



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 79

3rd March 2022

Dear Friends,

The past fortnight has been a whirlwind. I have had some time off with my family – 4 days in a windy Whitby, the government has altered the restrictions regarding self-isolation and mask wearing, and the continent of Europe is again convulsed by aggression and war. Indeed, the last week itself has been full of activity as the preparations for our Synod meeting on 12th March at St Andrew's Skipton are coming together.

I think we need to just pause and pray. Below is a prayer that can be found at [Prayers for Ukraine - United Reformed Church](#) written by Rev Dave Herbert, Moderator of Northern Synod. Please use this resource in the coming days and weeks as we look out for the people of Ukraine by offering them support, love and peace. Please pray for war's ending and that peace through Christ will prevail.

Eternal God,

As we are overshadowed once again by war,
We lift up before you
The innocents and vulnerable,
The victims of violence and cruelty,
Along with all who continue to sow the seeds of hate.

In the fog of war
Where truth is the first victim,
May your light, which cannot be overwhelmed,
expose the truth.

Grant to world leaders and all in positions of power today
Not only the wisdom
But also the courage
To do what is right in your sight.

Grant all who turn to you
your strength and fortitude,
Your inner peace,
Along with a continuing faith in your sovereign power,
In the face of military might.

All this we pray in the name of the Prince of Peace,
Jesus Christ,
Our living Lord and Saviour.
Amen.

Lifting of Covid-19 Restrictions

As you will know the government has lifted the restrictions surrounding the wearing of masks and the compulsory self-isolation regulations if one contracts Covid-19. This doesn't mean that the pandemic is over as there are still many people contracting the virus. In fact the advice that is being offered is that you still need to remain vigilant and that if you feel as though it is the right thing to do you may retain the measures you have had in place over the past months. Certain things will no longer be happening, such as the use of the QR posters we have had on display and the track and trace scheme we have all got used to. Any data you have held must be deleted or destroyed; more information on how you can do that is here

<https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-recovery-data-protection-advice-for-organisations/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-for-contact-tracing-purposes/> and you can find out more details about the data held by the NHS for venues using the QR code in our Privacy Notice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-qr-code-venue-posters-privacy-notice>

The current regulations can be found here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-and-support) with the recommendations of the URC to be found at the [Coronavirus advice - United Reformed Church](https://www.reformedchurch.org.uk/coronavirus-advice) page. This also has links to the latest updates, worship aid and resources, all designed for you and your churches as well as the links to the guidance I've previously highlighted from the Synod Moderators.

Our key responsibility and duty of care to our congregations, members and friends. So if you feel as a church that you wish to continue in asking that masks be worn, that hand gel be used and that social distancing is maintained, we at Synod will support you in that choice.

Spring Synod Meeting

On 12th March Synod will convene at St Andrew's Church, Skipton, to hold its Spring Meeting. The format of this meeting is different from the one we had in October as it is just a one day affair. However this time we will be attempting to host a fully hybrid meeting, whereby those who join the proceedings digitally via the Zoom conferencing platform will be able to participate as fully in the proceedings as those who will be attending in person. The advances in what we can now do through the technical team within Synod and the foresighted decision of General Assembly in respect of the validity of hybrid meetings means that this Spring not only shall we be gathering in person we will simultaneously be able to welcome those who dial in via our dedicated interactive digital facility.

The papers for the meeting will be sent out very soon – in the main digitally as this is how we intend to proceed in the future, but there is the opportunity to receive printed copies if you contact the office as soon as possible. For those who would like to join online the link is here

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89856346510?pwd=ZFJmb214YTF6ODNSUWNDbUpnL0p4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 898 5634 6510, Passcode: 463819, and I hope that opening up the proceedings, the work of the Synod can be made much more relevant to your churches.

In the meantime, the Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack, had made a video – accessed at this link and also on the Synod website <https://youtu.be/OQoFIfkQMYA> as a pre-Synod invitation to help us as we discern the future of our churches, our Synod and our Christian life.

Elders Conference

From a Spark to a Flame

A DAY FOR YORKSHIRE SYNOD ELDERS

Lighting up Mission through Prayer



Where do we feel close to God?
How do we talk - and listen - to God...
Devoting ourselves to prayer...
Mission and prayer...

Contemplation... Meditation... Singing... Dancing... there are as many ways to pray as there are people - and there are many ways to share our faith with people inside and outside of our churches.

This Elders' day is designed to inspire some original thinking - we'll talk about different ways to connect with our communities, ways to share our faith through prayer, and we'll look at new ways of worshipping.

Come prepared for an informal, interactive day with lively conversation, videos and practical prayer activities.

Be prepared to take away ideas and be ready to share your own experience and the experience of your church.

BOOK YOUR PLACE

26th March 2022—10.00am-3.00pm

Bilton Grange URC. 1 Woodfield Rd, Harrogate HG1 4LN

EVERYBODY WELCOME!

Although publicised as a day for Elders, the elders think it is so good that they wish to welcome any members or friends of the United Reformed Churches in Yorkshire to join them for the day.

For further information or to book, contact Val Morrison at valmorrison7@btinternet.com or on 01302 530109

We look forward to welcoming you to the Annual Elders Conference either in person or by Zoom. If you have not yet registered for the event and wish to do so, please contact Val Morrison – valmorrison7@btinternet.com to book your place.

Please find information below with regard to the Annual Elders Conference on Saturday, 26th March 2022

From a Spark to a Flame – Lighting up Mission Through Prayer

The title tells you something about the subject for our Annual Elder's conference. The above flier tells you a little bit more. The conference will be held at Bilton Grange URC in Harrogate but we will also be making it available via Zoom. Whilst this is a conference for elders we think it will be so good that we invite any member or friend of your church to come along too. It would be particularly relevant for anyone thinking of becoming an elder.

The booking details are given on the flier and we ask that you let us know when you book whether you will attend in person or via Zoom.

We look forward to seeing you on 26th March

Mission Advocate

Keep an eye on the [Yorkshire Synod \(urcyorkshire.org.uk\)](http://urcyorkshire.org.uk) website as well as the [Our 50th Anniversary - United Reformed Church](#) page. As part of this initiative to raise the profile of mission in the synod, our new **Mission Advocate**, Jon Steel, has begun to upload short articles onto the synod website and Facebook page each week, as well as hosting monthly Zoom get-togethers to ask the question "What is



Mission?" They get-togethers planned for the last Tuesday in the month using this regular Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/92778926887?pwd=dUJKckNDZ1NNL1BMRncvMzBFd2Q1UT09>. More information can be had from Jon via his new e-mail missionadvocate@urcyorkshire.org.uk. If you have signed up to the weekly update from website (which I would encourage you to do), you will receive a copy of it each Friday and with it the link to articles.

And talking of which, Jon has asked that you are reminded of the links mentioned last time.

<https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/so-whats-the-plan/> which explains a little bit about where we are starting this year (with prayer).

<https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/whatismission1/> where Ashley Evans gives a brief overview of his understanding of mission (look out for other people sharing their thoughts each month).

<https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/what-are-we-here-for/> that encourages us to start at the very beginning and think about what our churches are actually here to for

missionadvocate@urcyorkshire.org.uk

07522 220214

Disciple Development Fund

Yorkshire URC Synod Discipleship Development Fund

This fund is available to encourage and support individuals within the United Reformed Church engage with a journey of developing personal discipleship. It is available for any URC member or regular URC attender of any age who is not a Minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Worker.

Yorkshire Synod Ministries Committee are pleased to share with you that grants of up to £200 are now available.

Individuals can apply for help with the cost of attending an approved discipleship course, activities or retreats offered by others.

Congregations can apply for help with the cost of buying in a speaker or other resources to facilitate in-house schemes.

Please contact Kath Lonsdale, Convenor of Yorkshire Ministries,
kathlonsdale@talktalk.net or 01274 315203 to apply for this grant.

Also available is the following video, which will be shown at the March Synod meeting, which gives an overview of what is on offer

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bsPMiSjEbtqiTXSXuXJKOY0DCpDPm-_J

Lay Preachers Planning Group news

Lay preachers and Worship Leaders weekend

And looking forward – into the summer no less – Kath Lonsdale has asked that you keep the **22nd to 24th July 2022** (Friday teatime to Sunday lunch) clear if you are interested in a **Lay preachers and Worship Leaders weekend at Wydale conference centre**. The planning group are pleased to share that this weekend will be paid for by grants successfully applied for so you will only need to cover your travel costs. **There are 30 places available** and you are now invited to register your interest for this weekend with the office at office@urcyorkshire.org.uk or 0113 289 8490.

Yorkshire Reflections

From the beginning of February we have been uploading in to the 'Worship' section of the Synod website, a weekly reflection on a Sunday. Thank you to all who have either already contributed or have offered a date – it is much appreciated. If you would like to take a look, you can find the latest reflection here: <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/worship/>

If you are willing and able to have a go, do get in touch with me and we can discuss a date. We have availability from Sunday 10th April (Palm Sunday) onwards and details of what is required and how to send it, can be given.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With thanks and best wishes
Sally Duxbury, PA to the Moderator - Revd Jamie Kissack
office@urcyorkshire.org.uk

Legacies of Slavery Consultation

Warm greetings from Global & Intercultural Ministries.

The Legacies of Slavery task group would like to thank you for your support regarding the URC's Legacies of Slavery consultation. We genuinely want to hear from the breadth of the URC, irrespective of the particular responses which may be shared. The cut off date for responses to the global.intercultural@urc.org.uk e-mail address is now **31st March 2022**. We hope this will enable much wider engagement and we would also like to encourage churches, groups and individuals to keep engaging with the materials, and with the LoS/Anti-Racist Church journey in general, beyond the consultation period. We will still welcome reflections and responses after this date, and will seek to incorporate them into our verbal presentation to General Assembly.

Please find here the consultation documents for easy reference and downloading:

<https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/legacies-of-slavery/>

Thank you to those who have invited us to engage with your Synods more directly - we look forward to seeing you. And thanks again to all for your support.

With all good wishes,

Karen Campbell, Secretary for Global & Intercultural Ministries (Mission)

URC News Update

The latest issue of the [URC News Update March 2022 \(urc-news.org.uk\)](https://urc-news.org.uk) is now available. There are lots of links regarding URC Youth, the denominations Resource Centres for Learning, Reform Magazine and the URC Bookshop and how you can sign up for the GEAR Lent series which involves Bible study, discussions and prayer.

Ann-Marie, who edits the URC News Update (like me) is always on the hunt for stories to tell. Drop her a line at ann-marie.nye@urc.org.uk and get your good news out there.



Moderator of General Assembly Nominations

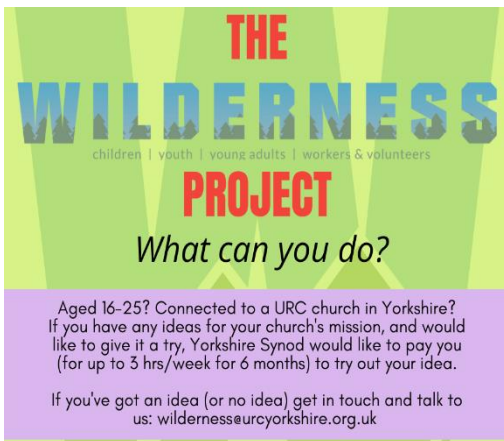
Nominations for the election of the Moderator of the General Assembly 2023-2024 are due to the General Secretary following the spring meetings of Synods – which in Yorkshire's case will be on Saturday March 12th at Skipton. More details about the procedure can be found in section 3 of C: Rules of Procedure for the Conduct of the United Reformed Church from the Manual.

https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/1638/72/C_Rules_of_Procedure.pdf

If you do feel called to nominate anyone please contact the Clerk at clerk@urcyorkshire.org and he will run through what happens. In essence an election will take place at the meeting of General Assembly this July for a successor to the Revd Fiona Bennett who will serve from the close of that meeting until the close of the 2023 meeting. It is hoped that with the role GA Moderator becoming a one year role, it will widen the number and diversity of folk who might feel that they could consider a call to this very particular piece of ministry. Last year that proved so with a sweep of very good nominations, and two absolutely excellent candidates willing to test that call with the Assembly.

Many thanks in advance for any names and don't hesitate to be in touch if you have any queries about this process.

Children and Young Peoples News



The WILDERNESS Project is back for 2022.

Here at the Yorkshire Synod we want to see young people participating in the mission of God in their church. More than that, we want to PAY YOUNG PEOPLE to participate in the mission of God in their church.

We know that it can be a struggle to keep young people engaged in church life, especially when so many other things are happening in their world. Often young people around the age of 16 take part time jobs, which means we see them less. The WILDERNESS

Project hopes to encourage, enable and equip young people with the support and the resource to turn a passion into a project to enrich the life of their church.

Please contact Megan [here](#) for more information.

To subscribe to the Wilderness newsletter you can either find the link through the newsletter itself or even better click here [URC Yorkshire Synod \(list-manage.com\)](https://list-manage.com)

It's back and ticket sales for

THE BIG DAY OUT

has already opened and won't close until Friday 09th September.

Please contact the synod office to book your tickets

office@urcyorkshire.org.uk

0113 289 8490

Include your church/group, group leader (and contact email), the number of paid tickets and how many free under 3 tickets and look out for the special coach funding offer.



The park rides and attractions will be open all day to enjoy and there will also be other fun activities to get involved in on the day. All ages are welcome for a day of fun and worship together!



To book contact: office@urcyorkshire.org.uk

Worshipping God Together : Apart.

Rev Janine Atkinson's regular services and reflections are still being uploaded to the website. As always a big thank you to Janine for these incredible resources which can be found 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/>

Joint Public Issues Team News



Joint Public Issues Team Conference on 11th June 2022 in London or online at www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/conference

The conference will focus on the increasing significance of the 'local' in action for change. During the pandemic, the local has taken on a renewed importance, and the needs, characteristics and opportunities in our communities have been seen in different ways. The local is playing a new role in

the political landscape too, with the 'levelling up' agenda and regional and national identities assuming prominence, and grassroots community organising bringing new power to campaigning.

Keynote speakers at the conference will include Emma Revie, CEO of The Trussell Trust, Marsha De Cordova MP and Bishop Mike Royal, incoming General Secretary of Churches Together in England. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from these keynote speakers, learn and ask questions in workshops and engage with other participants.

The conference is open to anyone who is inspired about working for change, from those already active to those who don't know where to begin.

We hope to make the conference as accessible as possible, which is why we are offering free tickets for those who have low incomes and for anyone aged under 25. These tickets are supported by the opportunity for other attendees to 'donate a ticket' when they purchase their own. Tickets can be booked at bit.ly/JPIT2022

We'd love it if you were able to join us for this day of creative exploration, and also encourage others from your churches to attend, in particular

- Someone who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford it
- Someone they have identified as a lay leader in the community
- Someone aged between 16-25
- Someone who can carry ideas back to a wider team

The conference will be an opportunity for us to come together, to be re-energised to speak, pray and act boldly as Christians committed to seeing transformation in our communities and beyond.

More publicity will be circulated shortly

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with

Simeon Mitchell, Team Leader, Joint Public Issues Team

Secretary for Church and Society, United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT

020 7916 8633 | 07584 053432 | simeon.mitchell@urc.org.uk

ECO News

The Synod is still looking for more **Synod Green Apostles**. If you have a desire to help Yorkshire become an Eco Synod and a torch-bearer for a greener environment please get in touch. Alex Jowitt at greenapostle@urcyorkshire.org.uk or me at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk would love to hear from you.

Property and Listed Building News

Jane, our Property Officer has asked that this bit of news regarding the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme from the HRBA be passed on.

LISTED PLACES OF WORSHIP GRANT SCHEME

Some **very good news** - we heard last month that the government's Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme has been extended for another

three years until 31 March 2025 (this is the scheme that gives a grant to cover the cost of VAT on repairs etc to listed places of worship). In today's financial climate is very, very welcome. For more information on how this works and the responsibilities of caring for churches which are listed, please drop Jane a line at property@urcyorkshire.org.uk.



**Historic Religious
Buildings Alliance**
a group within the Heritage Alliance

Annual Church Returns

Annual Church Returns (ACR) - another very important note for Church Secretaries

This is a gentle reminder about the Annual Church Returns which should be completed by the **31st March 2022** using the online portal. Churches who have requested paper copies should have received theirs by post over the last few weeks. (If you have recently requested a paper copy then these will be in the process of being sent). *If you have already submitted or are in the process of submitting your Annual Church Return either electronically or in paper format, we thank you and please disregard this reminder.*

Your login details were sent to you from 31 January in a 'Welcome' email from ministries.admin@urc.org.uk. Please check your inbox, spam and junk mailboxes. If you have not received it, please can you let us know at the Synod Office by return of email and we can re-issue this email directly from the Synod.

When accessing the portal please ensure you are using a modern browser, such as Firefox, Chrome or Edge and that you keep it regularly updated. Older versions are unsupported, and you may experience issues.

Please do get in touch with any queries.

Safeguarding News

Church Activities in Private Dwellings

Guidance regarding URC local church activities in private dwellings and can be found here: [Guidance for URC local church activities in private dwellings - United Reformed Church](#). This guidance is to remind churches of the risks to be aware of and take into account, for the safety of the people who live in the dwelling and for those visiting. Although a manse is normally considered a place of work, for the purposes of this guidance and to ensure good practice, it shall be considered a dwelling.

If you have any queries, please contact Matt Knowles, the Synod Safeguarding officer at matt.safeguarding@urcyorkshire.org.uk.

Annual Safeguarding Returns (ASR) – a very important to note for Church Safeguarding Co-ordinators

Like with the Annual Returns we are aware that there has been a slight delay in launching the new online system so for that reason the site will be live until **31 March 2022**. If you are unable to complete the ASR in that time, or feel you need a blank paper copy, you can either print it directly from the portal or contact Synod Office to send you a blank copy of the form.

Training

The latest tranche of dates have been released and are filling up fast. Below are the available training sessions as The Briefing went to press so if you need to do the training, get in touch now. All courses will be online and via Zoom. Bookings can be made by contacting Sally at moderatorpa@urcyorkshire.org.uk

Foundation (Basic) Training

Monday 16th May 2022 – 10am to 12pm only one place left

Intermediate Training

Please note, spaces are being taken up rapidly, so please get in touch as soon as possible.

Monday 25th April 2022 – 1pm to 3.30pm

Thursday 5th May 2022 – 1pm to 3.30pm

Thursday 12th May 2022 – 10am to 12.30pm

Tuesday 24th May 2022 – 1pm to 3.30pm

Please don't hide these events and resources in your inboxes or within the trees hiding your own churches' woods. 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