



**Yorkshire Synod**  
Somerset House  
St Paul's Street  
Morley  
Leeds  
LS27 9EP

Synod Moderator  
Synod Clerk  
Treasurer  
Property Officer  
Trust Secretary

Rev. Jamie Kissack  
Tim Crossley  
Rev Simon Copley  
Jane Bunyan-Murray  
Alastair Forsyth

e-Mail: [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk)  
Website: [www.urcyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.urcyorkshire.org.uk)  
Telephone: 0113 289 8490

## **The Briefing – Number 57**

### **17<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

Dear Friends,

I'm back after my mini break which was spent in the sun doing the odd day trip around the county from the sylvan delights of Hardcastle Crags to the weird and wonderful Forbidden Corner in Coverdale; and from the historic walls of the City of York to the hallowed turf of Bradford Park Avenue.

This week has begun with the not-unexpected news that the final lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions has been postponed. Rather than everything opening up on 21<sup>st</sup> June, there is a 4-week pause at Step 3 of the government's roadmap. After 2 weeks, the government will review the data to see if the risks have reduced and according to their website it is expected that England will move to Step 4 on 19 July. Therefore, the **current restriction will remain in place** and this is the [guidance on what you can and cannot do](#) with specific details here [Find out what the rules are](#). One concession that may have a bearing on our churches is that the restriction on the number of people who may attend marriage ceremonies has changed. Those details can be found here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) but it is worth reiterating that the limit now is the maximum capacity of the venue at which the ceremony takes place. Sadly though the restrictions on the numbers at wedding receptions has not changed. Neither have the guidelines regarding Public Worship; the full details of which are here and last updated 24<sup>th</sup> May [COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

This has already had an impact on one of the Synod's events in that the Retired Ministers, Spouses, Widows and Widowers gathering at Headingley St Columba's on July 1<sup>st</sup> has been postponed. The plan is to rearrange for later in the year with hopefully the same speakers and at the same venue. Details are being sent out to those who had indicated they were attending and if you need more information please contact [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk).

One thing that has been at the forefront of many people's mind when looking to restart services is the use of live music in services and whether congregations are allowed to sing. I have taken the liberty of copying the guidelines from the government's website and reproduced it here.

### **Singing, chanting and the use of musical instruments**

COVID-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, aerosols and through direct contact. Singing, playing some musical instruments, shouting and physical activity increases the risk of transmission through small droplets and aerosols.

Where singing takes place, it should follow the principles of safer singing.

- **Indoors:** a group of up to 6 amateur singers can perform or rehearse for performance with social distancing being maintained at all times. There is no limit on the number of professional singers, but they should follow guidance on performing arts. Performances should take place at the front of the place of worship to a seated audience. Indoor communal singing should not take place.

- **Outdoors:** When worship takes place outdoors, the congregation may join in with singing in multiple groups of up to 30. Congregation members should continue to follow social distancing rules. For guidance on singing outdoors outside of acts of communal worship, please refer to the performing arts guidance

Singing should follow the [principles of safer singing](#) and the principles set out in the performing arts guidance. In particular:

- Where music plays a big part in worship, and recordings are available, we suggest you consider using these as an alternative to live singing or performing.
- Any instrument played during worship should be cleaned thoroughly before and after use.
- Any performers should be positioned in a way that avoids face-to-face performance, as far as possible.
- Limit the duration of any singing, as far as possible.
- If the event takes place indoors, improve ventilation to ensure plenty of fresh air whenever possible, including opening windows.
- Always ensuring there is a gap of at least 2m between any performers and the first row of worshippers. Further mitigations like screens or other barriers between the performers and worshipper may also be considered.
- If worship takes place inside, the congregation should not participate in any activity that can create aerosols, including communal singing, shouting and chanting. This follows the advice generally for the performing arts.

Taken from [Celebrating religious festivals during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) last updated 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021

I make no apologies for this heavier than normal start to a Briefing, but as responsible members of society we must still be at the forefront of trying to prevent the transmission of the various Covid-19 strains. However, Synod is still looking forward to a busy summer and autumn of events. 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](http://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!**

# Church Links, Mission Activities and Synod Events

## Lay Preachers Planning Group news

### Exploring the upcoming lectionary readings together

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

The first was a week and a bit ago, but 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 Morrison, 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.

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

### Trustee training.

If you are an Elder and Trustee of your local church then there is specific training 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 and the following topics 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 6<sup>th</sup> July – 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July – 1pm to 3pm.

To book a place please **contact Matt Knowles** at [matt.safeguarding@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:matt.safeguarding@urcyorkshire.org.uk)

---

## Property News

In response to the postponement of the lifting of restriction due on 21<sup>st</sup> June the Synod team are keeping a close eye on any developments that may arise in the next few weeks, especially at the point of the review that was indicated by government at the end of the month. As I mentioned above, the postponement means that there are no changes to our current situation, apart from the attendance levels now allowed at marriage ceremonies. As usual, Synod is here to help, so if you have any questions drop a line to either me at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) or to Jane at [property@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:property@urcyorkshire.org.uk). 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.

---

### 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 19<sup>th</sup>. They have agreed to hold future conferences around three times each year and the next one is to be held on **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021** from 11.30am to 1.00pm.

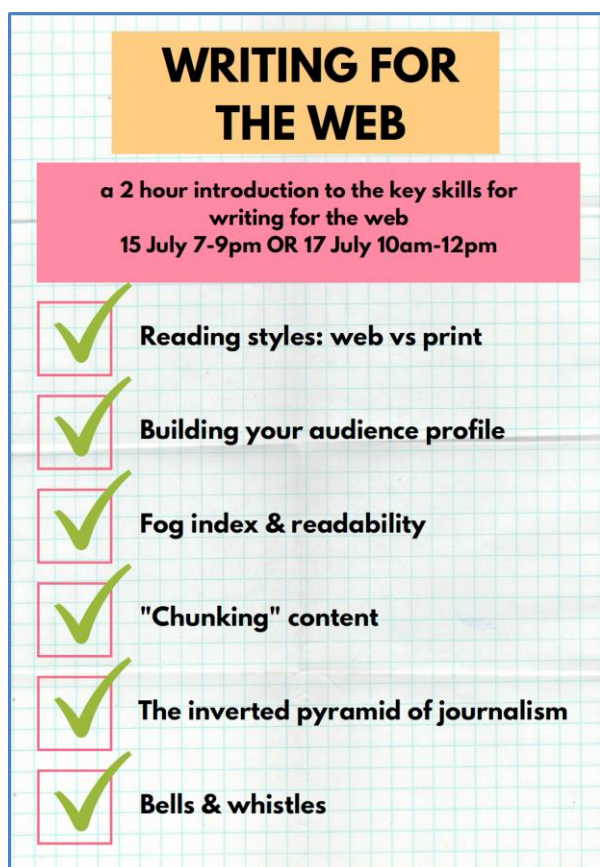
This conference will explore the **Vision and Mission Context for URC Buildings and Assets**, including whether we need a building to be 'church' in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? For this part of the conference, they are pleased to be able to welcome Martin Haywood, the convenor of the Mission Enablers 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](mailto:mission@urc.org.uk) to sign up for this event.

The third and final conference for 2021 is being planned for 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

---

## IT Group News



**WRITING FOR THE WEB**

a 2 hour introduction to the key skills for writing for the web  
15 July 7-9pm OR 17 July 10am-12pm

- ✓ Reading styles: web vs print
- ✓ Building your audience profile
- ✓ Fog index & readability
- ✓ "Chunking" content
- ✓ The inverted pyramid of journalism
- ✓ Bells & whistles

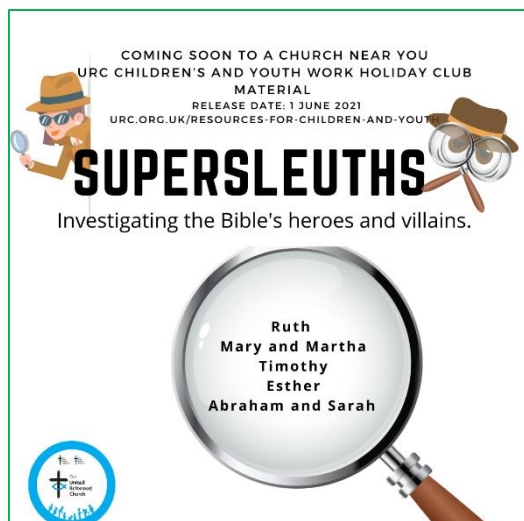
This short two-hour course is designed to help those among us who are contributing to church based websites. We will be holding it on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July between 7pm and 9pm and then again on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July between 10am and 12noon. Led by Lawrence Moore it will add another skill-set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

Also coming soon will be an exploration into how we can provide Hybrid worship – utilising the best of being in a building and the best way of getting across that experience to those who are joining a service remotely.

More details will follow so keep a close eye on future issues of The Briefing and at [Latest News | URC Yorkshire Synod](#)

---

## Children and Young Peoples News



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 18<sup>th</sup> 2021.**

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

This is 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](mailto: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

### 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 has begun; it started immediately after the G7 summit on 11<sup>th</sup> June and is making its way to Glasgow, passing through the full length of our Synod between 14<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September including a sojourn in York between the 20<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> September.

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





## Black History Monthly

Karen Campbell, the URC's Secretary for Global & Intercultural Ministries (Mission) has been in touch to highlight the fact that June's **Black History Monthly** takes place on **Monday 21st June, 7.30-8.30pm**, when we will be considering 'The Case for Reparations' - focused on an article written by Ta Nehisi Coates.

The subject is controversial, although many people feel that the arguments are very clear.

For details of how to join in the conversation, please see the article at [Black History Monthly: The Case for Reparations \(urc.org.uk\)](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/) and <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>. To join the meeting this is the link:

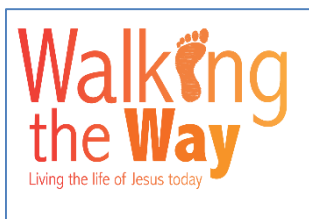
<https://zoom.us/j/99060809545?pwd=YIFOR2k2TUozbmJiWVZPSkxMQjNXUT09>

Meeting ID: 990 6080 9545

Passcode: 264326

---

A message from Simon Peters, the Walking the Way project manager:



Dear Friends,

I hope you are all well. I am delighted to announce that the first episode of the fortnightly [United Reformed Church podcast](#) is available now. This series will look at what it means to be a disciple of Jesus across all aspects of our lives, as we respond to concerns, issues and topics we encounter.

In addition to a new episode every second Wednesday, for the next few weeks between podcast episodes being released, I will also be uploading some video conversations which I have had with various people across the URC in relation to discipleship. Please look out for these on the [URC's YouTube channel](#).

If you or someone you know might be interested in featuring in either the podcast or video conversations, please let me know. The idea is to help audiences consider what it means to be a disciple of Jesus from as many perspectives as we can highlight.

Many Thanks and Best Wishes,

**Simon Peters**

**Walking the Way Project Manager**

---

**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](#).

---

### 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. Full details have been in previous Briefings, with the ideal formats being external shots in a landscape orientation; JPG or PNG file format, suitably labelled with name of photographer and no bigger than 3Mb. Black and white images are also welcome. 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.



# 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:  
Katrín Hackett:  
[admin@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto: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 of Yorkshire Synod 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 7<sup>th</sup> July at 1.00pm. For booking support please contact Katrin Hackett at [admin@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:admin@sheffieldmethodist.org) and to obtain joining instructions please follow this link <http://bit.ly/PositivelyRural5>.

---

### Cry of Faith, A Book of Sermons

The Reverend David Atkinson has recently published a book called, "Cry of Faith, A Book of Sermons". It contains 33 sermons covering a wide variety of subjects and biblical passages. Some sermons tackle difficult questions such as why does an all powerful and all loving God allow some terrible suffering? The sermons were written between 1980 and 2020, which covers the period when David was a full time minister in the Yorkshire Synod from 1983-1995 at Kings Way, Ossett. All proceeds from the sale of this book will go to St John's Hospice, Lancaster. The book costs £8:00 plus postage and packaging.

Copies can be purchased from: David Atkinson, 13 Ashford Close, Lancaster, LA1 4QH. Tel: 01524 572702. e mail: [davidatkinson437@gmail.com](mailto:davidatkinson437@gmail.com)

---

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](#).

---

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)

---

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](#)

---

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).

## Leading Your Church into Growth

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](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk) or Rev Ashley Evans at [ashley@bvurc.org.uk](mailto:ashley@bvurc.org.uk).



### 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)

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