



Minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church held on Saturday 14th March 2026 at West Park United Reformed Church, Harrogate.

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. 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 Revd Karl Hanton who has taken up the Special Category 18-25 Ministry in Leeds and Mell Camerata who is the Wilderness lead for the Sheffield team.

4. Present

There were 49 Lay people, 16 Ministers, 1 Lay Pastor, 6 Retired Ministers and 3 Under 26 representatives representing 40 churches and 2 Chaplaincies in attendance.

5. Apologies

Apologies have been received from 2 Ministers, 4 Retired Ministers, 1 Church Related Community Worker (CRCW), 1 Lay pastor, 1 Under 26 Representative and 9 Lay People.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th and 11th October 2025 were presented, were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Moderator.

The Clerk noted that Synod had not met since 11th October 2025.

7. Matters Arising

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

8. Notices

The Clerk gave the notices for the day including the appointment of Jane Bunyan and Revd Rosalind Selby 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, as had the order of service for the morning's worship session.

9. Date and Place of October 2026 meeting

Synod will next meet in full session on Saturday, 10th October at Moldgreen URC, Huddersfield from 10.15am.

The Clerk mentioned that Synod will meet for the ordination and induction into the Leeds Partnership of Ed Lyne at 2.30pm on Saturday 26th September at Wigton Moor URC.

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

10. Worship, the ways, the wherefores and the hows

The Moderator introduced Revd Neil Thorogood, General Assembly Moderator-elect, to lead Synod in an exploration of how to make worship a more relevant part of the Church's life, how to make it be at the heart of the day-to-day life of our constituent churches and how it has a relevance to the wider world.

The Moderator explained that one of the outcomes of the feedback offered by Synod attendees at the October 2025 meeting that worship is one of the main reasons for attending Synod meetings and that it should be a more focused experience at Synod meetings. He continued that this meant that the morning's session was to comprise of worship, interspersed with periods where general discussions around tradition worship planning, worship & wider social issues and worship and intergenerational themes would take place around the tables at which representatives were sat.

Revd Thorogood opened the exploration on worship with a paraphrase of Psalm 104 and then used the story of The Emmaus Road in Luke Chapter 24 as the basis of the session. The session was interspersed with acts of worship and periods of group work where members of Synod were invited to

- share their best worship experiences and what made them so
- explore what helps and hinders diving deep into Bible, faith and life in your church's worship
- whether intergenerational worship is more than just worship for children and does it only happen as a result of preference or deference.

In addition, Revd Thorogood offered the following bibliography as a resource bank for making worship a more relevant experience for all:

A. Websites for Worship

- URC Daily Devotions and Sunday Worship is our very own growing archive of worship material: reflections for each day linked to texts, weekly services in full following the Revised Common Lectionary (see below). All created by a host of URC folk. Awesome! (www.devotions.urch.org.uk)
- Vanderbilt Theological Library has superb resources for the Revised Common Lectionary (the 3-year pattern of Bible readings many churches use) – along with all the biblical texts, every Sunday has art, hymns, prayers, things to print out, etc. (www.lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu)
- Looking for copyright-free high quality photographs, video, music, sound effects and more? Pixabay is an incredible resource of free material you can search and download (www.pixabay.com)
- Or, for copyright-free photos and video, try Pexels (www.pexels.com)
- Maybe you need to hear a hymn tune to know if it's singable in your church, or you need to download an organ/piano/band playing it? Go to Small Church Music and access (just by registering your email) nearly 15,000 recordings you can download for free (www.smallchurchmusic.com)

- For multiple versions of the Bible you can search and download texts from, try The Bible Gateway (www.biblegateway.com)
- All the denominational websites will offer worship material. The Methodist hub linked to their hymnbook is particularly varied and useful (www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/resources)

B. Books of and about Sermons

Seeing how others construct sermons and preach can offer plenty of insights and examples. These are just three...

- Frederick Buechner, *Secrets in the Dark: a life in sermons*, Harper One, New York, 2006
- Susan Durber, *Preaching like a woman*, SPCK, London, 2007
- Doug Gay, *God Be In My Mouth: 40 ways to grow as a preacher*, Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 2018

C. Books Exploring Worship and Why Worship Matters

- Peter Craig-Wild, *Tools for Transformation: making worship work*, DLT, London, 2002
- Rachel Held Evans, *Searching for Sunday: loving, leaving, and finding the church*, Nelson Books, Nashville, 2015
- James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: the spiritual power of habit*, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, 2016
- Samuel Wells (ed.), *Liturgy on the Edge: pastoral and attractional worship*, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2018
- Neil Thorogood, *Gospel Voices: forty New Testament characters telling their stories*, Resource Publications, Eugene, 2023 – offering 40 monologues for use in worship linked to the lectionary and seasons of the Christian year

11. Pre-Lunch Announcements

- The Clerk invited Daniel Raddings to introduce the Communications questionnaire, which was to be accessed via a QR code in the room and that subsequently on the Synod Website.
- The Clerk also reminded representatives that the Christian Bookshop from Huddersfield and the Fairtrade organisations both has stalls in the room.

12. Youth Assembly Feedback & Introduction to Yorkshire Youth Representative

Synod was introduced to Jason Raddings, who will be taking on the role of Yorkshire Synod Youth Representative and Kacie Hodgson, who has just been inducted as United Reformed Church Youth Moderator. Through being interviewed by Melloney Camerata, the Sheffield area Wilderness Youth worker, both Jason and Kacie outlined their respective faith journeys, how they came to answer the call to the roles they will be fulfilling and what they hope to achieve through their roles. Both had been inspired to promote inclusiveness and to challenge complacency in areas where equality and diversity matter.

Both Jason and Kacie had attended the recent URC Youth Assembly and Synod was able to see the social media videos that are now a regular part of how URC Youth engages with their peers (as well as with those who subscribe to their social media channels) and which included those who are now on the URC Youth Executive body.

13. Worship, the ways, the wherefores and the hows – a Creative View of Worship: round-up and initial feedback

This plenary session was designed to feedback comments which arose from the morning's worship group sessions. It also afforded the opportunity for Judy Rogers, the Synod's Racial Justice Advocate to inform Synod of ways in which church worship can be world facing. She noted that in 2026, Sunday February 8th had been designated Racial Justice Sunday, and although that had now passed, materials are still available online. She outlined how her own church, Trinity St Andrew's in Skipton, had marked the day by acknowledging that all are part of a global village. During that service it was clear that racism was something that the majority there had not experienced, but by talking about racism it was clear that at Trinity St Andrew's there is now the strength to challenge it. She had been concerned about the response to such perceived radical worship, but she reiterated the point saying that to avoid being complacent about racism churches need to be vigilant. Finally, as part of her role as Synod Racial Justice Advocate, she is looking to map racial justice across the Synod's churches and to challenge them in the same way as Trinity St Andrew's had been challenged.

There was a further discussion around how intergenerational worship can be effective and that what had been seen to be the go-to formulae for styles of intergenerational worship may not now be as an effective medium as had been thought.

14. Introduction of the New Training and Mission Enabler.

The Moderator introduced Mr Jon Steel to Synod as the newly appointed Training and Mission Enabler. Mr Steel will be taking up the role from 2nd April and that role is the culmination of a great deal of work stemming from conversations begun at the 2024 Hinley Hall meeting. Once in post Mr Steel will be working with the steering group under the umbrella of the Synod Ministries Committee with much of his initial focus being to engage with churches to assess their needs and requirements.

15. General Assembly and Assembly Executive Feedback

The Clerk led on the feedback from those who represented the Synod at the Extraordinary General Assembly meeting in November July 2025 which was wholly concerned with the continued progress of the denomination's Church Life Review (CLR). All the resolutions were passed and full details can be found at <https://urc.org.uk/general-assembly-assembly-executive-assembly-committees/general-assembly/general-assembly-papers/> and the overall progress of the review can be found at <https://urc.org.uk/church-life-review-group/>. It was noted that although much of what is being done will be for the benefit of local churches, there needs to be an element of expectation management as not all the plans will come to fruition in 2026. The first things that will be rolled out are the Resources Hub and the help desk. These are planned for the summer of 2026, with the funding aspect of the CLR following on. An area to keep an eye on is that of the creation of intentional worship communities and Synod are being asked to see whether there is scope for these to be initiated in their areas.

Feedback was also offered from the Assembly Executive meeting held on 7th February. This was held online due to the limited number of papers being submitted. These can be found at <https://urc.org.uk/general-assembly-assembly-executive-assembly-committees/assembly-executive/> with papers F1 (resolution 10) on Assisted Dying and F2 (resolution 11) on Responding to Christian Nationalism being the only matters being debated. Both papers drew a wide variety of comment and both resolutions associated with them were carried.

16. Reports and Resolutions

Synod's attention was drawn to the papers circulated prior to the meeting, and to the resolutions that had been similarly circulated.

The Moderator moved the following resolutions:

Resolution No 1

Synod receives the report of its Council.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 2

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

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 3

Yorkshire Synod, meeting at West Park United Reformed Church, Harrogate, on 14th March 2026, resolves to receive and adopt the Yorkshire Synod Safeguarding Policy: Children and Adults (February 2026) as its formal Safeguarding Policy until March 2027.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 4

Yorkshire Synod meeting at West Park United Reformed Church, Harrogate, thanks Mrs Sally Duxbury for her 25 years of service working for the Yorkshire Synod and, especially as Moderators Personal Assistant, wishes her well in her retirement from 23rd April 2026.

The resolution passed with none against and with acclamation.

Resolution No 5

Mr Dan Morrell has stood down as Convenor of the Children and Young People's Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Dan Morrell for his work and wishes him well for the future.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 6

Mr Daniel Raddings has stood down as Yorkshire Synod Assembly Executive Representative. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Daniel Raddings for his work and wishes him well for the future.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 7

Revd Simon Cross has agreed to serve as Yorkshire Synod Assembly Executive Representative. Therefore, Synod appoints Revd Simon Cross to serve as a member of the Yorkshire Synod Assembly Executive Representative for a period of three years until March 2029.

The resolution passed with none against.

The Moderator invited the Clerk to introduce the amended resolution concerning Yorkshire Synod's representation to General Assembly 2026.

Resolution No 8

Synod appoints the following to be part of its representation of 12 people to the URC General Assembly meeting to be held between 3rd July 2026 and 6th July 2026:

Revd Jason McCullagh, Revd Simon Cross, Revd Johnny O'Hanlon, Tim Crossley, John Eveleigh, Kath Lonsdale, Claire Nutt, Terri Raddings, Jay Raddings.

The resolution passed with none against.

The Moderator continued and moved the following resolutions:

Resolution No 9

Mr Daniel Raddings has agreed to serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the SPACE group of churches as well as Kingsway Ossett, Knottingley and Ravensthorpe & Hopton URCs and as a member of the Pastoral Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mr Daniel Raddings as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the aforesaid churches and as a member of the Pastoral Committee for a period of three years until March 2029.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 10

Mr Jon Steel has agreed serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the Don and Dearne group of churches and as a member of the Pastoral Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mr Jon Steel as the Synod Pastoral Elder for the aforesaid churches and as a member of the Pastoral Committee for a period of one year until March 2027.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 11

Mrs Alanna Hurman-Hancock has agreed serve as the Young Adults Ministry representative on the Ministries Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Mrs Alanna Hurman-Hancock as the Young Adults Ministry representative on the Ministries Committee for a period of three years until March 2029.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 12

Jay Raddings has agreed to serve as Yorkshire Synod Youth Representative to URC Youth. Therefore, Synod appoints Jay Raddings to serve as the Yorkshire Synod Youth Representative for a period of three years until March 2029.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 13

Synod thanks Revd Angela Hughes, Revd John Jenkinson, Mrs Gillian Chapman and Mr John Rider for their three years of service as Synod representative to the Yorkshire District Council and appoints them all to serve a further three-year term until March 2029.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 14

Synod offers thanksgivings for the life and witness of Riddlesden United Reformed Church, and of its members and adherents, which sadly closed on 31st January 2026 after 82 years of service in that community. Synod prays that its legacy continues and for the members and friends of Riddlesden URC as they continue their Christian journeys in other places.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 15

Synod offers thanksgivings for the life and witness of The Michael United Reformed Church, Sheffield, and of its members and adherents, which sadly closed on 28th February 2026 after 72 years of service in that community. Synod prays that its legacy continues and for the members and friends of The Michael URC as they continue their Christian journeys in other places.

The resolution passed with none against.

Resolution No 16

Mrs Alex Jowitt has stood down as a member of the Synod Property Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Alex Jowitt for her work and wishes him well for the future.

The resolution passed with none against.

17. Thanks

The Clerk offered the Synod's thanks to:

- Revd Jamie Kissack for leading us today
- Revd Neil Thorogood for the morning's worship and leading Synod in its exploration of worship and to Megan and the Youth team for providing representatives the means to express themselves on the tables in the room.
- Office Staff, Sally, Anne, Claire and Hayley for coping with way Synod has been put together this Spring – and again a request for the October 2026 Synod in that if there are any papers that they be send in by mid-September (or earlier)!!
- To the good folk at West Park URC for allowing Synod to use their buildings and the excellent hospitality this morning, this lunchtime, and hopefully as Synod adjourns. In particular, thanks to the technical people here for setting up the sound system and to those who provided the means by which we were able to share in Holy Communion.
- All who attended at West Park URC and the Clerk requested that representatives take back to their churches not just their envelopes, but impressions of the day and the information you have received.

18. Closing Worship including in Memoriam

Closing worship was led by Revd Jason McCullagh, Revd Alison Micklem and members of the Nidd, Ouse, Wharfe group of churches of which West Park URC is part, including the Synod's In Memoriam (appended to the minutes).

19. Synod Concluded to meet again in this format on 10th October 2026 at Moldgreen URC, Huddersfield.



Yorkshire Synod In Memoriam October 2025 to March 2026

Elders

Alan Atkinson	Elder & Church Secretary	Moldgreen
Nancy Campbell	Elder	St Andrew's, Scarborough
Barbara Cavell	Leadership Team	Beeston Hill
Dorothy Land	Elder	Dore and Totley
Prof Tom McGuffog	Elder	St Columba's, York
Donald Milnes	Elder	Heckmondwike
Len Morris	Elder	Saltire URC
Carl Stevens	Elder	St Andrew's, Scarborough
Barry Swift	Elder & Treasurer	Sheffield, St James

Non-Elders (but who contributed to their church)

Barbara Thompson	Sunday School Teacher	Heywood Chapel, Northowram
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Ministers

Revd Stephen Alexander Wilkins	Minister	West Park Leeds (1987-1993)
Revd J Alan Stanyon	Minister	Abbeydale Sheffield (1959-1964), Kirkheaton, Dogley Lane and Flockton (1964-1968)
Revd Dr Elizabeth (Liz) Brown	Minister	Presbyterian Church of Taiwan & University of Leeds
Revd Colin Bones	Minister	Bolton Villas (1985-1991)
Revd John Durell	Minister	Huddersfield Group (1981-1993)
Revd Ken Harris	Minister	Selby (1985-1992)
Revd Elizabeth Denise Megson	Minister	Pickering, NW Manchester District (1988) Deane (1988-2002), Windermere Centre (1997-2005)