



The
United
Reformed
Church

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The Briefing – Number 80 17th March 2022

Dear Friends,

Each year, once we hold our March Synod I feel that spring is really upon us, followed hot on its heels by the summer. It is a time of renewal and new growth, mission and, especially as we have Easter in a few weeks' time, new life. Last Saturday's Synod meeting prepared us for that new mission and that new life. The challenges our Mission Advocate, Jon Steel is throwing down for us means that we cannot simply carry on as we have done before. We need to take this Jubilee moment to reset our Christian lives and work to bring the Kingdom's good news to everyone. At the Synod meeting we heard several stories of how we can do that, from the caring intimate work of the Parish Nurse scheme being supported at Heath URC in Halifax, to the means by which we can become a much more environmentally friendly organisation by signing up to Eco Church and Eco Synod. We were offered the means to resource that, financially through the Discipleship Development Fund and spiritually through Leading Your Church into Growth. We have all this at our fingertips – all it takes is that extra stretch to grab hold of it.

Somewhere which did reach out was the congregation at Riddlesden URC. It does seem a long time back, but by opening their doors on a wet, wild and windy day to those who had to leave their homes due to a landslip they showed just what a community church can be. You can read more here [Around the URC in seven days: 3-10 March 2022 - United Reformed Church](#) as the church and volunteers have been praised for the support they provided to their community affected by Storm Franklin. Homes were left without power, at least six had to be evacuated, and the back garden of one



property was washed away into the river. [Riddlesden: Video shows damage to homes after riverbank landslide - BBC News](#). An emergency shelter was based at the church and volunteers helped provide food and hot water.

Cllr Caroline Firth, of Bradford Council, said: "I want to thank Riddlesden United Reformed Church for opening its doors to the community, and the various volunteers who helped run the shelter. I know many, many more people who have been willing to step forward to help, as we have a tight-knit community."

I hope that in the weeks over the summer I can tell more stories of mission from around the Synod. Later in this issue is a plea for news from Ann-Marie Nye, who edits the national news update, but it would be great to be able to tell our stories here first. Please drop me a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk so that we can tell not only our friends here in Yorkshire, but across the whole URC community and the world beyond.



URC News Update

So here is that message from Ann-Marie:

We are fast approaching April and, thankfully, warmer months (yippee yi yay) and it's time to send me your news for inclusion in the April edition of News Update.

Please submit items of interest to the denomination as a whole, across the country and the nations. Images, copyright free ones, are always welcome.

All submissions to ann-marie.nye@urc.org.uk by 12pm on Monday 21 March please.

Ann-Marie Nye, Communications Officer

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.

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/>

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 on 01302 530109

JOIN US FOR A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

TASTE OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appreciative Inquiry is a collaborative and highly participative process, which works from people's strengths and positive experiences to enable them to build the kinds of organisations they would like to be part of and the world they want to live in.



Drawing provided by Siggy Parratt-Halbert www.stinkingweasel.co.uk

In this introduction, discover the key principles, the power of appreciative conversations, the tools to apply, and examples of its applications

Saturday 2nd April 2022 - 10am - 4 pm

Yorkshire Synod Office

Led by Emmanuelle Bastide-Wilson & Jenny Poulter

Refreshments & lunch will be provided, travel expenses can be claimed

For more info or to book please contact Emmanuelle:

embastide@icloud.com or 07941 923 420

Mission Advocate



How do we talk to other people about our faith? - join us for a really basic introduction

**A monthly chance to reflect, talk and pray about mission: Tues 22nd March, 7.30-8.30pm, on zoom.
Meeting ID: 927 7892 6887 Passcode: a4tfjp**



We are not all Billy Graham (if you remember him) or Ashley Evans. And that's ok, it may even be a good thing! For most of us, talking to other people about our faith is a very difficult thing to do. There are many reasons underlying that, and we won't be able to change them all quickly and simply. However, there are a few misconceptions that we might be able to undo, and a few simple starting steps we might be able to try. If you're interested to hear more and may be willing to have a go, join us on Tues 22nd March, 7.30-8.30pm on zoom for the next 'What is mission...?' session. Come and join us to explore, chat and pray together. It's a welcoming, easy-going space, but you have to bring your own tea and biscuits.

<https://zoom.us/j/92778926887?pwd=dUJKckNDZ1NNL1BMRncvMzBFd2Q1UT09>

Meeting ID: 927 7892 6887

Passcode: a4tfjp

missionadvocate@urcyorkshire.org.uk 07522 220214

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 found below on the original email. 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

GEAR

Rev Matt Stone has also asked me to draw your attention to CROSSFIRE, A Christian camp for young people ages 12+. It is organised by GEAR and is happening from 1st to 4th June (Platinum Jubilee Weekend). All details and booking information is via www.crossfire.org.uk



**Group for
Evangelism
And
Renewal**
*within the United
Reformed Church*

GEAR (the Group for Evangelism and Renewal in the URC) has been hosting a Lent series that is open to any individuals and churches who wish to join us.

Each week there will be worship, Bible Study, discussion and prayer as we will unpack the aims of GEAR. These are on Zoom on 2, 9, 16 and 23 March at 7.30pm (details available from Matt Stone - matt@hurc.co.uk), but the recordings are also available on the GEAR YouTube channel for personal or church use at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdbMiDGYKBHCwgf4bxkkQ0w>

Crossfire *A Christian camp for young people aged 12+*

Wed 1st – Sat 4th June 2022 @ Stathern Lodge, Leicestershire

Crossfire Camp is an exciting event for young people aged 12+.
We meet together each year to explore more about faith in Jesus Christ through teaching, small groups, worship and a whole range of fun activities.
Join us in 2022 for a great time of fun, meeting new people and exploring the gospel.

Crossfire is a GEAR event brought to you in conjunction with URC Youth

Book Online for Only £30 (£40 after 30th March)
Camping 🏕️ Tent hire from £5
www.crossfire.org.uk

Legacies of Slavery Consultation

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.

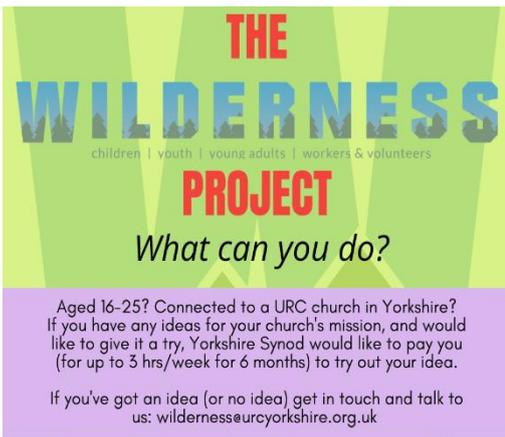
Please find here the consultation documents for easy reference and downloading:

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

Thanks again to all for your support.

With all good wishes, **Karen Campbell**, Secretary for Global & Intercultural Ministries (Mission)

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://urcyorkshire.org.uk/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

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. Full details and how to book can be found at the JPIT Conference 2022 | Joint Public Issues Team website

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.

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

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

JPIT would also appreciate some quick feedback on how we can serve congregations better and offer useful resources during the Season of Creation/Creation Time/Creationtide (1 Sept – 4 Oct every year). Could you fill in the online form (it'll take three minutes of your time) and perhaps share the link with others who might have an interest (and even those who might not!)?

<https://forms.gle/wezVu3YYnbRuxnK78>

Roo Stewart, Programme Support Officer for Church and Society roo.stewart@urc.org.uk

ECO News

 The Synod is still looking for more **Synod Green Apostles**. After Alex Jowitt's excellent overview of what is happening in both Synod and our Churches to help us meet the Eco challenge we have set ourselves there is a need 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 contact

 greenapostle@urcyorkshire.org.uk or clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk 

I also hear that the **St Andrew's Skipton Eco Group** are having an open discussion session on Sunday 3rd April at noon. As it says on the poster it is how we can be more eco-friendly in our travel, including holidays, commuting, trips to meetings etc. There is no need to book as all are welcome (and I would have mentioned it at Synod, but we didn't have the poster ready. We do now.)



St Andrew's Eco Group

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TRAVEL GREEN?

- How to travel?
- Where to stay?
- Where to go?
- What to do whilst you're there?
- How to reduce your carbon footprint whilst still having fun!

COME ALONG & DISCUSS ON SUNDAY 3RD APRIL - FROM 12PM (BRING A PACKED LUNCH) AT ST ANDREW'S CHURCH HALL, NEWMARKET ST, SKIPTON

Annual Church Returns

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

This is my final reminder in the Briefings as there won't be another issue until April. Annual Church Returns should be completed by the **31st March 2022** using the online portal. Churches who have requested paper copies should have received theirs by post. (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.*

Login details were sent from 31 January in an email from ministries.admin@urc.org.uk. Please check your inbox, spam and junk mailboxes if you have not received it. Then please can you let us know at the Synod Office so that 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 in LEPs

Why is the URC requesting an Annual Safeguarding Return from LEPs which follow a different denomination's policy for safeguarding?

Although many of our LEPs follow the safeguarding policy of another denomination, the information captured in the URC Annual Safeguarding Return will give us valuable insight into safeguarding in all local churches within Yorkshire Synod regardless of the policy they are following. The data provided is used by the United Reformed Church to develop training and support, to gain an understanding of what safeguarding is like in the local church and to gain a holistic view of safeguarding across the country.

If you are a church following another policy, parts of the URC return may not feel relevant but we would really hope that you could take the time to complete the return. Thank you for all you do to safeguard those that access your church, it really is appreciated and valued.

Safeguarding 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 – Limited spaces available and they are going fast
Wednesday 13th April 2022 – 1pm to 3pm, Monday 16th May 2022 – 10am to 12pm

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

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 and the track and trace scheme we have all got used to.

The current regulations can be found here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-and-support) with the recommendations of the URC to be found at the [Coronavirus advice - United Reformed Church](#) 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.

Please don't hide these events and resources in your inboxes or within the trees hiding your own churches' woods. Why not send the 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 due on 6th April. All you need to do is get in touch with me at

clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk.

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

