerththurc@gmail.com
or Revd Sue Cossey
bristolspa@urcsouthwest.org.uk



Hybrid Church Meet-up
Wednesday 7th September 2022
7:30-9pm

Come along to
YOUR space to
share and learn..

- Share ideas and good practice
- Hear valuable, experienced input
- Gain inspiration on Children's and Youth Work, Community Outreach, Technology and Worship

For more info, email:
jenny.mills@urc.org.uk;
dan@media4ministry.co.uk

Meeting ID: 892 8553 7599
Passcode: 655777

HARVEST RESOURCES

Harvest Resources - Arthur Rank Centre

This year, we want to encourage churches to use their harvest festival celebrations as an opportunity to thank farmers for all they do for us. As the effects of COVID-19 continue to unfold, it's impossible to predict the circumstances under which we will be celebrating our harvest festivals this year. Therefore, we've suggested ways in which you and your church community could celebrate either in individual households or as a gathered church.

[Harvest - The Arthur Rank Centre](#)



FROM THE PROPERTY TEAM

There have been important changes in the law affecting residential rented properties:

From October 1st 2022, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms will be compulsory in private rented residential properties in England.

Local church elders letting out residential properties, either themselves, or ideally through an agent who manages and updates as required, need to remember is that from 1st October every private rented residential property must be fitted with smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Where there are fixed combustion appliances in place, it will be a tenant's right to have a carbon monoxide alarm fitted. Also, under the new regulations, as landlord you will be obligated to repair or replace a CO alarm if the tenant has informed you that it is faulty or damaged. This will all be at the Landlord's expense.



WORRIED ABOUT YOUR INCREASING FUEL COSTS?



South Western Synod's Green Apostle, Revd Rob Weston, can help with advice on grants for churches looking at loft insulation, secondary glazing etc. One of the best ways to cut down your fuel bills is to reduce the heat and energy loss in your church premises.

There are various fact sheets available from Eco Church (all available for free <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/>) and Rob is available via email (tavistockurcminister@gmail.com) or by phoning



01566 784990. Across the Synod we have many different buildings that face different challenges. There is no simple solution that works in every situation, but by sharing our knowledge we can definitely help one another. In reducing our

energy consumption we will also reduce our carbon footprint, a vital part of our application for the Bronze Eco Synod award.

CHURCH NAMES



When getting in touch with the Synod Office it would really help if you include in any correspondence the name of the church concerned. Thank you.

URC 50TH JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd October

How are you and your church planning to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the URC? We would love to have some stories and photos of your celebrations for the October edition of the E-news.



THOUGHTS FROM THE SYNOD TREASURER

We thought it might be a good idea at the beginning of a new church year to set out for the benefit of churches some of the ways in which the Synod can help your church.



We can help and offer advice to new treasurers, although the best source of information about managing church accounts and claiming Gift Aid is ACAT, which is the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers. Their website is www.acat.uk.com. In order to get access to the full range of information you will need a login, which I can supply on request.

For help with specific URC related church accounts matters, please feel free to e-mail me as below.

The Synod offers churches grants for various activities which include property grants for developing or maintaining property, and enabling grants which can be used for anything that is mission related. This includes updating audio and visual equipment.

I have also taken on responsibility for dealing with M&M, so any queries can be directed my way in the first instance.



We have also taken on helping a few churches with their accounting and could help if you are unable to find someone who can provide the legally required accounts for your church.



I know several churches are looking at their banking arrangements, but the larger banks are generally unhelpful in providing services to charities. CAF Bank is well suited to supporting churches, but it is not free and seems to have an enormous backlog of applications. It is the only bank I know that allows for dual authorisation of on-line payments, which is the recommended way in which charities should operate.



A few churches have invested funds but struggle with the required skills to manage these properly. We are not allowed by law to give specific advice to churches, but we can offer suggestions about ways to invest ethically.



The best way to contact the Finance Team is by e-mail, as I am only available part time and Paula works from home. It would also save me some time if you used my Synod e-mail address rather than my private e-mail address.

I hope this helps to give you the information you or your colleagues might need.
Richard Gray synodtreasurer@urcsouthwest.org.uk

SOMETHING TO INSPIRE US ALL



Cricklade Assisting Refugees Escaping Conflict (CAREC) Community Sponsorship. Some 4 years ago a number of people from Cricklade United Church became aware of a scheme promoted by the Home Office - Community Sponsorship. This entailed a refugee Syrian family (identified by the United Nations High

Commission for Refugees - UNHCR) being matched

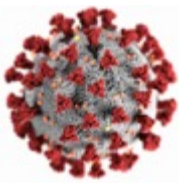


with a community who would offer 2 years' housing support and one year's friendship and support to enable the family to establish themselves in the UK. This seemed like an opportunity to put our faith into action and help those living in dire conditions, as seen nightly on our TV screens.

Following an open community meeting we moved ahead and formed the charity CAREC to take this forward. Members of the community became involved and responded with enthusiasm and generosity. We were able to arrange housing and raise funds to support the family. Donations of furniture, household items, toys and clothes flooded in. Dealing with the bureaucracy of the scheme took some time but eventually the day came when our family arrived at Heathrow from the Lebanon, where they had lived as refugees for the previous 7 years. All their worldly goods were contained in 2 bags.

The family were delighted with their home and initially settled well. Life became more challenging as they grappled with home sickness, the difficulty of learning English, the intricacies of understanding their new life, the complexities of Universal Credit, and the mysteries of the UK school system, which was compounded by one of the children being identified as having Special Educational Needs.

And then the Covid pandemic struck. This delayed the family's integration into UK life by a least a year. They were very careful with Covid regulations but found the lack of social interaction difficult. The children missed going to school - home schooling was next to impossible as the family's English and IT skills were limited. Inevitably the family contracted Covid later in the pandemic.



As the restrictions were lifted, both adults found work - the husband as a chef in a local restaurant and the wife as a cleaner in a local pub. Both children moved on to secondary schools.

The CAREC support group decided, given the Covid delays, to continue support for a third year and this came to an end in July this year. It had become apparent that housing would be a major concern as the family reached the end of their current tenancy. Rents in the area well exceeded the housing element of Universal Credit and the availability of social housing locally was nil. After much discussion, Wiltshire Council was only able to offer the family temporary accommodation in Chippenham, with a view to them obtaining a permanent house through a housing association in due course. Chippenham offered opportunities with employment, good transport links and possible contact with other Syrian families, so the family took the decision to move there as the next stage in their journey of resettlement in the UK.



And so our Community Sponsorship project is moving to a close. It was an ambitious project which has taken up a lot of time and needed a lot of support. But the response from the community has been impressive; the family has encountered only politeness and courtesy. For us, we are desperately aware of the problems of Universal Credit, the lack of provision for all children with Special Needs, the housing crisis which is receiving little national attention and the on-going plight of refugees.

The family moved on with a vanload of furniture, household goods and personal possessions but also with some spoken English, some knowledge of life in the UK and some experience of work and education. It was a good start for them and we hope that the family also took with them the feeling that we are friends who have tried to help them when their lives were at a low ebb.



Autumn/Winter Events 2022

Virtual Upper Room - ONLINE

Our Virtual Upper Rooms are an opportunity to receive prayer for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit, so that you can become a more effective witness for Jesus Christ. Our next VUR is on:

Tuesday 27th September, 7pm (BST)

Click the button below to read more about our VURs and book your place on September's event.

[Virtual Upper Room - more information & registration](#)

In the Spirit's Power - ONLINE

'In the Spirit's Power' (Gifts) is the second teaching of our 6-part Dunamis Project on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

For the first time, it is being specifically adapted for an online format. This is a great way to recap the initial teaching you may have received at a residential event, or to introduce others to the Dunamis Project.



Course Dates (Sep/Oct 2022)

Sep: Friday 23rd (evening) and Saturday 24th (all day)

Sep: Wednesday 28th (evening)

Oct: Wednesday 5th, 12th and 19th (evenings)

Oct: Friday 21st (evening) and Saturday 22nd (all day)

Exact times still TBC

We advise you to plan to be fully present for all dates.

[Contact Nicola for more info or to ask a question](#)

DFB&I Christmas Event - ONLINE

The past two years we have enjoyed coming together as a Fellowship for an online Christmas celebration. We have found it to be a joyous occasion and appreciated connecting with one another at this time. We will be doing this again in 2022:

Wednesday 14th December, on Zoom

Our Whole Lives as Worship

Christ Church Woodbury

SATURDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 19:00

An evening with Ken Benjamin – Director of Church Relationships at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC)

Founded by John Stott and friends, LICC is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year and continues to pioneer ways of growing and sustaining Christians to live out their faith on their frontlines.

Ken will be sharing how LICC's extensive range of ground-breaking research, resources, training, and publications together with leading speakers and experts, can help equip and inspire us all to be frontline ministers of God's grace and love wherever we are – in our homes, our workplaces, the church, in every aspect of our lives and relationships.

Doors open 7:00pm with refreshments served.

There is no charge for this event although a retiring offering for the ministry of LICC will be taken.



Journey of the Magi – a festive, light-hearted, joyful event with a moving and profound message.

Share the joy and wonder of Christmas with your church and local community through this exhilarating, critically acclaimed performance. The show offers a bridge between contemporary life and Jesus's birth, comparing our own personal journey to Christmas day with the journey that the wise men took. With sparkle and songs to keep the children entertained and bags of good humour for the grown-ups, Journey of the Magi delights audiences of all ages and offers a chance to reflect and refocus.

“Absolutely fabulous show. Wonderful mix of fun, wit, and meaning. It made me laugh and it made me cry all in a couple of minutes. (Hope you'll come back.)” Richard, Poynton Methodist Church

Springs is inviting churches to host a performance of Journey of the Magi, which will be available nationally during Advent 2022.

Further information can be found on the Springs Dance Company website page

<https://springsdancecompany.org.uk/productions/journey-of-the-magi/> by emailing touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk or by calling 07876 752 910

Deadline for the October Issue Thursday 22nd September

Please email your contribution to Rachel Leach, Synod Clerk at synodclerk@urcsouthwest.org.uk