Yorkshire Synod Briefing

Number 185

19th November 2026

ADVENT APPROACHES

One of the big debates in the Synod Clerk's household is when to obtain a Christmas Tree. Being on the more Cromwellian wing of Christmas celebrations (as well as being a bloke) the Synod Clerk tends to look to any date in December after the 20th; his daughter however is already looking at the local Garden centres for inspiration – whether to go for a cut tree, a potted one which can be used over several years or an artificial one and she has already begun the assessment of the family's living room to see what size would be appropriate.

All this activity leading into Advent and Christmas makes the next few weeks one of the busiest times of the year for all of us, and this is starting to show in the number of events that are being squeezed into the back end of this month and the beginning of next. What is encouraging is that these things are there as both preparation and celebration. You will see that there are musical events being organised in Norristhorpe, tree festivals in Roundhay, a quiet remembrance opportunity at Upper Chapel, Idle, and sadly the closure of one of our oldest churches, Heywood URC in Northowram. I'm sure that there will be more events as Advent gets into full swing, and I invite you all to let me know of our plans so that I can showcase them in the next issue of the Briefing, due out on 3rd December .

Church Life Fund

One thing that shows that the Denomination is working for all our churches is the news that the **CHURCH LIFE FUND** has gone live. All our Ministers, Church secretaries and Church treasurers were sent the e-mail we received at the Synod Office and we really do encourage churches to look to see whether this fund can be used effectively to release mission. The main website page link to the Church Life Fund webpage is this one https://urc.org.uk/church-life-fund/ and the links to the application forms are near the bottom of the page and directly via this link https://urcresourceshub.org.uk/church-life-fund-expression-of-interest-form/. There is also a Church Life Fund page on the Resources Hub https://urcresourceshub.org.uk/church-life-fund/, which expands on how the process works as well as the formal application forms. As with any new grant application process, the Church Life Fund team will only know how well the arrangements work once they have some experience of using them. They expect to refine the overall process and individual forms over time, and feedback is welcome, but that can only come from engaging with the opportunity being offered. The Synod Clerk is in touch with the Church Life Fund team, so please send any questions you have to the usual clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk address or directly to them at churchlifefund@urc.org.uk.

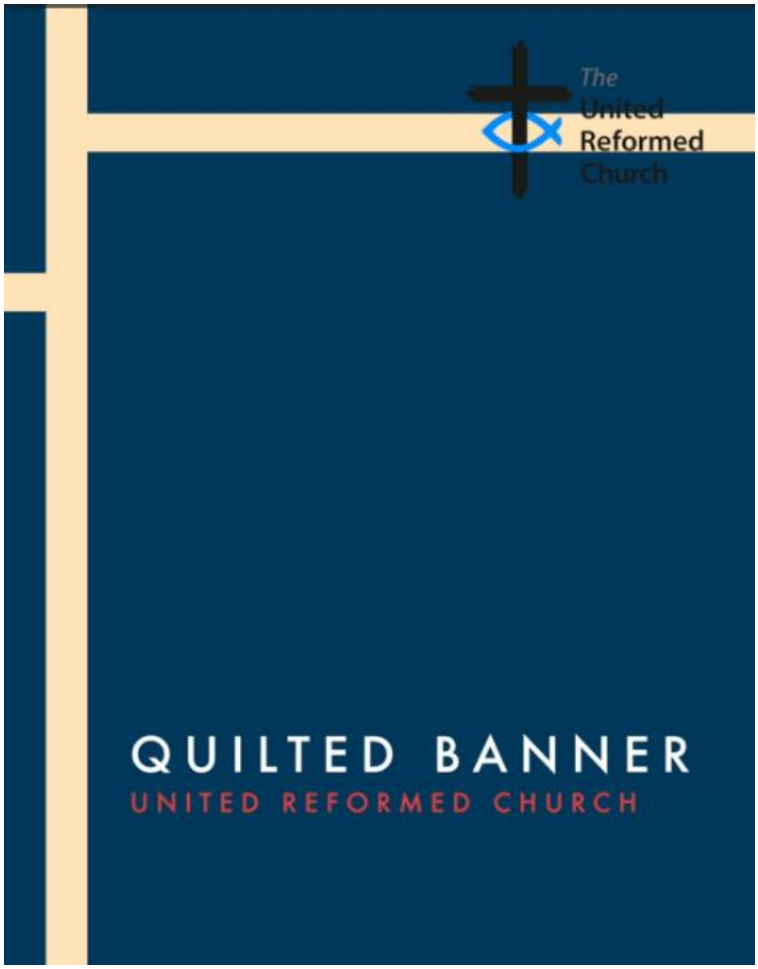
If you have any news of welcoming people into Church, stories of celebration and mission, please let me know at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and I'll showcase it in the next edition, due out on the website only on 3rd December 2026.

Tim Crossley

Yorkshire Synod Clerk

Inviting

The Ever Joyful Banner Project



Hopefully by now, every church in Synod will have received a special envelope from our own Revd Samantha Sheehan, who is currently serving as the Chaplain to this year's General Assembly Moderator. She is organising a denominational wide project called the "Ever Joyful" patchwork banner. You could almost call it the Great URC Sewing Bee……

She is already very grateful for your support in this and has already received a number of emails from folk requesting their packs following the article in the URC News Update earlier this month.

The packs have been put together with everything a congregation needs to get started - the fabric square, instructions and return envelope – and each church's pack will be sent to the Synod Office.

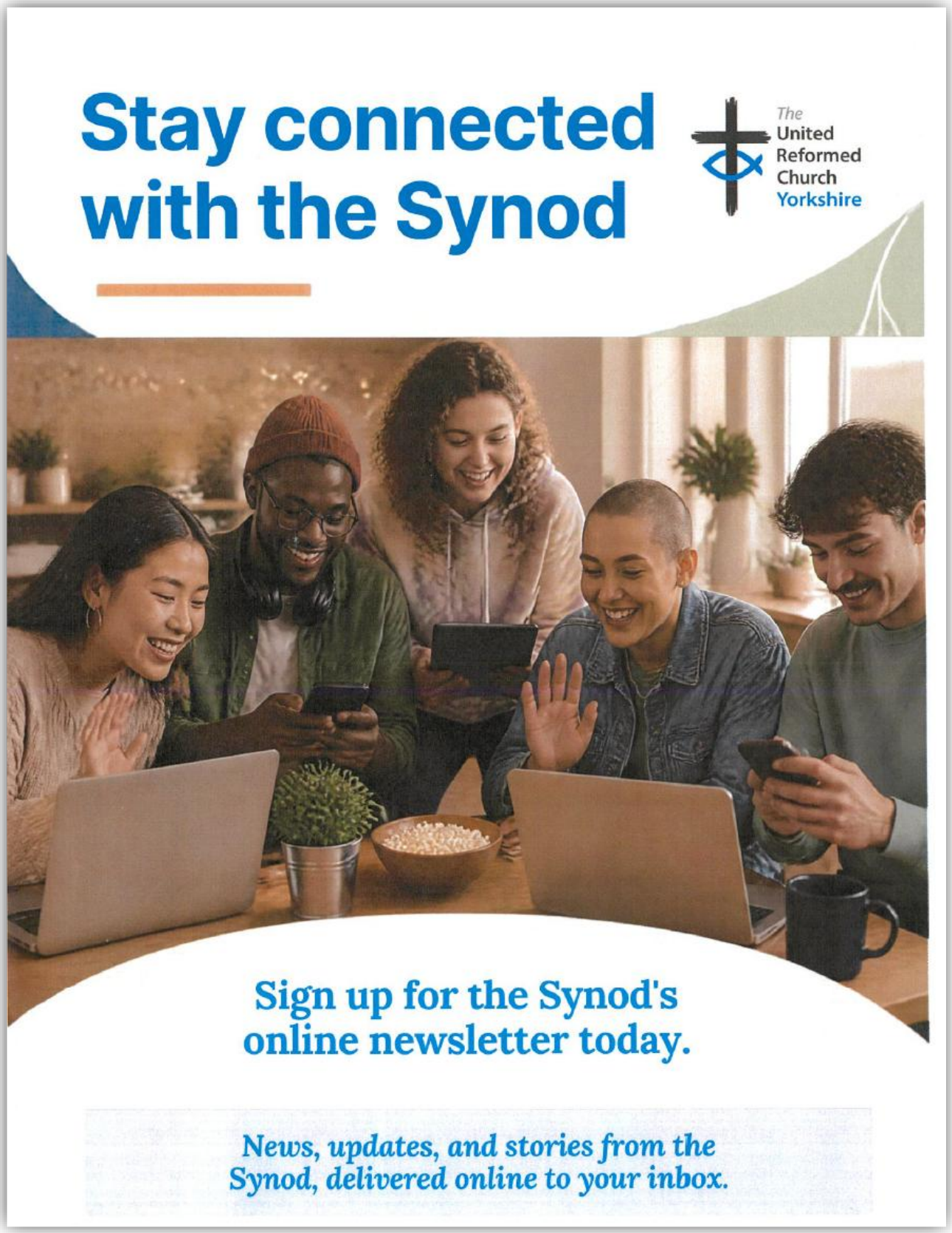
Thank you to all those who collected their envelopes (and other church's envelopes) at our Saturday Synod meeting on October 10th at Moldgreen URC in Huddersfield. Those that were not collected have been posted out to the relevant church secretary so there shouldn't be an excuse not to be aware of the project.

At the meeting we showed a short film (3 minutes) to explain the project and which invites local congregations to share in decorating a fabric square. If you missed it, or if you want to watch it again, these are the links to this video:

Ever Joyful or https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C30CqIh6_Td7sISGfUICxkARzSD9jJBt/view to download from a Google Drive or from YouTube here Ever Joyful or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnr9Vcn1OJc

We have given the deadline of 1st December for the patches to be returned, so Samantha and the Ever Joyful Banner team are very grateful to Northern Synod for being willing to receive them all. If folk miss this deadline, squares can be received up until the Assembly Executive meeting at the beginning of February. Although they do wish for as many as possible to come back by December giving them as much time as possible to create the banner before General Assembly 2027.

For more information please contact Samantha at Rev.S.Sheehan@gmail.com



To sign up, all you have to do is visit the Yorkshire Synod website at
https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/
scroll to the foot of the page and fill in your name and e-mail address.
It's as simple as that!!



St Andrew's
Roundhay

Invitation

to attend our Community

Clocktower Cafe

We will celebrate and give thanks that the clock is chiming again due to the generosity of church members and local Roundhay Community.

Many thanks to **you**, and our friends at

Leeds City Council

Community Committee

Wednesday
25th November
10am - noon

There will be a short celebration and rededication of the Clocktower.





Wednesday mornings 10:30-12:30



Starting 28th October 2026



Norristhorpe Warm Space



At

Norristhorpe United Reformed Church

All welcome to join us for a natter, meet new people, knit, read, play games or sit in peace...all with a free cuppa and biscuits.

Pop in or call 07745209270 for more info.

Norristhorpe united Reformed Church, Norristhorpe Lane WF15 7AR

Norristhorpe United Reformed Church
Norristhorpe Lane, Norristhorpe, LIVERSEDGE. West Yorkshire. WF15 7AN.
www.space.urc.org.uk

Clifton & Lightcliffe BAND

Let's get ready for Christmas



Saturday 28th November 2pm.

Tickets: £6.00 including refreshments after the concert. Available from Linda and Janet Or pay at the door FURTHER DETAILS CALL: 07891979921

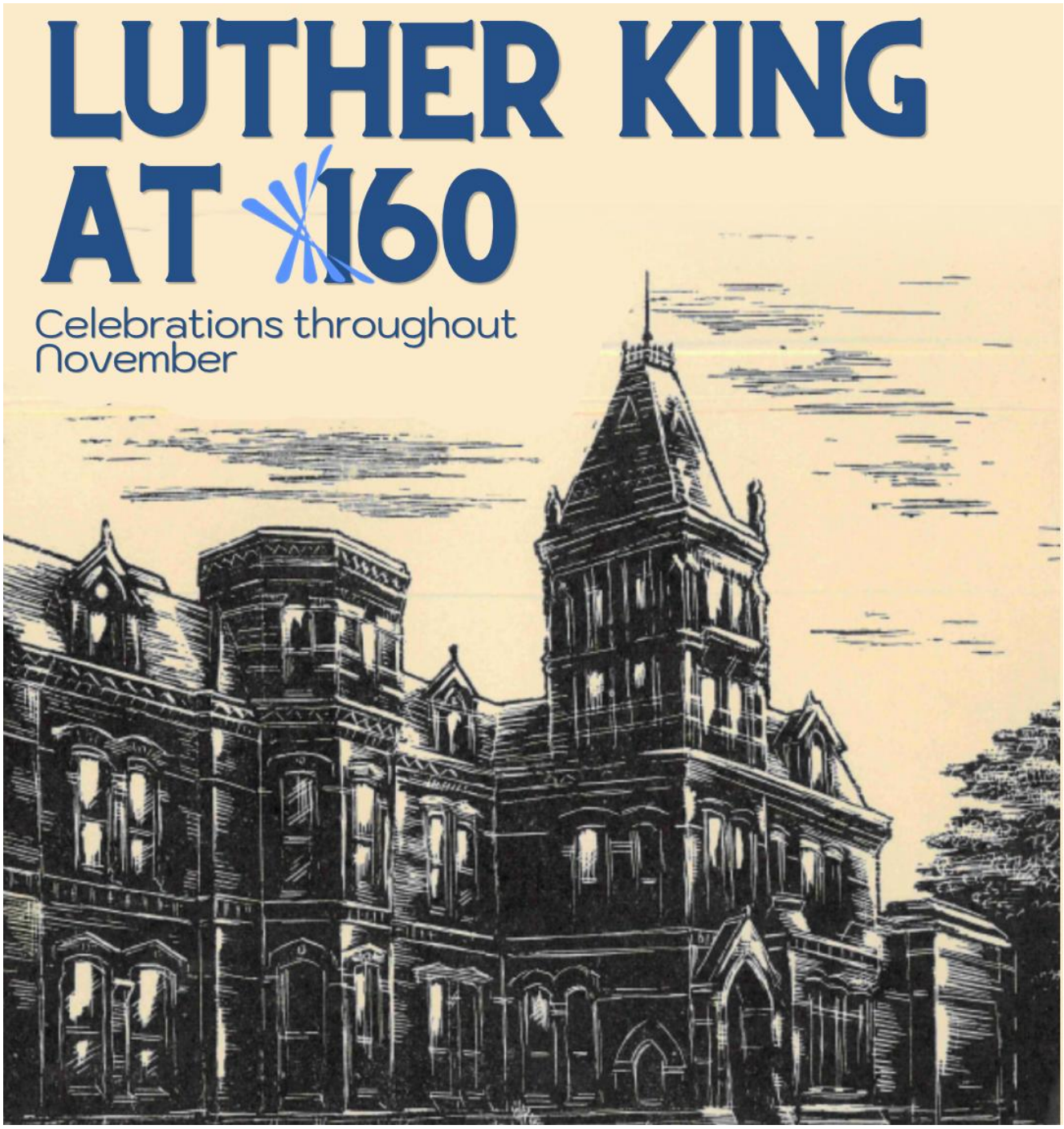
Warm Welcomes at Norristhorpe

It is all go at Norristhorpe this Autumn, as their welcoming spirit is inviting us into a very warming space. As you'll see, they have already begun the Church's regular autumn and winter Wednesday Warm Space programme. Pop by to say hello and enjoy the welcome that is on offer from 10.30am each week.

And, they are hosting the Clifton & Lightcliffe Band again. This local Brass Band will offer their "Let's Get Ready For Christmas" concert on the afternoon of Saturday 28th November, so check you diaries and head off the Norristhorpe for a cracking concert.

Luther King Newsletter: November 2026

Luther King College is delighted to invite you to join them as they celebrate our 160th Anniversary at Luther King



Date: Thursday 3rd December 2026
Time: 14:00-18:00 (Drop in for exhibition, refreshments from 17:00)
Where?: The Chapel @ Luther King Theological College, Brighton Grove, Manchester, M14 5JP

As part of the celebrations, we will be hosting a special anniversary exhibition drawn from our archives. The exhibition will highlight key moments in Luther King's history and the many people whose lives and ministries have been shaped here over the past 160 years.
To reserve your place, please visit our Ticket Tailor page:
https://buytickets.at/lutherkingtheologicalcollege/2500007
or visit https://lutherking.ac.uk/

St Andrew's
Roundhay

Charity

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



...when love came down...

3 - 5 DECEMBER

12pm to 5pm DAILY

in aid of

LIGHTHOUSE
WEST YORKSHIRE

HOMELESS
STREET ANGELS

Donate at JustGiving through this QR Code!

Heywood United Reformed Church, Northowram
Heywood Close, Northowram, HALIFAX. West Yorkshire. HX3 7DJ.

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING and CLOSURE



SUNDAY 6th DECEMBER from 2.30pm

All invited to attend!

Theme:

'BE NOT AFRAID – I GO BEFORE YOU ALWAYS!'

(Refreshments will be served afterwards in the Chapel Hall)

A non-conformist fellowship was established in Northowram in 1672 by the Revd Oliver Heywood after a number of years of uncertainty and persecution. We seek to give thanks for over 354 years of faithful witness to this community and commend the future into God's hands.

Candle Remembrance



Saturday 19th December
2pm – 4pm

We offer space and time to remember loved ones, light a candle in their memory and write a message to hang on the Christmas tree

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

Idle Upper Chapel URC

Westfield Lane Idle BD10 8PY



Contact megancyp@urcyorkshire.org.uk to book your place!
https://urc.org.uk/.../chil.../urc-youth/urc-youth-assembly/


SAVE THE DATE
BIG DAY OUT
SATURDAY 22ND MAY 2027
YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK
10AM-3PM
The United Reformed Church Yorkshire
TICKETS AVAILABLE IN EARLY 2027

Lay Worship Leaders' Weekend

"Date for the Diary"

9th – 11th July 2027

(Friday teatime to Sunday lunch)

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

We are very pleased that Revd John Proctor has agreed to be our main speaker at the annual 2027 conference.

Look out for theme information in January 2027.

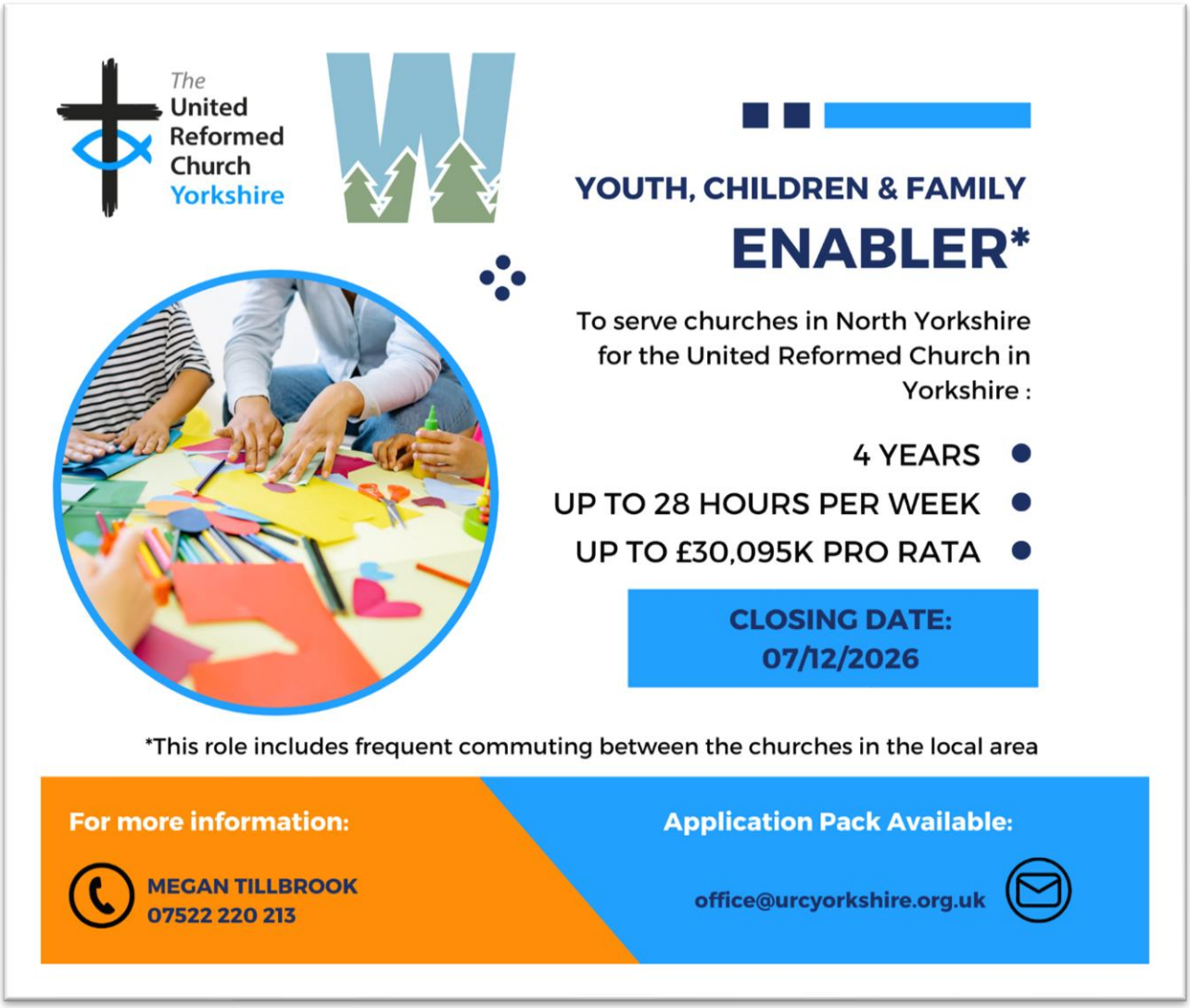
This weekend will again be paid for by Synod and grants so you will only need to cover your travel costs.

To register your place, contact:
office@urcyorkshire.org.uk or 0113 289 8490.

For any queries, contact Kath at
kath.lonsdale@outlook.com
01274 315 203 or 07759 525 936

The United Reformed Church Yorkshire Synod

Building



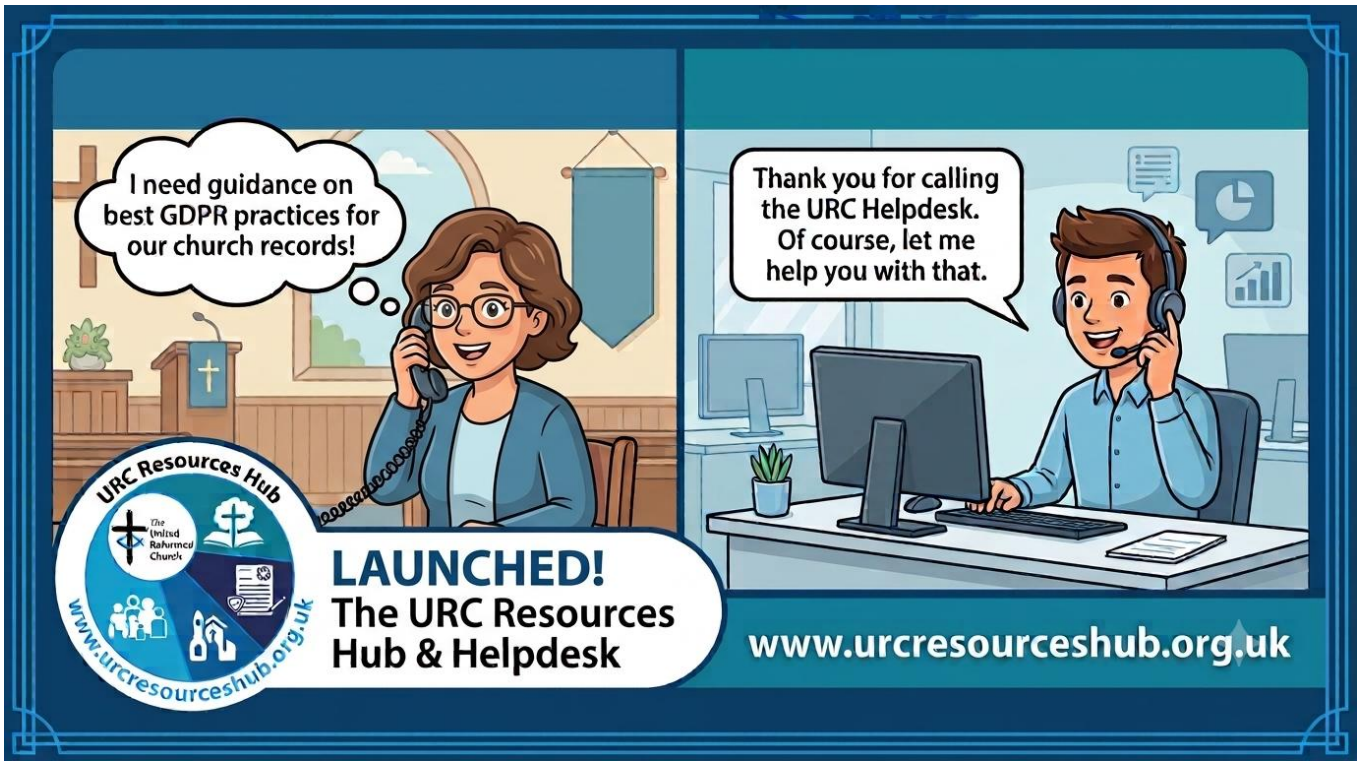
!!! WANTED !!!



The Synod is also looking for people to join some of our key groups, especially in the Property, the Financial Resources and Children and Young People's committees. These bodies guide the direction of Synod and without them Synod would find it hard to function. If you are able to take up a call to help Synod out, please contact the Synod Clerk at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk for more information.

Sharing

Yes, It's Here:
The URC's Resources Hub



One of the first roll outs from the Church Life Review is this brand new Resources Hub for all our churches and volunteers to use. There are two ways into it, through the URC website, or directly using this link: https://urcresourceshub.org.uk/. Please take a bit of time to have a look, and if you have any feedback or any suggestions for what you may want it to hold, please contact me at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and I'll pass on your feedback.

There will be more resources being uploaded to the resource over the next few months. The next tranche will be documents covering governance and finance, so keep an eye out on announcements here, in the URC's regular News Update circulars and in Reformed magazine.

It's not too late to ask that the team behind the hub add items which you may want. If you know of any resources which you feel may benefit all our churches, drop the Clerk a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and he'll contact the team putting the Resource Hub together.

Loving



Leeds URC Partnership Prayers

Thursday 5th December, 7:30pm.
A short time to pray together by reading the Bible and sharing the joys and challenges in our lives, churches, communities and world.
On Zoom:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7019277749

NEWS FROM THE DENOMINATION

The URC's News Update is a regular e-newsletter that keeps you informed about the latest news and events.
To receive this popular newsletter, please visit the https://urc.org.uk/news-updates-sign-up-form/ page on the URC website and follow the links. If you just want to dip in and catch up on what is going one, that's fine and you can read and print recent editions of our e-newsletter by visiting the **URC News Update** page at https://urc.org.uk/urc-news-update/ .



Book ahead to meet 2027-2028 General Assembly Moderator

The Revd Dr Susan Durber, General Assembly Moderator Elect, hopes to visit congregations, communities, projects and events across the URC throughout her year in office, July 2027-2028. If you would like to invite Susan to make a visit, please complete **this dedicated Google form**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeBCxYBjjiH3Hi36Rf2luwqMpnCsri6_1OgMx7XkDVBQjil9w/viewform?&dm_i=2JB1,24666,59BX7G,7URKM,1,0,0,0&pli=1 by 12 January 2027. For any queries, please **email Susan's PA, Rachel Fitzgerald** rachel.fitzgerald@urc.org.uk. Invitations to ecumenical gatherings, LEPs, or where there is a minister who has come to the URC on a certificate of eligibility are particularly welcomed.

The **Milton Mount Foundation** https://www.miltonmountfoundation.org.uk/ is looking for a new trustee from the URC. The advert is on the URC website: https://urc.org.uk/jobs/
Please go down to the Volunteer Positions section to find the ad.

Partnering

Lay Worker (Mission & Community)

Keld-in-Swaledale, North Yorkshire
Full Time (35 hours per week) | Fixed Term: 3.5 Years | 37.5k per year

Keld URC, working in partnership with the URC Northern Synod and Lady Hewley Trust is seeking an enthusiastic and committed Christian Lay Worker to develop and lead mission, outreach and faith-based community involvement across Upper Swaledale. The successful candidate will develop innovative projects, retreats, youth and family activities, prayer and discipleship opportunities, environmental initiatives, and partnerships with local churches and community groups. We are looking for someone who:

- Is a practicing Christian with a passion for mission and community engagement.
- Has experience of working with volunteers, churches or community groups.
- Has excellent communication and organisational skills.
- Can work independently and collaboratively.
- Holds a UK driving licence and has access to a car.

This is a unique opportunity to help grow Christian witness and build lasting impact in one of the most beautiful parts of the country.

There is a genuine occupational requirement for the postholder to be a practicing Christian in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010.

The successful applicant will be expected to live within reasonable proximity of Keld to enable effective delivery of the role.

For further enquiries and application procedure, please contact Rev Nadene Snyman at:-

teesandswaleurc@gmail.com

Closing Date: 14th December 2026
Interview Date: To be arranged

And Finally
Cascades of Grace

Usually I have an "And Finally" from one of our Synod churches, but this time it is from a much broader perspective.



Cascades of Grace is a network of Global Majority-heritage women within the United Reformed Church. Their aim is to nurture connection, amplify voices, and celebrate the richness of our shared experiences. They seek to bring Global Majority-heritage women together across the denomination, strengthening one another in faith, fellowship, and bold witness.

All Black and Ethnic Minority women in the URC are warmly invited to join them for Cascades of Grace events.

Together, they are committed to:

- celebrating gifts and recognising contributions
- hearing stories and sharing experiences
- shaping the spaces where Global Majority women's voices are centred and heard
- working for the full inclusion of all in the life of the United Reformed Church
- enriching the whole United Reformed Church through the gifts, skills and insights of Global Majority women.

If you would like to know more please contact Veronica Daniel veronica.daniel@urc.org.uk and please visit the Global and Intercultural page on the URC website at https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/global-and-intercultural-church/

If you have a good news story from your part of the Synod or something that you feel reflects the work of Synod as we move into the last month of 2026, or even things that are to happen in 2027, 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**, and the YouTube page at **URC Yorkshire - YouTube**



Nearly……..