



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Yorkshire Synod
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St Paul's Street
Morley
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LS27 9EP

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The Briefing – Number 54 **20th May 2021**

Dear Friends,

As we approach Pentecost, we must remind ourselves that we are a Church whose mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. This weekend sees Pentecost and I know that many of you will be opening up your church doors and holding physical services for the first time in over a year. Similarly, I know that some churches are not only opening their doors but also spilling out into their grounds and having outdoor services. I hope and pray that all your plans run smoothly and that the Message we proclaim reaches as many hearts as possible.

The slight lifting of restrictions last Monday has encouraged a great deal of thought about how we maintain our journey towards the full reopening of our premises. As many of you will know there are quite a few inconsistencies and imbalances in the current regulations when one compares what is currently allowed in acts of public worship (both indoors and outdoors on church property) with what is allowed in the secular life of the country. Trying to tread the right path is difficult and the Synod staff are keeping a very close eye on the regulations as published on the Government website as well as on the advice coming from the URC as a whole and its ecumenical partners. The changes that came into effect on 17th May can be found here [\(COVID-19\) Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). If you follow the links, you will see that there are sections on Places of Worship that will lead you to this page [COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship and special religious services and gatherings during the pandemic - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Another page which may be of use, especially for those of you who host music or drama groups, is this one on performing arts [Performing arts - Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Whilst we are all in agreement that it would be marvellous to re-open our doors to old friends and new, the way in which we do it must be done within the letter of the law (as it were) as well as with sensitivity to the feelings of our own church members and friends. What we in Synod have found is that each of you is unique and the situations you find yourselves in are unique. So if you find yourself needing to ask questions, looking for advice or searching for help, please get in touch with us at Synod so that we can be with you to support you in your decisions.

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://Yorkshire Synod (urcyorkshire.org.uk)) is filling up nicely and I would like to highlight a new feature – you can now sign up to receive a weekly news update that will highlight all the new things on the website – including the Briefing. Please let your church members and friends know, as we want as many people to know of what we are doing here in Yorkshire. There are many things to see and plenty of resources to draw from and as usual within the Briefing I will be highlighting 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. 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.

Church Links, Mission Activities and Synod Events



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 1st 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 Jaimie 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 1st June 2021

Email: office@urcyorkshire.org.uk Telephone: 0113 289 8490

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

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 8th 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 13th, 20th, 27th June and 4th July in preparation for leading worship on those Sundays.

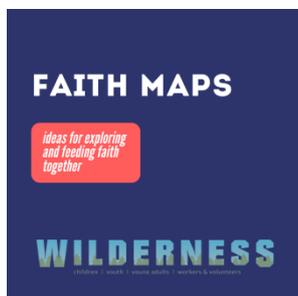
The second is on **Tuesday 29th June** at 10.30am – 12.00noon and repeated 7.30pm -9.00 pm on Zoom. Facilitated by Rod this will be a time for participants to look together at the lectionary readings for 11th, 18th, 25th July & 1st August in preparation for leading worship on those Sundays.

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 e-mail.

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.

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 for the regular short daily posts, and please add 'like' the page, to be alerted when each weekly post arrives.

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



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 a couple of sessions over the next couple of months which may be of interest to you.

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 where she can point you in the right direction.

IT Group News

Writing for the Web

This short two-hour course is designed to help those among us who are contributing to church based websites. We will be holding it on Thursday 15th July between 7pm and 9pm and then again on Saturday 17th July between 10am and 12noon. Led by Lawrence Moore it will add another skill-set to enable us to be more effective in showing what we do as Christians in Yorkshire.

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

Yours in Christ

Rev Ashley Evans
Synod Evangelist

LEAD YOUR CHURCH INTO GROWTH

October 4th-6th 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

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 or Rev Ashley Evans at ashley@bvurc.org.uk.

Property News

As I mentioned on the front page, the Synod team are available to help you with all your questions regarding the latest changes to the regulations associated with buildings. 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. I have commented in previous Briefings that there is some flexibility in the rules surrounding the meetings of charitable organisations. This means that in certain circumstances church or trustee/Elders meetings can take place in person. Details 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). It 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 if you need to discuss this further.

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 **24th to 28th 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)

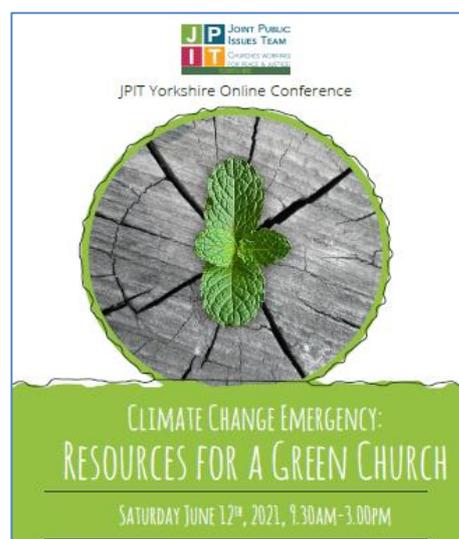
JPIT Yorkshire Online Conference Resources for a Green Church

If you think 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 being held online on Saturday 12th 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 last month 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

More details on the JPIT website at

[Green Conference • Joint Public Issues Team Yorkshire \(jointpublicissuesyorkshire.org.uk\)](https://jointpublicissuesyorkshire.org.uk)



Thy Kingdom Come

We have received a circular from our friend Simon Peters, the Walking the Way Project Manager:

Dear Friends,

Many of you will be aware of [Thy Kingdom Come](#), an annual prayer movement that unites individuals and churches from around the world in ten days of prayer, beginning after Ascension Day, through to Pentecost.

To mark the start of this year's journey, in the absence of a physical event or formal letter to local churches, the Waking the Way steering group has published an [article](#) on the URC website, and is promoting the movement across our social media.

The steering group would be most grateful if you could help to promote the article and posts that will be going up, as well as encouraging people to e-mail wtw@urc.org.uk with their stories and ideas around prayer to share more widely, as we encourage each other to take time to stop, reflect and join in prayer with Christians worldwide.

If there was ever a time for prayer, it is surely now!

Many Thanks and Best Wishes,

Simon Peters

Walking the Way Project Manager | United Reformed Church

020 7520 2718 | 07909 910 582 | simon.peters@urc.org.uk | www.urc.org.uk/wtw



Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain
cdfb.org.uk

CDFB Yorkshire Regional Zoom Workshop

Sat 29th May 2.30 - 4.00

We have the pleasure of Naomi Haywood leading our workshop
'Signing, praise with psalms'



Created on www.british-sign.co.uk

All welcome

Book via CDFB website (www.cdfb.org.uk).

Cost: members £5, non-members £7. Login details emailed on payment receipt.

Any queries email: yorkshire@cdfb.org.uk



The Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain is registered in England & Wales as a company limited by guarantee (No. 5466472) and a charity (No. 1115037). Registered office: Sunset Hallows, 21 Admirals Close, Watchet TA23 0GD

Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain

I have been asked to highlight this event being held on 29th May between 2.30pm and 4.00pm by Revd Clare Davison. The **Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain** are an ecumenical group encouraging churches to use movement/dance in worship. Clare has sometimes brought in person workshops to the attention of Synod, and this one is the third that has been done on Zoom. It is open to all, with a young person leading.

For full details please contact

Yorkshire@cdfb.org.uk and to book please do so on their website at www.cdfb.org.uk. The cost is £5 for members and £7 for non-members.

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/>

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 and I'll forward it to you. The deadline for replies is July, as Mal will be organising some workshops in the early Autumn.

Photo requests

The URC nationally are going to be producing a calendar of church buildings for 2022, linking in with the 50th 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 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.

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

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](#).

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](#)



And if you are interested in the JPIT conference mentioned above, 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.

If you know of anything you may find useful for our churches, please contact me at 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

