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## **The Briefing – Number 60** **8<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

Dear Friends,

I have started to write this Briefing on the day after the various announcements were made regarding the lifting of lockdown restrictions from 19<sup>th</sup> July. At first glance it looks like the onus of care will now rest with the individual, not only in a personal context, but in a corporate one, and I feel that this will have a bearing on how we as respond to this added responsibility. Throughout the past sixteen or so months of this pandemic we have been responsible; both to ourselves and our members and friends, and to the communities to which we have a mission. I hope that this will continue in the days, weeks and months to come.

What I must emphasise though is that it is not yet set in stone and I make no apology for quoting the government's website [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-and-support) as of 10.00am Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July:

*The Government has announced more details about step 4, the final stage of the roadmap, which is expected to start on 19 July. There are also 5 principles for managing COVID-19 as we learn to live with the virus. [Find out what will change following a move to step 4.](#)*

*Step 3 restrictions remain in place until then. [Follow the guidance on what you can and cannot do.](#)*

*All adults in England can now book COVID-19 vaccinations. [Book your vaccinations on the NHS website.](#)*

The decision to move to step 4, I understand, will take place no sooner than 12<sup>th</sup> July and it is the hands of Parliament which will be voting on the matter at that time. Therefore in the meantime please continue with abiding by the regulations we have been working to since May and hopefully in the next week I may have some more news regarding what we may be able to do after 19<sup>th</sup> July.

The existing guidance can still be accessed via these links: the [guidance on what you can and cannot do](#) and [Find out what the rules are](#). As mentioned in previous Briefings 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-wedding-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-receptions-and-celebrations). Remember the guidelines regarding Public Worship have not changed; 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship).



This coming weekend sees the URC's General Assembly being held for the first time on a digital platform. Please hold your Yorkshire Representatives, as well as all the other attendees, in your prayers as they discern the path which the URC is to follow in the forthcoming year. The business sessions will be livestreamed on the URC website, Facebook page and YouTube channel. The links to those pages are now on the General Assembly web page [www.urc.org.uk/general-assembly](http://www.urc.org.uk/general-assembly) and will be live from Friday.

# 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 next one is on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> 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 to all lay preachers nearer the date. If you need further information, please get in touch via the [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk) e-mail.

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 here of the Briefing, on the website and on the Weekly Mailing. And looking forward – into next year no less – Kath Lonsdale has asked that you keep the **22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

The final date for the session is 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)

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## 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](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) or to Jane at [property@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto: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 19<sup>th</sup> with future conferences planned to be held about three times each year with the next one being held on **21<sup>st</sup> 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 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 on 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## 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. 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.

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.



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## SAVE THE DATE – Sat Sep 18<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](#).

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# Youth WEEKEND AWAY

THIS RESIDENTIAL TRIP IS FOR 11-17 YR OLDS CONNECTED TO A URC CHURCH IN YORKSHIRE.

**COST: £25 PER PERSON**

**WHEN: FRI 1ST OCT – SUN 3RD OCT, 2021**

**WHERE: KINGSWOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE, DEARNE VALLEY**

**We've missed you!**

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October to Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.



## URC Youth Assembly 2022

It's that time of year again! Youth Assembly 2022 is just round the corner! Are you or do you know a 14-26 years old? (Yes, we have increased the age for this year!). Experience worship and participate in discussions about faith and life with people your age! Not the chatty type? A silent disco could be right up your street! For more info click here:

[www.urch.org.uk/urch-youth-urch.html](http://www.urch.org.uk/urch-youth-urch.html)

Book your place before 1 January 2022 at:

[www.urch.org.uk/urchya](http://www.urch.org.uk/urchya)

## 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](https://www.facebook.com/wildernessfaithmaps).

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 two-hour course is designed to help those among us who contribute 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. To register, click here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/writing-for-the-web-tickets-162037818477?aff=eand>

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

Yorkshire Synod has launched its brand new **Weekly 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 general updates. Anyone can sign up, so spread the word around your congregations and ask them to sign up. 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!**

### 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:



These two workshops form an exploration of how we can effectively provide Hybrid Worship.

**Behind the lens:** A workshop looking at the best ways we can utilise simple technology to enhance online and hybrid worship including livestreaming suggestions, hints and tips.

**Monday 2nd August – 7-8:30pm on Zoom**

To sign up: [behindthelens1.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/behindthelens1)

**In front of the lens:** A workshop looking at the best practices for preaching online or in hybrid worship.

**Tuesday 3rd August – 7-8:30pm on Zoom.**

To sign up: [infrontofthelens1.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/infrontofthelens1)

# 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.



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## 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](mailto:director@timeforgod.org). However if you would like the full size leaflets sent across, drop me a line at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk).



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**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/>

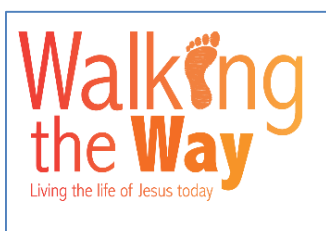
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Revd Phil Nevard, who is based in South-Western Synod, has invited us to take up the offers afforded by their **Talking Absolute Worship** project. It consists of a panel of preachers discussing the Lectionary texts - how we might preach them and how the rest of worship might be shaped around them. It is produced weekly in video and audio-podcast form with episodes available in advance for those worship leaders who like to think ahead. It can be accessed via the <https://www.talkingabsoluteworship.com/> website for free!!

Podcast versions are available from most podcast applications (spotify, itunes, google etc) by searching for "Talking Absolute Worship", from our own podcast page: <https://taw.buzzsprout.com/> and they have a Facebook page which people can follow to stay in touch with latest releases: <https://www.facebook.com/TalkingAbsoluteWorship>

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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.

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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](#).

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### **The Big Cliff Weekend | 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 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](#)

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### **Photo requests**

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

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.

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St Andrew's URC Sheffield has a very gifted and committed organist who has put worship resources on every week since the beginning of the first lockdown. The music is an eclectic, rich and classical selection and 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](http://www.standrewsurcsheffield.org.uk/stop-press)

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

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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 \(urc-news.org.uk\)](https://urc-news.org.uk)

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**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](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk).**

If you know of anything you may find useful for our churches, please contact me at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) and I'll circulate it here and on the website. Similarly if you need any further help, be it to do with IT, finance, property or the like we are here to help.

National URC site: <https://urc.org.uk/> Yorkshire Synod: <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/> Yorkshire Synod

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/urcyorkshire> Yorkshire Synod Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/urcyorkshire> Yorkshire Young People's Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/wildernessyorkshireurc/>

*Tim Crossley*

*Synod Clerk*