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The Briefing – Number 56

3rd June 2021

Dear Friends,

Last week's rather heavy offering, especially when it comes to the latest guidance we have received regarding the 17th May changes to the Covid-19 restrictions, has meant that this week the Briefing will be relatively light. I hope that by concentrating on the things that are to happen within and for Synod we can look to a much brighter future within the Synod. As you will see, the Children and Young People's group are planning for their mini Big Day Out in September whilst the Lay Leaders, Elders and LYCiG groups are equally active over the next few months. 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. 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 here in the Briefing.

At Synod, we are looking more and more to what we can offer in the months to come. One of the key things is this:

Yorkshire Synod is delighted to launch its brand new **Weekly Mailing**! This is your one-stop-shop mailing. It's a great way of keeping informed about what's going on, in and around the synod. It contains latest news on events past, present and future, good news stories, announcements, and updates on whatever our wonderful staff, officers, ministers, elders and volunteers are up to! The good news is, anyone can sign up! It's not just for church secretaries, or ministers, anyone can receive this mailing, and opt-out at any time, too! It's very easy to do, visit the synod website www.urcyorkshire.org.uk and scroll down to the bottom of ANY page. You will see the sign up form on the right-hand side, fill it in, send it off and you'll be sent a confirmation email to confirm your subscription.

We look forward to you hearing from us!

This does not mean to say that we are taking our eye off the ball when it comes to our understanding of what we are allowed (or not as the case may be) to do in our places of worship and associated buildings. Behind the scenes there is a constant watch on the government sites which is from where the key information is disseminated. As a reminder here are the key website links which I highlighted last week: [COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship](#) and ['COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021'](#). More denominational specific guidance and help can be found on the main URC website at [Advice to churches about coronavirus from the United Reformed Church](#) and the related advice Synod is offering can be found on the new look Yorkshire website [COVID-19 Advice and Support | URC Yorkshire Synod](#).

Church Links, Mission Activities and Synod Events

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 2021** between 10.00am and 11.30am, with a repeat at 7.30pm on the dates mentioned. More details as we get closer.

Safeguarding News

Verifier training.

DDC (Due Diligence Checking) – the company that provides the service to process the DBS checks on behalf of the URC are offering training slots to those local church officers who are verifiers/document checkers for their church and would like to have an input on how to process the checks. It would also benefit verifiers who may need an update in how to use the system.

There will be a URC Safeguarding Officer present at each session to assist and answer any questions.

The dates for these training slots are:

- 10th June 2021 - 10am to 11am
- 5th July 2021 – 7pm to 8pm
- 10th September 2021 – 4pm to 5pm
- 2nd October 2021 – 9.30am to 10.30am

Training will be via Zoom and if you would like to book on the training then **please email Matthew Baxter** with the session you would like to attend. His email is safeguarding@urc.org.uk.

Trustee training.

There is also specific training being provided for Trustees of local churches within the Synods to understand your safeguarding responsibilities. This training is being provided online by Farrar & Co, a firm of solicitors from London who provide safeguarding advice and assistance in all aspects of safeguarding matters. This training is being provided to all churches throughout the Northern, Yorkshire, North Western and Merseyside Synods via funding from the Synod Safeguarding Development Fund.

This is a 2 hour training session which as well as providing vital guidance, allows you to take part in discussions and look at case studies to help your understanding of your role as a Trustee for your church.

The following aspects will be covered

- Why safeguarding matters to the URC
- How to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for your church
- The Elders duties as Trustees
- How to spot, deal and report with a serious incident

The training will be delivered via Zoom and the dates for the sessions are

- Tuesday 6th July 2021 – 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Thursday 15th July 2021 – 1pm to 3pm.

To book a place please **contact Matt Knowles** at matt.safeguarding@urcyorkshire.org.uk

Property News

As I mentioned on the front page, the Synod team are keeping a close eye on any developments that may arise in the run up to the magical date of June 21st. At the heart of this is a desire on our part to understand fully the implications any changes will have on 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.

URC Buildings Forum Steering Group

The URC Buildings Forum Steering Group is planning some more conferences in the wake of the successful Buildings Forum held back on April 19th. They have agreed to hold future conferences around three times each year and the next one is to be held on **21st July 2021** from 11.30am to 1.00pm.

This conference will explore the **Vision and Mission Context for URC Buildings and Assets**, including whether we need a building to be 'church' in the 21st Century? For this part of the conference, they are pleased to be able to welcome Martin Haywood, the convenor of the Mission Enablers Network and the Southern Synod Mission Officer. They hope also to hear from two separate places of worship about how that have creatively used their buildings. One in a rural community and the other in a multi-cultural community.

Please email mission@urc.org.uk to sign up for this event.

The third and final conference for 2021 is being planned for 14th October 2021 from 7.00pm to 8.30pm. This conference will focus on environmental issues for church buildings, including Eco-Church and Eco-Congregation. More details will be forthcoming when available via the Yorkshire Synod website.

Leading Your Church into Growth



CALLING ALL CHURCH LEADERS!

We are very excited to once again be 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 well in advance, here 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.

IT Group News

Writing for the Web

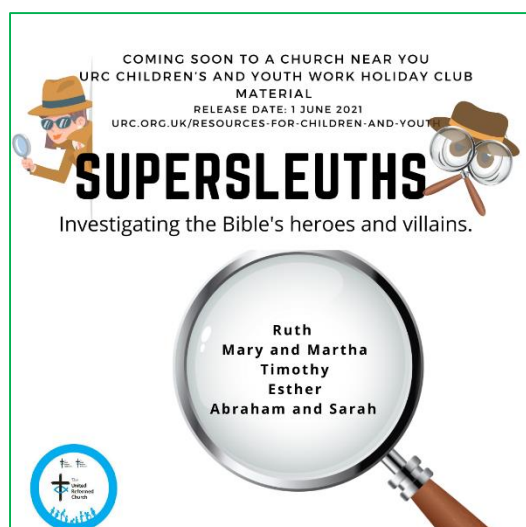
This short two-hour course is designed to help those among us who are contributing to church based websites. We will be holding it on Thursday 15th July between 7pm and 9pm and then again on Saturday 17th July between 10am and 12noon. Led by Lawrence Moore it will add another skill-set to enable us to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

Children and Young Peoples News

As I mentioned above, the Children and Young Peoples' group are busying up as the summer progresses.

The first event to mention is this weekend's **URC service for Environment Sunday** for 6th June 2021. You can already watch this service led by children and young people from around the URC on the URC Children's and Youth Work Youtube channel at <https://tinyurl.com/29kv99wx>.

I'm told you may use parts of the service in your own worship and download supporting resources from <https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>.



Secondly the URC Holiday Club materials are now available. This year the theme is '**Super Sleuths**'. The free holiday club materials for 5-11s are produced by the URC and are designed to look at different people from the Bible. The resource can be used for an activity day and there are additional materials to adapt it to use with under fives, for intergenerational groups and for a Vintage Holiday Club (for people in later life or with dementia). Visit <https://urc.org.uk/holiday-club> for full details and download instructions.

Finally – **SAVE THE DATE – Sat Sep 18th 2021.**

'The LITTLE Big Day Out' – at Gulliver's Valley, Sheffield

This a great opportunity for a day out especially for any families you are connected with through your churches and church activities. Tickets £10 per person (over 90cm tall) by contacting wilderness@urcyorkshire.org.uk. For more information on the venue please visit (<https://www.gulliversvalleyresort.co.uk/>) and as the plans start to come together more information will be sent out and uploaded to the Children and Young Peoples' section of the new look Yorkshire Synod Website [Children and Young People | URC Yorkshire Synod](#).

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.

General Information and Resource Sharing

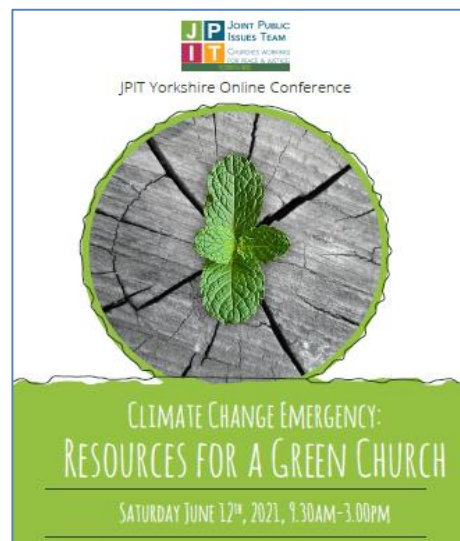
JPIT Yorkshire Online Conference Resources for a Green Church

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](https://jointpublicissuesyorkshire.org.uk)
[\[jointpublicissuesyorkshire.org.uk\]](https://jointpublicissuesyorkshire.org.uk)



Relay to COP26 Starts Soon

This November, world leaders are meeting in Glasgow for important climate negotiations. It is a decade-defining opportunity to make a stand. The **Young Christian Climate Network** relay will be starting immediately after the G7 summit in 11th June and making its way to Glasgow, passing through the full length of our Synod between 14th and 25th September including a sojourn in York between the 20th & 24th September.

If you click on this link [RELAY | YCCN](#) not only can you volunteer to get involved, but you can see where it goes.



Worshipping God Together : Apart. 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/>

The latest edition of the URC's **NewsUpdate** has just been published. A downloadable version of it, formatted for print and for churches to cut and paste into church newsletters, is available on the URC website. Download and print your copy [here](#).

Please note that there will not be a Briefing next week. The Clerk has decided that he needs a bit of a holiday, but don't despair, the next issue will be available on all good e-mail lists and websites on Thursday 17th June.



POSITIVELY RURAL 5: Countryside Challenges

Wednesday 7 July—1:00pm

Focusing on the issues facing rural communities
and how we can respond to them

Speakers: Rachel Hallos, the West Riding NFU chair and
Claire Maxim, CEO of Arthur Rank Centre

For booking support please contact:
Katrin Hackett:
admin@sheffieldmethodist.org
Tel: 0114 270 9990

To book your place and obtain
joining instructions, follow this link:
<http://bit.ly/PositivelyRural5>
Registration deadline: 5 July

This has come through our friends in the Yorkshire Plus Methodist area (which I gather covers all the districts which Yorkshire Synod also covers plus a little more). Revd Andrew Webb, who is also minister at St Andrew's Skipton, is on the steering group and has invited those in the Synod who are interested in rural ministry to join them on Wednesday 7th July at 1.00pm. For booking support please contact Katrin Hackett at admin@sheffieldmethodist.org and to obtain joining instructions please follow this link <http://bit.ly/PositivelyRural5>.

Dementia Friendly Churches Questionnaire

I have 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. 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 the simple form that was sent round to church secretaries earlier in the month (adding your church name to it of course), or if you know of someone who could do it on your behalf then please send me it at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk. If the form has gone astray let me know and I'll forward a fresh one to you. The deadline for replies is July, as Mal will be organising some workshops in the early Autumn.

How to Handle Later Life

The above request from Mal links in to this book which has been written by a URC member, Marion Shoard, from Kent. Her book entitled [*How to Handle Later Life*](#) (Amaranth Books, 2017) is aimed mainly at older people themselves.

Marion is offering the book free to individuals in churches, lay or ordained, seeking to engage with older people. If you are involved in work with older people within your church and/or your wider community and would like a copy, do drop her a line at PO Box 664, Rochester, Kent ME1 9JB with your name, address and a cheque made out to her for £3.70 (to cover postage and packing). For any questions about her offer, email marion@marionshoard.co.uk.

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. Full details have been in previous Briefings, with the ideal formats being: just the outside of the buildings; landscape orientation for preference, JPG or PNG file format. Black and white images are also welcome.

Please label the files with the name and location of the church with the file size being no larger than 3Mb 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.

For those with local tastes I know that the **Sheffield team** have their services on their own website at <http://sheffielddurc.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](#).

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

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