

The Briefing – Number 89

4th August 2022



This edition sees me in holiday mood. I'm heading off with the family for a break so the next issue of the Briefing will be in 3 weeks' time, rather than the 2 weeks that has been the (nearly) usual sequence over this past few months. It will give me a chance to recharge the batteries, spend time with the family and this time see somewhere new.

The past few months in the URC has seen us grappling with the "new". As we come out of the confines of the Covid-19 restrictions and look around at how we can reconnect with our local communities we find ourselves

in a new place. Much of what we may have hoped for as we returned to our churches is now no longer possible. Synod is acutely aware that there has been a fall-off in the number of people physically attending our traditional services at our traditional times. Similarly the idea that we have to provide a traditional service in a traditional setting using traditional hymns and prayers is being challenged. New ways of doing "church" have been developed: online services, streamed events, catch up bible studies – all these things are able to be accessed, not just at 10.30am on a Sunday morning, but throughout the week.

This is why the URC's Jubilee is such an important event. It offers us as a denomination the opportunity to reset ourselves, to look again at what we are doing as Christians and to be able to proclaim the Gospel anew. This was very much the message from the recent General Assembly, and below there is a list of the key resolutions which will have a bearing on what each of our

churches need to consider in the weeks months and years ahead. It is not a comprehensive list and I would urge you to read the full reports that are available through the URC website at [General Assembly papers - United Reformed Church](#) and in particular via the Assembly Business Digest [Assembly-Business-Digest-2022.docx \(live.com\)](#) & [Assembly-Business-Digest-2022.pdf \(urc.org.uk\)](#). To keep up with all the events associated with the Jubilee here's the link [Our 50th Anniversary - United Reformed Church](#). Indeed, for those who are interested in going there is an opportunity to be part of the stewarding team at Church House and Central Hall on 1st October. More details below.



Watch this space as well for other things that you have been doing through the summer. This time of the year sees many churches hosting Holiday Clubs, Youth Events and Outdoor Services. Please drop me a line and a picture so that we can celebrate with you, and maybe even borrow some of your ideas.

General Assembly Follow Up

I am extremely grateful to my esteemed fellow Clerk, Rita Griffiths, of Mersey Synod, who has put together this very useful ready reminder of some of the key resolutions which have a direct effect on all of us within Synod.

Resolution 52: UK Asylum Policy

General Assembly is appalled at the cruel and unjust nature of the UK's current asylum policies, including the plan to send some asylum seekers to Rwanda. It believes that those fleeing war or persecution should be treated fairly and compassionately irrespective of the situation which has brought them to our country. It directs the Mission Committee to prepare briefing materials and make representations to Government about these matters and **encourages all URCs and their members to write to their MPs to support this call.**

Resolution 2: Children and Youth Work Committee

Paper B1

General Assembly shares the concern of URC Youth Assembly to tackle the stigma surrounding mental ill health. General Assembly strongly encourages individuals to take part in Mental Health First Aid training, and **encourages all local churches, Synods,** and General Assembly staff and committees to help individuals access this training. General Assembly joins Youth Assembly in recommending that **local churches** strive to ensure that at least one person in leadership has undertaken this training and such training is regularly refreshed and renewed.

Resolution 4: Children and Youth Work Committee

Paper B1

To mark the launch of URC Children at General Assembly this year, the United Reformed Church resolves afresh to ensure that **all structures and councils of the church (Church Meeting, Elders' Meeting, Synod,** and General Assembly) are consistently mindful of the voice of children and of the impact of their decisions on children and future generations. To enable this, **all councils of the church** are encouraged to review how they are able to hear and respond to children.

Resolutions 17 (a) and (b): Mission Committee - Environmental Policy

Paper I2

- (a) Resolves that urgent action should be taken to reduce carbon emissions **across the whole of church life,** with the aim of reaching net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030.
- (b) Adopts the Environmental Policy (link below), and instructs the committees and bodies under its control, and encourages associated bodies (including Trusts, the Retired Ministers Housing Society, and Resource Centres for Learning), **Synods and local churches to adopt as a minimum the practices it sets out.**

[Environmental Policy - United Reformed Church](#)

Become a Greener Church – see [Become a greener church - United Reformed Church](#)

Affirmative Action Towards an Anti-Racist Church

Paper E1

A report to Assembly on the work so far of the Affirmative Action Task Group was presented. The report outlines actions the Church can take to improve appointment processes. Its recommendations include promoting 'positive action' as best practice, making anti-racism training mandatory and introducing mentoring.

Introducing the report, Karen Campbell, pictured, said it was not about positive discrimination but about levelling the playing field.

<p>The resolution before Assembly endorsed the work of the group and asked them to continue with it, bringing firm proposals to the 2023 Assembly. It was passed unanimously.</p>
<p align="center">Resolution 16: Mission Committee - Reinvigorating the ecumenical vision of the URC Paper I1</p> <p>b) General Assembly reminds Synods and local churches that joint or ecumenical members of LEPs have always been and remain members of the United Reformed Church, not just those who were members of the URC at the formation of the LEP.</p>
<p align="center">Resolution 18 (b): Mission Committee - Korea Peace Appeal Paper I3</p> <p>b) General Assembly commends the Korea Peace Appeal and urges Synods, local churches, and individuals to sign the Korea Peace Appeal in solidarity with ecumenical partners in Korea.</p> <p>Click on this link to sign the appeal https://united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/korea-peace-appeal</p>
<p align="center">Resolution 2: Children's & Youth Work Committee – Mental Health First Aid Paper B1</p> <p>URC Youth Assembly reaffirms its commitment to tackle the stigma surrounding mental ill health. Youth Assembly strongly encourages individuals to take part in Mental Health First Aid training and for local churches, Synods and General Assembly to look into ways to help individuals access this training. Youth Assembly asks General Assembly to join it in recommending that local churches strive to ensure that at least one member of the leadership team has undertaken this training</p>
<p align="center">Resolution 8: Finance Committee - Possible one-off payments to ministers and lay staff Paper G2</p> <p>General Assembly resolves that, as a gesture of good will towards those serve the Church centrally and bearing in mind the recent energy cost increases for many, with the likelihood of further energy price rises to come later in the year, a gross payment should be made together with October 2022 stipend and salary payments amounting to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £800 in the case of each office holder in receipt of a stipend under the URC Plan for Partnership; and • £500 in the case of each 'Church House' employee. <p>General Assembly urges Synods and local churches to consider these issues for their staff.</p>

All the decisions can be found on the main URC website, but as a resume, you can do no worse than downloading the digest document here [Assembly-Business-Digest-2022.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Lay Training news

As mentioned at General Assembly the **Newbigin Pioneering Hub** is up and running to offer a space for Pioneers to connect and learn. The first of these lay training courses will begin in September 2022 and will be run by Seedbeds and the Church Mission Society (CMS). The Hub will be cited in a current and active Pioneering project at Lodge Road URC/Community Church, Birmingham.



If you are interested in finding out more, please email info@seedbeds.org or contact ministries@urb.org.uk

Church Events and News

THERE'S A FAMOUS SEASIDE PLACE CALLED KIRKHEATON THAT'S NOTED FOR FRESH AIR AND FUN

I know that Kirkheaton is nearly as far from the seaside as you can get around here, but there is plenty of fresh air and fun there.



No beach holidayno problem!

As the six week summer school holiday drew closer, at Kirkheaton the church there become increasingly aware of the rising cost of holiday accommodation at the seaside resorts, especially during the busy months. In response we decided to offer a beach holiday for families with young children without them even leaving the village – an opportunity to ‘Holiday at Home’

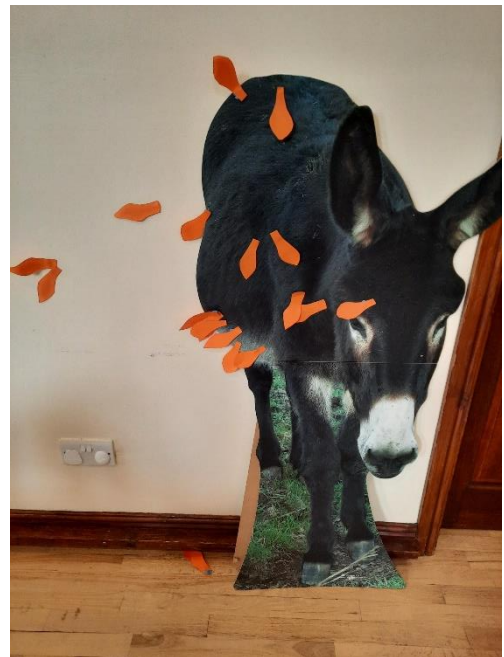
To do this we turned the church into a seaside venue and the village became ‘Kirkheaton on Sea’ for a whole day.

Bunting went up and a sand pit, ball pool, volley ball court, beach balls, tent, skipping ropes, rocking horse, picnic mats, hoola hoops and even the life size cardboard

donkey (usually part of the nativity display) became part of the venue. There were games, crafts and a story-time on offer throughout the day. Thirty children came with their families who brought their own picnic and we rounded off with ice cream treats for everyone.

The Holiday at Home had gone down well and we hope has been a real blessing to families in the village during the summer break.

Worth noting is that ‘Holidays at Home’, using adapted formats could be offered to folk of different age groups who are unable, for all sorts of reasons, to enjoy a summer break at the coast.



LYCiG

The **Leading Your Church into Growth Northerly Synods’ Conference** will be taking place between 7th and 9th November at Hinsley Hall, Leeds. Each of the 5 Northerly Synods has been allocated a set number of places, but there may be more places available than first thought as one or two of the synods may not be able to fill their allocation. Keep an eye on all good URC websites and Briefing newsheets for further updates.

Looking further ahead, the URC LYCiG team are looking at doing a national LYCiG conference for the whole of the denomination. Keep June 2023 clear in your diaries.....



Hybrid Church Meet-up

Wednesday 7th September 2022
7:30-9pm

Come along to
YOUR space to
share and learn..

- Share ideas and good practice 
- Hear valuable, experienced input 
- Gain inspiration on Children's and Youth Work, Community Outreach, Technology and Worship 






For more info, email:
jenny.mills@urc.org.uk;
dan@media4ministry.co.uk



Meeting ID: 892 8553 7599
Passcode: 655777

Children and Young Peoples News

THE BIG DAY OUT


Ticket sales are open and will not close until Friday 9th 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 4 tickets and look out for the special coach funding offer.

Here's a quick reminder of what is on offer

<https://youtu.be/Ec4zHtt0BW0>



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



Month-long prayer initiative to launch for children across the URC

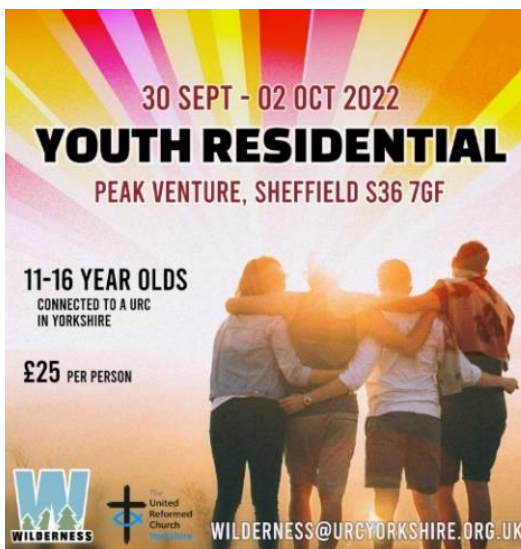
As many of you will now have heard, URC Children, a new umbrella for children aged 0 to 12-years-old connected with the United Reformed Church (URC), has been launched this month through a new prayer initiative.

All local congregations are invited to 'Pray like Hannah' across the month of July for children. Children have always been important to the life of the URC, and as we celebrate our 50th anniversary, it seems timely to renew this commitment formally.

The URC General Assembly on 10th July marked the launch of URC Children by resolving to ensure that all structures and councils of the church (local church meeting, Synod and General Assembly) are consistently mindful of the voice of children and of the impact of their decisions on children and future generations.

More about Pray like Hannah can be found [here](#).

Finally, if you are thinking of running a holiday club in your own church this year or working ecumenically with others to run something similar, whether for children or intergenerationally, you may be interested to look at our second book of holiday club materials which is now available on our website or by request as a digital copy. **Timetravellers** takes children and adults on a whirlwind journey through time to talk with children from Bible times and bring back what we learn to help us in our walk with Jesus today and in the future. It comes with video dramas, original music and a range of appendices to help you adapt for different settings. You can find it on <https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people/children-youth-work/time-travellers/>



The Wilderness team is organising a YOUTH RESIDENTIAL at the end of September. This will be at Peak Venture in Sheffield and details of how to book can be found here:

<https://forms.gle/xp1oYgrzG5nTHgBp9>

To subscribe to the Wilderness newsletter click here [URC Yorkshire Synod \(list-manage.com\)](#)

National News

Jubilee Weekend

As planning continues for the URC's 50th Jubilee events on Saturday 1 October, the good folk who are organising the Jubilee weekend are asking for your help in promoting the three events on offer, and recruiting stewards to help ensure the smooth and safe running of the day.

With regards to stewarding, help is needed at Open Church House to welcome visitors, guide them around the building and help manage safety and security. Support is also needed at the Worship Service, especially with serving Communion, which will, in many cases, involve carrying trays of bread and wine up flights of stairs. **If these are things you, or anyone you know, might be able to help with, please email 50@urc.org.uk as soon as possible.**

In terms of promotion, the Service of Worship at Central Hall, Westminster, the Open Church House event and Walk to Westminster now each have their own tab on the events page, giving information about each event in a more accessible way. These can be linked to directly in emails and social media posts as follows:

Service: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/our-50th-anniversary/50th-anniversary-tickets/#service-of-thanksgiving-and-celebration>

Open Church House: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/our-50th-anniversary/50th-anniversary-tickets/#open-church-house>

Walk to Westminster: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/our-50th-anniversary/50th-anniversary-tickets/#walk-to-westminster>

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss anything further, please contact

Andy Jackson

Head of Communications

The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

020 7916 2020 | 50@urc.org.uk | www.urch.org.uk

Come to church at Greenbelt

The URC turns 50 this year and we're having a special service at Greenbelt to celebrate! Come to church at Greenbelt on **Sunday 28 August**, which will begin with one of the largest and most memorable communion services you've ever been part of, listen to superb music from Guvna B and Martyn Joseph, and join us for a special 50th birthday party that reflects the rich diversity of the URC.



Throughout the bank holiday weekend, there is a full programme running in the new café which challenges and inspires, equips, and entertains. Worship, discussion, music, bedtime stories and superb crafts on our theme of 'Revoltin' Christians' combine with great coffee and tea, delicious treats and affordable meals. All this plus the adventurous and epic Greenbelt programme means that this will be an unforgettable time for everyone who comes. For more information, head over to our URC@Greenbelt page:

<https://urc.org.uk/greenbelt/>

From our colleagues and friends in Citizens UK

We're excited to tell you about a new opportunity to join us at [Still Small Voice](#), a residential 5-day retreat at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, taking place from Monday 12th to Friday 16th September 2022. This retreat is aimed at a range of participants: those in ministry and ministerial training, lay and ordained; from those relatively new to Community Organising through to veterans of the craft. During this retreat, you will explore that ground, with a particular focus on contemplation and action; mysticism and resistance. How do we balance these in our own spiritual/organising lives, and how can we enable our faith communities to be renewed and re-energised by embracing that balance too?

We will bring to that exploration a spirit of 'co-creation' – everyone will participate by taking some kind of leadership role – learning and growing together. If you have any further questions, please email the learning team at learning@citizensuk.org

Safeguarding News

Due to the high demand for the **Safeguarding for Elders** training, a new webinar date has been booked for those who missed out earlier in the year. The next one will take place on Wednesday 5th October at 2pm and full details are available from Carrie Kaunda, (who is for those who may not know the safeguarding training and development co-ordinator for the denomination.) It will be approximately 90 minutes long, and to book please contact Carrie direct at Carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk



Sometime soon the national Safeguarding team will be publishing a quarterly newsletter. It will be sent around to all church safeguarding leads and will be available to download from the URC

Website's Safeguarding page at [Safeguarding - United Reformed Church](#). If you struggle to download let Paula know via safeguardingsupport@urcyorkshirenorthern.org.uk and we'll get the latest issue across to you.

In the meantime however, please be aware of new legislation surrounding an amendment to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which now includes an offences for a person in a position of trust within a religious setting. More details here <https://urc.org.uk/new-law-includes-religious-settings-in-positions-of-trust/> or from Paula Kitson at safeguardingsupport@urcyorkshirenorthern.org.uk.

Worship Resources



The URC's new **Worship Notes** initiative is now up and running. They are designed to help everyone who plans worship and will be found on the URC website here www.urc.org.uk/worship-notes. They are in digital format and can be easily downloaded. They will help those who need to plan worship in a hurry, they will give refreshment to hard pressed Elders, Lay preachers and

Ministers, and they can either be used as they are or adapted for local use.

The notes are planned to be released at least a month before the Sundays to which they relate so as to facilitate good planning and put them on the URC website so you can always find them quickly! To find out more visit www.urc.org.uk/worship-notes and to get reminders each month [You can sign up for these emails here](#).

Heritage Open Days

The Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust has been in touch inviting churches to get involved in an exciting new initiative - **Yorkshire Churches Day (YCD)**.

Their vision for Yorkshire Churches Day is to have one day a year when all places of worship in the region open up and showcase the history and heritage found inside their buildings. It is a wonderful opportunity to show off the value of the many historic religious buildings in Yorkshire both as places of worship and important centres for the local community.

The aim of the day is to encourage everyone to visit their local church even if they have never stepped foot inside a church before. It will be a day for those who are curious about the history and heritage of their local surroundings and to find out how our church buildings are still active places of worship.

This year Yorkshire Churches Day is being run in partnership with the Heritage Open Days (HOD) initiative on **Saturday 10th September**. Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, when thousands of people come together to celebrate their heritage, community and history.

To take part, a church needs to register on the HOD website [Homepage | Heritage Open Days](#) by 31st July, open up on 10th September and explore missional and fundraising events to hold on the day.

Full details of the signing up process and help and ideas about publicity can be found at <https://www.yhct.org.uk/yorkshire-churches-day/>

For more details please contact Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust through Tom Ramsden the YHCT Chairman at generalenquiries@yhct.org.uk or through their website <https://www.yhct.org.uk/>.



NORTHERN
COLLEGE

VACANCY

Tutor in Ministerial Formation

Northern College is seeking to recruit a full-time tutor in this role which focusses on the personal and practical formational development of students. It is an occupational requirement that the postholder be a URC minister of word and sacraments, or a CRCW, with at least three years' experience working with local churches. An MA is essential as some teaching (dependent upon the postholder's experience) would be part of this role.

Preferred start date January 2023. URC stipend + tutor uplift + housing allowance.

Contact rosalind.selby@lutherking.ac.uk for the job description and person specification.
Closing date for applications 30 September: Interviews early October.



NORTHERN
COLLEGE

<https://northerncollege.co.uk/>

Keep exploring our
websites for up-to-date
information on courses
and events



LUTHER
KING
CENTRE
FOR THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

<https://www.lutherking.ac.uk/>



The Management Team of the St Cuthbert's Centre, Holy Island invites you to a

Gift Day

being held at the Centre on
Saturday 3rd September 2022, 2pm - 4.30pm
(safe crossing times 10.55am - 6.35pm)

An opportunity to visit the newly refurbished building and to see the plans for the garden,
based on ideas by the late Ruth Crofton
Refreshments will be available

Donations towards the upkeep of the building, the development of the garden, and the
ongoing ministry of this unique place will be very welcome, from individuals and congregations

Further information from:

jeanwbarr@btinternet.com (07762 195516)

alison.shiel@hotmail.co.uk (0191 281 3417)



If you are unable to join us but wish to support the work of the Centre please contact
Jean Barr, details above.

KELD RESOURCE CENTRE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOW ROW WITH KELD URC 2022 STUDY DAYS



There are now just two Study Days left this summer at the Keld Resource Centre. The next one is on **Saturday August 6th** with **Revd David Wood** leading on **“Seeking the Ancient Paths: Old Testament Spirituality for Today”**

The programme for the day is:

10-30 – 11.00 : Arrivals and refreshments

13.30 - 15.00 : Session Two : All Change

11.00 - 12.30 : Session One : The Good Life

15.00 - 15.30 : Refreshments and departure.

12.30 - 13.30 : Lunch

You are invited to bring a Bible and a picnic. We will provide the drinks! The cost of the day is £10. We would love to see you!

If you are interested in attending, please contact David Wood at david.wood4@btinternet.com

The final Study Day is on **Thursday September 1st** with **Revd Trevor Pitt: Looking at Green Theology**



Property Transactions Coordinator London

**Permanent contract, 35 hours per week
Salary: £37,216**

**Are you a solution focused individual with experience of property sales and purchases?
Our small team provides high quality housing services to our retired ministers.**

The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society is a community benefits society providing housing for church ministers in retirement. We own and manage around 280 properties dispersed across England, Scotland, and Wales. In this role you will be responsible for the administration of buying and selling properties for the Society, being the main liaison between all the parties.

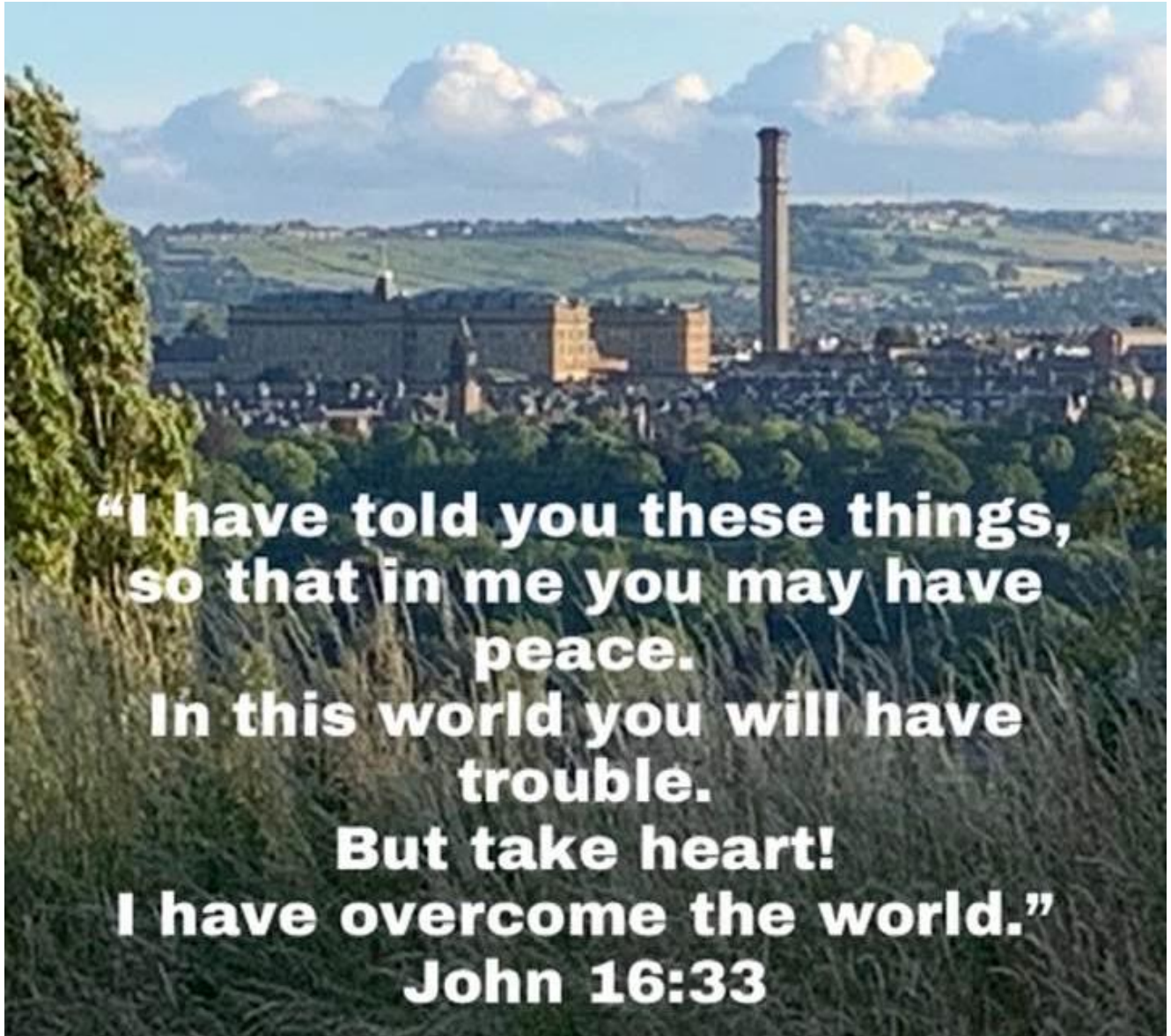
You will be educated to degree level, have experience of working in the housing sector and possess working knowledge of the conveyancing process. You are an excellent communicator with an aptitude for negotiation. Highly organised and able to determine priorities, you will also be a team player willing to support your colleagues. Good interpersonal skills including diplomacy, confidentiality and careful listening are essential.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment: based at Church House in London with hybrid working from Church House and from home a possibility.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form (noting that we do not accept CVs):

**Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urc.org.uk/vacancies**

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Monday 15 August 2022 Interview date: Tuesday 23 August 2022



Thanks to Ashley Evans, our Synod Evangelist for this image, which was uploaded to the Synod’s Facebook page. You can keep an eye on all our social media platforms for news; on the website at [Home - URC Yorkshire Synod](#), the Facebook pages at [United Reformed Church in Yorkshire - Home | Facebook](#) and [Wilderness URC Yorkshire - Home | Facebook](#), the YouTube page at [URC Yorkshire - YouTube](#) and the Twitter page at [URC in Yorkshire \(@URCYorkshire\) / Twitter](#).

Please don’t hide these events and resources in your inboxes. 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 25th August. All you need to do is get in touch with me at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk.

Tim Crossley

Synod Clerk