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The Briefing – Number 59

1st July 2021

Dear Friends,

From the information overload of last week to the calm serenity of this issue, there cannot be too much of a contrast between this week's Briefing to that of last week's. As we experienced in the run up to big announcements earlier in the year we are constantly hearing the clamouring of those with the ear of the media advising and speculating as to how we should go forward. However, we must await the Government's decision regarding the lifting (or retention) of the restrictions on 19th July with patience and prayer. I know it is frustrating, especially as many of us are wanting to attempt to return to our normal lives and many of our churches are being asked to open up their doors to enable the activities we took for granted in 2019 to resume. Synod's advice is the same as it has always been; to keep within the regulations and to ensure that your premises are kept to a standard which is expected of by the current regulations.

As usual here is the [guidance on what you can and cannot do](#) with specific details here [Find out what the rules are](#). As mentioned last week, the numbers allowed to attend marriage ceremonies has changed and those details can be found here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Remember the guidelines regarding Public Worship have not changed; the full details of which are here and last updated 24th May [COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Synod is still looking forward to a busy summer and autumn of events and you may even spot some new events which are being planned. 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. 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!

Church Links, Mission Activities and Synod Events

Lay Preachers Planning Group news

Exploring the upcoming lectionary readings together

The Lay Preachers Planning Group continue in putting on sessions exploring the lectionary readings throughout the year. The details of the next one is:

Tuesday 20th July; 10.30am to 12.00noon and repeated 7.30pm to 9.00pm. This is facilitated by Jill Fletcher and will cover the lectionary readings for 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th August.

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 date.

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 summer, they have also got your autumn diaries to fill as well. They have asked Lawrence Moore to lead 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.

And looking forward – into next year no less – Kath Lonsdale has asked that you keep the **22nd to 24th July 2022** clear if you are interested in a **lay preachers weekend at Wydale conference centre**. More details and a booking form nearer the time.

Safeguarding News

Trustee training.

If you are an Elder and Trustee of your local church specific training is being provided online by Farrar & Co, a firm of solicitors from London who provide all manner of safeguarding advice and assistance. 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 6th July – 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Thursday 15th July – 1pm to 3pm.

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

Property News

As the final lifting on restrictions is still a moveable feast the Synod team are constantly keeping a close eye on any developments that may arise in the next few weeks. Advice is always available from the team so don't be backward at being forward in asking any questions of us. Synod is here to help, so if you have any questions drop a line to either me at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk or to Jane at property@urcyorkshire.org.uk.

One thing to bear in mind though as we all come out of lockdown is to make sure that your buildings are ready to welcome folk back. Advice is available at both Synod and National levels on both the Yorkshire [COVID-19 Advice and Support | URC Yorkshire Synod](#) and Denominational [Advice to churches about coronavirus from the United Reformed Church](#) websites. In fact this little gem of a

site has been brought to my attention <https://www.hrballiance.org.uk/coronavirus/>, so here is me signposting it to you as it includes both Covid-19 and fund raising in general.

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 with future conferences planned to be held about three times each year with the next one being held on **21st July 2021**, from 11.30am to 1.00pm. This 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 on 14th October 2021 from 7.00pm to 8.30pm and 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.

Children and Young Peoples News



There is a great deal happening in the CYP part of the Synod, and I do urge you to pass news of these events on to those who are key to nurturing the younger end of your congregations. In fact, why not have a look at the latest newsletter here <https://tinyurl.com/ssazwa4c> and sign up for it to be sent directly to your e-mail address.

So first up is the Young Adults' Pilgrimage (18-25s) on Saturday 3rd July. It will start and finish at Leeds train station (11.30am – 7pm approx.) Bring comfortable footwear, your own packed lunch and we will provide a meal at the end of the day. This will involve walking, talking, time for reflection and people from the Bible. Please let Jon Steel know by this Sunday night (27th June) via wilderness@urcyorkshire.org.uk.

For those who fancy themselves as budding Sherlocks or Morses (or even Inch High Private Eyes, for those with a long memory) why not try the **'Super sleuths' URC Holiday Club materials** – a FREE resource from the Children and Youth Team, with videos, activities, songs and ideas for groups that are pre-school, primary, secondary, vintage ('older') or intergenerational. There is also up to £100 available to help you put on your activity. 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.



SAVE THE DATE – Sat Sep 18th 2021. 'The LITTLE Big Day Out'



This is a great opportunity for a day out especially for any families you are connected with through your churches and church activities. Tickets £12 per person (over 90cm tall) by contacting wilderness@urcyorkshire.org.uk. For more information on the venue please visit <https://www.gulliversvalleyresort.co.uk/>. Further financial support will be available and as the plans start to come together more information on this and other aspects of the day 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](#).



Friday 1st October to Sunday 3rd October is the Wilderness Youth Weekend – a residential activity weekend at Kingswood Activity Centre, Dearne Valley. Designed for 11-17s the cost will be £25 per person. More details and booking information will be available soon on the synod website.

Wilderness Faith Maps



Finally – 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.



After a long gap the Summer 2021 edition of **In GEAR** is now available on GEAR's web-site. This latest edition plus numerous back copies can be found at: <http://www.gear.org.uk/publications/in-gear-magazine/>. You can download the PDF version by clicking on the relevant front page view. If you wish to receive a paper copy (or multiple copies), please complete the form on the web page.

IT Group News

Over the next couple of months, the IT Team are bringing you these two events to help you with both website presence and online worship. Make a note of the dates and as the respective dates come closer I'll be able to let you have more detail.

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 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. Registration details will be available soon.

BEHIND THE LENS

A WORKSHOP LOOKING AT THE BEST WAYS WE CAN UTILISE SIMPLE TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE ONLINE AND HYBRID WORSHIP.

ALSO INCLUDES LIVESTREAMING SUGGESTIONS, HINTS AND TIPS.

MONDAY 2ND AUGUST - 7-8:30PM, ON ZOOM
SIGN UP:



IN FRONT OF THE LENS

A WORKSHOP LOOKING AT THE BEST PRACTICES FOR PREACHING IN ONLINE OR HYBRID WORSHIP.

TUESDAY 3RD AUGUST - 7-8:30PM, ON ZOOM
SIGN UP:

The United Reformed Church Yorkshire

This course is an exploration of how we can effectively 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. It will also look at what is possible in front of the camera as well as helping those who are behind the camera.

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

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

This is the final call for the **Positively Rural 5** event being hosted by the Yorkshire Plus Methodist area. Revd Andrew Webb, 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. To book please contact Katrin Hackett at

admin@sheffieldmethodist.org and to obtain joining

instructions please follow this link <http://bit.ly/PositivelyRural5>.

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 11th June and is 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.



Time for God Volunteers

Has your church considered hosting a Time For God volunteer? If it has then this is for you, if it hasn't then this is also for you. Rather than come through the Synod Office, all information can be gleaned from director@timeforgod.org. However if you would like the full size leaflets sent across, drop me a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk.



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/>



If you are engaged in community ministry (however you might choose to interpret that term) and need a space to meet with others then you need to sign up for these monthly hour-long **Church at the Edge** Zoom sessions. They are brought to you by **Church Action on Poverty** and the **URC's 'New Reality Same Mission' group** from Children's & Youth Work, Church & Society, Walking the Way & Church-Related Community Work.



Shermara Fletcher, Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multi-cultural Relations at Churches Together in England facilitated the June event. With roots in the [Church of God of Prophecy](#), Shermara is a dynamic millennial Pentecostal leader with significant experience in community organising, ecumenical engagement, leadership development and public speaking. In recognition of her ground-breaking work, Shermara was the recipient of the 2020 Exceptional Young Woman award from [The Wise Women Awards](#).

For those of you who missed **Shermara Fletcher's inspiring talk**, would like to share it with others, or would simply like to watch again it is here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeH2FIORof8>

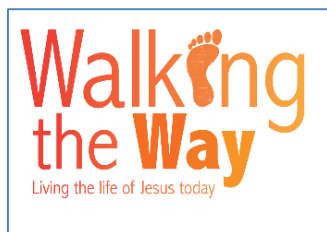


Thursday 8th July, 2-3pm, will be led by Eunice Attwood, Church at the Margins Officer for the Methodist church.

Eunice brings over twenty years' experience of ordained diaconal ministry from a variety of contexts. Serving as the Vice-President of the British Conference in 2010-2011, she has significant experience of working with diverse groups of people across the Methodist Connexion. Eunice has been the Tutor in Pastoral Theology at the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham and is also one of the launch team leaders for New Inclusive Church

Birmingham, a church plant living out the love of Jesus in practical, unexpected, and transforming ways. The Zoom link for the session is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87816588776> Please register at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/church-at-the-edge-tickets-154843588341>

There is a break in August before the following online event on September 16th, 2-3pm. More information as I get it.



A reminder that the fortnightly [United Reformed Church podcast](#) from the **Walking the Way** team 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, Simon Peters, the

Project Manager will also be uploading some video conversations 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 Simon know.

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](#).

The Big Cliff Weekend | 24th-25th July 2021

From our friends at Cliff College in Derbyshire is notice of **The Big Cliff Weekend** which is a one-off event in July 2021 with the opportunity to gather on the Cliff College site to worship, learn, relax and celebrate together.

As well as the excellent worship and teaching you expect from Cliff College, there will be activities for all ages across the site. Come with your family and friends and spend the weekend with us praising God and enjoying the beautiful Cliff site in all its summer glory!

For more information or to book tickets visit: [The Big Cliff Weekend - 24-25 July 2021 - Cliff College](#)

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.

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.

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 the Reflection is read aloud with the words there on the screen for you 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](#)

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 [URC News Update July/August 2021 \(urc-news.org.uk\)](#)

Please don't hide these events in your inboxes. Please send this Briefing around your own church mailing lists as these events are for everyone, member or non-member, church-goer or non-church-goer. All these activities within and beyond Synod are designed to grow the Kingdom. Plans are always happening 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