

Opening Reflection by Mark Hodgson Lay Preaching Commissioner

Kingdom and Commonwealth

Some of you may know that Phil/Pippa and I have been on a short (!!) sabbatical around parts of the edge of Europe. Following Brexit, the sticker on the back of our car has had to change from GB to UK. So I started to think about the word “Kingdom”. During our time away, I was able to do a decent amount of reading and one of the books I studied was **C H Dodd**’s book on [The Parables of the Kingdom](#). Dodd attempts to define the word “Kingdom” in the context of the Kingdom of God, but the struggle he had led me to ponder whether it was in fact the right word. It certainly seems to match a direct translation of the Greek or Aramaic words that would have been used but these are not clearly understandable. In one of the communion liturgies from Iona, the phrase used is the **Commonwealth of Heaven**. Does that perhaps sit a little more comfortably with us? We no longer consider God is merely male; neither does God reign like a ruler.

Or is the latter statement wholly true?



In many of the reflections about the reign of our last sovereign, **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth** was lauded for a series of qualities which she fully embodied, having been inspired by our (and by that I mean hers and ours!!) Lord, Christ Jesus – qualities of humility, service, duty, dedication, sacrifice, compassion and love. These are qualities which our new King has vowed to continue and declared at a time when he must have been suffering the loss of a beloved mother, all the time in the public glare. It is times like this when we recall the painful loss of members of our own families.

The list of Christ-like qualities were restated in the address given by the **Archbishop of Canterbury** at the funeral service for the late Queen – a wonderful service full of remembrance and hope. Given those examples of a “reign like a ruler”, Kingdom is absolutely the right word, recalling that Jesus, the Messiah, came not to be served but to serve – a different kind of leader!

“This is our God, the servant King.”

I would never have considered myself a monarchist and yet I have been extremely moved by all the events of these last days and the outpouring of love during this time of national mourning. I was particularly struck by the wide ecumenical participation in the funeral – something surely planned by Elizabeth and therefore of great significance to her. The readings she chose, the prayers read by many church leaders and the address given by **Justin Welby** also echoed the fundamental truth about our faith; a faith which the late Queen has ably defended for over seventy years. That truth is a sure belief that, after this life, we shall be exalted in the love of God – indeed, we shall live forever in the “Kingdom of God” – a kingdom of humility, service, sacrifice and love.

“We will meet again,” and we shall also see God face to face rather than darkly in a mirror; know fully, even as we are fully known. And when that day comes, may we all rest in peace and rise in glory!

STOP PRESS: Jubilee Events POSTPONED

Please note that the Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration planned for Saturday 1 October has now been postponed, along with the Open Day at Church House.



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972

The postponement applies not only to the **Jubilee Service**, but also to the **Open Day** at Church House, the **Walk to Westminster** and the **Enquirers' Event** planned for the same day. The Convenors of the 50th Anniversary Planning Group, **Andy Jackson** and **Sam Richards**, have issued the following [statement](#):

Last week, the URC heard about the revised dates for the national rail strikes on October 1 and 5, news that was confirmed on Tuesday (20th). Many meetings and conversations have taken place, and we've decided, with the heaviest of hearts, that the best option is to postpone our jubilee events.

After close to three years of planning, this postponement is deeply disappointing, but we want the URC to celebrate its jubilee properly, with all who want to take part. We will let you know about the new date as soon as possible, and please keep all who are affected by this news in your thoughts and prayers.

All attending the events on October 1 were going to receive a special copy of **Reform**, which is also celebrating its 50th anniversary. If you would like to receive copies for you and for others in your church, please email reform@urc.org.uk with your address details and the number of copies required.

POSTPONED: Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Church of South India



Please note that the service celebrating the **75th Anniversary of the Church of South India**, advertised in our last edition as taking place this **Sunday, 25 September**, has also been postponed. **Churches Together in Leicestershire** intends to reschedule the service at a later date.



Around the East Midlands

Induction of the Revd Clare Davison



L-R: Revd Dr Peter Stevenson (Interim Moderator), Rev. Brian Davison, Revd Clare S Davison, Revd Geoffrey Clarke, Revd Matt Stone. (Courtesy of Colin Jeffries)

On Sunday 11 September, **St Andrew's United Reformed Church** in Peterborough hosted the Induction of the **Revd Clare S Davison** as Minister of the **South Lincolnshire Resource Area**, which comprises **Spalding URC, Eastgate, Bourne and Castle Square, Wisbech** with **St Andrew's** as the Resource Church. Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** presided over this joyful occasion, with the **Revd Matt Stone** preaching the sermon.

We warmly welcome Clare into the East Midlands Synod and pray she will enjoy a fruitful and fulfilling ministry among us.

In Pictures: Synod Jubilee Celebration



The East Midlands Synod held its grand **Jubilee Celebration** at Nottingham's **De Vere Jubilee Conference Centre** on Saturday 10 September, with members and friends flocking from all over the Synod to enjoy a day of worship and workshops, fellowship and fun. Here are just a few of the highlights.



Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** with special guest the **Revd Fiona Bennett**, Moderator of General Assembly



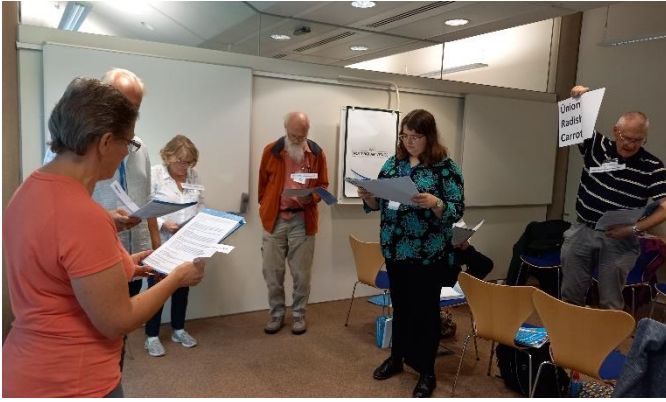
Free birthday cupcakes for all, thanks to Synod staff members **Hannah Holmes**, **Donna Varley** & **Chris Willis**



Welcome to the East Midlands: Geoffrey with the **Revd Solomon Aryee-Brown**



Attendees take the opportunity to relax and mingle in the Conference Centre's atrium



Workshops included opportunities to reenact the parliamentary debate that brought the URC into being...



... to explore creativity in poetry and in crafting...



...and to learn new songs for worship.



Guests from the St Philip's Centre in Leicester helped us encounter different faiths and sample their foodstuffs. Other features were a **Prayer Trail** with stations around the lake and a chance to think greener with **A Rocha UK**.



In their "URC Future Forum", **Fiona** and **Geoffrey** helped us consider in hope where God might be leading us next.



The Revds Camilla Veitch & Ruth Maxey led an interactive, intergenerational act of Jubilee worship in the auditorium.



The service included readings and music in many styles, including a new hymn written for the URC's 50th anniversary.



Representatives of six churches were awarded plaques to mark projects supported by the Synod Mission Fund.



Fiona and Geoffrey gave short talks entitled "Commemorate", "Celebrate" and "Create" and led a Communion liturgy specially written for the occasion by our good American friend the Revd Thom Shuman. Geoffrey also led us in prayer and reflection on the life and service of Her Majesty the Queen, following her death two days beforehand.



We gave thanks for the URC, writing the things that we value about it onto ribbons and tying them to a washing line.



Naturally we sang "Happy Birthday" to ourselves and some of our younger friends helped hand out the cake.



The service also included a first glimpse at the glorious Jubilee Banner to mark our anniversary, crafted by many gifted hands under the artistic direction of **Allly Ford**. (Look out for the finished article in an upcoming edition.)





Photos of the Jubilee Celebration by Revd Geoffrey Clarke, Revd Camilla Veitch and Derek Graham

The Touch: a Poem by Sam Goodman

Sam Goodman of Derby Central URC kindly allows us to share this poem, which resulted from the Poetry & Praise workshop led by **Joy Rice** at our Jubilee Celebration this month:

The touch

And your hands hold me
They meet me in prayer
They comfort my spirit
They show me that you care

And your hands reach out to me
They tell me that love forgives
And they lead me to a place
Where I can truly learn to live

And your hands console me
I feel how your touch can heal
How you mend the brokenhearted
How your love is real

And your hands feed me
It is more than wine and bread
It is manna from heaven
I feel abundantly fed

And your hands save me
Hands once nailed to cruel wood
And your new creation comes
God looks down and it is good

And your hands hold me
I am no longer here alone
And your embrace welcomes me
To your temple, to your home



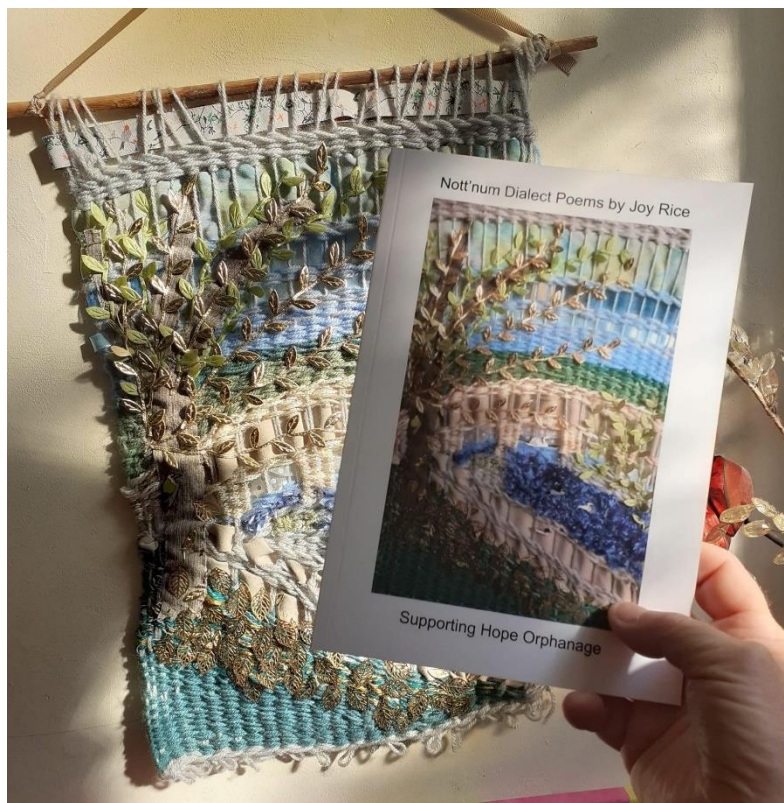
Poems, Chiefly in the Nott'num Dialect

Joy Rice from **Bulwell URC** has produced a new charity poetry book, **Nott'num Dialect Poems**. Along with 18 poems, the book includes a three-page glossary to explain/translate!

The book costs **£6** (plus 68p postage), with all profits going to support **Hope Orphanage** in Sierra Leone (via [Punk for the Homeless](#)). The book will be greatly enjoyed not only by Nottingham people but all those with connections to the area – it could make a great stocking filling for your Nottingham relatives living abroad!

If you are interested in buying a copy, please contact Joy by emailing: joyricepoet@gmail.com.

Joy generously allows us to share this sample, a poem about the beach in Nottingham's Old Market Square:



I wish that Nottnum ad a proper seaside.
Ooh I do like to be beside the sea.
The council try hard every summer,
burra pile of sand in Market Square don't do owt fer me.

I wish that Market Square looked out over a beach,
wi golden sands an a sparklin sea of azure blue,
burinstead we'v got tram on one side,
an Council House in right front as ow view.

I wish I cud sit on a beach in the sunshine,
trousers rolled up an wi knotted hankie on mi head.
If I close mi eyes I can pretend I'm not on a pile of sand in Nott'num,
but somewhere like the French Riviera instead.

But, thanks to Council for their efforts,
fer shippin in sand by the ton.
At least I can sit in Market Square,
wi mi candy floss an ev a bit of fun.

I wish we cud swop manky owd pigeons for seagulls.
Close yer eyes an imagine em in the sky.
Squawkin an callin to each other,
before comin down to nick your chips an pie.

I wish I cud paddle in ocean,
crystal clear washing mi tootsies clean.
The nearest that I can get to that experience,
is slab square fountains...or the...River Leen.



Personal News

It is with great sadness that we bring news of the deaths of the following servants of the Church. We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved through their lives and ministries.

The Yorkshire Synod informs us of the death of the **Revd Gillian Brown**. Gillian served at: Cornwall and Plymouth District (1989-92); Caradoc, Seaforth (1992-94); Zion, Wakefield (1994-99); and the Airevale Group (1999-2013). We hold her family and friends in our prayers.

As previously advertised, a memorial service for the late **John Shaw** takes place at Christ Church URC, Leicester on **Wednesday 28 September** at 11.00am, following his death on Thursday 27 January 2022.

John was an active preacher, known to many churches in Leicestershire and beyond, and was leader at Westcotes URC for several years up to the end of his life. He had previously served as an elder at Christ Church, and was a keen member of the Chantry Choir.

Funerals Workshop Day

led by **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, Principal of Northern College**

Saturday 5 November 10.00am-3.30pm
at Hinckley United Reformed Church

Do you receive requests to take funerals in your church but don't always have an experienced celebrant available? Would you like to learn how to lead memorial services or discuss your practice with others?

We have joined forces with Northern College and the West Midlands Synod to offer a free **Funerals Workshop Day**. Facilitated by **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby** of Northern College, the URC's Resource Centre for Learning in the north of England, this training opportunity takes place on **Saturday 5 November**. The Workshop Day will be hosted at **Hinckley URC**, which is easily reached by road or rail from either East or West Midlands.



The topics to be covered include all the basics, such as arranging an appropriate service, liaising with funeral directors and the different options available to families. Most importantly, it will also explore the grieving process, equipping you to provide sensitive pastoral care to the bereaved, to be prepared for any hard situations and not least, to take good care of yourself throughout.

The day is perfect for **Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders** who are sometimes called upon to lead a funeral, but all ministers, elders and church members who want to learn more about this important ministry are equally welcome to attend. The training is offered free of charge: simply bring your lunch.

To register for the Funerals Workshop Day, simply email **Hannah Holmes**: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk.

Adult Education for the Learning Church

Eight Wednesdays from 12 October
Westminster College, Cambridge or online



Westminster College
Cambridge

A resource centre for learning

For Ministers and Church Group
Leaders 2022

TMM3201 Adult Education for the
Learning Church

8 week course in person or online

Pre-course preparation via Moodle (Virtual Learning
Environment).

This course will enable you to:

- Enable you to deepen your understanding of Christian education and mission
- Reflect on what adult education and discipleship means in your context
- Gain practical tips and insights into course planning, preparation, evaluation, and group dynamics
- Reflect theologically on your own role and identity as a Christian educator and life-long learner
- Evaluate different adult education theories in different ecclesial contexts



Walking
the Way
Living the Way of Jesus Today

Dates:

Wednesdays 11.10am-
1pm and 2-2.50pm

For 8 weeks from
12th Oct–30th Nov '22

Course cost: £295
(Bursaries available)

For the course schedule,
more information and a
booking form please contact
the Tutorial Office
01223 330632
admin@westminster.cam.ac.
uk



Westminster College, Cambridge (one of the URC's Resource Centres for Learning) offers the opportunity to take part in its 8-week module **Adult Education for the Learning Church**, either in person or online.

Suitable for anyone involved in leading adult learning groups in churches, the course enables participants to reflect on what adult education and discipleship formation mean in their own contexts, balancing theological perspectives with practical tips and insights. Further details are available by [emailing the College](#).

To follow the course on a not-for-credit basis costs **£295**. Bursaries are available. You may also contact the Synod Training & Development Officer **Derek Graham**, who happily recommends this course, by emailing training@urc5.org.uk.

Serving the United Reformed Church

Appreciating Church: Deepening Your Practice

Saturdays from 24 September online



**Deepening Your
Appreciative Inquiry Practice
September 2022 – January 2023**
www.appreciating.church

**Opening webinar
Saturday 24th September 2022
09.30 – 13.00**

This online practice-based course is intended for people who have already undertaken an introductory Appreciative Inquiry course such as *Taste of AI* and who wish to build on existing AI practice and deepen their understanding. Pursued over a period of up to five months the programme is tailored to each participant's context and covers:

- AI principles in day to day practice
- Creating great questions and protocols
- Creating and delivering AI events
- Building AI practice into church and community life
- Revisiting the 5D process and SOAR
- Emerging new approaches and tools

In addition to having completed *Taste of AI* the requirements for entry to the course are:

- evidence of having used appreciative inquiry since initial training
- completion of the SOAR-based application form
- identifying a current practical activity for working on during the course

Small group work and one-to-one sessions will be conducted online at times agreed with participants.

Facilitators

Fiona Thomas

Co-author of *Appreciating Church. A practical Appreciative Inquiry resource for church communities*

Jim Coleman

Freelance facilitator and retired United Reformed Church minister

Both are experienced AI practitioners and active participants in the *Appreciating Church* community of practice.

Fee

The fee of £300 includes facilitation, AI resources, and support throughout the course.

Through satisfactory completion of this course, participants become eligible for International Academy for Appreciative Inquiry (IAAI) accreditation at practitioner level. This course constitutes Module Two of training through IAAI member bodies.



Reminders of Other Forthcoming Events

Legacies of Slavery: a Webinar from the Urban Theology Union

**Wednesday 28 September
4.00-5.30pm via Zoom**

Former Home Secretary **David Blunkett** and URC minister **Zaidie Orr** are among the panellists in an online conversation about the legacies of slavery on both sides of the Atlantic. The panellists will consider how to address the challenges in practical terms, in order to foster the kind of society where all peoples can flourish in work and life.

The webinar is offered by **Urban Theology Union**. For further information and for the Zoom link please [click here](#).



City Wires & Networks: How Christians Navigate Them

Join us by Zoom at 4-5.30pm on Wednesday: 28 September 2022 for a rich conversation between:

Lord David Blunkett, former MP for Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough;
Councilmember Kristerfer Burnett of Baltimore, Maryland (USA);
and **Rev Zaidie Orr**, Team Ministry member for the United Reformed Churches in Sheffield.

Our conversation will be moderated by the Rev. Dr Rob Hoch, UTU's Director of Theological Exploration.

Our topics will include questions arising from the legacies of slavery in the United States and United Kingdom. We will ask our guests to think with us about the challenges we face and "what works" — we intend to go beyond "diagnosis" to think about approaches that foster the kind of society where all peoples have an opportunity to flourish in work and life.

Visit us for more information (and the Zoom link) at [UTU's Public Forum for City Wires](#), or email at office@utusheffield.org.uk



<https://utusheffield.org.uk/2022/08/02/new-date-postponed-city-wires-and-networks-session/>

Chesterfield Schools Art Exhibition

**St Andrew's URC, Chesterfield
Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 October**

After an enforced three-year break, **St Andrew's United Reformed Church Chesterfield** and **Chesterfield Rotary Club** are working together with local Secondary School art teachers to resume the fabulous **Schools Art Exhibition**, featuring new art works from nine schools across Chesterfield. The exhibition will be open from **10.00am–4.00pm** on **Saturday 8 October** and **1.00–4.00pm** on **Sunday 9 October** at St Andrew's URC (187 Newbold Rd, Chesterfield S41 7BE).



Everyone is welcome. The mayor and civic leaders will attend the opening awards ceremony at 10.00am on the Saturday when certificates will be given to all the students presenting their work. On Sunday morning at 11.00am, St Andrew's will hold a *Songs of Praise* service celebrating the URC's Jubilee.

Introduction to Makaton for Churches

Five dates available online
from Wednesday 12 October

URC Children's and Youth Work has teamed up with **Education and Learning** to provide online training for all in the United Reformed Church in **Makaton**. To further the URC's aim to encourage churches to become increasingly accessible and inclusive, the URC hopes to apply for **Makaton-Friendly** status from the Makaton charity.



The United Reformed Church Training

Introduction to Makaton for churches

Help make church and children/youth work
more accessible for all

URC Children's and Youth Work and Education and Learning are pleased to offer a free online introduction to Makaton, led by Makaton tutor Laura Netley. Learn how to support your communication with simple signs which will make your meaning clearer. Places are limited to fifteen but the session is repeated on five different occasions:

- Wednesday 12 October 19:00 - 21:00
- Saturday 5 November 9:00 - 11:00
- Monday 7 November 9:30 - 11:30
- Thursday 17 November 19:00 - 21:00
- Monday 16 January 19:00 - 21:00

Book on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-makaton-tickets-394966865527>

Makaton is an easy-to-learn system of symbols and signs used alongside spoken language to aid communication. It's valuable not only for those with additional needs, but also very small children, children and adults with English as a second or foreign language, and many more. In a two-hour session you will learn the signs for some common words, including faith words, and hopefully be inspired to learn more.

Places are limited – 15 people per session – and the sessions are being offered on five different dates and times. See: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/makaton-sessions-tickets-394966865527> for details or else contact children.youth@urc.org.uk.

Spirit of the Jaguar: a Talk & Slide Show

Wednesday 19 October 7.30pm
The Dales URC, Nottingham

Anna-Louise Pickering presents her photography alongside the paintings of wildlife artist **Pollyanna Pickering**. The talk takes place at **The Dales URC**, Parkdale Road, Nottingham NG3 7GL on Wednesday 19 October at 7.30pm. Tickets are priced £6 for adults, £2 for children, with all proceeds supporting Pollyanna's foundation for wildlife projects.



Christmas Shows from LAMPS Collective

Two touring productions now booking for December



The Christian arts charity **LAMPS Collective** is touring two productions during Advent 2022. As broadcast on Premier Radio, **Bread and Starlight** is a one-person musical drama that recounts the story of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, and is touring from **2-11 December 2022**. Meanwhile, **Babs of Bethlehem** is described as a weirdly wonderful hybrid of Babushka and the Nativity story (with a dash of Fawlty Towers!) and is touring from **16-23 December 2022**.

If you are interested in booking a performance in your church, please email LAMPS Collective's tour booker **Gillian** on bookings@lampscollective.com.

Situations Vacant

The **Methodist Church**

Children and Family Worker

BAPTISTS TOGETHER

Keyworth Methodist Church with the support of **Keyworth Baptist Church** are seeking to appoint a creative, imaginative and suitably qualified person to the position of **Children and Family Worker** based in Keyworth, a large village in rural Nottinghamshire.

This is an ecumenical post to further develop Christian outreach among children and young families in Keyworth by leading an existing team of volunteers working with children and young people. There are established relationships with schools, churches and the community and regular children and family events are currently running successfully. There are also several housing developments under construction where we wish to start relationships with new families.

You should be a practicing Christian willing to work with a Management Group, local clergy and lay people to further develop and start a wide range of activities within churches, schools and the village community. This is a full-time post with a salary between £20,592 - £24,645 p.a. depending on experience and qualifications. (Pay review November 2022)

Application closing date: 14 October 2022

Interview date: Week beginning 31 October 2022

The application pack and form are available on KMC's website: keyworthmethodistchurch.yolasite.com

Enquires and applications forms should be sent to the Church Secretary: kmcchurchsecretary@gmail.com

Find Us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urch5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:
<https://www.urch5.org.uk/>



Our [East Midlands Synod Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/) continues to host the **Evening Prayers** led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and others during the ongoing pandemic. If you are a Facebook user, please consider **Liking** and **Sharing** this Page and its posts:
<https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/>

Similarly the [Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/) shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: <https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/>



On our dedicated [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrk8XOGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrk8XOGeZU5SgN95g>

Contacting East Midlands Synod

The **Synod Office** is open from **Monday to Thursday** each week. Please contact staff members by email in the first instance, as this will receive a direct response from the person with whom you wish to correspond. The Synod telephone line (**0115 960 9241**) is answered Monday-Thursday, 9.00am-3.00pm.

This E-letter is produced on behalf of:

The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.
Telephone: 0115 960 9241

***Corrections and apologies:** thank you to those who spotted that the last edition recorded the Inductions of the Revds Cecil White and Solomon Aryee-Brown as having taken place in October, a month still in the future. The intended month was of course September.*

CCL1067405

Queen Elizabeth II: photo by [Wikimages](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Hands: photo by [Shoeib Abolhassani](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Nottingham beach: photo by [tshrinivasan](#), [CC BY 2.0](#) via Wikimedia Commons

Next edition: Thursday 6 October 2022

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both:
trainingpa@urch5.org.uk and training@urch5.org.uk

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 3 October 2022**