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## **The Briefing – Number 53**

### **13<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Dear Friends,

The announcement last Monday indicating that the restrictions we have been living with over the past few months are to ease slightly on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May was a welcome step on the road to a return to a sense of normality. However the changes we will see in our churches will be limited as the lifting of restrictions are more significant in the commercial aspects of our lives. Although there are greater opportunities to mix with other households from the 17<sup>th</sup> May, what we are able to do in our acts of worship have not changed. Similarly, the lifting of restrictions on the numbers attending funerals is tempered by the fact that limits will still be in place; the numbers allowed being dependent on how many people the capacity of COVID-secure venue can safely accommodate with social distancing. The biggest changes are to be seen in the organisation of secular events and this will have an impact on what churches can do on their premises. The less stringent regulations surrounding secular events does highlight several anomalies and inconsistencies which has led us to offer the following advice: keep an eagle eye on the Government and URC websites. The key details are still being kept up to date on the Government website, which can be accessed here ([COVID-19 Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/coronavirus/coronavirus-restrictions/coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do)), which was last updated on 10<sup>th</sup> May. What you will see is that there has been no change in the regulations regarding acts of Public Worship. Briefly this means that services can take place, but with no congregational singing, with facemasks mandatory (with exceptions as usual) and no mingling. The specific instructions regarding acts of public worship are here, and haven't changed (as far as I know) since it was published on 12<sup>th</sup> April ([COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship and special religious services and gatherings during the pandemic - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/coronavirus/coronavirus-restrictions/coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do)).

In answer to any questions surrounding continued cleaning of premises is that this has not changed either: the amount of time between cleaning for use and allowing people in only needs to be long enough to ventilate, so about 10 – 15 minutes is plenty. Bear in mind that normal cleaning can now be done with antiviral cleaners or hot water and soap with only the high touch points that need extra attention. However, the lifting of secular restrictions, in particular for the hospitality industry, has meant that there seems to be an imbalance. This means that many churches face a difficult choice of whether to open their premises for non-worship events where the restrictions are less strict than for acts of public worship. As ever each church's experience and priorities are unique and as ever Synod is here to help you try to navigate the rules and regulations.

At Synod we are looking more and more to what we can offer in the months to come. The new-look website [Yorkshire Synod \(urcyorkshire.org.uk\)](http://urcyorkshire.org.uk) is filling up nicely. There are lots of things to see and plenty of resources to draw from and as usual within the Briefing I will be showcasing the new and the important as we upload them. If you have anything that you would want to highlight in the News section or to drop into the Calendar, please let me know. May's diary is as good as full with this weekend's Synod Quiet Day being now only a couple of days away. As ever there are plenty of events, courses and resources as we move through spring into summer. If you have any events you would like to add to our list, please send them into the office and we can put them on the website as well as on Synod Calendar and in the Briefing.

# The United Reformed Church Yorkshire Synod



Reflection, Refreshment, Renewal

Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

10am – 1pm

By Zoom

*We gather online, and then spend time in our own  
space, with guided reflections and prayers  
Led by Rev Annette Haigh*

To book, contact [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk)



## An invitation to Retired Ministers, Spouses, Widows and Widowers

Mrs Kath Lonsdale and Rev Jason McCullagh on behalf of Ministries and Pastoral Committees would like to invite you to a get together with a hot lunch at  
**Headingley St Columba, Headingley Lane, Leeds, LS6 2DH**  
on **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 11am - 2.30pm.**

### **Morning Speaker; The Revd Rosalind Selby** **How Green is my Bible?**

Rosalind is the Principal of Northern College, Manchester where she teaches Biblical Studies and the Church and the Environment.

She is currently serving on the URC's Environmental Task Group.

### **Afternoon Discussion with Revd Jamie Kissack, Yorkshire Synod Moderator** **Tribes, Belonging, and the Gospel.**

*What are our experiences of belonging to 'the church'?*

*How have they changed over the years?*

*What would be a Gospel understanding of 'belonging'?*

**For full details please contact the Synod Office by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021**

Email: [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk) Telephone : 0113 289 8490

Yorkshire URC Synod Office, Somerset House, St Paul's Street, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9EP

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## Lay Preachers Planning Group news

### **Exploring the upcoming lectionary readings together**

Next month the Lay Preachers Planning Group are putting on two new sessions exploring the lectionary readings in June and July.

The first is on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June** at 10.30am – 12.00noon and repeated 7.30pm – 9.00pm on Zoom. Facilitated by Kath in the morning and Jill at night, this will be a time for participants to look together at the lectionary readings for 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July in preparation for leading worship on those Sundays.

The second is on **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June** at 10.30am – 12.00noon and repeated 7.30pm -9.00 pm on Zoom. Facilitated by Rod this will be a time for participants to look together at the lectionary readings for 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> July & 1<sup>st</sup> August in preparation for leading worship on those Sundays.

This time the group are trying a repeat of the morning session at night to assess how this works for you all. As previously these sessions will be participative rather than "expert led" by an outside speaker and the links will be sent to all lay preachers nearer the dates.

If you need further information, please get in touch via the [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk) e-mail.

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Never let it be said that there is no forward planning in Synod. Not only are the Lay Preaching planning group doing some brilliant work this spring and summer, they have also got your Autumn diaries to fill as well. They have asked Lawrence Moore to leading an overview of **Luke's Gospel** for worship leaders. The provisional dates are **2nd, 4th, 9th and 11th November 2011** between 10.00am and 11.30am, with a repeat at 7.30pm on the dates mentioned. More details as we get closer.

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## Children and Young Peoples News



### **Wilderness Faith Maps**

This simple weekly resource provides an easy way to engage with the Bible, prayer and the world around us. Linked to a Sunday Lectionary reading, it is suitable for all ages and faith experiences, as a starting point for a discussion or for personal reflection. You can find it each week here on [Facebook](#).

Watch out this Easter for a short daily post, and please add 'like' the page, to be alerted when each weekly post arrives.

**Youth Mental Health First Aid training: 9.30am – 12 noon on 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> May on Zoom.** There are **FREE** places for church volunteer leaders, but you need to attend all the sessions. There are still a couple of places left. **Contact Jon Steel to book a place.**

If you struggle with any of the hyperlinks, please get in touch with me at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) or Jon Steel at [joncyp@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:joncyp@urcyorkshire.org.uk)



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**URC Children's & Youth Work and Education & Learning invite you to a series of free, online workshops to improve communication skills.**

There are eight workshops listed below; book to attend any one workshop, each pair or the whole series!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/series-of-workshops-building-skills-confidence-and-capacity-in-comms-registration-144181152709>

There are still four sessions over the next couple of months which may be of interest to you.

**20/05/2021: Inclusive worship using signs and symbols- session 1:** Lorraine Webb will introduce us to Makaton (unique language programme that uses signs, symbols and speech) and using Widget (communication in print) to support worship that is more accessible to those with particular needs. You will also hear about other inclusive ways of worshipping.

**17/06/2021: Inclusive worship using signs and symbols- follow up session:** Return and share what you have learned and tried out; share your successes and challenges and learn from each other. Lorraine will again lead us and encourage building on the previous session.

**27/05/2021: Sharing stories more effectively- session 1:** Want to write a press release, a good news story or an eye-catching advertising piece? Come along and find out some of the 'tricks of the trade' to help your writing get the message across more effectively and interestingly. By the end of the session you will have a greater understanding of the power of words and be encouraged to go away and try out the ideas. The session is led by Ann-Marie Nye.

**01/07/2021: Sharing stories more effectively- follow up session:** Come back and share what you have learned and tried out; share your successes and challenges and learn from each other. This session will build on what you did the previous session. The session is led by Ann-Marie Nye.



**Additional info:** All sessions will be recorded and will take place from 7.30pm to 8.45pm. We are pleased to be able to offer small grants (up to £200) to those connected with URC's who attend these training sessions. The grants will be to enable you to put the training into practice (ie purchasing equipment, software, further training) and will be by application (more details at the sessions). For more information please contact Sam Richards [sam.richards@urc.org.uk](mailto:sam.richards@urc.org.uk) where she can point you in the right direction.

## Leading Your Church into Growth



### CALLING ALL CHURCH LEADERS!

We are very excited to once again been able to secure places on this very popular and effective church growth conference. We are asking that at least two, or even better three could come from each sending church to be able to get the most from this highly effective course.

The full cost is usually £225 for this residential course.  
UNDER 30's Free- 100% discount.

This includes accommodation and food.

We are able to offer up to **50%** discount. This means that for those who would not be able to go at the full cost, you now can!

### We only have limited places at this fantastic offer

The earlier we book our places the more places we can secure.  
So please get back to me as soon as possible to secure your place.

For more information and booking information  
Please contact:

The Synod office  
or  
[ashley@bvurc.org.uk](mailto:ashley@bvurc.org.uk)

Yours in Christ

Rev Ashley Evans

Synod Evangelist

### LEAD YOUR CHURCH INTO GROWTH

October 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> 2021

Three days to inspire,  
encourage and equip  
ordained and lay  
leaders

Yorkshire Synod  
are subsidizing  
this course by up  
to 50%

The Hayes  
Conference  
Centre

To go on the  
journey with  
others.

### SYNOD EVANGELIST

Rev Ashley Evans

07403423082

[ashley@bvurc.org.uk](mailto:ashley@bvurc.org.uk)

Again, hot of the press and well in advance, is notice of the LYCiG 2021 National Conference. For more information and booking information, contact the Synod office at [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk) or Rev Ashley Evans at [ashley@bvurc.org.uk](mailto:ashley@bvurc.org.uk).

## Property News

As I mentioned on the front page, the last week has seen a flurry of activity. Jane, our Property Officer is available to advise on the best course of action when it comes to how we begin to reopen, but as mentioned above, please keep a close eye on the Government's websites. As mentioned in this section last week there is some flexibility though in the rules surrounding the meetings of charitable organisations that can be found here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance for the charity sector - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector). This is a rather complex page on the Government's website, but it may allow churches to hold Annual Meetings as the meeting fulfils the charitable objectives of the church. However, do bear in mind that you will still have to be Covid secure, following track and trace guidance, be able to ensure appropriate social distancing and have an up-to-date Risk Assessment. As ever Synod is here to help so if you need advice on this, please get in touch as Jane, our Property Officer is available for advice via [property@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:property@urcyorkshire.org.uk) if you need to discuss this further. To help the key links to the Government website which cover church opening: <https://tinyurl.com/4vjhv2ee> and <https://tinyurl.com/jhm9cur8>.

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## General Information and Resource Sharing

### Spirituality in Difficult Times

Some of you may have received this information already, others perhaps not. Either way Dan Morrell has sent this in on behalf of the **URC: Spirituality team** (formerly the URC Retreats Group), convened by the Revd. Richard Church, who are holding a week of online events based around spirituality in difficult times.

The week runs from **24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021** and explores where people may find spiritual nourishment in the wilderness. There are three sessions each weekday. Each session stands alone, but will have this same overarching theme.

Each day begins at 7:30am with morning prayers led by Mark Argent, followed by a variety of speakers from around the URC and beyond, including the Revds. John Proctor and Elizabeth Caswell, Reuben Watt, and the Revd. Ian Fosten. For more information, or to sign up, visit the event page [here \(https://sitw.eventbrite.co.uk\)](https://sitw.eventbrite.co.uk)

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### Dementia Friendly Churches Questionnaire

I have received this week a request that churches fill in a simple questionnaire asking about dementia friendly worship and their response to it. The questions have been prepared by Mal Breeze who is a Community Minister in North-Western Synod. He has developed some dementia friendly worship resources and is now taking this wider across the Northerly Synods. Mal would be delighted to help any church across the URC which wishes to become dementia-friendly and would appreciate it if you could share the questionnaire offering his support.

If you could fill out this simple form (adding your church name to it of course), or if you know of someone who could do it on behalf of your church please let me know at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) and I'll forward it to you. The deadline for replies is July, as Mal will be organising some workshops in the early Autumn.

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### Photo requests

The URC nationally are going to be producing a calendar of church buildings for 2022, linking in with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the denomination.

The idea is to use very good photographs of our church buildings to give a flavour of our buildings from the length and breadth of the denomination. Victorian churches, post war pre-fabs, churches opened in the last couple of years – photos of all types of URC buildings are welcome.

The ideal formats are: just the outside of the buildings; landscape orientation for preference but square and portrait images are also fine. JPG or PNG file format. Black and white images are also welcome.

Please label the files with the name and location of the church (e.g. st-columbas-north-shields.jpg), no bigger than 3Mb in size and please include the name of the photographer.

Please send them to Andy Jackson at [andy.jackson@urc.org.uk](mailto:andy.jackson@urc.org.uk) and if photos are sent, the photographer is granting the URC permission to use the photographs in print and digitally.

The deadline is by mid-July, as the calendar will be going to print in August.

If you have any questions please get in touch with Andy at the e-mail above.

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St Andrew's URC Sheffield has a very gifted and committed organist who has put worship resources on every week since the beginning of the first lockdown. The music is an eclectic, rich and classical selection and he now puts the text into a digital voice, which means the words are there to read yourself. The service from the previous week is immediately accessible below the new one, and earlier services are now archived and accessible too. [www.standrewsurcsheffield.org.uk/stop-press](http://www.standrewsurcsheffield.org.uk/stop-press)

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For those with local tastes I know that the **Sheffield team** have their services on their own website at <http://sheffieldurc.org.uk/> and on the Yorkshire site you can find help in preparing and participating in Online Worship at [COVID-19 Advice and Support | URC Yorkshire Synod](#).

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As I keep mentioning the Yorkshire Synod has a dedicated **YouTube channel**. On it there are the **Moderators musings** and releases from **the LYCiG team, Children's and Youth, Mission** and more! The link is here: <https://bit.ly/urcyorkshireyoutube> and have a look at what has already been uploaded. If you have a google account, you will receive emails when a new video is posted. In addition there is a great deal of information on the LYCiG page on the Synod website. Now is as good a time to have a look at [Leading Your Church Into Growth | URC Yorkshire Synod](#)

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**Worshipping God Together : Apart.** has become a cherished regular feature. The latest service from Rev Janine Atkinson has been uploaded to the website and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Janine for these resources. You can find it under the 'What we do' drop down heading if you fancy a Yorkshire Synod Website surf or more directly at <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/worship/>

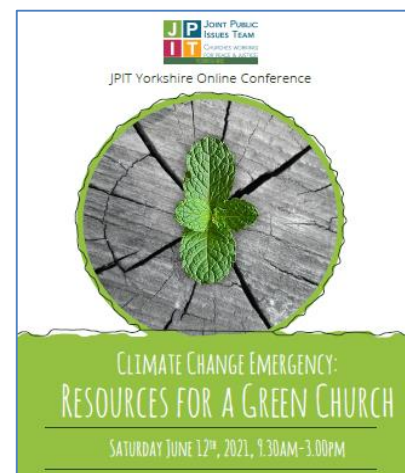
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We have had advance notice of a major environmental conference that will be held online on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The **JPIT YORKSHIRE ONLINE CONFERENCE, Resources for a Green Church** event is open to everyone and details are available on the flyer that was sent out at the same time as this Briefing and should be on the Synod website as well.

*"If you think that the Climate Change Crisis really is an emergency, and that the Church has an important part to play in helping people transition to new ways of living more gently with God's world, then sign up for the JPIT Yorkshire online conference via*

[sue.cutting1209@gmail.com](mailto:sue.cutting1209@gmail.com)

More details will follow nearer the date.







And if you are interested in this I do recommend that you sign up for these newsletters, <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org> from Eco Congregation in Scotland and the other is the Joint Public Issues Team newsletter <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/whats-new/newsletter/>



I have listed much of what I know is happening above, but it would be good for you to send across notification of any open events you are hosting in your churches. Please don't hide these events under a bushel, but let me know so that I can get it out to a wider audience; my usual deadline is Wednesday teatime. Similarly, please send the Briefing around your congregations so they know of those activities within and beyond Synod designed to grow the Kingdom. Plans are already afoot to bring more activities and good news stories to your attention, so keep an eye open for the next Briefing. All you need to do is get in touch with me at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk).

If you know of anything you may find useful for our churches, please contact me at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) and I'll circulate it here and on the website. Similarly if you need any further help, be it to do with IT, finance, property or the like we are here to help.  
National URC site: <https://urc.org.uk/> Yorkshire Synod: <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/> Yorkshire Synod Twitter: <https://twitter.com/urcyorkshire> Yorkshire Synod Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/urcyorkshire> Yorkshire Young People's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wildernessyorkshireurc/>

*Tim Crossley*

*Synod Clerk*

