

## Opening Reflection by Dr Graham Jennings Clerk of the East Midlands Synod

This September, we wish all our children, young people, teachers, lecturers - indeed everyone involved with the start of the new academic year - every good wish for the coming term.

Of course, this month does not correlate with the start of the liturgical or Church year but often, for our congregations, it does feel like the beginning of a new cycle of activity after the summer break. I wonder if we are looking forward to these coming months with excitement or perhaps with a degree of trepidation.



Any new start - a new job; a new school; a move to a new home; to university; starting a family - can be exciting but also daunting and can even feel overwhelming or threatening. This can also be true in our churches when new projects or other significant changes are being considered or even simply when a new session begins.

Along with a number of recently appointed Synod colleagues this summer, I have experienced a new start as I began to take on new responsibilities as Clerk. This has been made so much easier due to the help and support of so many present and past members of Synod staff and the essential volunteers. I sincerely thank them all for this assistance.

In reporting on the **Church Life Review** at General Assembly 2023, the **Revd Dr John Bradbury**, our General Secretary, suggested that resourcing our Local Churches as effectively as we can is the primary strategic purpose of Assembly and Synods. This aligns perfectly with the vision of the East Midlands Synod.

Although new to the role of Clerk, I have been present at many Synod Meetings as a church representative when it has been a joy to hear other churches' "Good News Stories". Frequently, the good work of the congregations has benefited significantly from the support of Synod - sometimes financially but more often due to the equally important if less tangible support of Pastoral Consultants and the other Synod personnel and volunteers: e.g. the officers, the moderator, local networkers, and all the others who carry out essential work "behind the scenes". All these people are committed to helping our churches flourish because they are all part of the One Church of Christ Jesus.

At a point in the year when we might be thinking about new starts and challenges ahead, it is perhaps good to be reminded of the support that is there for our churches. Challenges ahead might transform into opportunities when they are not faced alone, particularly where we can connect with others who may have experienced something similar and discovered effective responses from which we can all benefit.

## Around the East Midlands

### Ron Kenyon OBE Retires as Director and Chair of EMS Trust



At the 2023 AGM of the East Midlands Synod Trust, **Ron Kenyon OBE** retired as Chair and Director of the Trust, after over 12 years of service with the Trust. He is pictured (left) receiving a small token of appreciation from East Midlands Synod Moderator, the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke**.

Ron retires with many thanks from the Synod for his time, wisdom and contribution over the years and will continue to be a valued member and elder of St. Andrew's with Castle Gate URC, Nottingham.

### Gainsborough URC: Heritage Weekend and Book Launch

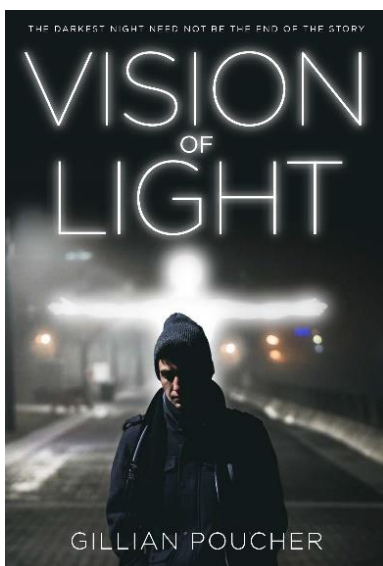
Saturday 9 September and Sunday 10 September

**Gainsborough URC**, Church Street, Gainsborough DN21 2JR is once again participating in Heritage Lincolnshire's Open Days on **Saturday 9 September** (10.00am-4.00pm) and Sunday 10 September (12.00-2.00pm). The church houses a permanent all age exhibition about the Mayflower Pilgrims. The two-manual pipe organ built in 1903 by

Forster and Andrews is listed by the British Institute of Organ Studies as an instrument of national heritage significance. The theme of the Heritage Open Days for 2023 is '**The Arts of Lincolnshire – Creativity Unwrapped.**'

North Lincolnshire Area Minister the **Revd Dr Gillian Poucher** will be holding the book launch for her new novel, 'Vision of Light' at 11am on **Saturday 9 September** at Gainsborough URC. The book signing will be accompanied by readings and a question and answer session. Tea/coffee will be available.

'Vision of Light', published by Instant Apostle, is now available to pre-order from Gillian's online shop at [www.gillianpoucherauthor.co.uk](http://www.gillianpoucherauthor.co.uk), other on line retailers and all good bookshops. The discounted sale price at the book launch will be £10 (cash or card).





## Olney Churches Holiday Bible Club 2023

The **Revd Chris Parker** shares the following report:

From 7 - 11 August the combined churches of **Olney** held their annual **Holiday Bible Club**, "On Safari". Around 100 children aged from 5 to 12 years came every day, helped by leaders from all four churches (Baptist, Anglican, URC and Catholic). **Sutcliffe Baptist Church** was our base for starting and finishing the mornings, with the 5 to 6-year-olds staying in the building for their group activities, 7 to 8's going to **Cowper Memorial URC** and the 9 to 12's walking to the **Parish Church** for their groups.



Thankfully the weather was good all week so walking and games could take place outside.

As well as the age groups the together time featured much singing, messy games, prayer, and an excellent daily drama from the young people who had been practising since Easter. We also were taught the Lord's Prayer bit by bit each day with added actions.

The week concluded with a free family BBQ, and it was lovely to see happy children with their parents and carers. It was also brilliant to share God's love with the community and a real privilege to see and hear the spirituality of the children. Thanks to all involved.

## East Midlands Synod Energy Support Scheme

Subsequent to the completion of claims for the first two quarters of the **Synod Energy Fund**, the East Midlands Synod Trust has decided to extend the scheme. Applications for assistance with gas and electricity costs are now invited for the quarters ended 30 June 2023 onwards, until further notice.

Application forms and guidance notes can be found here:

[East Midlands Synod Support Scheme for Local Churches | East Midlands Synod \(urc5.org.uk\)](#)

Completed applications should be submitted within three months of the quarter end.

## Synod Meeting

### Message for All Churches and Synod Reps

Our Synod meeting is to be held **at Loughborough URC** on **Saturday 7 October** from 10.30am – 4.00pm. **Please ensure your church is represented.** If your usual rep is unable to attend another member can represent your church. This is a time when you can find out what is happening across the Synod.

## Prayer Handbooks and Diaries

You are reminded that **URC Prayer Handbooks** and **Diaries** can be ordered now, for collection at the Synod Meeting on Saturday 7 October. (No postal delivery is available if ordering via the Synod: if you wish to receive these publications by post please order them directly from the [URC Bookshop](http://www.urchurch.org.uk) instead).



**ALL ORDERS TO BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY  
18 SEPTEMBER**

Prices are as follows:  
Prayer Handbooks - **£5.99**  
Diaries (green or yellow) - **£7.99**  
A5 blue diary - **£9.99**

Please send orders to **Chris Willis** at [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk) or phone your order through to the Synod Office: 0115 960 9241.



## Safeguarding Training Opportunities

Foundation training is available as an e-learning course. Simply follow this link to access the course:  
[Foundation Safeguarding Training - eLearning](#)



There are lots of training opportunities around the Synod this year. To book on to any of the Synod training below, email **Hannah Holmes** at: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk)

<p><b>Zoom Foundation Training</b> Tuesday 17 October 6:30pm – 8.30pm</p> <p><b>Zoom Intermediate Training</b> Tuesday 19 September 1pm – 3.30pm</p> <p>Thursday 23 November 6:30pm – 9pm</p> <p>Wednesday 13 December 10am – 12.30pm</p>	<p><b>Face to Face Safeguarding Training</b></p> <p><b>Intermediate - Tuesday 24 October 1pm – 3.30pm</b> At Duston URC, Northampton, NN5 6JF</p> <p><b>Intermediate - Tuesday 7 November 10am -12.30pm</b> At West Derbyshire URC, DE4 4FB</p> <p><b>FOUNDATION - Thursday 19 October 6.30pm – 9pm</b> At Melbourne URC, Derbyshire, DE73 8GJ</p>
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## Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme

As announced recently by the government, places of worship are to receive **£28 million** in funding to help keep them and their attendees safe where they have experience of hate crime.

The funding is part of the government's commitment to ensure that faith communities in England and Wales are protected from the threat of hate crime and terror attacks and can practise their faith freely and without fear.

The money is for physical protective security, such as CCTV, intruder alarms and secure fencing to help protect mosques, churches, temples, gurdwaras and other places of worship. For details, please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/28-million-funding-will-help-keep-places-of-worship-safe>

## Joint Synod Youth Weekend

**Friday 15 - Sunday 17 September 2023**

**There are still places available!!!**

We are delighted to host a weekend away for young people and young adults from Friday 15 to Sunday 17 September at the **Blackwell Adventure Centre** near Bromsgrove. Cost: £50



Offering a warm and welcoming lodge and a range of activities, this will be a great weekend for young people to meet other young people connected with URC Congregations. The event is being jointly organised by the East and West Midlands Synods.

For a copy of the poster or a booking form contact: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) or call: 07577 867024

# Community Audit Sampler Day

Mackworth URC, Derby  
Saturday 30 September 10.30am-3.30pm  
led by Vicky Longbone



Do you want your church to be more relevant to its local community? Would you like help in discerning what your local mission should be? Are you eager to reach out to the people in your vicinity, but not sure of the most fruitful way?

Then you will want to find out about running a **Community Audit**. This is a tailored process, in which you combine existing information sources with your own close observations and encounters to form a complete picture of your geographical community and its most pressing needs. It will help your church to learn exactly who your neighbours are – and what you can do for them.

The East Midlands Synod is offering a free **Community Audit Sampler Day** at **Mackworth URC**, Derby (DE22 4DG) on **Saturday 30 September** so that you can find out what this process might do for your church.



The Sampler will be led by **Vicky Longbone**, our Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) in the **Derby A2C** project and a passionate advocate of making churches relevant to their neighbourhoods by identifying and meeting local needs. Come along and be inspired by Vicky's enthusiasm for reaching out and rooting churches in the immediate community in the best way possible.

The Community Audit Sampler Day is provided **free of charge** and is open to all URC and LEP members, elders and ministers throughout the East Midlands. Refreshments will be provided so you need only bring a packed lunch. To register, please email [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk)



## Trusteeship Training Day for Elders

**Loughborough URC**  
**Saturday 4 November 10.30am-3.30pm**

led by **Jim Wild**, East Midlands Synod Trust with **Derek Graham**, Training & Development Officer

Elders often find that they are, by default, also appointed Trustees for the churches they serve – but what exactly does this entail? Online training is regularly provided about the Safeguarding responsibilities of Trustees – but what about its other aspects?

Our free **Trusteeship Training Day** aims to take the fear and anxiety out of the role of Trustee, as we explore its responsibilities in terms of accountability, governance and legal and financial obligations. We are delighted that **Jim Wild**, long-serving member of the East Midlands Synod Trust, has agreed to share his professional expertise in trusteeship and that **Loughborough URC** have agreed to act as hosts for anyone across the Synod who wants to understand more about what it means to be a Trustee.

This is an opportunity to set Trusteeship in its place, as part and parcel of good leadership, without letting it overshadow the all-important spiritual and pastoral dimensions of Eldership.

The Trusteeship Training Day is provided **free of charge** and is open to all Elders, church members and ministers throughout the East Midlands Synod. Please bring a packed lunch; tea and coffee will be provided. To register, please email [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk).



## Training & Development Interest Group

**Wednesday 27 September, 7.30pm**

The Synod's **Training and Development Core Group** has launched a new initiative, which sees us recruiting **Training and Development Networkers**. We are delighted that we now have the beginnings of a very strong team from across the counties.

T&D Networkers will have local knowledge of training and development needs, and as a Core Group we are committed to broadening the range of lay training and development events and activities to ensure that these are relevant. In particular, we aim to offer events and activities which provide opportunities for spiritual refreshment.

Are you interested in hearing more about what the role of T&D Networker involves? If you are, then please come along to our Training and Development Interest Group meeting on **Wednesday 27 September** from 7.30pm on Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84012978202?pwd=MU5ISzdyWFYvWVZ1R0JibXlaMS90dz09>

To let **Hannah Holmes** know that you will be joining us or for any queries please email:

[trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk)

## 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.**

In the **East Midlands Synod**, we are saddened to bring you the news that retired minister the **Revd Brian Baker** died on Thursday 27 July.

Brian served at: **Marple Bridge** (1956–64); **Newland Lincoln** (1964–71); **Hoole** (1971–78); **Heaton Chapel** (1978–83); in the **Heaton Group** (1983–88); as Synod Clerk for North Western Province (1986–93); and at Fairhaven (1988–95). Our thoughts and prayers are with all who held him dear.

## Creation Time and Protecting Creation

The **Season of Creation** or **Creation Time** is in full swing, running from **1 September** (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to **4 October** (St Francis Day). The theme for 2023 is 'Let Justice and Peace Flow', acknowledging that climate and ecological justice are inseparable from justice for communities most impacted by climate chaos, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation.



**A Mighty River**

Amos 5: 24

**Let Justice  
and Peace Flow**  
Season of Creation 2023

**Churches Together in Britain and Ireland** provides links to many excellent resources, including thoughts and reflections on the common lectionary readings for each Sunday in Creation Time:

<https://ctbi.org.uk/season-of-creation-2023/>

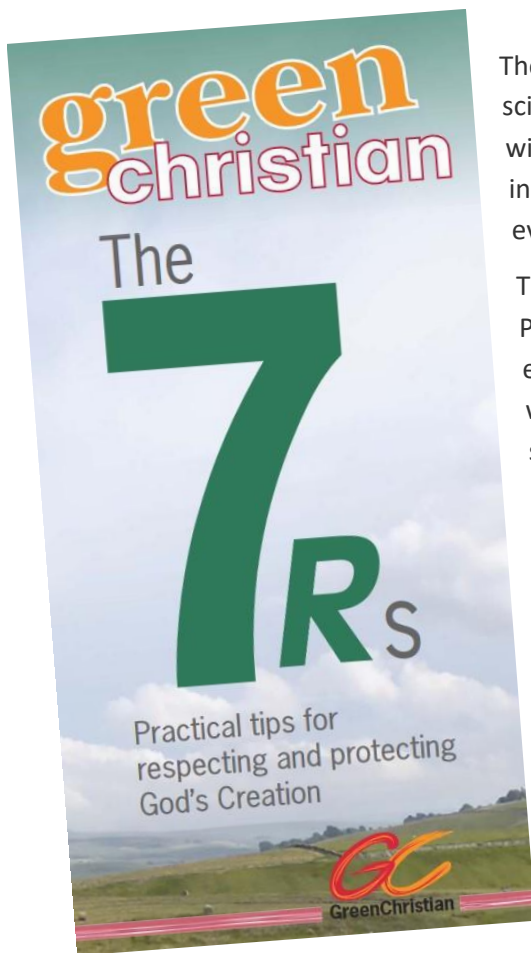
The **A Rocha** website has a wide range of ideas, hints and tips for connecting with Nature:

<https://arocha.org.uk/get-involved/engage-your-church/>



# Practical Ideas and Tips for Protecting Creation

Green Christian has not 3, not 5. but 7 R's for finding joy in God's Creation!



The threats to our planet, which climate and environmental scientists have been warning us of for decades, can now be seen with our own eyes: the plastic in the oceans, the loss of garden insects (notably butterflies) and birds and the extreme weather events and wildfires, which are increasing in number and ferocity.

This year and next, **El Niño** (a warming of surface water in the Pacific Ocean) might add significantly to climate chaos; it is too early to predict how strong El Niño will be or whether global warming will (temporarily) pass 1.5°C next year, but some scientists are worried.

As Christians, we commit to lives of loving service, including protecting God's wonderful Creation. And yet on every side we're bombarded by clever advertising, cunningly designed to encourage us to buy more and travel to exciting places. But almost every purchase or distant travel has a carbon footprint, uses up resources and pollutes the earth. We can live more simply and find joy in the free gifts that God gives us.

We can:

<b>Rejoice</b>	in all that God has given us	(enjoy our local patch of nature)
<b>Refuse</b>	to believe the advertisements	(wait 24 h before buying something)
<b>Reduce</b>	buy less, travel less, worry less	(ring-fence quality time with others)
<b>Reuse</b>	love and reuse things for years	(try charity shops, Freecycle, freegle)
<b>Repair</b>	value sewing & repairing skills	(invest: sewing kit & superglue tube)
<b>Rent</b>	or borrow or share	(and lend something in return)
<b>Recycle</b>	but only as a last resort!	(and buy recycled items if possible)

Download the 7R's leaflet: <https://www.greenchristian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/leaflet/seven-R-s.pdf>



**CAN YOU HELP?** We'd like to feature monthly 'diaries' for the installation of a heat pump and/or PV panels for 'traditional' church buildings. Just starting? Interested? Please contact: [charles.jolly13@btinternet.com](mailto:charles.jolly13@btinternet.com) .

**Charles Jolly**

on behalf of **JPIC** (the Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation group)

## Local Churches Working Towards Net Zero

Tuesday 26 September 8.00pm – 9.30pm



URC BUILDINGS  
FORUM

**Local churches  
working towards  
Net Zero**

for more information and to register for a link:  
[mission@urc.org.uk](mailto:mission@urc.org.uk)

Tuesday 26 September  
8pm - 9.30pm

Information about the Buildings Forum and recordings of previous webinars can be found at:  
[www.urcbuildingsforum.co.uk](http://www.urcbuildingsforum.co.uk)

## Talking About... Bullying

Thursday 28 September 7.00-8.00pm, online

### Talking About... Bullying



what can we do to stop bullying?  
how can we support the bullied - and the bully?

**Thursday, 28th September 7-8pm**  
**[www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout](http://www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout)**

Bullying can be an issue faced by people of any age, not just children and young people, although they often feel it more keenly than others.

**Anti-bullying week** (Monday 13 – Friday 17 November) is a week in which organisations focus on what can be done to address issues and plan for how to deal with it when they become aware of it in their situation.

In this session **Leo Roberts** (CYDO, North Western Synod) will share some of the latest thinking and techniques in how to deal effectively and positively with bullying. You can book your free place on the session at [www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout](http://www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout) .

## Black Light Course – Back for Autumn 2023

Starts Thursday 28 September 2023

**Urban expression** is once more partnering with the **Ascension Trust** to host another Black Light Course.



**What's it about?** It explores the presence and contributions of black people in the Bible, in church history and in Britain today. It celebrates the remarkable growth of the church in Africa and the exciting 'reverse mission' impact on Europe. It does not shy away from looking at the legacies of Christendom and colonialism, but it invites creativity and courage in seizing the opportunities that are emerging.

**Is it political?** No more than Jesus himself was political in the things he said and did, the way he challenged the status quo, his announcement of a new politics, which he called 'the kingdom of God.'

**Is it guilt-inducing?** No, that's not the aim, but it is challenging, inviting us to recover lost aspects of our histories, to reflect on our attitudes and relationships, and to ask what it means to follow Jesus in a multi-ethnic society.

**Who is it for?** Anyone interested in these topics, but especially for church leaders, youth leaders, mission leaders – actually, anyone interested in evangelism, justice, healthy churches and peaceful communities.

**What's the agenda?** There is no hidden agenda, but one of our hopes is that the course will not only inform but inspire, challenge and equip, and result in new forms of partnership between black and white Christians and churches in seeking the kingdom of God in our nation. That's the focus of the final session in the course.

**What does it cost?**

Full course £80 (unwaged £40)

20% discount available for 5 or more attendees from the same group or organisation. Email [admin@urbanexpression.org.uk](mailto:admin@urbanexpression.org.uk) to ask for the code.



## Appreciating Church Conference

'Appreciating the Tough Stuff'  
Saturday 30 September online

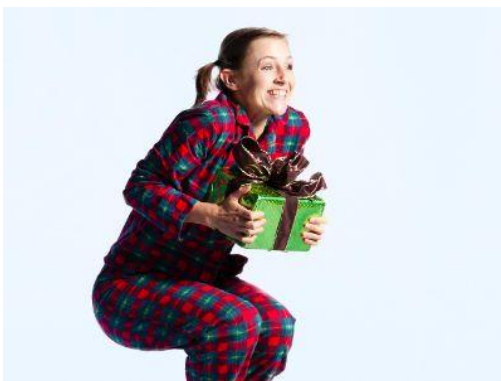


The Conference is now taking place online and the fee has been reduced to £30.  
For more information or to book visit: [Events - Appreciating Church](https://appreciating.church/events) .

## Journey of the Magi

**Journey of the Magi** – a festive, light-hearted, joyful event with a moving and profound message.

**Springs Dance Company** is inviting churches to host a performance of **Journey of the Magi**, which will be available nationally during Advent 2023.



Share the joy and wonder of Christmas with your church and local community through this exhilarating, critically acclaimed performance. The show offers a bridge between contemporary life and Jesus's birth, comparing our own personal journey to Christmas day with the journey that the wise men took. With sparkle and songs to keep the children entertained and bags of good humour for the grown-ups, Journey of the Magi delights audiences of all ages and offers a chance to reflect and refocus.

*"Absolutely fabulous show. Wonderful mix of fun, wit, and meaning. It made me laugh and it made me cry all in a couple of minutes. (Hope you'll come back.)"* Richard, Poynton Methodist Church .

Further information can be found on the Springs Dance Company website page <https://springsdancecompany.org.uk/productions/journey-of-the-magi/>, by emailing [touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk) or by calling 07775 628442.

## Situations Vacant

### Westminster College seeks an Honorary Treasurer

Following the retirement of its long-standing member, **Westminster College** is seeking a dedicated and experienced individual to fill the role of Honorary Treasurer.

The **Honorary Treasurer** is a Governor of the College. They have a crucial role in shaping Westminster, as it continues to provide a vibrant and inclusive learning community pivotal to the URC. Some flexibility of role responsibilities exists, but broadly includes:

- Reviewing financial statements, budgets and financial policies to maintain transparency and accountability.
- Collaborating with the College Executive and Management Committee in its development and implementation of effective financial strategies aligned with the college's mission and goals.
- Providing regulatory oversight of the financial affairs in collaboration with the Management Committee and the Board of Governors.
- Providing strategic financial guidance to ensure the college's long-term sustainability and growth.
- Attending four Management Committee meetings and four Board of Governors Meetings each year, as well as occasional ad hoc meetings or events as required.

In supporting compliance of the College's financial management, the role requires:

- Strong financial expertise, ideally gained through professional experience or relevant qualifications.
- Commitment to the United Reformed Church and an understanding of its values and ethos.
- Passion for the development of Westminster College as a Resource Centre for Learning, and a desire to contribute to its ongoing success.
- High levels of integrity, professionalism, and attention to detail.

If you are excited about the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students, staff, and the wider community through your financial expertise, we would love to hear from you. To discuss the position or to apply please contact [bursar@westminster.cam.ac.uk](mailto:bursar@westminster.cam.ac.uk).

## Keeping up to date with Synod News and Events

If you would like to subscribe to receive this **Synod Newsletter** please click here <https://bit.ly/URCEletter> or scan the QR Code below:



If you would like to subscribe to receive our **Synod Children and Youth Newsletter** which includes news about resources, events and lots more please click here <https://bit.ly/CandYNews> or scan the QR Code below:



## 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/) hosts **Evening Prayers** every day at 9.30pm, led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and our prayer team, along with other posts. 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/UCzXFUjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g>

## 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.

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This E-letter is produced on behalf of:

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

The inclusion of items in this newsletter does not constitute endorsement by the East Midlands Synod. Any views expressed do not represent the views of the East Midlands Synod or any of its officers or staff except where explicitly stated.

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Opening photo by [Chilli Charlie](#) on [Unsplash](#)  
Trusteeship training: photo by [krakenimages](#) on [Unsplash](#)

***Next edition: Thursday 21 September 2023***

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

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 18 September 2023**