



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
Website: www.urcyorkshire.org.uk
Telephone: 0113 289 8490

The Briefing – Number 61

15th July 2021

Dear Friends,

So now we know, it was heralded in the media as Freedom Day, but the transition to Step 4 of the Government's Covid-19 recovery plan has raised as many questions as it can answer. The move to Step 4 from Monday 19th July should mean that we can reopen our churches and allow us to do those activities both within and outside of worship which we have been yearning for since March 2020. However the advice that the URC, both nationally and at Synod level is that we do not rush into something which would put our churches, our members, our visitors and the communities we serve at risk. As much as we would love to throw off the shackles of lockdown the advice is that we proceed with as much caution as we have done throughout this pandemic. The move to Step 4 devolves the responsibility and duty of care to the individual, be it an individual person or an individual organisation such as a church.

Therefore, I feel that the first piece of advice I can give is for you to consult the latest offering from the **URC Synod Moderators** here [New Freedoms, Same Responsibilities: Synod Moderators' advice to congregations \(urc.org.uk\)](https://www.urcyorkshire.org.uk/new-freedoms-same-responsibilities-synod-moderators-advice-to-congregations). As the title suggests we have the new freedoms offered by the lifting of the restrictions we have been working under for the past 16 months, but our responsibilities are still the same and I hope that these are at the forefront of our collective minds as we move through the summer. The Moderators remind us to love God with our whole being and love our neighbour as we love ourselves. To do this we should still regularly review our Risk Assessments, remember those who remain clinically vulnerable or anxious. Furthermore the Moderators encourage everyone to continue the practice of washing or sanitising hands, to maintain a careful cleaning routine in our buildings and to show love to others through minimising risk to their health.

The latest Government advice – updated 12th July – can be found here [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread from 19 July - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread-from-19-july) and all the links therein are worth following to ascertain the extent of the changes that will come into effect on 19th July. Sadly those pages which impact most on the worship life of our churches [COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship), [Celebrating religious festivals during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/celebrating-religious-festivals-during-coronavirus) and [COVID-19: suggested principles of safer singing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing) have yet to be updated to incorporate the changes due to take place from 19th July.

From a Synod point of view, we appreciate that each of the churches within our remit will be working at difference speeds. We know that some will want to return to full activities, others will be happy to follow a more circumspect path. Whatever a church decides Synod will support it in that decision. All that we advise is that you be responsible and that you respect the wishes of those who are not yet prepared to embrace the apparent freedoms Step 4 offers. Similarly, if churches do feel that they are not yet prepared to offer what is to be allowed from July 19th and need support then Synod is there for them. So in the meantime please continue with abiding by the regulations we have been working to since May. Keep referring to the websites here [guidance on what you can and cannot do](https://www.urcyorkshire.org.uk/guidance-on-what-you-can-and-cannot-do) and [Find out what the rules are](https://www.urcyorkshire.org.uk/find-out-what-the-rules-are) and hopefully they will be updated in time for the changes on July 19th.

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 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 to all lay preachers nearer the date. If you need further information, please get in touch via the 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 **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.

Property News

I have mentioned above that the change to Step 4 is to happen on July 19th and as usual the Synod team is constantly keeping a close eye on any developments that may arise. 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 be particularly aware of is that, although many restrictions have been lifted, our advice is not to let up on maintaining the cleanliness routines which you have all been so good at. It means that as we all come out of lockdown 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.

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.

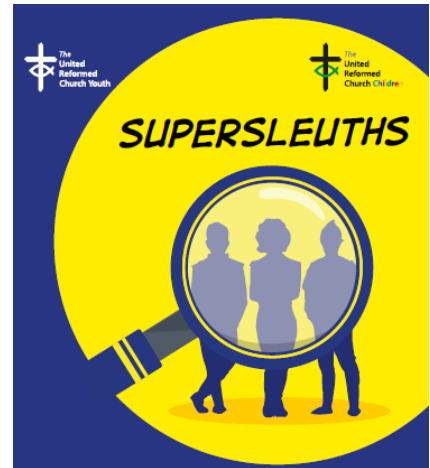
Please email mission@urc.org.uk to sign up for this event.

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. 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.



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.



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.urc.org.uk/urc-youth-urc.html

Book your place before 1 January 2022 at:

www.urc.org.uk/urcya

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.

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

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.

The first one is this two-hour course designed to help those among us who contribute 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.

To register, click here:

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

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

The second one is **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

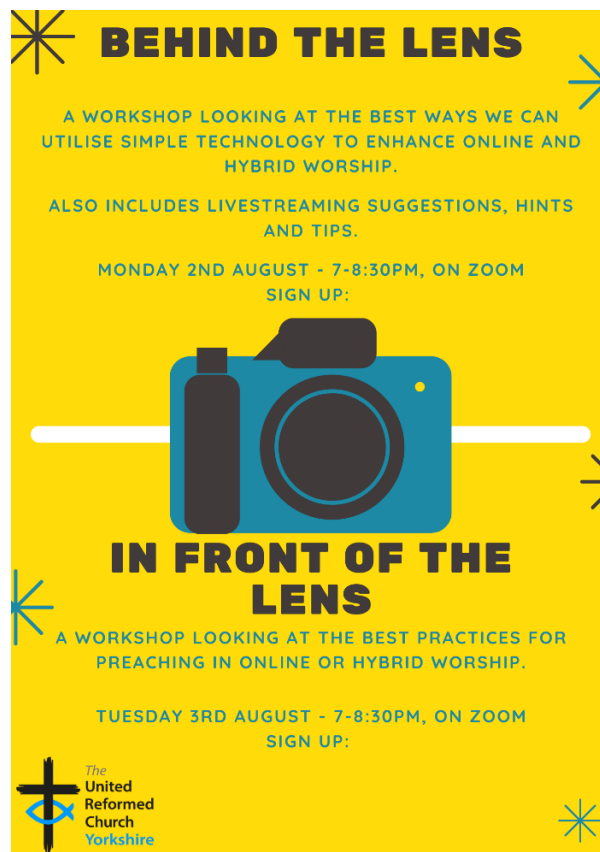
In front of the lens: A workshop looking at the best practices for preaching online or in hybrid worship.

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

To sign up: infrontofthelens1.eventbrite.co.uk

And don't forget that 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 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!



General Information and Resource Sharing

Let's celebrate:
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE URC

General Assembly online fringe event on
Wednesday 21 July 2021 from 7.30pm to 8.45pm.

Children's and Youth Work Committee and URC Youth invite you to 'Let's celebrate: children and young people in the URC'. Come and share in an uplifting hour focusing on all that has been happening with 0-25s, thanking God and praying for the next steps.
Event is open to everyone – please book to secure your free place on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lets-celebrate-children-and-young-people-in-the-urc).

Now that General Assembly has drawn to an end for 2021 there is an opportunity to celebrate all the good things that have been achieved through the year, the resolutions from Children's and Youth Work and Youth Exec which were discussed by Assembly, and all the exciting news as we look forward to the year ahead.

The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work Committee and Church House team take great pleasure in inviting you to join us in a General Assembly fringe event: **Let's**

Celebrate-Children and Young People in the URC, which is being held on zoom on the evening of the 21st of July. This free event is open to all and we would love for you to join us from 7.30 to 8.45pm. Please see the attached invitation and don't forget to click the link and book your place as we would love to see you there. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lets-celebrate-children-and-young-people-in-the-urc-tickets-158609321751>

Talking About...Opening Up?

Join us on Zoom to find out what you need to know about:

- Rules and regulations
- Activities
- Risk assessment

Thursday, July 29th at 7pm

Aimed at those who work with children or young people in any setting.

Book your tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/opening-up-tickets-161875254243>



Also here is information about a new series of online gatherings hosted by our Children's and Youth Work specialists from around the synods. Entitled "**Talking about....**", these monthly gatherings will provide all those engaging with children, families and young people, whether as volunteers or employed workers, to meet together, to build networks, and to talk through some of the issues common to many. The first session, on **29th July**, will be focused on opening up some of our children's and youth groups post-lockdown – a topic which will be

relevant to many as we ease out of restrictions and consider our next steps. To book your tickets visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/opening-up-tickets-161875254243>

GROW YOUR MAILING LIST

29 July, 7-8.30pm

A WORKSHOP TO DISCOVER

- Why your list is essential to connection & communication in a hybrid church
- How to use it to grow your congregation
- Introducing Mailchimp
- Creating your account
- Designing your signup campaign
- GDPR: handling the data safely & transparently

SAVE THE DATE: BOOKING DETAILS TO FOLLOW

A while ago the good folk in North-Western Synod identified a need for training in Mail Chimp. North-Western are happy to extend that opportunity out to the Northerly Synods as Lawrence Moore is going to deliver that training.

If you can save the date – 29th July – I hope to be able to bring you details of how to sign up in next week's issue.

The Summer 2021 edition of **In GEAR** is now on the GEAR's web-site. This latest edition plus numerous back copies can be found at: <http://www.gear.org.uk/publications/in-gear-magazine/>

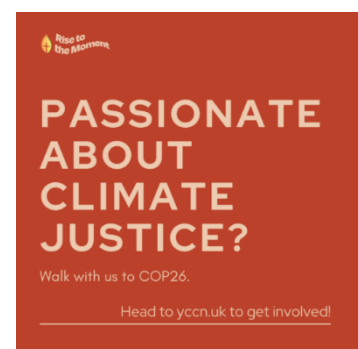
You can download the PDF version by clicking on the relevant front page view. If you wish to receive a paper copy (or multiple copies), please complete the form on the web page.



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.



TIME FOR GOD
**VOLUNTEERING
CHANGES
LIVES**

Has your church
considered hosting a Time
for God Volunteer?

†fG

**Time for God is ready
to place a high-quality
volunteer in your
church.**

Over the past 60 years, Time for
God has been matching
volunteers to transformational
projects in churches and
charities across the UK. We are
currently seeking some new
church partners.



**HOST A VOLUNTEER FROM
SEPTEMBER 2021**

**WE HAVE A GROUP OF HIGH
QUALITY VOLUNTEERS, ONE OF
WHOM IS READY TO BE PLACED
WITH YOUR CHURCH.**

For £300 per month (plus room and food allowance for the volunteer) your church will be matched with a specifically chosen volunteer who will be supported and disciplined by our staff team. Your church will also receive guidance and support on hosting a volunteer from our excellent team. A TFG volunteer serves 35-38 hours per week investing in your church and community.

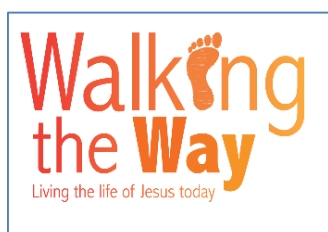
We have seen so many stories of transformational work through this project and we'd delighted to make you a part of it.

If you are interested in more information please email
director@timeforgod.org

YORK HUB, POPE'S HEAD COURT, YORK, YO1 8SU

†fG

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/>



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 **Moderator's 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 \(urc-news.org.uk\)](http://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