



Yorkshire Synod

Briefing

Number 121



21st December 2023

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year

Thank you all for reading and reacting to what I bring to you in each of the Briefings during the past year. It really is a privilege to be able to share what we are doing in the Yorkshire Synod. From coffee mornings and those small, but important, acts of mission to the big events and grand plans, I have learnt that what is done in our Synod is all for the work of God's Kingdom.

A key factor in all of what I bring you is information – in a way our own gospel to the Gospel which we are called to proclaim. Please don't hold back from letting me know what you have all been doing as well as what you are planning to do. What may be a small spark in one part of our Synod may burn brightly in another, so don't be backwards in being forwards and spread the Good News.

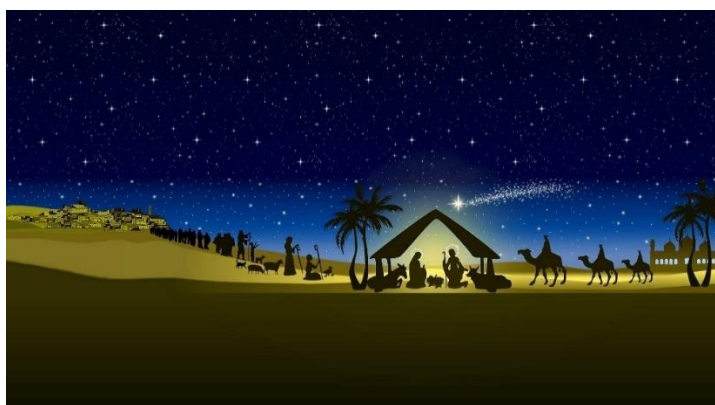
So, from the Synod Team and I, may you all have a warm, healthy and merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

The Yorkshire Synod Office will close for Christmas from lunchtime on **Friday, 22nd December**

and will re-open at 8.30am on **Tuesday 2nd January 2024.**

(Emails to office@urcyorkshire.org.uk will be occasionally monitored during this time for anything urgent)

From all at the Synod Office, we send our blessings and wish you and your churches Peace and Joy this Christmas and for the coming New Year.



*Jamie, Tim, Jane, Alastair, Simon, Ashley,
Megan, Matt, Paula, Carrie, Anne, Hayley, Rachel and Sally*



Q. How did Joseph and Mary weigh baby Jesus at birth?

A. They had a weigh in the manger.



Loving



Candle Remembrance

For loved ones who have died

Saturday 23rd December 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Space and time to remember

There will be opportunity to light candles in memory of loved ones and to write their names on a tag and hang it on a Christmas tree

Come along for as much or as little time as is helpful to you

Idle Upper Chapel, Westfield Lane, Idle, BD10 8PY

Revd Jamie Kissack will be leading the 'Yourchurch' (online URC congregation) Midnight Christmas Eve Communion Service on Zoom at 11.30pm on Sunday 24th December.



For more information on [yoURChurch](https://yourchurch.org) please visit the website at [yourchurch](https://yourchurch.org) and follow the links there. It really is a place of community for people to share in fellowship, prayer, and a life of faith.



WINTER COAT EXCHANGE

Available to anyone
who would like to
donate a coat or needs
one, no questions
asked.



OPEN:
Mondays and
Thursdays, 11am-1pm
Sundays, 12-12:30pm

There is a bell on the
front and back of the
church.



**Stainbeck Church
Stainbeck Road, Leeds,
LS7 2PP**

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

Inviting

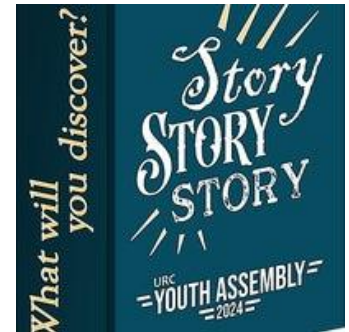


URC Youth Assembly and Leaders' Gathering

Each year the URC Youth Assembly brings together a diverse group of under-25s from across Scotland, England and Wales for a weekend of business and fun combined, exploring issues and topics relevant to Church, society and life through workshops, seminars, discussions and creative activities. It is a weekend to have your say, make friends and find fellowship.

In 2024 the Youth Assembly and Leaders' Gathering will be held at Whitemoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffs from 26th to 28th January and is for all young people associated with the United Reformed Church in any way. The age range is from Year 10 (England and Wales)/S3 (Scotland) up to and including 25.

This is the last call for bookings: the cost is £149 and talk to your church or synod about help with funding if needed. So book your place at linktr.ee/urcyouthassembly2024 by 2 January or contact children.youth@urc.org.uk for a booking form.



Holiday Forum in a Day - Saturday 24th February 2024

Save the date! Join us on Zoom next February 24th for [HF in a Day](#) and have a taste of what to expect at next year's summer conference.

The Holiday Forum team will be joined by **Rev Fiona Bennett** who leads our theme and **Rev Kuraone Mutimwii**, our worship leader. They'll give us a flavour of their sessions to whet your appetite and there'll be other things to get stuck in to throughout the morning and later in the evening (full timetable TBC).

The day will run in two parts: from 9.30am-12.30pm and then from 7.30pm-9.30pm (with the option to join from 6.30pm to meet and share dinner virtually).

Don't forget, places for the summer conference (Sunday 18th to Friday 23rd August 2024 at The Hayes & online) are limited to just 100 this year and lots have been filled already, so [book early](#) to avoid disappointment!



Q. What is it called when a tree takes some time off?
A. Paid leaf.



Sharing



URC :: Spirituality

broadening and deepening prayer

Spirituality in the Reformed tradition covers a wide range: it includes people who are enriched by deep explorations of scripture, or sitting in silence, encountering God in the world, or exploring things in quiet days and retreats.

This new web site brings together some of these strands as a way of encouraging people to broaden and deepen their spirituality. There are ways of interacting with others, taking part in events, sharing something of the spirituality that takes place in private, and looking at spiritual direction.

Members of URC spirituality can join in discussion groups on this site and network with other members. [Click here to join.](#)

URC spirituality came into being as a result of a re-visioning of the United Reformed Church Retreat Group, which, earlier in its story, was called the URC Silence and Retreats Network. At the 2023 General Assembly it was agreed that the new Worship Faith & Order committee would have oversight of URC spirituality and that it would report to them on an annual basis. There is an ongoing process of reviewing and renewing this activity and gradually it will be moving out of online-only activity. For example, our website www.unc-spirituality.org.uk could be a place to advertise local retreats, quiet days and other events and place, which would be especially useful for folk on the edges of Synods.

At the moment this is a small group - some still around since the S&R Network days and others invited in and we need to broaden our constituency somewhat. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining us at this actually quite exciting time, then get in touch with Kathryn Price (revdrkmprice@gmail.com) or our secretary Ann Barton (ann.barton@hotmail.com) and an invitation and zoom link can be sent out.

You will then receive information about upcoming online events for Advent and Epiphany, which I hope you will be able to circulate in your own networks. These events are free join and currently the dates are -

- **Living Wisely** - a quiet day for Epiphany (three separate sessions: morning, lunch and early afternoon) - Saturday 6th January 2024

Do please get in touch - let the URC Spirituality group know what is happening where you are, so that they can develop a greater sense of community around the church.



Q. Why was the baby jalapeno shivering?

A. Because it was a little chilli.



Building



URC training Nurturing resilience

Following on from the sessions earlier in 2023, Children's and Youth Work and Education and Learning offer another opportunity to come along to four new sessions, looking at resilience.

10 January 2024:
Compassionate Welcome
17 January 2024:
Inclusive and Expansive Language
24 January 2024:
Understanding Wellbeing
31 January 2024:
Spiritual Care

Session leaders:
The Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young
The Revd Dr Adam Scott

For more information
and to sign up:
www.bit.ly/Resilience4churches



Following on from the success of the URC Training sessions earlier this year, Children's & Youth Work and Education & Learning are offering four new sessions on **RESILIENCE**, led by Alex Clare-Young and Adam Scott.

Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young (they/them or just their name) is a URC minister in Special Category Ministry developing a new faith-based community in Cambridge City Centre. Alex is an Associate Tutor at Westminster College and is also a writer, facilitator and activist, creating content around LGBTQ+ identities, neurodiversity, compassionate/trauma awareness and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) more broadly. Alex enjoys using creativity - in words, music, craft and design - to express their commitment to social and eco justice and to bring people together.

Revd Dr Adam Scott is Principal of Northern College, a NSM URC minister and a chartered psychologist. He loves to explore where psychology and faith intersect and has a particular interest in wellbeing, mindfulness and human flourishing.

10 January 7.15-8.45pm: Compassionate Welcome – with Alex Clare-Young

Compassionate awareness is also known as trauma awareness. We will consider faith-based trauma, safe spaces, brave spaces, and the practice of compassionate welcome together at an introductory level.

17 January 7.15-8.45pm: Inclusive and Expansive Language – with Alex Clare-Young

This is an opportunity for anyone who compiles or writes liturgy, prayer, worship, song or copy in a church context to explore and workshop what our URC commitment to inclusive and expansive language may look like in practice.

24 January 7.15-8.45pm: Understanding Wellbeing – with Adam Scott

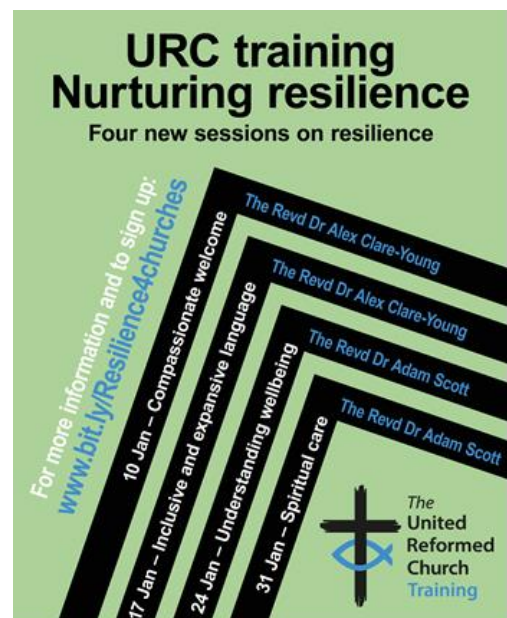
Wellbeing is about a broad understanding of health and relates to not only our physical or mental health, but also our happiness, pleasure and sense of meaning. This session will explore how people of faith can nurture their wellbeing in practical and enjoyable ways.

31 January 7.15-8.45pm: Spiritual Care – with Adam Scott

There is much talk about resilience in the church today, and the importance of self-care and community-care in the development of resilience. In this session we will specifically look at the role that spirituality and spiritual resources can play in enabling us to effectively care for ourselves and others.

To register for these sessions, please go to Eventbrite URC Training or click on this link:

<https://bit.ly/Resilience4churches>



5 Northerly Synods LYCiG

Rev Ashley Evans, our Synod Evangelist writes: At the end of November a whole load of us from across the 5 Northerly Synods of the United Reformed Church, plus a few guests from different parts of the URC, met together in Preston for our annual LYCiG [Leading your Church into Growth](#) conference.

What a fantastic time we had learning, sharing and planning all about how we might change our culture and fulfil the 'great commission' and grow our part of the Kingdom, through our churches. Some fantastic feedback, which will help shape our future.

It was fantastic, meeting some wonderful people who all had one desire, to grow our churches. To be a part of God growing His church. If you have let the fire dim why not turn the heat up and pray specifically for growth and focus on being a welcoming and inviting Church. Or invite me to your elder's meeting of special services to share more about how you too can become a growing church.



Lectionary Planning

The Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Planning Group are pleased to let you know that we are facilitating another of these sessions in the New Year.

They invite you to Explore the lectionary readings together on Thursday 11th January. There will be two identical sessions, the first session being at **10.00am** with a second repeated session at **7.30pm**.

Facilitated by Rod Morrison in the morning and Jill Fletcher in the evening, this will be a time for participants to look together at the lectionary readings for 21st January, 28th January, 4th February and 11th February in preparation for leading worship on those Sundays.

Please register your interest with Rod Morrison at rodmorrison1946@btinternet.com by Friday 5th January, indicating whether you will join in the morning or evening or if you are available for either, so if necessary we can balance the groups so both sessions are viable.

Both events will be held on Zoom and the link for the sessions will be sent on Monday 8th January to all who register.

Please share this opportunity with anyone who leads worship in your church, whether on their own or part of a worship team, especially if they are new to this calling, to help us reach those who are not on our circulation list.

Yours in Christ's service
Kath Lonsdale, Rod Morrison, Jill Fletcher and Anne Dale
Yorkshire Synod Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders Planning Group.

Partnering



SAFEGUARDING

Matt Knowles, our Lead Safeguarding Officer tells us that the team will be providing constant Safeguarding cover to both Yorkshire and Northern Synods throughout the Christmas and New Year period. Each officer will have an out of office message on saying that if there is any issue at all then to contact the generic safeguarding email address at safeguarding.1and4@urc.org.uk

This inbox will be monitored every day over the period (including Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day) by a member of the safeguarding team. This member will deal with any issue that is raised at all. This means that any issue will be acted upon quickly and that no church will have to wait until the festive period is finished to get to help and support.

As with everyone else in the Synod, the Safeguarding team will be returning to back to full operating hours on the 2nd January 2024.



URC launches new safeguarding guidance - Good Practice 6

On 23 October 2023 the URC launched Good Practice 6. You can read more from the URC national website by clicking [here](#). A copy of Good Practice 6 will be posted to all church-based Safeguarding Coordinators, Synod Safeguarding Officers and Moderators. You can also read a free digital version of Good Practice 6 by clicking [here](#).

Forthcoming Training Sessions

The following dates in 2024 are still available for Intermediate Safeguarding Training via Zoom with Matt Knowles.

Wednesday 10th January, 7pm – 9.30pm
Tuesday 23rd January, 10am – 12.30pm

Monday 5th February, 1pm – 3.30pm
Saturday 17th February, 9.30am – 12.00pm

If you are unsure as to whether you need to do the foundation (basic) training or the intermediate training Please click [here](#) to read Paper T5 which was adopted at last summer's General Assembly. It details the roles and levels of training required. Members wishing to book a place should have completed the foundation e-learning package prior to the date of the Intermediate course. For more information or to book your course please [email](#) Paula Kitson as soon as you can as spaces are limited and are being taken up rapidly.

Additionally, the Safeguarding team are looking to do several face-to-face Intermediate training courses throughout the Northern and Yorkshire areas. If you wish to nominate your church to potentially hold one of these courses, could you let Paula or Matt know.



Q. Why don't skeletons like summer?
A. Because they have no body to go to the beach with.



UK Wide Safeguarding Training 2024



Foundation Training can be accessed via our Elearning on the Learning Hub [here](#)

All training listed below will take place via zoom.
Bookings can be made by emailing Emma.Pearce@urc.org.uk

Domestic Abuse	Jan 17 th 1.30pm	June 4 th 6.30pm
Modern Slavery	Jan 30 th 6.30pm	October 8 th 1.30pm
Refugees and Asylum Seekers	March 6 th 1.30pm	September 17 th 6.30pm
Adult Safeguarding	April 18 th 6.30pm	October 15 th 1.30pm
Spiritual Abuse	May 8 th 1.30pm	November 11 th 7pm
Online Safety	November 19 th 1.30pm	
Safeguarding for Pastoral Workers and Elders supporting Survivors	Jan 25 th 1.30pm	June 11 th 6.30pm
Substance Abuse	Feb 27 th 6.30pm	October 3 rd 1.30pm
Safeguarding for Ministers supporting Survivors	March 18 th 6.30pm	September 25 th 1.30pm
Elders as Trustees	January 31 st 1.30pm	May 14 th 7.00pm
DDC Verifiers Training and Safer Recruitment	February 8 th 1.30pm	May 30 th 6.30pm
DDC Verifiers Training and Safer Recruitment	October 28 th 6.30pm	December 4 th 10.00am



Q. What do mummy cows read to baby cows to get them to sleep at bedtime?
A. Dairy Tales.

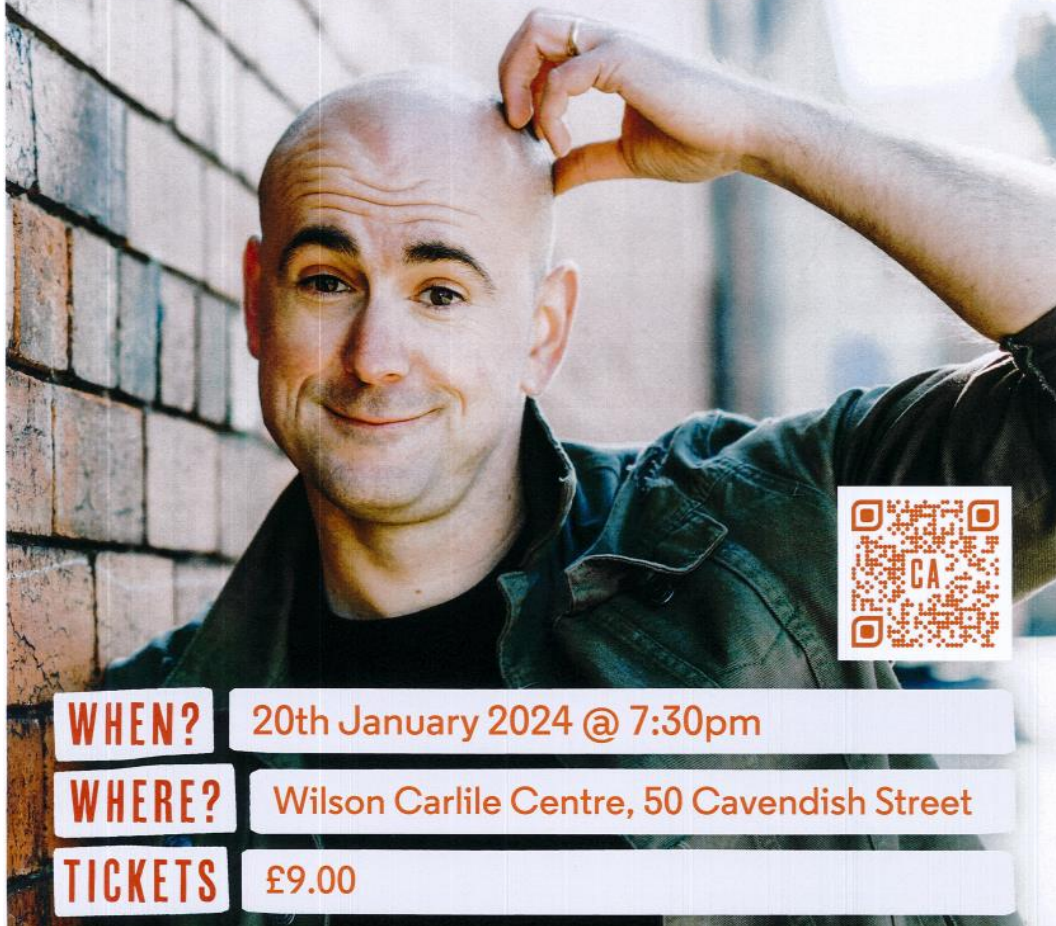


"TOSSES OUT COMIC GEMS IN AN ALMOST PROFLIGATE MANNER" YORKSHIRE TIMES

COMEDY NIGHT WITH ANDY KIND

"ABSOLUTELY TERRIFIC"

THE SCOTSMAN



WHEN? 20th January 2024 @ 7:30pm

WHERE? Wilson Carlile Centre, 50 Cavendish Street

TICKETS £9.00

The Church Army in Sheffield is hosting a Comedy Night with Andy Kind at 7.30pm on Friday 20th January, at Wilson Carlile Centre, 50 Cavendish Street, Broomhall, Sheffield S3 7RZ. Andy is a preacher and award winning comedian (calling himself a 'promedian') and gets great reviews.

Synod is in partnership with the Church Army at Darnall URC in the Attercliffe and Darnall Centre of Mission. You can see much of what is happening there in Briefing No 105 from April 2023 or at [Attercliffe And Darnall Centre of Mission - Church Army](#)

Tickets for the event are £9 and all proceeds raised will be going to the frontline work of the Church Army, transforming lives through the love of God. Tickets can be purchased through the QR code on the poster attached or online at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/charity-comedy-night-with-andy-kind-tickets-764057044187>

If you have any questions please contact Rachael at the Church Army by email: rachaelrookwilliams@churcharmy.org or by telephone: 0114 551 2604



Programme Manager

18 months - 2 year Fixed Term contract,
35 hours per week
Salary: Circa £60,000

Are you an experienced and gifted programme manager seeking the opportunity to support meaningful change?

The United Reformed Church is going through a period of change which we have initiated as our Church Life Review. This phased national programme covers 13 Synods and 1200 churches from Cornwall to Orkney.

The programme is complex and multi-faceted. Phase 2 is committed to designing new and sustainable models of sharing resources across and between the 13 Synods and multiple legal entities. Its design will offer effective operational services to churches to support congregations, as ways of creating new church communities are explored. Phase 3 implementation will follow any recommendations arising from the design phase.

We are seeking a gifted individual who can hold the strategic picture of reconfiguring complex structures and simultaneously understand, and be sensitive to, the significance of change on church congregations, assisting us with navigating this transition. Working with the General Secretariat, Assembly Business Committee, standing committees, churches, and Synods across the UK, you will be responsible for delivering the Phase 2 design. A key skill will be to balance time constraints with the imperative to consult widely on aspects of church life which will affect many and may include complex and technical issues.

You are educated to degree level, or equivalent experience, with project management qualifications. You will be highly motivated, solution focused and have excellent interpersonal skills to bring the programme to completion within budget and identified time frames. Experience of complex project management and transformation is essential. Your understanding of collaborative change will be underpinned by your excellent communication skills. Your ability to handle complex projects and technical issues, and yet engage with all parties and communities of interest with confidence and assurance, will be key to the success of this phase of our Church Life Review.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment, working from Church House and/or from home.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please send an application form to:

Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urchurch.org.uk/jobs

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Friday 5 January 2024 Interview date: Tuesday 23 January 2024

This post requires a satisfactory enhanced certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.



Ecumenical Officer

Full time, 37.5 hours per week
Salary : £40,710 per annum

The North Western Synod of the United Reformed Church stretches from the Scottish borders through Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and into parts of Cheshire and Derbyshire. The Synod's purpose is to help local churches in their mission to reach out to the people around them with love, truth, justice and peace and to make this world more as God wants it.

The Synod wishes to appoint an Officer who will support and facilitate the churches of the North Western Synod in their relationships with one another and coordinate forward looking relations with ecumenical partners. Whilst it could be, there is no requirement for this role to be filled by an ordained minister The Officer will be pro-active in encouraging and developing the principles and practices of ecumenism throughout the Synod.

You will

- lead the work of the Synod towards visible unity with all Christian denominations;
- develop and implement a Synod policy on ecumenical commitment within its Missional Partnerships;
- identify potential for new ecumenical possibilities;
- support officers, committees and others in developing constructive and practical approaches to ecumenical partners.

You will be home based, although work closely with the Synod office in Salford. You will work alongside relevant committees and officers from Synod, local churches and wider ecumenical colleagues and those within the denomination, in developing links and relationships. You will need to be organized, and able to manage your time and administration effectively and efficiently.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please contact us for a Job Description and application form (noting that we do not accept CVs): clerk@nwsynod.org.uk or telephone 0161 769 1122.

Closing date for completed application forms: midday on 22nd January 2024. Interviews week commencing 5th February 2024



Q. What do you call a short mother?
A. A minimum.



To offer support for the Church's humanitarian support for those affected by the ongoing crisis in Gaza please visit the URC's website at [Christian Aid Middle East Crisis Appeal - United Reformed Church](#). Also please visit the [Christian Aid Appeal](#) site which includes supporting key facts and information, together with the opportunity to make donations direct to [Christians Aid](#). You can also contribute through the URC's own programme *Commitment for Life* at [Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory – United Reformed Church](#).

Finally, please let me have details of what YOUR church is doing. Let me what you plan for 2024, especially what you are doing on the weeks leading up to Lent, during Lent itself and over Easter 2024. Drop me a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and I'll showcase it in the next edition, due out later in January than usual – this time on the 18th, so you have plenty of time to get those stories to me by the deadline on Wednesday 17th January 2024.
Thank you and God Bless,

Tim Crossley

Synod Clerk

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](#).



and finally



A Priest, a Pastor and a Rabbit enter a clinic to donate blood.
The Nurse asked the Rabbit: "What's your blood type?"
The Rabbit replied, "I'm probably a type O".

