



Minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church held on Thursday 9th October on the Zoom Conferencing platform and on Saturday 11th October 2025 at St Andrew's Roundhay, United Reformed Church.

Proceedings of Thursday 9th October 2025 via the Zoom Conferencing platform commencing at 7.00pm

1. Welcome and opening comments

The Moderator offered a welcome to all who have attended, and especially to those attending a Synod meeting for the first time.

2. Synod Convened

Synod was convened by the Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack.

3. Present

There were 35 Lay people, 10 Ministers, 1 CRCW and 5 Retired Ministers representing 39 churches, 1 CRCW project and 2 Chaplaincies.

4. Apologies

Apologies have been received from 1 Minister, 7 Retired Ministers and 8 Lay People.

5. Receiving of Papers

The Clerk moved the following:

Resolution No 1

Synod receives the report of its Council.

and

Resolution No 2

Synod receives the reports from its Committees and Groups as presented in the attached papers where appropriate.

Each of which was passed with none against.

6. Synod Finances

The Treasurer started by thanking the recently retired Mr Chris Evans and welcomed Rev Alison Micklem to the Financial Resources Committee. The FRC is currently working on funding matters and this will be brought to Synod at a future meeting.

The Treasurer then led on the papers concerning the funds accruing from the sale of closed churches. He stated that the policy needs to be more flexible so the changes proposed would allow Synod to retain all funds and to allocate it to whichever project is felt to be most beneficial to Synod. The criteria will be based on both conversations with churches in those areas where churches have closed or where amalgamations have taken place and with the wider family of churches in the Synods. Decisions of this nature will be made by a multi-disciplinary team just as the current Mission Fund panel is made up. The amalgamation policy is to be developed on the same basis to the closed policy. Currently the proceeds of a sale are equally split between the amalgamated church and Synod with the Synod portion being

released as Synod felt is needed. The hope is that conversations will take place with amalgamated churches, especially if there is a need for financial advances to allow for amalgamation to take place before final distribution takes place.

The Treasurer then moved

Resolution No 6

Yorkshire Synod, meeting on the Zoom Conference platform on Thursday 9th October 2025, resolves to adopt the Policy on the use of proceeds from the sale of property of Closing churches (September 2025) as circulated for presentation.

and

Resolution No 7

Yorkshire Synod, meeting on the Zoom Conference platform on Thursday 9th October 2025, resolves to adopt the Policy on the use of proceeds from the sale of property of Amalgamating churches (September 2025).

Both of which were passed with none against.

The Treasurer introduced the paper on the Legacies of Slavery.

The background to the URC's Legacies of Slavery initiative was outlined. Synod was informed of the request from the Denominational steering group to contribute to the denominations fund designed to create a lasting contribution towards the apology and reparations in the work being done in partnership with partner Caribbean churches.

He then moved

Resolution No 3

Yorkshire Synod, meeting on the Zoom Conference platform on Thursday 9th October 2025, resolves to donate £60,000 to the denominational Legacy of Slavery Fund, the timing of which is conditional on available property income.

The resolution passed with none against.

The Treasurer then introduced the paper on the Church Life Review Fund and outlined briefly the work that had been done denominationally over the past 18 months, which is accessible at <https://urc.org.uk/church-life-review-group/>

He then moved

Resolution No 4

Yorkshire Synod, meeting on the Zoom Conference platform on Thursday 9th October 2025, resolves the following:

- i. To endorse the proposal to establish a Church Life Fund.***
- ii. To agree to a contribution of £300,000 over an initial 5-year period, to be reviewed thereafter with a view to further substantial contributions.***

The resolution passed with none against.

The Treasurer introduced the paper on the Synod Budget as provided in the distributed Synod papers.

He then moved

Resolution No 5

Yorkshire Synod, meeting on the Zoom Conference platform on Thursday 9th October 2025, resolves to accept the Yorkshire URC Synod Budget for 2026.

The resolution passed with none against.

7. Safeguarding

The Lead Safeguarding Officer, Mr Matt Knowles introduced and expanded on the submitted paper and emphasised to Synod certain elements which are necessary for churches to comply with. In particular he emphasised the need to be as up to date as possible with all DBS checks and to ensure that all training for all those mentioned in the supplied General Assembly 2025 paper T2 is up to date(<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/T2-Safeguarding-Training-Framework.pdf>).

Safeguarding Training was emphasised, especially for those who are Elders/Trustees. Originally this group were asked to do basic training, however they are now asked to do the Intermediate training. This is very important as Elders/Trustees are the ones responsible for the good governance and welfare of local churches.

The Safeguarding team is looking to ensure that the three-year cycle is best served in the interest of local churches. The plan is to provide training in-person, but this is resource-heavy, so a request is made that those doing the training look to attend sessions in local areas and not necessarily in individual churches. Zoom based training is still available, but the Safeguarding team would prefer to do Intermediate courses in person. There are also plans to combine basic & intermediate training in the future, and refresher training will be formatted differently from the original intermediate training.

He also mentioned the move by key church insurers by which adherence to denominational policies are becoming a key feature of ensuring the validity of cover. He strongly advised that churches bring themselves up to a level whereby the insurers are happy to cover them and offered the Safeguarding team's help to churches to enable them to do that.

Conversations have taken place with some insurers and they are happy to work with the Safeguarding team and with churches to bring all relevant parties up to date.

8. Synod Rises

Synod rose after prayer at 9.00pm to reconvene at 10.15am on Saturday 11th October at St Andrew's URC, Roundhay.

Proceedings of Saturday 11th October 2025 at St Andrew's Roundhay, United Reformed Church commencing at 10.15am

9. Synod Reconvened

Synod was convened by the Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack.

10. Welcome

Rev Tim Lowe of St Andrew's Roundhay United Reformed Church, welcomed members of Synod and gave a brief outline of the work St Andrew's Roundhay URC is doing in its local community and as part of the Leeds partnership.

11. Opening comments

The Moderator offered a welcome to all who have attended, and especially to those attending a Synod meeting for the first time including Mrs Rachel Crawshaw who was appointed to the role of Company Secretary and Trust Officer on 1st April 2025 and Rev Johnny O'Hanlon who has recently been inducted into the Sheffield Team Ministry.

The Moderator also noted the following departures through retirement from the Synod: Rev Annette Haigh from the Aire Valley Pastorate and Rev Ashley Evans from his role as Synod Evangelist as well as Mr Alastair Forsyth as Trust Secretary on 31st March 2025.

12. Present

There were 47 Lay people, 17 Ministers, 1 CRCW and 4 Retired Ministers representing 47 churches, 1 intentional community and 2 Chaplaincies in attendance.

Total attendance over both sessions: 60 Lay people, 21 Ministers, 1 CRCW and 5 Retired Ministers representing 50 churches, 1 intentional community and 2 Chaplaincies in attendance

13. Apologies

Apologies have been received from 3 Ministers, 7 Retired Ministers and 13 Lay People.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2025 were presented, and with a minor typographical amendment were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Moderator.

The Clerk noted that Synod has met three times since 8th March 2025:

Firstly, on Saturday 9th August 2025 at Emmanuel St John for the induction of Revd David Coote into the ESJ/Whitby pastorate.

Secondly on Saturday 30th August 2025 at Longcauseway Church, Dewsbury for the induction of Rev Samantha Sheehan into the SPACE Pastorate.

Thirdly on Saturday 4th October at Central URC, Sheffield, for the induction of Revd Johnny O'Hanlon into the Sheffield Team.

15. Matters Arising

No matters arising have been brought to the attention of The Moderator.

16. Notices

The Clerk gave the notices for the day including the appointment of Rev Fran Kissack and Ms Lydia Raddings as tellers if the need arose for the counting of votes in any of the day's resolutions.

The Clerk also noted that the Moderator's report had been added to the digital papers late, and that it has also been printed and distributed to those in the room.

17. Date and Place of March 2026 meeting

Synod will meet again on the Saturday, 14th March 2026 at West Park United Reformed Church, Harrogate from 10.15am.

The Clerk also asked that churches willing to host Synod should contact him in the usual manner.

18. Worship

Worship was led by the Rev Jason McCullagh and Mr Edward Craig, basing the address on Luke 4:16-21 and Isaiah 6:1-6

19. Introduction to Workshops.

Mrs Megan Tillbrook introduced the format of the day whereby Synod Reps are asked to choose two of the following workshops to attend:

Introduction to Workshops – Megan Tillbrook

- Discipleship in Divided Times, led by Mr Roo Stewart and the Joint Public Issues Team
- Exploring Life, Love and Faith with Gen Z, led by Mr Matthew Willmott of the Frontier Youth Trust

- The Gift of Presence: How children and young people can transform church life, led by Mr Tony Harris and Ms Tracey Winfrow

20. Workshop One

Representatives then joined their respective morning workshop groups.

21. Pre-Lunch Announcements

- The Clerk noted that videos from the Church Life Review team, which outlined how this major piece of work is going, and from the Congregational & General's Community Awards as two of the Synod churches have been recipients this year: St Andrew's Roundhay's Forget-me-Not Café and Trinity Wilsden's Soupermums, are being shown. He offered to send digital copies of the videos to those who would like them.

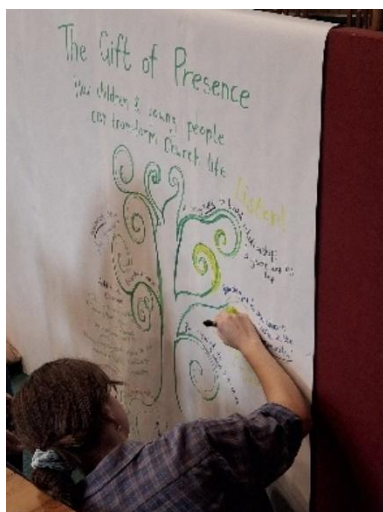
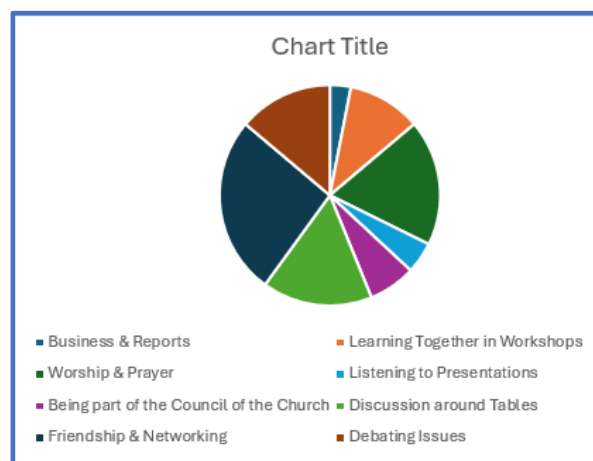
Grace was offered by the Moderator and Lunch was taken which included the showing of Community Award videos and notices regarding EAPPI and Circular Monday.

22. Workshop Two

Representatives then joined their respective afternoon workshop groups.

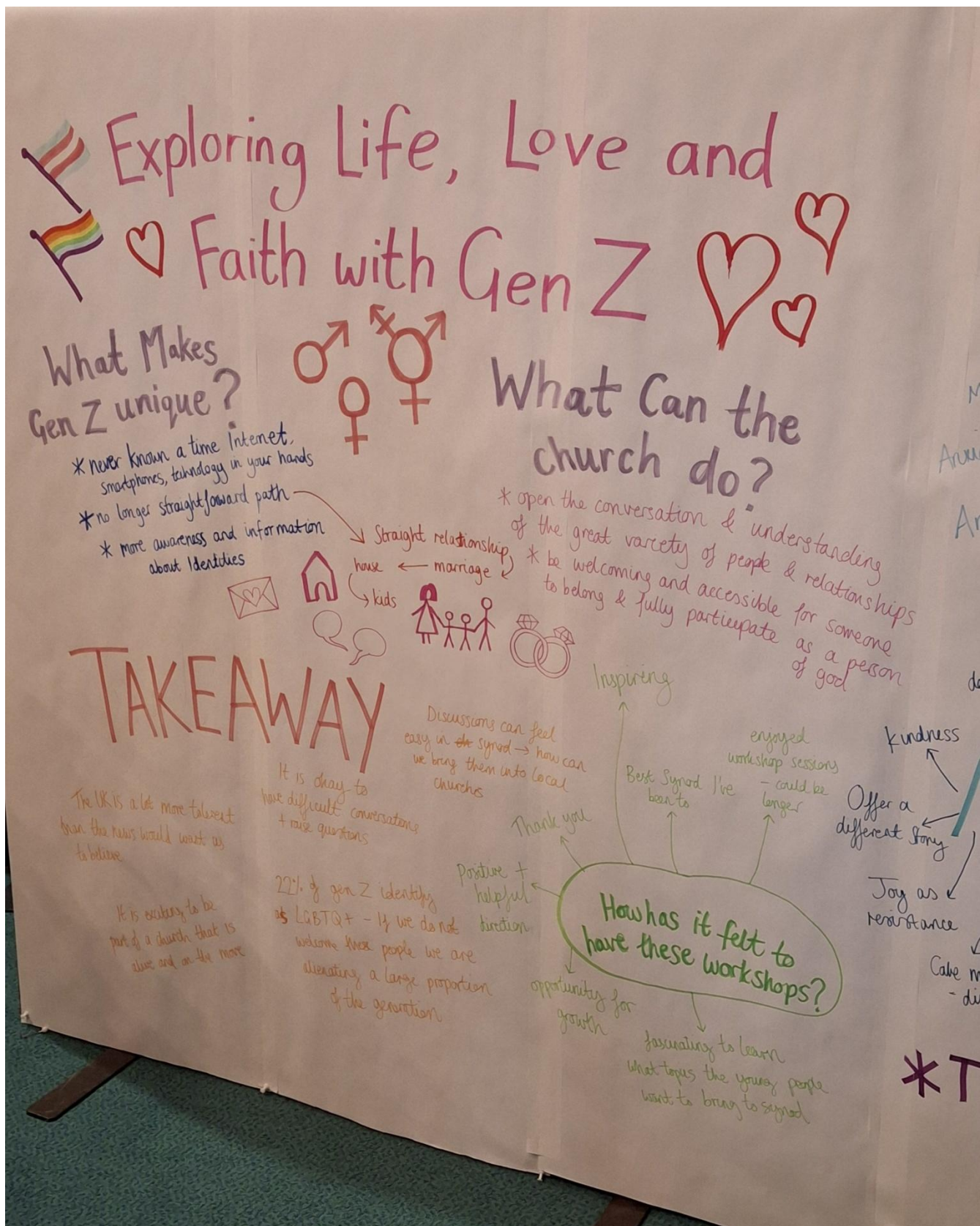
23. Workshop Round-up and initial Feedback

Revd Samantha Sheehan took feedback from the workshop sessions and offered a means to disseminate what had come from the three double sessions. Throughout the Synod an opportunity had been offered for representatives to choose which part of the Synod experience resonated best with them via a simple marking exercise. Representatives were asked to choose their three favourite aspects of Synod and from the 130 choices a pie chart has been produced. This chart will be analysed by Synod Council to ensure that Synod meeting experiences are improved.



Feedback from the respective note takers in the three workshops from their morning and afternoon sessions had been fed to Ms Emily Clarke who had agreed to translate the comments received into a visual representation on a "Mood Board" of how representatives had reacted to and were informed by the proceedings of those workshops. Rather than attempting to formally note this feedback the following pictures were taken of the completed "Mood Board".

Exploring Life, Love and Faith with Gen Z



Discipleship in Divided Times



The Gift of Presence

The Gift of Presence

How children & young people
can transform Church life

Listen!

Return
✓

Brexit

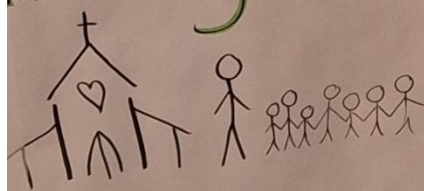
services
tion



Faith ♥

♦ **Love**

Community



encouraging people to be a link
Time into what God is saying
being church where people are

welcoming does it
feel genuine?

Those who can't
can pray for those
who can

Addressing
Challenges

- * Childrens work is exhausting
- * Culture of fear → rejection
→ not being open
about faith
- * How to measure
success?
- * How to bridge gap between
friendship & Hospitality
- * How to know what
is needed in the
community

Putting down roots

café

Holiday club

Friendship & Trust

Light party

It takes time

Don't be afraid to invite

work together

Be prepared to
change & evolve

prayer walk

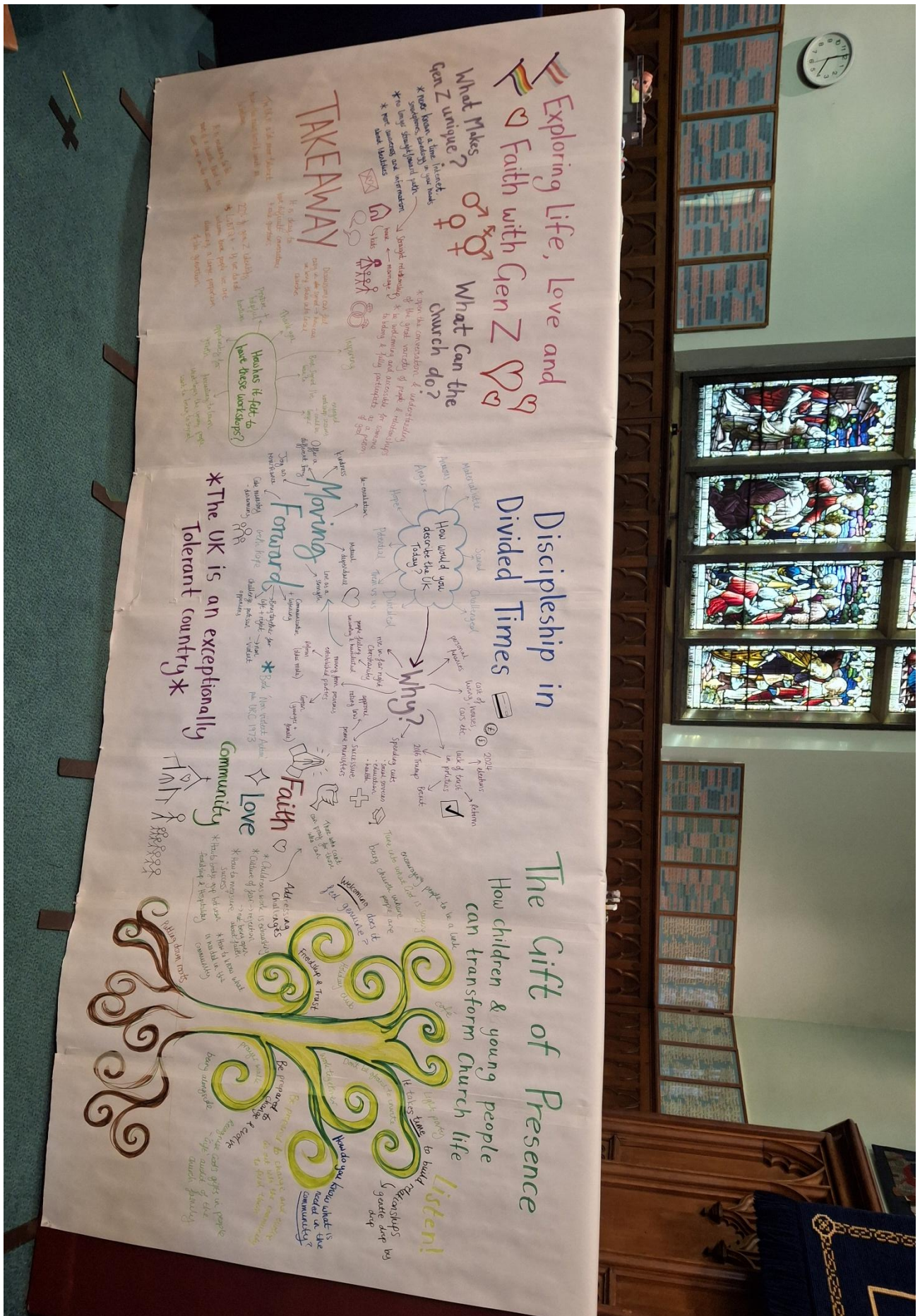
being alongside

to build relationships
gentle drip by
drip

How do you know what is
needed in the
community?

Be prepared to change and evolve
Go out into the community
to find them

Recognise God's gifts in people
- 'Gift' audit of the
church family



The Mood board is now at the Yorkshire Synod office and will be available for viewing on request.

24. Synod Missional Strategy

The Moderator asked Rev Jason McCullagh to introduce the paper on the Synod Missional Strategy. He did so, covering the action points outlined in the supplied paper.

Rev Jason McCullagh then moved

Resolution No 8

Yorkshire Synod, meeting at St Andrew's Roundhay URC, on Saturday 11th October 2025, resolves to adopt the Yorkshire Synod Missional Strategy 2025.

The resolution passed with non against.

25. General Assembly Feedback

Several of those who represented the Synod at the General Assembly meeting in July 2025 offered their reflections and comments.

Mr John Eveleigh reflected on the Israel/Gaza paper <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2506-Synod-resolution-on-Israeli-military.docx> and the debate which ensued. He noted that the resolution was not a matter for navel-gazing and he was encouraged that the URC resolution associated with the paper was in line with both Methodist Conference and World Council of Churches resolutions.

Rev Simon Cross fed back on the prospective changes to the denomination's relationships with the three main Recourse Centres for Learning (Northern College, Scottish College and Westminster College). General Assembly has started a review, the goal of which is to make learning easier to access from across the denomination.

Rev Fran Kissack reported on the new relationship with "Place for Hope", an organisation designed to help in all matters of mediation and that if there is anyone who would like to be part of a growing number of mediation practitioners in the "Place for Hope" family to contact them, either directly or through the Synod office. She also highlighted the paper and resolution establishing 13 Pioneering posts across the denomination <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/H2-Criteria-for-13-new-pioneering-posts.pdf>. There is one post allocated to each of the URC's Synods with the aim of creating intentional communities in areas where there is little or no "church" presence.

The Clerk then informed Synod of the forthcoming Extra General Assembly in November which will consider the Church Life Review and he reminded Synod of Resolution 4 passed on the Thursday evening.

26. Reports and Resolutions

Synod's attention was drawn to the papers circulated prior to the meeting, in particular that of the creation of a Synod Compliance Group.

The Clerk then moved

Resolution No 9

Yorkshire Synod, meeting at St Andrew's Roundhay URC, on Saturday 11th October 2025, resolves to create a Synod Compliance Group comprising the Synod Moderator, the Synod Clerk, the convenors of the Ministries and Pastoral Committees, a member of the Synod Safeguarding team and any other as appropriate to any specific situation.

The resolution passed with none against.

27. Synod Life

The Moderator asked Synod if there were any points of clarification in regard to any of the papers and if any of the available Convenors would like to offer anything further.

The Clerk then reminded Synod of the extra two personalia resolutions, 22 and 23.

The Clerk moved the following resolutions:

Resolution No 10

Rev Ashley Evans has retired from his role as Yorkshire Synod Evangelist. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Rev Ashley Evans for his work and wishes him well for the future.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 11

Mrs Ailsa Johnson has stood down as Convenor of the Joint Safeguarding Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Ailsa Johnson for her work and wishes her well for the future.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 12

Mr Chris Evans has stood down as a member of the Financial Resources Committee as of 23rd June 2025. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Chris Evans for his work and wishes him well for the future.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 13

Mrs Claire Nutt has agreed to serve as a member of the Yorkshire District Council. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Claire Nutt to serve as a member of the Yorkshire District Council for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 14

Mrs Anne Robson has agreed to serve as Convenor of the Joint Safeguarding Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Anne Robson to serve as Convenor of the Joint Safeguarding Committee for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 15

Mr Alex Walker has agreed to serve as a member of the Property Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mr Alex Walker to serve as a member of the Property Committee for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 16

Rev Alison Micklem has agreed to serve as a member of the Financial Resources Committee from 25th March 2025. Therefore, Synod appoints Rev Alison Micklem to serve as a member of the Financial Resources Committee for a period of three years until March 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 17

Mrs Judy Rogers has agreed to serve as the Yorkshire Synod Racial Justice Advocate. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Judy Rogers to serve as the Yorkshire Synod Racial Justice Advocate for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 18

Revd Nicola Robinson has agreed to serve as Convenor of the Yorkshire Synod Green Apostle Group. Therefore, Synod appoints Revd Nicola Robinson to serve as the Convenor of the Yorkshire Synod Green Apostle Group for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 19

Mrs Karen Charlesworth has agreed to serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the Bradford churches (Bolton Villas, Holme, Pudsey, Westfield Wyke) and as a member of the Pastoral Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Karen Charlesworth to serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the Bradford churches and as a member of the Pastoral Committee for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 20

Mrs Terri Raddings has agreed to serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the Wharfe Group of churches (Christchurch Ilkley and Trinity St Andrew's Skipton) and as a member of the Pastoral Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Terri Raddings to serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the Wharfe Group of churches and as a member of the Pastoral Committee for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 21

Rev Joseph Amoah has agreed to serve in the new role of Synod Directed Ministry representative on the Ministries Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Rev Joseph Amoah to serve as the Synod Directed Ministry representative on the Ministries Committee for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 22

Mrs Lynne Braham has agreed to serve as a Yorkshire Synod member of the Joint Safeguarding Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Lynne Braham to serve as a member of the Joint Safeguarding Committee for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 23

Mrs Angela Etwell has agreed to serve as a Northern Synod member of the Joint Safeguarding Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Angela Etwell to serve as a member of the Joint Safeguarding Committee for a period of three years until October 2028.

The resolution passed with none against.

28. Thanks

The Clerk offered the Synod's thanks to:

- Rev Jamie Kissack for leading us today
- Rev Jason McCullagh and Mr Edward Craig for this morning's worship
- Megan, Tony, Tracy, Roo and Matthew for the three workshops and the feedback sessions, and especially to Emily for her work on the Mood Boards.
- Office Staff, Sally, Anne, Claire and Hayley for coping with the way Synod has been put together this Autumn – and again a request for the March Synod in that if there are any papers that they be sent in by mid-February (or earlier)!!
- All who attended both at Roundhay and earlier online on Thursday evening. The Clerk requested that representatives take back to their churches not just their envelopes, but impressions of the day and the information received and please share it with your congregations.
- To the good folk at St Andrew's Roundhay URC, for allowing Synod to use their buildings and the excellent hospitality this morning, this lunchtime, and hopefully as Synod adjourned. In particular, thanks to the technical people here for coping with the files that were sent.

29. Closing Worship including in Memoriam

Closing worship was led by Rev Tim Lowe, Mrs Megan Tillbrook & Ms Lydia Raddings and included the Synod's In Memoriam (appended to the minutes).

30. Synod Concluded to meet again on 14th March 2026 at West Park United Reformed Church, Harrogate.



Yorkshire Synod In Memoriam March 2025 to October 2025

Elders

Patricia Clough	Elder	Bingley URC
Richard Binley	Elder/Steward	Emmanuel St John's, Scarborough
Ann Oldnow	Elder & Treasurer	The Church in South Leeds
Jennifer Freeman	Elder/Steward	Christchurch, Ilkley
Hetley Burnham	Elder/Steward	Christchurch, Ilkley
Leslie Johnson	Lay Leader/Elder	Pudsey URC
John Rhodes	Elder	Bolton Villas Family Church
Elizabeth (Liz) Ketch	Elder	Dore & Totley
Derek Spiers	Elder	Dore & Totley
Roderick Garthwaite	Elder	Ardeen Rd, Doncaster
Ina Edwards	Elder	Ardeen Rd, Doncaster
Barbara Royle	Elder	West Park Leeds
Derek Thomson	Elder & Church Secretary	St Columba's, York
Alison Sayers	Elder	St Columba's, York

Non-Elders (but who contributed to their church)

Brian Poulter	Christ Church, Halton
Margaret Whitehead	The Grove, Gomersal & Heckmondwike

Ministers

Rev Robert Way	Minister	Headingley St Columba
----------------	----------	-----------------------