



Yorkshire Synod

Somerset House
St Paul's Street
Morley
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Yorkshire Synod

Briefing

Number 103



9th March 2023

Yorkshire Synod March 2023 Meeting

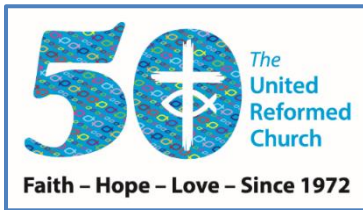


Saturday 11th March will see representatives from all our churches gather at the Synod Spring meeting. It was to have met at Holme URC in Bradford, but this is not to be. Instead we will be meeting at **Herringthorpe URC** in Rotherham. Hopefully by now the papers have been sent to Synod representatives and to Church secretaries. Please keep this meeting in your prayers as we look forward to Yorkshire's Missional Synod year.

At this meeting we will see how the Synod has taken its first steps in its promotion of the framework offered by the 5 Threads of Mission which we adopted at the October meeting. Throughout the day those threads of Sharing, Building, Partnering, Loving and Inviting, will be at the heart of what we do. Not only that but we will be looking to bring these threads out to all churches in the Synod so that we all can be witnesses to Jesus in our words and actions.



URC Anniversary Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration and Open Church House event



The URC has announced that the new date for its Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration is **Saturday 15 April 2023**. In an ideal world there would have been a longer gap after Easter, but despite that the hope is that as many members and friends of the URC will be able to join us for our delayed anniversary celebrations. The Open Church House event at 86 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9RT, will also take place on

April 15 from 10am-12 noon.

Tickets

If you have a ticket and are able to come to the event on April 15, please do nothing - your ticket is still valid. If you would like more tickets, please visit <https://bit.ly/urc50> and amend your order. However, if you are no longer able to attend, again visit <https://bit.ly/urc50> and select Cancel Order. This will free up your tickets for others. Or email 50@urc.org.uk and we can cancel the order for you.



Anniversary Choir

If you would like to sing in the Anniversary Choir, you can find out more details and the dates of the rehearsals by visiting <https://bit.ly/urc50-choir>

Stewards and enquiries

If you are able to volunteer as a Steward at the service, please email 50@urc.org.uk which is also the email address for any enquiries relating to the new date.

For more information on the new date and the plans for the celebration, please visit [New date announced for URC's Jubilee service - United Reformed Church](#)

General Assembly 2023

General Assembly, the full meeting of the United Reformed Church, has gone back to annual gatherings (from an earlier pattern of meeting every 2 years). This year, General Assembly will take place between 30th June and 3rd July, at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. Each Synod is able to send 16 representatives, comprising ministers, lay people and 2 'under-25s'. We are particularly looking for any lay people who would like to be involved in General Assembly – an opportunity to be involved in discussions about the current and future work of the church, and to



listen to varied speakers and conversations. If you are interested in learning more about General Assembly, you can look at the links on the URC website here [General Assembly, Assembly Executive & Assembly committees - United Reformed Church](#). If you would be interested in attending this year, could you please contact the Synod Clerk at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk. Some of the places have been allocated and their names will be brought to the March 2023 Synod for approval. However not all the places are taken so please get in touch for either this year or for subsequent years.



Lay Training news

Shaping Worship: Creation's Climate Crisis – responding in faith

The Spring Zoom Conference of the Joint Liturgical Group (JLG) of Great Britain nears and it looks to be exciting!

Planning to attend? Here's how!

Wednesday 15 March 2:00-5:30 on Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85184771951>

'Shaping Worship: Creation's Climate Crisis – responding in faith'

*We have arrived at, or passed,
our Earth Environment's Crisis/Kairos Moment
– how can worship help us wake up?*

Spring Conference sponsored by the Joint Liturgical Group of Great Britain

Everyone is welcome to attend.

No registration fee; donations appreciated

Themes & Presenters:

- **Creation Power** -- *Can scientific truth wake us up?*
 - **Dr Kim Holmén**, Special Advisor at Norwegian Polar Institute
- **Bible Power** – *Can the Bible wake us up to Climate Chaos?*
 - **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby**, former Principal of Northern College and Biblical Tutor at Luther King Centre, Manchester
- **People Power** – *Can we wake up our congregations?*
 - **Steve Hucklesby**, Policy Advisor for JPIT, Joint Public Issues Team
 - **Revd Dr Tamas Kodacsy**, European Christian Environmental Network, leads the Eco-congregation movement in Hungary
- **Worship to wake us up**
 - **Phillip Mellstrom**, Worship and Development Worker, Church of Scotland
 - **United Church of Zambia**, Liturgy from 'Sensitization Sunday on our Environment'
 - **David Williams**, Composer - 'We hold the Key', a new hymn
...the land mourns, and all who live in it languish --Hosea 4:3a NRSV



<https://jlg.org.uk/>

Yorkshire Synod Discipleship Development small grant fund 2023

During 2022 the Ministries Committee were pleased to authorise 8 different applications to the national small grant Discipleship Development fund which used up the whole of the £2000 Yorkshire Synod was allocated. Happily Synod has had confirmation that the same amount will be available during 2023. If anyone wants to discuss an application before submitting it please contact the Convenor of the Yorkshire Ministries Committee, Kath Lonsdale at kathlonsdale@talktalk.net. Remember this is for any age to apply so please discuss with your young people as well as adults.

KELD RESOURCE CENTRE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOW ROW WITH KELD URC

NEW FOR 2023 : STUDY DAYS



Our next study day will be held on Wednesday April 5th- the Wednesday of Holy Week. It will be led by Revd. Frances Biseker, our minister in residence that week, and her husband John.

Cross Purposes

Understanding the cross, death and resurrection of Jesus in today's world.

The programme for the day will be as follows:

10.30 : Arrivals and Coffee

13.30 : Session Two

11.00 : Session One

15.00 : Refreshments and Departure

12.30 : Lunch

There will be discussion, sharing, space to ponder

All participants are invited to bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be provided. The cost for the day will be £10 per person.

To book your place, please contact Revd David Wood via david.wood4@btinternet.com

There will be three further study days in the summer. Watch this space!

Lay preachers and Worship Leaders Weekend

'Preaching Trauma and Resilience – Bible and World'

at the Wydale Conference Centre, Brompton by Sawdon near Scarborough

<https://www.wydale.org>

We are pleased to say that registration for our second **Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders weekend at Wydale Conference Centre** is **NOW OPEN**. This will be **7th – 9th July 2023** (Friday teatime to Sunday lunch).

We are excited that Dr Megan Warner, Old Testament lecturer from Northern College, will be our main speaker at the conference, and that once again we will be joined by our Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack.

This weekend will again 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 with the office at office@urcyorkshire.org.uk or 0113 289 8490.

Yours in Christ's service

Kath Lonsdale, Anne Dale, Jill Fletcher, Rod Morrison,
Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders Planning Group

For any queries, please contact Kath at kathlonsdale@talktalk.net 01274 315203 07759525936

Safeguarding news

Our Safeguarding team have just announced another series of courses for both Foundation Training and Intermediate training. Although Foundation Training can be accessed online they are also aware that some folk prefer to do it in a more traditional way – even if it is on Zoom!!

The Intermediate Training will always be direct training, with 2 sessions being offered on Zoom and one in person.

Safeguarding Foundation Training

5th April 2023 – 7pm to 9pm – Zoom

Safeguarding Intermediate Training

16th March 2023 – 10am to 12.30pm – Zoom

21st March 2023 – 1pm to 3.30pm – Zoom

25th April 2023 – 6.45pm to 9.15pm – in person training at Herringthorpe URC, Wickersley Road, Rotherham, S60 4JN. Places are limited on this course so please book early.

If you need more information, please contact Paula Kitson, our Safeguarding Support Officer at safeguardingsupport@urcyorkshirenorthern.org.uk

DBS VERIFIER and SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING



DDC VERIFIERS AND SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING DATES 2023

Are you a DBS verifier for your church?
Are you involved in the recruitment of staff or volunteers?

These sessions will run back to back so you can book on one or both of them

If you missed the training in 2022 then Please book onto one of the following training dates...

February 28th 1.30pm – 3.30 pm
April 18th 6.30pm – 8.30pm
June 13th 6.30pm – 8.30pm
September 12th 6.30pm – 8.30pm
November 15th 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Training will be delivered on zoom



DBS VERIFIER TRAINING 1 HOUR

The training will cover

- The role of a Verifier?
- Service features and benefits
- The support and assistance available to Verifiers Recent changes at the DBS
- Eligibility
- Blemished disclosure process
- FAQ's and real case studies

SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING 1 HOUR

The training will cover

- Learning from Past Cases Preparing to Recruit
- Preparing to Recruit
- The Selection Process
- The Interview Process
- After the Interview
- Pre-Appointment
- Starting Employment

TO BOOK: Please contact Emma Pearce at emma.pearce@urc.org.uk



Caffeinated Companions

Caffeinated Companions has now been running successfully at **Brackenhall URC** in Huddersfield since September 2022. With a range of different community members choosing to join throughout the sessions, varying from week to week. These include family members of children engaging with the various activities running in Northfield Hall on Tuesdays.

During December Brackenhall URC decided to extend their offer to include craft activities, both to attract in more/new people and also to enhance the experience for existing users, these activities included, upcycled Christmas cards, Christmas tree decorations and wreath making.



At the beginning of January one of their founder members sadly unexpectedly died. In the light of this they decided to offer the opportunity to make yarn flowers throughout January. These flowers were then shared at the funeral, which was attended by a number of people from caffeinated companions.



Now in February and they have decided to utilise the session on 21st February to host a Pancake party and invite as many people as possible in to share pancakes with us.

Penny Weynberg, one of the Brackenhall URC Elders commented; *“I have been surprised how many 'theological' conversations have happened at Caffeinated Companions. Caffeinated Companions has enabled and strengthened relationships between church members and the local community, several of whom are continuing to regularly attend the sessions.*

On our first session of the year we were visited by 2 different people who are actively involved with helping people find support and activities in our area. We were able to share information with them, learn from them and put them in touch with each other.

Energy Efficiency and Places of Worship

Recently we have been receiving a few enquiries from churches asking about how they can reduce their utility bills or how to be more energy efficient. Sadly there is no quick answer, but this useful page on the Historic England website may hold a few pointers. On the [Energy Efficiency and Places of Worship | Historic England](#) site, advice is given on saving energy, reducing heat loss and reducing energy used for heating as well as other hints and tips about maximising what you already have. The office also has a “Save energy, reduce your carbon footprint & keep warm this winter” checklist that is another useful tool to help make your buildings warmer places.

Winter Warmer Initiative grants from the Yorkshire Synod Mission Fund are still available



The Yorkshire Synod is acutely aware of the challenges facing many people in our communities with the prospect of huge increases in energy bills this winter, and beyond.

We are pleased that some congregations are already responding (and intend to respond) with initiatives to offer warm spaces for their communities and Synod would like to help with this.

We would encourage congregations (and groups of churches, including ecumenical partners) who are planning such initiatives to apply to the small grants stream of the Synod Mission Fund for help (grants up to £2,500)

To ease the burden and speed of administration the Synod Mission Fund Panel are relaxing our normal procedures for applications as follows:

1. Applications can be made at any time directly to the Synod Clerk at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk. The applications will then be dealt with between SMF Panel meetings as soon as possible.
2. Use and attach the small grants form found at [Forms - URC Yorkshire Synod](https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/181121-Synod-Mission-Fund-SMALLER-grant-application-form.docx) ideally this one <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/181121-Synod-Mission-Fund-SMALLER-grant-application-form.docx>
3. Please insert the title "Winter Warmer Initiative" followed by the Church (or lead Church) name into the Mission Project Name field on page 1 of the form AND in the e-mail subject field so we can pick up applications quickly.
4. Please be very brief in question 1 (Your Project). Some description of what you are doing will be helpful but there is no need for too much detail describing the purpose of your project and how it helps the mission of your church.
5. Churches can still apply for an additional grant towards Winter Warmer initiatives even if they already have applications for other projects in train, submitted recently, or planned for the near future.
6. Churches can apply if your Winter Warmer initiative has already started.
7. We would still like to see indications of offers of match funding plus your latest accounts. Some indication of how your own energy bills are being affected will also be helpful. Insert this in the form at question 3 (How much of this can your church contribute?). Costs of the project for which you request funding must relate directly to the initiative. This includes anticipated additional energy costs but not normal energy costs.
8. Applications towards Winter Warmer initiatives can be submitted up to 31st March 2023

We look forward to receiving your applications. Please come back to either the Synod Clerk, Tim Crossley or the Synod Treasurer, Rev Simon Copley via the office with any questions you may have.

You will also be pleased to know that the Yorkshire Synod budget for 2023 includes £100,000 set aside to help churches in Yorkshire with the challenges of their own normal energy costs. This is in addition to £2 million that is being set aside by the URC centrally to help churches in all Synods.

Keep an eye open for further updates.

Update: New Energy Bills Discount Scheme

We have also been made aware at Synod that the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance has published updated information on the Energy Bills Discount Scheme which will support UK businesses, charities and the public sector with their energy bills. This scheme, to assist non-domestic customers – including places of worship – with their energy bills from April 2023 – March 2024 can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bills-discount-scheme>. In addition there is a useful Factsheet here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-discount-scheme-factsheet> and the Heritage Alliance have produced a useful summary here <https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/blog/government-announces-new-energy-support-for-business/>

For most customers, a discount on the price per unit will be applied automatically via energy bills. There are some conditions relating to the kind of contract which the customer has with the supplier. In most cases, this will mean a rise in the unit cost of energy from April 2023 compared to what is being paid now, but it will still be below the market price.

The Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (CLAS) has also advised that charities (including places of worship) can check whether they are currently paying the correct rate of VAT on the fuel that they purchase. <https://www.gov.uk/vat-charities/what-qualifies-for-relief>. Contact your supplier if you believe that you may qualify for a refund.

A small number of places of worship may qualify for an additional reduction through the ETTI (Energy and Trade Intensive Industries) scheme. This will apply to 'places of worship which are a historic site or building or a tourist attraction; or which house a library, archive or museum'. They will need to apply for this additional support, however more information including the application process is not due until end of March 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bills-discount-scheme>

The list of eligible sectors is here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1128033/230104_ETII_List_for_gov.uk.pdf and 'historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions' appears only at the end.

Before any grant application is sent in, can you run it by the Synod Team first, please? This is to ensure that both churches and Synod can work in tandem to reduce the financial pressures we are all feeling.

Sharing



Prayer Handbooks, new Elder lapel logo pins and the 50 Hymns for 50 Years book, along with the other jubilee books, Golden Threads, Traditions and Transitions and Steve Tomkins' That They All May Be One are all available via [The United Reformed Church Bookshop - books, resources, gifts and more \(urcshop.co.uk\)](https://www.urcshop.co.uk)



Gift Aid claims on digital donations

Churches and chapels that have installed card-readers to take casual donations by visitors should note the following: HMRC has issued new [guidance](#) which states: "Donations made using digital platforms, credit card or debit card may incur an administration fee which reduces the actual amount received by the charity. Subject to the normal qualifying conditions, *the gross donation paid is eligible for Gift Aid*, regardless of any processing fees incurred by the charity. The charity may treat these administrative fees as charitable expenditure. Where the charity is unable to demonstrate a clear audit trail of administration fees incurred Gift Aid should only be claimed on the net donation received" [our emphasis].

This might be an opportunity to claim more Gift Aid.

Holiday Forum - Inclusion through Invitation



Join us online on **Saturday 18th March** for your chance to meet our theme and worship leaders and get a taste of what to expect at our summer conference in August.

The morning will feature worship led by Rev Ruth Watson, a taster theme session with Michael Harvey and a virtual farm tour with Forum's resident farmer, Abi Howl. The evening will see a family quiz and breakout rooms to socialise with Forum friends.

Use this link to join us - all are welcome!

Further information about timings for the day will follow - keep a look out on the Facebook page and group

Saturday 19th - Friday 25th August 2023 The Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire

Visit our website to find all you need know about the main conference in August. Don't forget to **book early** as places this year are limited!

You'll also find information about financial support to come to Forum via the bursary fund. We're blessed to have received URC funding again this year to support attendance.

We can't wait to see you soon!



Inviting



LENTEN LUNCHES AT THE KING'S WAY CHURCH, OSSETT

King's Way Church, Ossett, will again be having lunches on Tuesdays during Lent. These will take the form of a modest meal of soup and a roll, followed by a talk given by a visiting speaker.

There is no charge, but there will be a retiring collection for the speaker's charity.

Tues. February 28th	PAFRAS
Tues. March 7th	MND
Tues. March 14th	THE LINDA YOUNG FOUNDATION
Tues. March 21st	CAUSEWAY
Tues. March 28th	EMBRACE



All at 12.30pm until 1.30 p.m. at the King's Way Church Hall.

Contact Christine Whitworth if you are able to plan your visit at christine_whitworth@hotmail.co.uk, but please feel free just to come at the last minute – everyone will be very welcome.

YOU'RE WELCOME COURSES

The Education and Learning part of the URC is again running its "You're Welcome" courses again. This year there are two versions of the course, which brings in elements of courses that have run in the past, in particular "Ethos and History" and "What is the URC?"

1) The Zoom sessions which take place from **Friday 9 – Saturday 10 June 2023**. These sessions are for accepted candidates entering EM1, and are in fact mandatory for them. Over the last 2 years, however, we have extended the invitation to new Church House and Synod admin staff, and also Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers.

2) The residential course at Westminster College, Cambridge, which runs from lunch on **Monday 2 October through to mid-morning on Wednesday 4 October 2023**. This course has always been for ordained ministers of other denominations working in Local Ecumenical Partnerships and also for those on Certificates of Eligibility. In recent years we have also invited Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers, AALP trainees and new Synod field staff e.g. Training Officers and CYDOs. The sessions are led by staff and resource persons from the URC and Westminster College. Please note there is a **fee** for this course (£150 last year and the year before) and this fee, plus the delegates' travel expenses, should be covered by their URC synod.

Both versions of the course include sessions on the history of the URC, what it means to be part of the URC and its mission today, and how to be intergenerational and intercultural.

For more details and further information please contact Philippa Linton, the Administrator to Education and Learning at philippa.linton@urc.org.uk.



YOUNG ADULTS COFFEE

FREE COFFEE @ 10:30AM!

25 FEBRUARY - SHEFFIELD

11 MARCH - HERRINGTHORPE URC (SYNOD MEETING)

22 APRIL - LEEDS

20 MAY - YORK

15 JULY - HUDDERSFIELD



Join 'Wilderness Young Adults' on
Facebook for more info!

Or email

wilderness@urcyorkshire.org.uk



United
Reformed
Church
Yorkshire



MILTON MOUNT FOUNDATION

Secondary Education

The Milton Mount Foundation offers bursaries to assist with the cost of secondary school fees to the children of Congregational and URC ministers, and also to the daughters of members of these churches. Subject to the availability of sufficient funds, it may also be possible to provide grants to assist with the cost of school uniform and educational trips for ministers' children at both state and fee-paying schools.

Higher Education

Bursaries are offered to daughters of Congregational and URC ministers **starting their first undergraduate degree** in autumn 2023. Bursaries are also offered to those beginning a **first postgraduate degree**, for up to three years. Subject to sufficient funds being available, similar grants may also be available for sons of ministers.

For further information and application forms, please contact the Secretary, Mrs Rosie Hopkins, at miltonmountfoundation@gmail.com or on **01252 715087**.

The closing date for all applications for the 2023-24 academic year is **10 May 2023**.

Yorkshire Synod - Elders' Conference

Saturday 22nd April 2023 10:00am-3:00pm

Bilton Grange United Reformed Church,
Harrogate, HG1 4LN (and online option)



Elders' Conference - 'Resilience'

*Do you sometimes wonder how to cope with yet more change, new ideas, new technology and a changing social context. Our Annual Elders Conference to be held on 22nd April 2022 at Bilton Grange will give us all some time to think about some techniques which might help. Our subject is **Resilience** – with the dictionary definition 'an ability to recover quickly from or adjust easily to, misfortune, change or disturbance': this will be an interactive, flexible and fun day conference exploring the importance of resilience in church leadership. Participants will have the opportunity to connect with others from churches across Yorkshire, learn about the science of resilience, and practice activities that help develop resilient individuals and communities.*

The conference will be led by Rev. Dr. Adam Scott, Principal of Northern College and has experience of Pastorate and Chaplaincy Ministries along with extensive experience in the field of Psychology.

We aim to run this as a hybrid event with in-person and virtual access.

To book your place please contact Val Morrison –

valmorrison7@btinternet.com - 01302 530109



URC retreat
FOR CHILDREN, FAMILY
AND YOUTH WORKERS



Tuesday 23rd May from 10am-2pm

**Potteric Carr Nature Reserve, Mallard Way,
Doncaster, DN4 8DB**

Time to be, reflect and
share together

Contact Hannah Dey to book on
hannah.dey@thriveleeds.org.uk

Partnering



'No. 84', Redcar, Cleveland

Is New Monasticism catching your attention? Does being part of a small innovative residential missional community appeal?



Does taking time out to think and pray through new possibilities, or taking a gap year feel timely?
Are you excited by new ways of being and doing Church?

From Spring 2023 onwards for those aged 18 and over, Redcar has a rare opportunity in the Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church to become part of a household of three living within a simple Rule of praying, eating, studying and serving together while accompanying Redcar United Reformed Church & Redcar Baptist Church in missional presence in Redcar.

If needed, a modest maintenance allowance is available.

You are invited to register your interest by Friday March 31st 2023.

Information packs available from
Lisa McAvoy, Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church, 4 College Lane,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8JJ. Tel 0191 232 1168

lisa.mcavoy@urc-northernsynod.org

For an informal chat contact Sue Walker on 0787 335 4171

Biblesusan@aol.com

You can also 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. Please send the Briefing around your own church mailing lists as these events are for everyone, and 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. Keep an eye open for the next Briefing due on 23rd March. All you need to do is get in touch with me at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk.

Tim Crossley

Synod Clerk