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The Briefing – Number 63 29th July 2021

Dear Friends,

This week, dare I say, has been a relatively quiet one in certain quarters. There are the usual rumblings and grumblings in Parliament regarding the final lifting of self-isolation (due to come into effect on 16th August) and the number of questions coming into the office regarding the overall lifting of restrictions and the move to self-regulation hasn't caused too much stress. Despite this seemingly lack of movement the engine room that is the Synod Office and the staff there are still keeping a close eye on any developments and as usual are ready and willing to help in any way they can. As a reminder, please consult both the URC advice, ably encapsulated in **URC Synod Moderators' [New Freedoms, Same Responsibilities: Synod Moderators' advice to congregations \(urc.org.uk\)](#)** as well as the **URC's main [Advice to churches about coronavirus from the United Reformed Church](#)** pages.

Sadly we are experiencing a bit of technical difficulty with the relevant Yorkshire Synod page at the moment. It's not the whole site so my advice is to click here [Yorkshire Synod \(urcyorkshire.org.uk\)](#), find the bit near the bottom that looks like this image to the right, fill it in and you will get a weekly update as to everything that is new. In time this weekly update will replace the weekly Briefing. It won't happen immediately although from early September the plan is for the Briefing to be published fortnightly. Don't keep this little snippet of information to yourself – tell your friends, your church members and your congregations as a whole. There's a whole array of things to help, guide and inform you, not only about the URC but about how we can become a **Jesus centred people**.

The screenshot shows a mobile view of the urcyorkshire.org.uk website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the site name and a refresh icon. Below that, a dark blue banner contains the text 'Let's keep in touch!' and 'We'd love for you to hear from us with our latest news, sign up below.' There are three input fields: 'First Name', 'Surname', and 'Email Address *'. Below these is an orange button labeled 'Keep me posted!'. At the bottom of the form, it says 'We don't spam! Read our privacy policy for more info.' with a small upward arrow icon.

I hope those quarters that were not quiet this weekend were in your church buildings. If you were one of those folk who I spoke with last week you may have been asked what the first hymn would be now that we can enjoy congregational singing (behind masks of course). I was hoping to be able to sing "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"; I didn't get that one, but boy was I happy to clear the tubes with "To God be the Glory".

So as we travel through August keep the doors open and the welcomes warm. Our responsibilities are still the same as they have been throughout the pandemic and I hope that these are at the forefront of our collective minds. Regularly review your Risk Assessments, remember those who remain clinically vulnerable or anxious and encourage everyone to continue the hygiene routines we have got used to so that we can show love to others through minimising risk to their health. As well as the links noted above the latest Government advice can be found here **[Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)**. Whatever a church decides to do 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 now allowed and need support then Synod is there for them. So in the meantime keep referring to the websites here **[guidance on what you can and cannot do](#)** and **[Find out what the rules are](#)** and hopefully they will have been updated on the Government website.

Church Links, Mission Activities and Synod Events

Lay Preachers Planning Group news

Not only have the Lay Preaching planning group been working tirelessly this summer, they are also working to fill your autumn diaries 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 (please sign up at [Yorkshire Synod \(urcyorkshire.org.uk\)](https://urcyorkshire.org.uk)).

I know there are more things in the pipeline and news of these will be distributed in the usual ways. 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

The Synod team is constantly keeping a close eye on any developments that may arise, especially as Covid-19 cases in the community continue to fluctuate. 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 and more recently on July 21st. 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 \(urcyorkshire.org.uk\)](https://urcyorkshire.org.uk) 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. All the Synod activities will be uploaded to the Yorkshire Synod Website as well, which does have a link for you to sign up to the weekly update.

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](#), then like the page to be alerted when each weekly post arrives.



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

IT Group News

Behind the lens is 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.

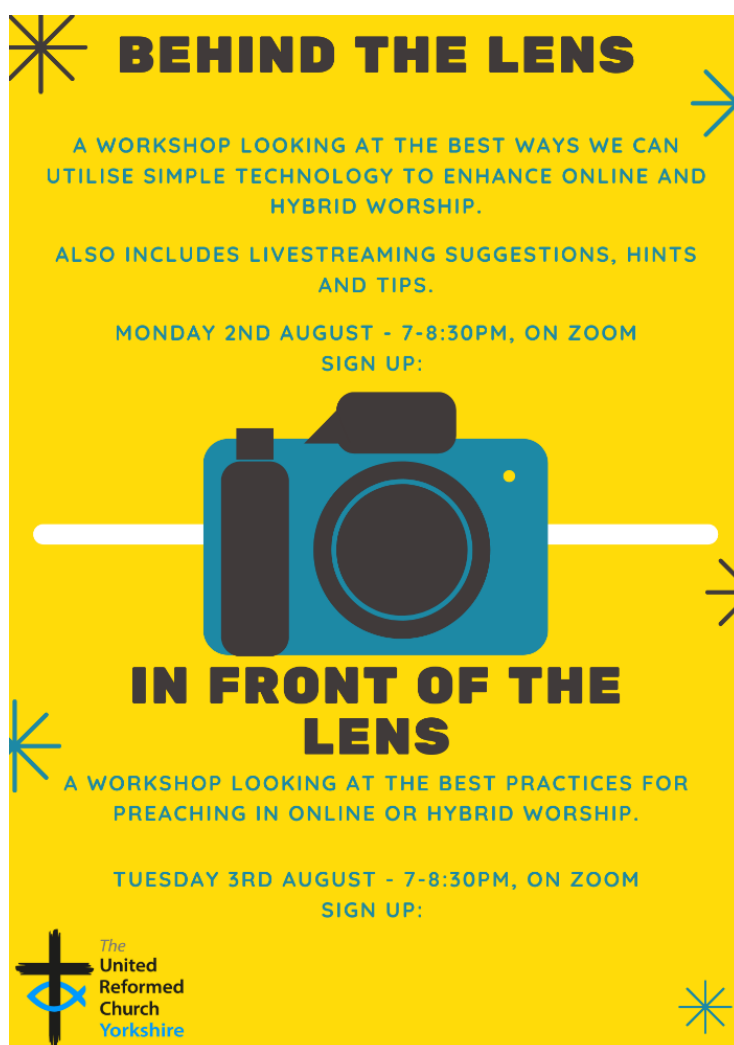
To sign

up: infrontofthelens1.eventbrite.co.uk

FULL DETAILS AT [In front of/behind the lens! | URC Yorkshire Synod](#)

And don't forget that Yorkshire Synod has launched its brand new **Weekly Mailing!** I have a feeling I've mentioned it before, but its worth mentioning again. 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

Firm Roots Cancer Support Group



**Trinity Church Hall, New Road Side,
Rawdon LS19 6AS**

The last Wednesday of every month

11am – 12.30pm

**Join us for friendship, encouragement,
reflections, music, and to pray for people
affected by cancer.**

All welcome!

Refreshments provided

*The **Firm Roots** motto is 'Strength for today; hope for tomorrow' and we at Trinity Rawdon want to offer a safe space and an opportunity to gather once a month for prayer, support and to journey alongside those whose lives have been affected by cancer, and to support them with God's love.*

To find out more go to: www.firmroots.org.uk



For more information visit our website
www.trinityrawdon.org.uk

Or join our Facebook group - Trinity Rawdon - our church

This has come through from Trinity Rawdon. For more information visit www.trinityrawdon.org.uk.

Commitment for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Harvest Service on Legacies

Suzanne Pearson from Church House has got in touch to draw our attention to the **NEW** service that *Commitment for Life* has created in conjunction with Christian Aid on leaving a Legacy. The Harvest service including full text and a video of the service is downloadable from our website by following the link

<https://urc.org.uk/commitment-for-life/worship-commitment-for-life.html>

As this Harvest Service is a pilot legacy partnership, it would really help Christian Aid and CFL if you could kindly provide us with some feedback. Please do let me know if your church uses these CFL Harvest resources and how well it was received by the congregation.

A simple 'How to do it' style flyer, is in the process of being prepared and will be added to the *Commitment For Life* website by the end of August [Commitment for life \(urc.org.uk\)](https://urc.org.uk).

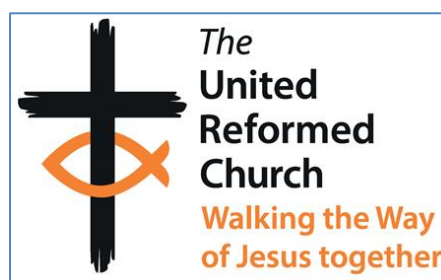
Finally, Christian Aid are organising training on 'talking about legacies in your church' on 23rd September.

Church leaders can book their place by emailing Kathy directly via this link:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/gifts-wills/remember-charity-week>.



Simon Peters, the Walking the Way Project Manager, has been in touch to say that the latest episode of the URC Podcast, featuring Richard Lewney and Kevin Snyman of Commitment for Life, looking at how disciples of Jesus should approach the topic of money, is now available at <https://bit.ly/URCPodcast4>



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

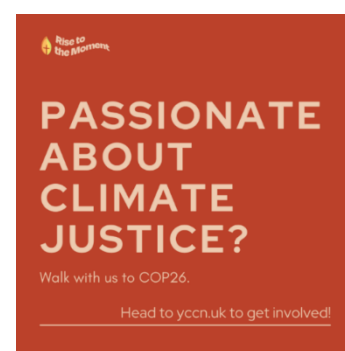
You can download the PDF version by clicking on the relevant front page view. If you wish to receive a paper copy (or multiple copies), please complete the form on the web page.

Worshipping God Together : Apart. Rev Janine Atkinson is back from her well-earned break and a new service for this coming weekend has been uploaded to the website where you will still find many of the services previously uploaded. As always a big thank you to Janine for these incredible 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/>

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.





Universities Chaplaincy in Leeds

Part Time Christian Student Outreach Worker- Digital Engagement and Promotions Lead

We are seeking an individual to become a Christian Student Outreach Worker who will play an important role in the life of the chaplaincy, particularly by developing its outreach by digital means. If you have an active Christian faith and are looking for a place to meet new people, use your skills and grow in your faith over the next year, we'd love you to join our team and help us shape the chaplaincy for the up and coming academic year.

We are the Chaplaincy Team, based at the Emmanuel Centre. We offer pastoral support, activities and events for all the students and staff at the University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, University of Law (Leeds) and Leeds Arts University. What does that look like?

We are Christians who are here to support all people, no matter what they believe (or don't). We recognise that people are on a journey during their time at university and we want to join them on that. We're interested in people, faith, community, meaning, purpose, the search for understanding and the more we ponder, the more we realise that all these things are connected.

We really believe that this role will give you the opportunity to develop some of your passions and interests, and are particularly interested to hear from you if you have experience in digital outreach and promotions and if you are excited by the following:

- Spiritual development of students
- Worship and prayer
- Wellbeing

We will support you, encourage you and help you develop your skills, while exercising your teamwork, leadership and creativity.

Interested? Read this pack for all the details.

Closing date: **5pm - 17th August 2021**

This post is subject to a "Genuine Occupational Requirement" under the Employment Equality Regulations (2003).

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.

Synod Mission Fund

As you will know, the Synod runs a Mission Fund designed to resource the outward looking mission of churches and church groups. As you all start to move out of lockdown to resume your work in the communities we serve don't forget that the Fund is available for you and that all you need is a good idea. If you need to have a chat about what may be suitable please get in touch with me at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and have a look at the [Grants and Funding | URC Yorkshire Synod](#) page and follow the links to the Synod Mission Fund forms.

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 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