



E-LETTER 374

20 October 2022



Opening Reflection by Judith North Belonging to the World Church Officer

Belonging to the World Church

What does this mean? Do we see ourselves as belonging to our own small village or large city church? Perhaps we see ourselves as belonging to the East Midlands Synod, or the United Reformed Church in the UK.

Yes, we belong to all those – but we also belong to the World Church. To make this a little more relevant to us, each one of the thirteen Synods has been partnered with a country which is a member of the **Council for World Mission**. East Midlands Synod is partnered with the Botswana Synod of the **United Congregational Church of Southern Africa**. The **UCCSA**'s six other Synods are Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Malawi and Angola, the last two having joined at the UCCSA General Assembly held from 22-27 September 2022 at Trinity Church in Gaborone, Botswana.

Our link with Botswana dates back to when **Revd Dr Prince Dibeela** was appointed as Mission Enabler to our Synod through **Church World Mission**. Since then, we have enjoyed exchange visits of young people, ordained ministers and local congregations. We have made formal agreements that are revisited every four years either in Botswana or our own Synod.



The UCCSA Church in Kanye, Botswana

I have been fortunate to be part of the visits and have made many friends in the various churches around Botswana, and I continue to keep in contact with them via email, Facebook and WhatsApp. Each Sunday I can worship alongside one of their churches, although when we change the clocks they will be two hours

ahead and their services often start at 8am!! I was able to join in their General Assembly last month and it was lovely to hear the choir singing: they 'fill in' unannounced and impromptu every time there is a break for the speakers to change over.

During the pandemic the churches were closed and although some of the churches were able to link up on Facebook, many of the congregation were unable to join in due to the lack of equipment and available Wi-Fi. The congregations are spread out and many of the elderly were very isolated, but they are now back in church. They still have to limit the number of attendees at services to 75, instead of the usual 300 - but they do hold two services each Sunday morning.

During July many members took part in their annual **Heritage Walk**, raising money for the Synod and local churches. The two main walks were to **Kolobeng**, site of **David Livingstone's** final mission station, and **Serowe**, the birthplace of Botswana's founding father **Seretse Khama**. Local churches that were unable to join these organised local walks in their area.

I feel very privileged to be the co-ordinator for the partnership and look forward to the time we are able to travel and visit Botswana once more, hopefully taking a group again.

I also have a personal link to Botswana. My husband David's great aunt Alice travelled to Old Palapye, Bechuanaland (now Botswana) in 1890 as a teacher with the London Missionary Society. She then travelled to Serowe with Chief Khama and his tribe where she set up a small school and then a hospital. He was so grateful for all she did that when he visited Queen Victoria in 1895, he travelled to **Enderby** where Alice's parents lived. It was a very auspicious occasion in our village. Alice married and settled in Serowe and there are still descendants whom we keep in contact with and visit when we are able.

UCCSA is rooted in Congregationalism, family orientated, looking after each other. When you visit any of the churches you are treated as a brother or sister: you are part of the family. Please help Botswana Synod continue to belong to our family, in turn: visit our brothers and sisters there via Facebook and remember them in our prayers. They are part of us all.

Around the East Midlands

Induction of the Revd Paul Burton

Saturday 29 October 3.00pm
Arnold United Reformed Church

The Induction of the **Revd Paul Burton** as Non-Stipendiary Minister in the **North Nottinghamshire Area Churches Partnership** will take place at 3.00pm on **Saturday 29 October** at Arnold United Reformed Church.

You are warmly invited to attend. If you would like to do so, please email **Eileen Glass** by Friday 21 October, for catering purposes: eileen.glass32@gmail.com .



URC Jubilee Celebration at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone

On Sunday 16 October, the **Church of Christ the Cornerstone** in Milton Keynes held a **Celebration in Word and Song** to mark the 50th anniversary of the formation of the United Reformed Church. The URC is one of the five denominations which share in commitment to service and witness in this ecumenical church community.



The celebration was co-led by four of the five Regional Church Leaders, with the participation of local URC ministers the **Revds George Mwaura, Jo Clare-Young and Ruth Maxey**, together with the **Revd Jenny Mills**, Secretary for Education & Learning.

Also taking part was the **Revd John Reardon OBE**, former Moderator of General Assembly, Deputy General Secretary of the URC and General Secretary of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland.

John, who celebrates the 60th anniversary of his Ordination in December, was among those in attendance at the uniting service in Westminster Abbey on 5 October 1972.



Led by **Adrian Boynton** and the Cornerstone choir, all of the hymns for the service were by URC and Dissenting authors and included the [two prize-winning hymns](#) composed for the URC's Jubilee, 'God of the Pilgrim Way' and 'Together through the Father's love'. The URC50 [award-winning poem](#) 'Always trust the star that guides you' by Neil Thorogood was also read. East Midlands Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** preached the sermon, citing the URC's contribution to be an invitation to "Sing 'Magnificat' not 'Monopoly'; 'Magnificat' not 'Monochrome'; 'Magnificat' not 'Monarchy'".

Cost of Living Crisis: A Response from Lincolnshire



Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** is one of the signatories to a letter sent by **Churches Together in All Lincolnshire** to all church leaders throughout that county, addressing the cost of living crisis as winter approaches. Ecumenical partners in **Leicestershire** were this week considering a similar challenge.

In light of the possibility of an economic crisis not known for decades, and responding to the anxiety and fear present in communities and churches, the letter says:

“In order for the Church to be as effective as possible in both urban and rural contexts, we strongly urge you to work together, as never before, with ecumenical partners. [...] It is a truism to state that we can be far more effective together than we can apart. In the coming months we will need to overcome any obstacles that have prevented us from working collaboratively in the communities we seek to serve. The cold and hungry are not interested whether those who care for them are of a particular denomination; therefore, as disciples of Jesus, we need to come together as one.”

The signatories urge churches to convene meetings urgently to explore how they might act together in response to local needs. Suggestions not only include offering warm spaces or hot soup and drinks where this may be affordable, but also the possibility of heating a single space for collaborative mission projects – or even worship, either together or in relay to save costs while building unity. They conclude:

“One thing is for sure, whenever the world has been in crisis, God has found new and creative ways of responding and redeeming a situation. This is a time when as one, the churches of Lincolnshire, can rise to the challenge, make a huge difference and witness for Christ in a truly effective and meaningful way.”

Details of the **Warm Welcome** scheme, Foodbanks and other helpful links are available on the **CTAL** website at: <http://www.ctal.org.uk/cost-of-living.html>.

Final Call for 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**

Offered jointly with Northern College and the West Midlands Synod, our free **Funerals Workshop Day** is designed particularly for **Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders** who are sometimes called upon to lead a funeral. All ministers, elders and church members who want to learn more about this important ministry are equally welcome to attend.

Facilitated by **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby** of Northern College, the day will cover practicalities and liturgy, insights into the grieving process and pastoral care for the bereaved. The training is offered free of charge: simply bring your lunch.

To register for the Funerals Workshop Day on **Saturday 5 November**, please contact **Hannah Holmes** without delay by emailing: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk.

Funerals Workshop Day

Free one-day training
for Lay Preachers,
Workshop Leaders & others

led by

Rosalind Selby

Principal, Northern College



Learn more about the
practical and pastoral aspects
of this vital ministry

Saturday 5 November 10am-3.30pm
at Hinckley URC, LE10 1NL

To register: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk

Weddings Workshop Day

led by Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, Principal of Northern College

Saturday 10 December 10.30am-3.30pm
at **The Haven United Reformed Church, Banbury**

The **Wessex Synod** is delighted to share that **Rosalind Selby**, Principal of Northern College, will also be leading a day for lay people on preparing and taking Wedding Services. This will be at **The Haven United Reformed Church**, Banbury on **Saturday 10 December** from 10.30am until 3.30pm.

To allow the date to proceed they need a core number of participants, so if you would like to attend the day, please email Ruth Heine on development@urcwessex.org.uk by Monday 31 October to register.



Energise – A Gathering for Children and Youth Leaders Across the Midlands

Saturday 29 October
10.30am-3.30pm
Lillington Free Church,
Leamington Spa

Children and Youth Leaders across both the East Midlands and West Midlands Synods are warmly invited to [Energise](#), a special event for all those engaged alongside young people. We are delighted to welcome **Dr Sam Richards**, the URC's Head of Children and Youth Work who will share with us in the day.

Energise takes place at Lillington Free Church, 136 Cubbington Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 7AH on **Saturday 29 October** between 10.30am and 3.30pm. For more details and to book, please visit out the [event page](#) by clicking the poster, or contact **Richard Knott** for further information: email cydo@urcwestmidlands.org.uk

ENERGISE
AN EVENT FOR ANYONE
INVOLVED IN OR INTERESTED IN
ENGAGING ALONGSIDE
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
FAMILIES IN THE URC

SPECIAL GUEST DR. SAM RICHARDS
10.30-15.30

29 OCT

LILLINGTON FREE CHURCH
CUBBINGTON ROAD, LEAMINGTON SPA
CV32 7AH

book via www.bit.ly/energise22

CONTACT
CYDO@URCWESTMIDLANDS.ORG.UK

101st Meeting of the East Midlands Synod

The 101st meeting of the **East Midlands Synod** took place on the evening of Monday 10 October 2022. The meeting took place via Zoom, with Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke**, Synod Clerk the **Revd Camilla Veitch** and Synod Administrator **Chris Willis** hosting live from the Synod Offices in Sherwood, Nottingham.

This was a briefer business meeting following last month's Synod Jubilee Celebration, but still opened in worship led by the Moderator. Time was also taken to give thanks for the life and witness of **Anstey URC**, **Burton Joyce Community Church**, **Freeby Chapel**, **Friary URC** and **Rothwell URC** following their closure.

The Synod Clerk reported that the East Midlands Synod has committed to divest from fossil fuel investment and is working to appoint a Children & Youth Development Officer (CYDO) and Mission & Development Officer (MDO). Substantive business included papers on the **Proceeds from Sale of Land and Property**, withdrawn for further consideration, and on the policy for **Manse Fund Reserves**, which was passed. The meeting also approved resolutions from the Synod Officers enabling them to work with the Synod Trust to create an **emergency support scheme** up to a maximum of £250,000 to assist otherwise viable churches who may be threatened by the energy crisis, and to link this as appropriate with a nationwide URC fund when more details become known.

Synod also heard good news stories: **Janette Hopkins** reported on the leading role taken by **Cowper Memorial URC, Olney** in a huge Community Quilt project to mark 250 years since John Newton wrote "Amazing Grace" at Olney in 1773, while the Revd Tim Edworthy outlined the success of **Well Street United Church, Buckingham** in its mission particularly to young people.

The next Synod Meeting will take place in person at St Andrew's with Castle Gate URC, Nottingham on **Saturday 18 March 2023**.

News from URC Mission Committee

*As suggested in the course of the Synod Meeting, our **Mission Development Officer**, the **Revd Robert Bushby**, shares this report of discussions at last month's meeting of the URC Mission Committee. To contact Robert about any of these initiatives, email: rjbushby12@gmail.com.*

Newbiggin Hub/Fresh Expressions update

It was reported that the first residential of the year-long **Newbiggin** course for lay pioneers had taken place. The course results in a pioneering certificate for participants. The weekend was attended by 22 people from different denominations. It is still a work in progress but a good start was made, with some existing URC pioneer ministers offering to coach students.

Regarding **Fresh Expressions of Church** it was commented that it is difficult to ascertain where pioneering work is taking place in the denomination and you are asked to inform me of what is taking place in our Synod.

Report from the Churches Together in England ecumenical officers' conference

Lindsey Brown from Eastern Synod attended this conference and reported on the three main sessions:

- **Exciting church – Bishop Mike Royal, CEO of CTE.** This focused on the recognition that church can feel quite fragile so the need to work ecumenically is more important than ever. This session also focused on the crises now – fuel; cost of living; climate catastrophe; mental health; confidence in the police and the state and elected representatives, and how churches need to be ready to step in to offer pro-active support where needed.
- **Relevant church – Nicola Brady, CTBI General Secretary.** Nicola spoke about how churches are still trusted to be honest brokers between the community and state/police etc. We should be valued as amplifying the voices of the people on the margins – not speaking for them – and should nurture a socially engaged spirituality.
- **Church as loving community – Helen Cameron, Moderator of the Free Churches Group.** Helen spoke about how the church is a calling, a command and a gift. She emphasised that ecumenism is a command and that working together is how we were created to be.

Pilgrimages to the Holy Land

Following on from the denominational pilgrimage in 2019, work has been undertaken around further education, including online training events with *Solutions Not Sides*. Questions had been asked about how to undertake a meaningful pilgrimage that highlights injustices that might not otherwise be discussed. It was pointed out that less than 2% of pilgrimages to the area deal with the current injustices in the occupied territories. A document is being produced to help us decide how to proceed with pilgrimages.

Mission Enabling Fund

It was explained that this is the **Vision2020** fund renamed, as agreed at General Assembly this year. It is important for this to be advertised as widely as possible. The ultimate aim is to have a one stop landing page on the URC website for all available grants. The broad nature of those who can apply was noted.

Advent Resources from the Children's and Youth Work Department

5,000 copies of this resource will be produced and they will be offered free to families and churches and synods will be invited to donate if they are able. The suggested donation will be £1.00 per pack. The theme is 'Are you ready?' and there is also a QR code to link with the **FOFA** (Friends on Faith Adventures) At Home resource.

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 life and ministry.

The Mersey Synod informs us of the death of the **Revd Angus Duncan**, on Saturday 15 October. Angus ministered at: Billingham (1966-70); Gosport (1970-79); as Synod Clerk in Mersey (1989-2000); Hoole, Chester (1979-2004); and Sealand Road (2003-04). Details of his funeral will be available by calling the Mersey Synod Office on 0151 722 6590. We hold his wife and family in our prayers.

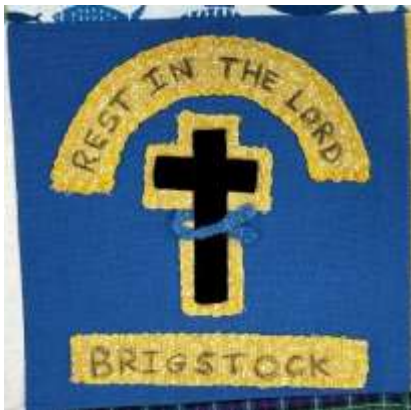
Jubilee Banner

Our **Jubilee Banner**, representing every church in the East Midlands Synod, has been busy touring local churches. If you would like to borrow it for a special service, please email jubilee@urc5.org.uk.

We are pleased to feature just a few of the individual square panels created by the skilled craftspeople in local churches:



Brigstock URC's panel was made by **Judith Beeby** and **Sheila Smith**. Judith took inspiration for her design from the text above the pulpit, "Rest in the Lord" which, they say, "sums up our faith very succinctly".



Brigstock is an old village not far from Corby, and the chapel was a Congregational church prior to the formation of the URC. One of three churches in the Rockingham Forest group, it is home to a small but busy congregation as well as the meeting place for several village groups.

For **ChristChurch LEP**, Grantham, **Jean Breckenridge** chose as an emblem the church organ, since the grade 2* listed building is locally renowned as the venue for numerous musical events. Jean's design was embroidered by **Alison Blowers**.



The Local Ecumenical Partnership of ChristChurch, Grantham was formed in 2008 between the United Reformed Church on St Peter's Hill and the Central Methodist Church on Finkin Street, whose premises it continues to occupy.



Duston URC, Northampton chose a different medium again: a collage which manages to squeeze in numerous aspects of church life. Symbols on the left-hand side represent prayer, Communion, family, praise and worship, with an indication of the hearing aid loop and wheelchair access which guarantee the church is all-inclusive. Toward the right are signs of the groups and activities which the church hosts: the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade, coffee mornings, foodbank, Luncheon Club and Sunbeams – children of Christ one and all. Occupying the central place is the cornerstone for all of these activities: the Bible.

Book Launch: A Question of Loyalty

Saturday 29 October 11.00am-12.30pm

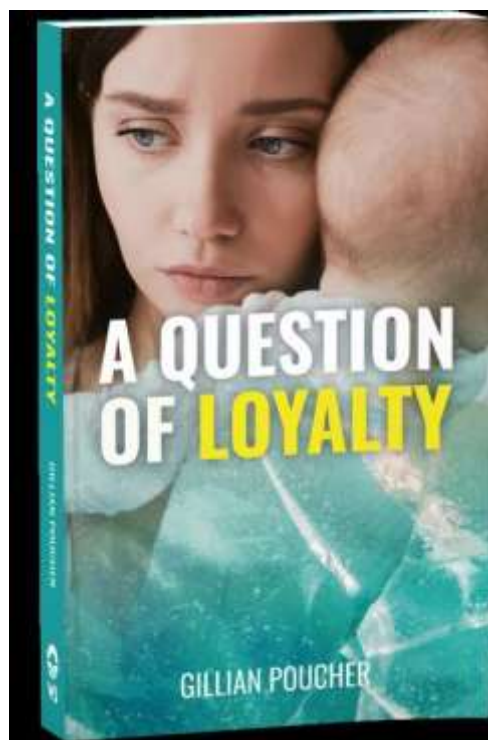
Trinity URC, Lincoln

Gillian Poucher will be holding a book event for her new novel, 'A Question of Loyalty' on Saturday 29 October from 11.00am-12.30pm at **Trinity URC**, Garmston Street, Lincoln LN2 1HZ. The event will include author talks, readings and signings and Q&A. Tea and coffee will be available.

'A Question of Loyalty', published by Onwards & Upwards Publishers, can be purchased at the event at a discounted price of £10 (cash only please). Otherwise it is [available online](#) and from all good bookshops.

For more information, visit Gillian's web-site:

www.gillianpoucherauthor.co.uk.



URC Buildings Forum Online Event

Tuesday 15 November 7.30 – 9.00pm online

Two Synod Moderators share their experience of church development at the next **URC Buildings Forum Conference**, which is to take place on Tuesday 15 November from 7.30pm until 9.00pm. This online event will focus upon stories about church buildings being used for mission and how local churches can be guided in facing this challenge as we come into the 'New Reality' after the pandemic. There will be an opportunity to hear about the experiences of developing a church building, its life and its mission, and learn of some of the joys and pitfalls of following that path, with the **Revd Ruth Whitehead** and the **Revd Steve Faber** as guest contributors.

There will also be time during the conference for a conversation about the Environmental Policy agreed at General Assembly. As usual, there will be time in small groups to talk about your own experiences, opportunities and challenges.

To register, please email mission@urc.org.uk with 'Forum Online Event' in the subject heading by Monday 31 October, including your name, email address, and details of which church or organisation you are representing. Login details will be sent a few days before the meeting.

First Aid Training

Saturday 28 January 2023 9.30am-3.30pm
Bulwell United Reformed Church

Bulwell URC has arranged to hold an **Emergency First Aid at Work** training session on Saturday 28 January 2023, from 9:30am-3:30pm. There are six spaces remaining for the day course, which Bulwell generously opens to other churches in the East Midlands Synod.

If you would like to claim one of these places, at a cost of £40 per person, please email:
eleanor@bulwellurc.org.uk.

Webinars: Safeguarding for Elders as Trustees

Online:

Tuesday 14 March 2023
7.00-9.00pm

or

Friday 20 October 2023
2.00-4.00pm

Following high demand for the recent webinars outlining the **Safeguarding** responsibilities of Elders as Trustees, two further dates are now available next year.

To book please email
carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk.



Please join one of the dates below to gain vital information on your specific safeguarding role in the URC. This session is for all Serving Elders with Trustee Responsibility in their church.

From the webinar you will

- Gain an understanding of URC policies and how they underpin your role in relation to Safeguarding.
- Understand your role as a trustee for the church and how this links to safeguarding.
- Understand the 5 safeguarding actions outlined by the government for churches as charities.

PLEASE NOTE THIS TRAINING IS IN ADDITION TO THE FOUNDATION AND INTERMEDIATE TRAINING AND COVERS SEPARATE INFORMATION

March 14th 2023 7pm-9pm

October 20th 2023 2pm-4pm



TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT
CARRIE.KAUNDA@URC.ORG.UK

Situations Vacant



The East Midlands Synod
of the United Reformed Church

is seeking to appoint a
Children's and Youth Development Officer (Ref CYDO)

This is a full-time post for 37.5 hours/week
(including evening and weekends) on a permanent contract.
Salary: £32,796 to £33,624 depending on experience and
qualifications

This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure

This post offers a challenging opportunity for an experienced and professionally qualified Children's and Youth Worker with training and development skills. We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed Christian to develop our strategy, serve the churches of the Synod in offering advice, training, and support to those working with children and young people and to work with the wider United Reformed Church. The Officer appointed will be a member of a collaborative Synod team and therefore good team working skills are essential.

If you share our passion for children and young people playing their part in the mission of God, please contact:

Mrs Chris Willis
East Midlands Synod Office
1 Edwards Lane
Sherwood
Nottingham
NG5 3AA
Tel: 0115 9609241
E-mail: admin@urc5.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 30th November 2022
Interviews to be held: w/c 12th December 2022

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is an occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian

**COUNTY ECUMENICAL
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (CEDO)
FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

Are you inspired by the vision of Christians
of different traditions working together?

Are you a great networker, solution-finder and
administrator?

If so, this post may be for you.

£8,049 plus 10% pension contribution
Home based, 10 hours a week

Application pack available on www.shireandsoke.org.uk or from
Kate at methodistcircuit@gmail.com

Applications to be received by
12:00 noon on Friday 28th October 2022

Interviews: mid November 2022

Commencement date: asap

For an informal chat about the role contact
caroline.hutchings@shireandsoke.org.uk



Find Us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urb5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:
<https://www.urb5.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/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g>

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

CCL1067405

Wedding: photo by [Samantha Gades](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Next edition: Thursday 03 November 2022

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both:
trainingpa@urc5.org.uk and training@urc5.org.uk

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 31 October 2022**