



Yorkshire Synod

Briefing

Number 147



13th February 2025

HOW, WOW and news from N.O.W.

You may have noticed that there has been a three week gap since the last Briefing, and this was down to your Clerk attending the General Assembly Executive and other meetings last week. When that decision was made, and knowing that the last issue was quite a light one your Clerk thought that this issue would also be relatively light. But boy, was he wrong.

This is a bumper issue, and one which includes great news stories which have been sent in from across the Synod, advance notice of lots of events happening in the Synod over the spring and summer and the promised a mini profile of our new starter, Tony Harris, who has taken up the role of Wilderness Youth worker in the "N.O.W." group of churches. This group of churches in the Nidd, Ouse and Wharfe group have come together with the Synod's Children & Youth Work committee and have appointed Tony as their new Youth, Children and Family Enabler. He started on Monday 27th January and I'm hearing that the foundations for his work are already being laid. And talking of foundations, one of our two "And Finally" stories continues in that theme of foundations, begun last time through our friends in Idle.

Mid-February also sees us rushing headlong into Synod meeting season. On Saturday 8th March Synod will be meeting at **Heckmondwike URC**. I am not aware that they have hosted one of our twice yearly meetings before (although I am happy to be educated) and I know that the church are looking forward to welcoming Synod with open arms. However the meeting won't be streamed out to a wider audience this time, which makes it all the more important for your church representatives to head into the heart of the Synod to join in fellowship and be part of that decision making body which supports and resources the URC in our part of the world. I hope to be able to send all the papers out (both digitally and real paper copies to those who request) before the next issue of The Briefing and I'll give a report of the meeting in the issue due out on 13th March.

Finally, my usual further call for folk to help in the running of Synod. We are always looking for people to help in the mission and direction of Synod and the URC in general. If you know of anyone who you feel could help, or if you feel as though you have a gift to offer, please follow that call and get in touch with either myself at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk or our Moderator Rev Jamie Kissack at moderator@urcyorkshire.org.uk. If you time it right, I may even ask Synod to appoint you on March 8th!!!

If you have any news of welcoming people into Church, stories of celebration and hope or even notices of future events, please let me know by dropping me a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and I'll showcase it in the next edition, due out on

Thursday 27th February 2025.

Thank you

Tim Crossley

Loving



INTRODUCING TONY HARRIS

Wilderness Hub Enabler for the N.O.W. Churches

The Wilderness Team are really happy to be able to introduce Tony Harris (seen here with his family) as the new Wilderness Hub Enabler for the N.O.W. group of churches based in the Nidd, Ouse and Wharfe group of churches. Tony started at the back end of January and here's a little message from him to us, and I pray that his welcome in Yorkshire is a warm and Christlike one.

Hi everyone, I'm Tony.

I'm a born and bred midlander who now lives in God's own County. I'm a dad of 4 boys Euan 16, Nate 12, Cody 10 and Oscar 5 and a husband to my beautiful wife Sarah (I'm not allowed to add her age). I Love Jesus, my family and Rugby League and Union and follow Coventry City FC in that order. I have been working with secular and Christian kids for nearly 20 years, and my midlife crisis was getting a theology degree to embark on my journey of making my passion a reality and privilege of helping kids and families find the Lord. I am really looking forward to this chapter of my testimony and can't wait to meet as many of you as I can.

God blessings over you all

Tony

Yorkshire Synod Discipleship Development Small Grant Fund 2025

The Ministries Committee have so far approved 20 applications to this fund since 2022 and are pleased to say that there is another £2000 available for new applications in 2025. There is a new application form as the amount which you can ask for has increased to up to £300. So if anyone wants to discuss an application before submitting it or to ask for a new application form to be sent across please contact the Convenor of the Yorkshire Ministries Committee, Kath Lonsdale at kathlonsdale@talktalk.net.

Remember this is for any age of lay person to apply for so please discuss with your young people as well as adults.

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE: LAY PREACHERS TRAINING EVENT

Suzanne Pearson of the Commitment for Life programme, <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/church-local-and-global/commitment-for-life/>, has been in touch to highlight this training event being held shortly at Luther King House in Manchester. Over the past year or so there has been a high demand from churches requesting someone to visit and lead a *Commitment For Life* services. While it is critical for the sustainability of CFL that the programme engages with congregations on a Sunday morning, this is quite a challenge from such a small team! Therefore, a special training event has

been put together at Luther King House in Manchester for Assembly or Synod Accredited Lay Preachers to help us in this task. The event will equip and resource preachers in each of the Regions we support, to assist us in leading these services. Costs involving travel, accommodation and meals will be covered by *Commitment For Life*.

As places are limited, please can you send responses to Suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk by **Friday, 14th February 2025** at the very latest (and apologies for the short notice).

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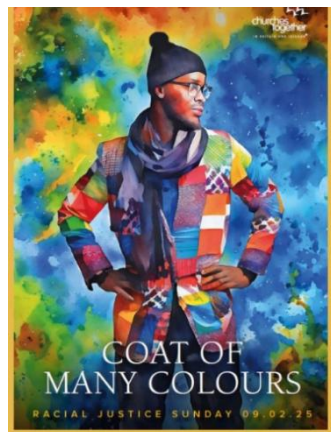
Commitment
for Life

**LAY PREACHERS
TRAINING EVENT**

- Lay preachers are invited to a fun and creative learning event.
- You will join with others to develop a Commitment for Life service of worship.
- CFL helps local congregations make global justice a key part of their mission.
- You will be provided with information, resources, hints, guidance and encouragement to help your congregation focus on global justice.

**Wed, 2nd April to
Thurs, 3rd April 2025**

Venue: Luther King House, Manchester, M14 5JP
Contact: commitmentforlife@urc.org.uk
by 14th February 2025
No Cost!



Thirty years of Racial Justice Sunday

This year's theme for Racial Justice Sunday is the 'Coat of many Colours' and the resources have been produced by the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. This year is a landmark one for racial justice as it marks the 30th Anniversary of Racial Justice Sunday. *The Coat of Many Colours* reflects the increasing diversity that exists in our churches today. Yet despite of this, the reality is one where inequality still exists in our churches and it is an affliction which continues to damage our relationship and the experience of many people of a Global Majority heritage.

So, this message comes with a thank you if you included Racial Justice in your worship on the 9th February and a request that if your preaching plan was already full, then chose another Sunday to mark this fundamental part of our ministry and mission to the world today. Please see below a prayer which can be used in worship.

[Thirty years of Racial Justice Sunday – 9 February 2025 – Churches Together in England](#)

Prayer

God, You have told us what is good. You have made clear what You require of us.
We pray that You remind us of our shared responsibility to work with You to build a better world for all.
As we seek to do what is just, help us to recognise injustice, to notice those who are oppressed or alienated.
As we sow love throughout this world, in Your mercy, guide us to the ones who feel unloved.
May we bring Your light and love into places where fear and hatred have cast their shadow.
May we walk in humility and solidarity with all around us.
Help us not to trespass or misstep on the journey towards equality and justice for all.

Amen

Racial Justice is everyone's business

With blessings,

Zaidie Orr.

Inviting



More news from the Children and Young People's Synod team

There is a lot happening around Synod this spring, and these events need to be shared around Synod so that you can be promoting and encouraging in your own churches and groups.

GrandFaith

Being a grandparent can be a joyful chapter of life. Sharing your faith with your grandchildren can be a part of this, but it can be challenging.

Join us on this four week course. We offer you tools and skills to equip you to share your faith with your grandchildren.

This **free** course runs for four weeks -

- Wednesday, 26th February 7pm - 9pm
- Wednesday, 5th March 7pm - 9pm
- Wednesday, 12th March 7pm - 9pm
- Wednesday, 19th March 7pm - 9pm

Use the QR code or the web link to book:
<https://shorturl.at/nkiQQ>

GrandFaith.

The material is largely based on the 'Grandparenting for Faith' material by BRF and is a 4-week course for grandparents who would like to feel encouraged and equipped to share their faith with their grandchildren. Our churches are full of grandparents so please do share with those you feel might be interested!

Youthscape Essentials Course

This is a 10 month course (one session per month) which has been put together for all those who already do, or who would like to work with young people. Each session of this

You are invited to Youthscape Essentials, all round training for every volunteer youth leader.

We are going to learn and pray in a community with a shared heart and hope for young people and for God.

Each of the 10 sessions includes:

1 insight into youth culture to explore

1 practical skill to try out together

1 area of Christian character to reflect on

We always start with the voice of a young person through a special recorded video, and we close by being sent out in hopeful prayer.

Whether you have been involved in youth ministry for years or you are thinking of getting involved, Youthscape Essentials is the place for you.

Running online, monthly, from Tuesday 25th February to Monday 24th November 7pm to 9pm.
For a list of dates please contact cydo@urcmerseysynod.org.uk.
To book go to <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/yse/register> or use the QR code and enter course code 1245085.



course offers an insight into contemporary culture or research into young people's lives, a practical skill to learn and develop and a personal characteristic which can be applied to building effective relationships with young people. It really is an insightful and useful course. This course and the GrandFaith course are being delivered by me and my Five Northerly CYDO+ colleagues.



There are still a few more days to book onto the **Youth Leaders Gathering** in March. This is a unique opportunity to gather with other youth leaders in URC's in the UK, and to share the company and knowledge of Ali Campbell, who will be delivering part of the weekend's program. If you know anyone who may be interested, please pass it on and let them know that the synod will contribute to their costs.

Youth FORUM 2025

Three forums so far have been planned for 2025. The first gathering is on 29th March at Heckmondwike URC. As part of the day we will be going to a local Pottery Barn for a pottery wheel



lesson and some pot painting. Other sessions include gathering at the Stag Community Church – Herringthorpe URC on Saturday 5th July, then on November 15th at St Andrew's Roundhay.

Use the QR code or the following link to book:

<https://buytickets.at/theunitedreformedchurchyork../1546359>

Joined up Conference

is for all who have a role in ministering and working with children and young people. It would be great if we could increase the URC presence at this conference, which is in Sheffield next door to Central URC. This year is the 10th anniversary of the conference and they are thrilled to have Nick & Becki Drake keynoting and leading the worship. Please do consider attending and sharing with those in leadership and working with children and young people.

Finally, some of you may be aware that the URC is part of the **Intergenerate UK** network and that there is a series of webinars being produced over 2025 about intergenerational worship. The webinar in February is around preaching. Information can be found here:

<https://padlet.com/URCCYW/training-events-and-opportunities-pb0xf9hbk6xawrq8>



Line Management Training 2025

The HR department at URC Church House are once again running their Line Management course. Having done this course, I heartily recommend that those of you who are either line managing or are thinking about employing people in your churches sign up to do the course. As well as the hour-long sessions you will be able to link into other churches who are doing just what your church is doing as well as drawing on the vast experience of the Church House staff. Although this course is for anyone working within the URC with direct line management responsibility its scope is a bit wider, so first read the URC's [Essential line management](#) on the website then sign up for the course.

Each session is from 10.00am to 11:15am on the dates below and covers the several topics.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Thursday 27 February	<i>The Basics</i>
Thursday 27 March	<i>Managing Performance</i>
Thursday 24 April	<i>Appraisals</i>
Thursday 15 May	<i>Managing Attendance</i>
Thursday 26 June	<i>Flexible Working</i>
Thursday 24 July	<i>Recruitment</i>
Thursday 25 September	<i>Equalities</i>
Thursday 16 October	<i>Policies – Capability</i>
Thursday 20 November	<i>Policies – Disciplinary and Grievance</i>

This is the final call to reserve a place on the training sessions, so please email deepti.upadhyaya@urc.org.uk with your full name, Email, Synod/Church name and Role/job title. It costs nothing, apart from your time each month, but its value is beyond measure. For more information visit: <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/guidance-support-for-churches-synods/employment-guidance/training-events-and-courses/>



NORTHERN
COLLEGE

Envisioning Worship Conference

For everyone interested in how worship affects mission

Theme: What if God is Child?

Dates: 11am on 8th March – 3.30pm on 9th March 2025

Venue: Luther King Centre, Manchester

Costs: Residential: £200, Non-residential: £120

Who is it for? Anyone intrigued by the idea of the childlikeness of God – in the midst of the smallest experiences; apparently weak but disruptive; curious, playful and imaginative; raging and dancing – and what this might mean for worship and mission. Anyone drawn to Bible explorations, creative workshops and more – and who is interested in imagining things differently.

For more information and to register, visit –

<https://northerncollege.co.uk/ewc-march-2025/>



The General Assembly has recommended that URC members and groups widen/deepen their understanding of some of the fundamental issues as to why the conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory seems so intractable.

The inter faith enabling group together with Commitment for Life are hosting a series of online events beginning on 19 February 2025 with Revd Philip Woods who will be looking at Christian Zionism's role in the questions (see below). Please do try to attend and to circulate where you think it might best be received.

Revd Dr Kevin Snyman
Programme Officer, Global Justice, Partnerships, & Inter Faith Relations

IOPT IN FOCUS THE URC ONLINE SERIES



SAVE THE DATE!

19TH FEB '25
2PM GMT



SESSION 1 OF 4

CONFRONTING CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

WITH
PHILIP WOODS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
USA

UNPACKING THE ISSUES
ISRAEL & THE OCCUPIED
PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

FOR ZOOM LINK
COMMITMENTFORLIFE@URC.ORG.UK



Invite your MP to church

Last week Heath United Reformed Church Halifax invited their MP Kate Dearden along to their church service. They had a short sermon on Jesus being political before handing the mic over to Kate who shared her motivations and story as well as hopes to continue a relationship with the church.

Thank you to Jane Simmons sharing these photos of Kate meeting church members.

Feeling inspired? The Joint Public Issues Team have asked that you [Read our guide on inviting your MP to church.](#)



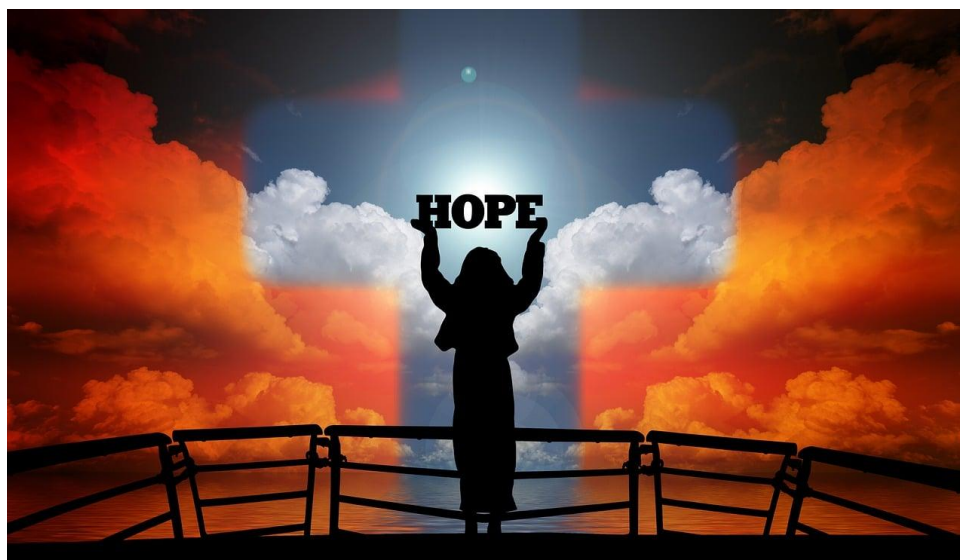
Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Weekend

"Hope in a Troubled World"

25th – 27th July 2025

(Friday teatime to Sunday lunch)

at Wydale Conference Centre, Brompton by Sawdon near Scarborough www.wydale.org



We are excited that Hannah Fytche, Associate New Testament Tutor at Westminster College, will be our main speaker at the conference, and that we will be joined by our Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack.

This weekend will again be paid for by Synod and grants so you will only need to cover your travel costs.

To register your place, contact:

office@urcyorkshire.org.uk or 0113 289 8490.

For any queries, contact Kath at:

kathlonsdale@talktalk.net

01274 315203 or 07759525936



Partnering



Plant Enabler

Shiregreen URC is a small Christian community set within a large (formerly council) housing estate in the Northwest corner of Sheffield. The multi-use buildings and grounds are enclosed within Valentine Crescent – hence the website address: www.valentinechurch.online.

We are looking for someone with a flexible view of what it means to be church to help us develop our aim to be Good News for the residents of Shiregreen and its environs. Our constant drive is to become a Hospitable Space for all who pass through our gates – as expressed in our Vision blog on our website.

We have a very practical set of premises and outside areas, which would be open to further development by someone with an imaginative and creative approach to Christian outreach and service to the community. We are looking for someone who will utilise the grounds to enable access for older people and develop a growing area for use by children and adults as an educational/therapeutic facility.

We seek someone who will maintain the premises to a high standard of cleanliness suitable for welcoming various activity groups.

Our church is part of the city-wide group of URC churches served by a team of URC ministers. The Plant Enabler would also provide an on-call maintenance service to some of the member churches in Gleadless, Pitsmoor, Meersbrook Park initially, but based at Shiregreen. The Plant Enabler would be seen as a member of the wider team of staff who work with the ministers to further the churches' work in and around the city.

If you like a challenge and are open to being challenged by our little corner of the city, please follow the link below to check out what we are offering:

<https://www.valentinechurch.online/about-1>

This is a 3 year funded post

Salary: 24 hours per week - £17,285 per annum

For an opportunity to chat about the post contact Martin Lambourne on 07708946093 or martinlambourne@me.com. Closing date for applications is Monday 17th February with interviews late February/early March.

Please visit the Shiregreen website at <https://www.valentinechurch.online/about-1> to download the fill job description and application form.

BIG DAY OUT 2025



BIG

DAY OUT



Activities :

- ✓ Bible Study
- ✓ Worship
- ✓ Crafts
- ✓ Family Theatre

Prices:

18 & over £5 &
19 - 25 £3
Under 18 FREE

A note

from the planning team:

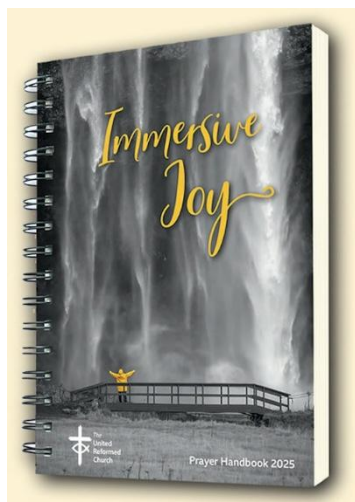
'Plans are well underway for our BIG Day Out next year. We are looking forward to seeing you at YSP to enjoy a time of fun and friendship. So get the date in the diary, get your coaches booked and spread the word!'

Saturday 17 May 2025, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Sharing



Enter your prayer for the 2026 Prayer Handbook



The deadline for submissions for the 2026 URC Prayer Handbook – Touching God is fast approaching.

Under the new editorship of the Revd Dr Susan Durber and the Revd Jonnie Hill, prayers are invited which express gratitude for, or a yearning to experience, the touch of God in our lives — moments when the sacred mystery of God breaks into the everyday, filling it with awe and wonder.

Prayers that celebrate the sacramental nature of all life, affirming the presence of the divine throughout the world we share.

Please make your submission by the deadline of 21 February. You can email your prayers for the 2026 Prayer Handbook to phb@urc.org.uk.

GOOD NEWS AT KNOTTINGLEY

On Sunday 9th February at the service at Knottingley URC (who now meet in the Salvation Army building on Weeland Road) the congregation were joined by the Synod Evangelist, Revd Ashley Evans. Not only that, but he presided over the transfer into membership at Knottingley of three people, Claire Nutt, her husband Iain and Kacie Hodgson and inducted into membership Margaret Lyons who has been very active in the life of Knottingley URC for many years, but had never become a member. Claire, who is the Synod Pastoral Elder for that part of the world, was also inducted as an Elder at Knottingley and will be working closely with them as they embark on a new chapter in the life of the church there.

Knottingley had been a church on the edge, with a building that was too much for the congregation, but the agreement with the Salvation Army to share their building has brought a breath of fresh air and I hope you can join me in praying that the green shoots reappearing in Knottingley thrive and grow in the years to come.





Ministries Support Officer London

**Permanent, Full time
35 hours per week
Circa £43,000 per annum**

Are you ready to help support the Ministries of the Church as it seeks to facilitate the whole people of God?

The work of the Ministries team provides support to all Ministries within the United Reformed Church through the work of the Ministries and Accreditation Committees. In this role you will work closely with the Secretary for Ministries as part of a small team and within the wider Discipleship team.

You will be educated to degree level, or equivalent experience. You are already working or volunteering in a ministries or mission orientated environment and have experience of leading projects as part of a team. You have excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to advocate and inspire people. Evidence of participation in discipleship development or other lifelong learning would be a distinct advantage.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly working environment; working from Church House and from home.

If you are interested in working with us and can meet the job requirements, please send your application form to:
Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urc.org.uk/jobs

Closing date: 12 noon, Monday 3 March 2025 Interviews: Wednesday 19 March 2025

**In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian*

Building



SAFEGUARDING

The Safeguarding team have asked that you are reminded that they are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year (and even 366 days in Leap Years!!). Details can be found on the Yorkshire website at <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/safeguarding/> and any query, either by phone or by e-mail at safeguarding.1and4@urc.org.uk will be answered within 24 hours.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING COURSES

The following Safeguarding Training courses are now available for 2025.
All these courses are to be held via zoom and to book a place please contact Paula
Kitson – paulakitson.1and4@urc.org.uk

Monday 17th February 2025 – 10am - Intermediate training
Wednesday 19th March 2025 - 10am – Refresher training
Friday 11th April 2025 – 10am – Intermediate training
Wednesday 7th May 2025 – 2pm – Refresher training
Thursday 5th June 2025 – 7pm – Refresher training



UNSAFE PLACES

In the first of two articles following the Makin Report into abuse in the Church of England, a survivor of church-based abuse responds

When I hear yet another story of senior clergy and church leaders covering up appalling, unthinkable abuse on a horrific scale, I hear God's heart break. Tears flow down my face and God's. Together we share in human suffering, we share in the pain of another. How can this be? So much abuse, so much hiding, so much avoidance, silencing and lawlessness – so much darkness, so much beaten, broken and bruised hearts and lives – the damage done by those whom we are expected to trust and confide in and depend upon....

This is bad news for survivors and for everyone in the Church. Can the Church ever recover from the reputational damage? I suspect not. In our fragmented, fragile world, in a society where post-truth is the norm for so many, our voice of reason, our voice of hope is diminished and very often ignored due to stories such as this. Our light becomes dull and our salt loses its flavour. The very institution that clergy have tried to protect is crippled by these happenings.

Illustration: ©Brent Clark

The church is consequently often perceived as unsafe, cold (literally and spiritually) and irrelevant. How can clergy and spiritual leaders be so convinced of God's love and be so apathetic in working out this love for others? How does being silent when we should be speaking out, ignoring abuse instead of exposing it, and being indifferent and complacent have the final word for so many. What have we become? What type of persons are we? What we do for the least, we do for Christ, he tells us in Matthew's Gospel.

Having been in ministry for decades, working in a professional capacity with and ministering to men who have convictions for sexual offences, I can testify that God's grace is enough. No matter what our story, by his grace and in his strength we can be a conduit of love, kindness and goodness in the places we find ourselves. In our weakness he is strong, in our frustration he hears our call and our sighs, our inner groans – he sees it all.

It is devastating that the Church has been on many occasions an institution whose existence was not for the sake of the smallest, the weakest and most vulnerable in our midst but instead selfishly served the interests of the powerful, the entitled, the elite and most privileged in our society.

The voices of the survivors were so often silenced until now. So much investment is being made by Churches to try to prevent these horrendous failures being repeated. And rightly so – this is to be praised. However, the road to recovery is long.

All clergy and leaders, in fact all of us, owe it to the survivors, to each other, and to ourselves to work with a sense of urgency and sensitivity in the area of safeguarding. It is great to have training, appoint safeguarding leads and have

'We must stand with and stand up for all the survivors of abuse in our presence, known or unknown'

in place robust policies and procedures to address these situations, but my plea is for all in the Church to become allies and advocates for justice. We must stand with and stand up for all the survivors of abuse in our presence, known or unknown. We must allow them to share their stories, listen to them without judgment, offer apologies, grant prayers of blessing to replace the cursing, and honour their presence and what they bring, instead of ignoring, casting

The Makin Report

The Makin Report, published in November 2024, detailed 'prolific, brutal and horrific' abuse perpetrated by John Smyth, a reader in the Church of England, in England during the 1970s and 1980s and in Zimbabwe and other African countries in the 1980s and 1990s. At least 30 boys and young men were abused in the UK and 85 in southern Africa.

In 1982, the internal Ruston Report brought the abuse to the attention of Church officers, who responded, Makin says, with 'an active cover-up'. Fresh disclosures in 2012 brought the abuse to the attention of Church authorities 'at the highest level'. An officer made a report to the police in 2013, which the report calls inadequate, including no named victims, and it did not lead to charges. Church leaders cited the police investigation as a reason not to act on allegations themselves.

Channel 4 News reported on the abuse in 2017, after the story was brought to them by Andrew Graystone, who published a book about it, *Bleeding for Jesus* in 2021. The Church of England commissioned the Makin Report in 2019, shortly after Smyth's death. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, resigned in November following criticism of his role in the Church's response to the abuse.

Appearing on the podcast Roger Bolton's *Beeb Watch*, Graystone said, 'There are at least three major church abuse stories affecting the Anglican Church that will break in 2025.'

For the United Reformed Church's response to the Makin Report, see 'News', *Reform*, December/January.

away or crushing. We must intentionally invite them to the table and into the conversation – piece by piece, little by little removing the cloak of shame, the fear and disgrace or humiliation they have experienced in times past.

We must learn to offer sacred places, forums and gatherings, places where survivors can reenvision their life and purpose, their identity and call, we must be a place where they can find truth, wholeness and God's unconditional love. Only when this is done can we begin to look for seeds of change.

As a minister who has suffered abuse at the hands of senior leaders, my prayer for all is to walk humbly, love mercy and act justly, in the words of the prophet Micah. May God break our hearts for what breaks his.

Help us, Lord, to walk in your wisdom and love at all times with all people. May we be channels of peace, restoration and healing. Amen.®

In the next issue of Reform, Sharon Barr, Safeguarding Lead for the United Reformed Church, considers how the Church should respond

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Staying safe in church buildings

The Synod Safeguarding Team is reaching out to all churches across the Synod to signpost you to the following website: <https://www.protectuk.police.uk/marauding-terrorist-attack-mta-run-hide-tell>

This website gives specific guidance on what to do if you or your local churches are faced with any instances of threat. If there is any further information that any church may need, please contact your Carrie Kaunda, the Yorkshire Safeguarding Officer straight away or visit <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/guidance-support-for-churches-synods/staying-safe-in-church-buildings/>

And Finally

An Evening with Harry at West Park United Reformed Church, Harrogate



Harry Satloka of Harry Does History entertained a sold-out crowd at West Park United Reformed Church on 1st February with tales from his bicycle ride to the pyramids.

Harry began the evening talking of the passion for history and desire for adventure that inspired him to undertake the journey. The audience was treated to a series of videos which accompanied his stories about his adventures on Rudolph, his trusty bicycle from Resurrection Bikes. Videos included guides on how to open a bottle of wine with a shoe, cross a road in Egypt, start a fire, and set up a hammock. They also demonstrated his 'top of the hill' dance, performed to the

tune of Wallace and Gromit (even after climbing 2300m in Switzerland!) Most importantly, Harry paid tribute to those who helped in along the way: good friends, new friends, complete strangers, and even a handful of dogs. Throughout the talk, the audience were enthralled, and treated to Harry's signature jokes (familiar to many!).

The evening was made possible by team of dedicated volunteers, working together for the first time. The audience were served a delightful meal, and Artizan Café provided delicious chocolate cake to cap it off.

Funds raised during the event will go to support the West Park Church project and Artizan International.

And as Harry remarks in one of the clips: 'The uphill are still tough. But I know in a day, a week, a month, a year, I'll only remember the good bits'.



The **West Park Project** aims to restore the beautiful church overlooking The Stray, whilst retaining it as a place of worship but transforming it into a vibrant community space for performance, meetings and use by local groups. It will also host a semi-permanent exhibition on the history of Harrogate, the first display for which was unveiled on the evening (rather appropriately on Harrogate's connections with Egypt).

Artizan International enables, empowers and supports people with disabilities to meet their full potential, through therapeutic craft activities and social enterprise, in the UK and the developing world.

Harry's videos from the trip will soon be available on his YouTube channel, Harry Does History. His Free Walking Tour of Harrogate will return in March, all via <https://www.harrydoeshistory.com/>

Due to the success of the evening, and a long waiting list of names, it is proposed to repeat the event in a few weeks time. Provisional bookings can be made at enquiries@westparkcentre.org.uk

More Mallets and Foundations

Following on from last time's story about the foundation mallet celebrating the construction of Idle Upper Chapel's 1950's building found in Scotland, I've received this letter from Mrs Gillian Figures, a long-standing member at St Andrew's Roundhay, with the accompanying pictures. As you will read, the challenge that our buildings present is nothing new and the way in which this was overcome at Roundhay over 100 years ago is something that we may learn from today.

Dear Tim,

I was very interested to read the article about the 'hammer', connected with the church at Idle, being rescued from a charity shop in Scotland. At St Andrew's Roundhay, we have several beautifully made mallets, each with a silver shield bearing the name of one of the children of the church. In January 1908, during the construction of the main sanctuary of what was then Roundhay Congregational Church, in order for the children of the Sunday School to feel part of the project, one of the senior teachers suggested that they should be challenged to each raise one guinea towards the Building Fund.



They were given collecting boxes for home use 'for the pennies of the children themselves and the friends who come to visit them.' No begging from neighbours! At a special ceremony on Saturday 12 September 1908, called The Children's Demonstration, the successful forty eight children presented their purses and were given a specially made mallet with which to ceremonially lay a brick with their initials baked into it. They had to repeat the words, 'This brick is well and truly laid.' The mallets were treasured by the owners and some have been presented to the church many years later.

It is poignant to identify the initials on the bricks when reading the names on the War Memorials. Many of the bricks can still be seen when doors in the vestibule panelling are opened, although some are obscured. I wonder if other churches have similar items of historic interest?

Gillian Figures



If you have a good news story from your part of the Synod or something that you feel would enhance the work of Synod in 2025, drop me a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and I'll make sure it hits the back page!!

You can also keep an eye on all our social media platforms for news; on the website at [Home - URC Yorkshire Synod](#), at [United Reformed Church in Yorkshire - Home | Facebook](#) and [Wilderness URC Yorkshire - Home | Facebook](#), the YouTube page at [URC Yorkshire - YouTube](#) and the Twitter (X) page at [URC in Yorkshire \(@URCYorkshire\) / Twitter](#).