



**Opening Reflection by Revd Nigel Adkinson
Deputy Convenor of Ordained Ministries and Churches Group
and Synod Terms of Settlement Officer**

A prayer often attributed to Archbishop Oscar Romero...

This is what we are about

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. we are prophets of a future not our own.



This prayer, read through the lens of Advent, reminds us of God's timing. We are often called on to wait and this is increasingly difficult when set against the background of the demands placed upon us in our secular life. We are constantly under pressure to make decisions quickly, with little time to take the long view and consider the wider consequences.

In my role as Deputy Convenor of the Ordained Ministry and Churches Group and the Synod Terms of Settlement Officer, I find myself privileged being able to pause and consider the life and work of the Synod churches.

Writing a new Terms of Settlement document fills me with hope and excitement for the Minister and Resource Area they will serve. What will they be able to achieve together as that new ministry unfolds? Where will God lead them, what incarnational moments will be revealed on this journey together?

My wider role as Deputy Convenor brings the privilege of seeing the life of churches through a longer distance lens, offering encouragement and guidance, joining churches at different points of their journey of witness and faith, to walk alongside them and encourage them in discerning where God is leading them. A true privilege.

In seeking to help and guide, it is always important to prayerfully remember that God is at work building his Kingdom. We must not attempt to exclude him in a “we know best” attitude. Rather, we should – as the Romero prayer reminds us – lay foundations, sow seeds, be yeast, and remember above all, that we are the workers, ministers, and prophets in this generation.



As we build, may we do so recognising God’s timing and trust him. More than 2000 years ago God used his timing to come and live among us. He lives among us still, through the example of Jesus and the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit. We may not always recognise that; we may become frustrated when our plans don’t work out as we hoped, but we wait to recognise our plans are in the hands of the Master Builder whose Kingdom lies beyond our human imagining. In working for it we change the world in small, yet vastly significant ways, shining light in dark places, bringing hope and healing to a broken world. May the waiting of this Advent season bring us a blessing of hope and peace.

News From the Synod Officers

Regrettably, we must share with you the news of a couple of forthcoming departures from our Synod team.

The **Revd Camilla Veitch** will be stepping down from her post as **Synod Clerk** with effect from 1 February 2023. Camilla has made this decision after much thought and consideration, to prioritise her other ministry roles and personal wellbeing. The process to find the new Synod Clerk has commenced and details will be shared in the next e-letter.

Donna Gordon our **Synod Safeguarding Officer** will be leaving her role with us at East Midlands Synod on 31 December 2022. She will remain within the URC as West Midlands Synod SSO. She has taken an opportunity to work at senior level within a charity doing good work within her local community and has had to sacrifice one of her URC roles. Donna has kindly agreed to assist us on a much-reduced part-time basis in the new year, to provide cover until we have a new safeguarding officer in place.

Our sincere thanks go to Camilla and Donna for all their time, patience and wisdom. We are sure you will keep them both in your prayers as they make their way through this period of change.

Around the East Midlands

Induction of the Revd Paul Ellis

We are pleased to share news of the Induction of the **Revd Paul Ellis** to the pastorate of the **West Leicestershire Area** (comprising Braunstone, Christ Church, Enderby, Groby and St Stephen’s URCs).

The Induction service will take place this **Saturday, 3 December** at 3.00pm. You are warmly invited to join the service via Zoom, the link for which is below. Please note that the Zoom link will be active from 2.30pm to allow for everyone to be ready for the 3.00pm start:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83043995913?pwd=RUN4Ky9FRGRtQ2dOQ3NmSXdRSnQvUT09>

Meeting ID: 830 4399 5913 Passcode: 044912

The Dales Project for Remembrance Sunday

The Dales URC along with the wider community worked hard on a display for Remembrance Sunday, featuring hundreds of poppies.

The poppies were all made by the craft group and others in the community.

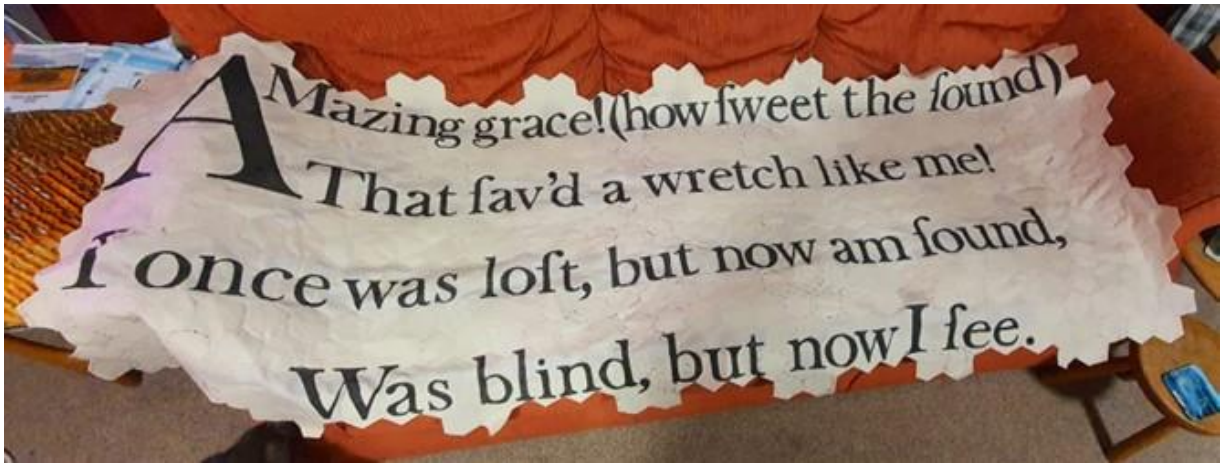


“Amazing Grace” Anniversary Quilt Unveiled in Olney

Cowper Memorial United Reformed Church in Olney is home to a remarkable new quilt, created in time to mark 250 years since “Amazing Grace” was written in the Buckinghamshire town in 1773. The hymn’s author **John Newton**, a former slaver turned ardent abolitionist, served at that time as Olney’s parish priest. The completed quilt was unveiled in the church on Sunday 13 November by the Deputy Mayor **Debbie Whitworth** and **Amanda Molcher**, Trustee at the Cowper & Newton Museum. Both Olney Town Council and Milton Keynes Community Foundation provided grant funding to make the project possible.



With the URC’s **Janette Hopkins** leading on the design and organisation, very much supported by her husband the **Revd Derek Hopkins**, the quilt has been a massive undertaking involving over 90 people across the community. Between them they have sewn the 3,500 hexagons which are patchworked into the finished quilt – a process very close to the method used in Newton’s time. Hundreds of packages of material, thread and hexagonal paper templates were distributed to homes all over Olney, while the church also hosted two **Sit ‘n’ Sew** afternoons to bring some of the crafters together in fellowship.



Many of the hexagonal patches are sewn into floral forms, using the time-honoured “Grandmother’s Flower Garden” design, with the materials themselves chosen to reflect the evolution of fabric patterns over the past 250 years. Other elements such as the project’s logo are meticulously hand-drawn, while the celebrated opening verse of “Amazing Grace” is painted exactly as it appears in the first edition of **Olney Hymns**, published by Newton in 1779 with the poet William Cowper, to whom the URC building is dedicated.

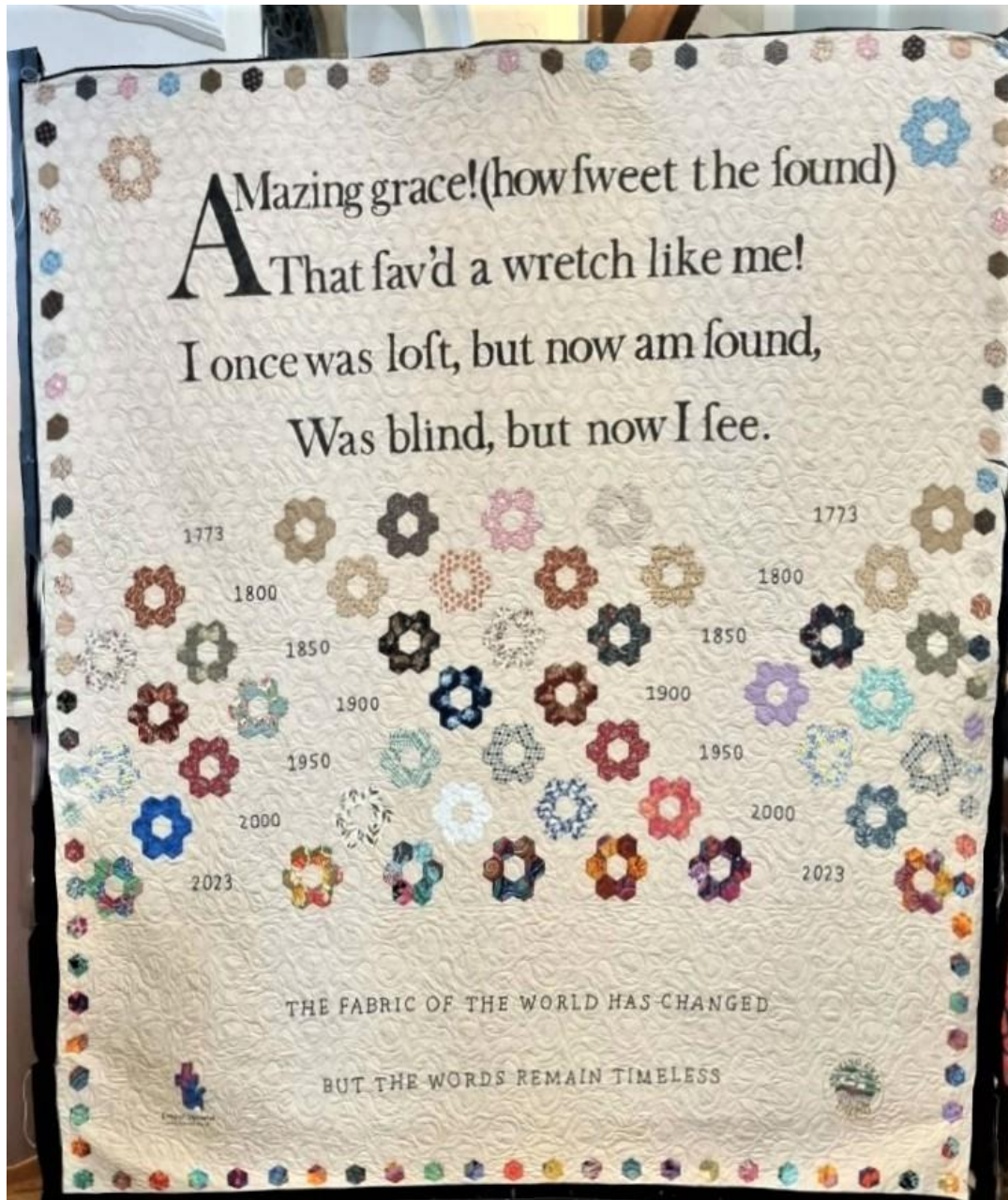


Once all 3,500 hexagons were painstakingly sewn together, first into larger panels and then one whole, each of the paper backings had to be individually removed. Then the whole assemblage was sent to be quilted, using a design specifically chosen to reflect the friendships forged through its creation. Finally, the finished quilt was bordered and mounted on a special stand, ready to be seen by all those who had put such effort into making it.



The quilt's makers hope that it will travel around to different venues, playing a part in the continuing story of this 250-year old hymn and what it means to so many people. Hand-sewn lettering at the bottom testifies that "The fabric of the world has changed but the words remain timeless." The quilt itself, meanwhile, stands as powerful testimony to the community spirit which persists within Olney and the surrounding area.

If you would like to enquire about displaying the quilt, please contact olneymurc@gmail.com.



With thanks to JH, CD & CP for the information supplied for this article.

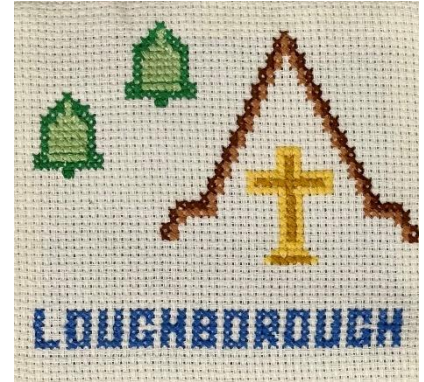
Local history in our Jubilee Banner

Like Olney's "Amazing Grace" quilt, the distinct history, heritage and architecture of several local churches is celebrated in this final selection of panels from our **East Midlands Synod 50th anniversary banner**. Although we can't feature every individual square in the e-letter, we greatly appreciate the skill and creativity of all who contributed.



Boulevard URC, Nottingham actually incorporates a historical artefact in its panel, in the form of an section of Nottingham lace, once a world-famous product of the city. This piece of pre-1948 lace was donated by **Kathleen Pass** and was part of her mother's collection, in a beautiful vintage confectionery box that she has drawn on for many projects. The lace forms the sky behind an image of the church itself, traced onto fabric after an original drawing by its Secretary **Stuart Walker**.

Loughborough URC's square also celebrates a significant local industry: in this case, bell-making. With origins dating to the 14th century, **Taylor's** is the last major bell foundry in the UK, and the largest in the world. Sent by **Margaret Jolley**, the cross-stitched panel also incorporates a stylised church spire.



Gainsborough URC contributed a panel showing not a church but a ship in full sail: the **Mayflower**, which famously carried the Pilgrims from England to the New World in 1620. Otherwise known as the **John Robnison Memorial Church**, the building was erected in memory of the pastor to the Pilgrims, our dissenting forebears – although Robnison himself did not travel with them. The church is now home to a permanent Mayflower exhibition.



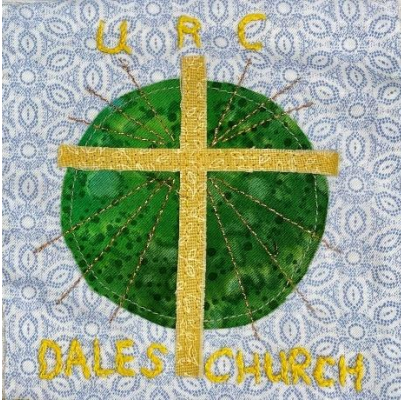
Fountain Square Church in Tideswell, Derbyshire, chose to feature an important architectural feature. **Barbara Ryder** writes, "The old front door was kept when the building was renovated, so represents the history of the church." A URC/Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership, Fountain Square now sports a modern glass entrance round the corner from the original doorway.



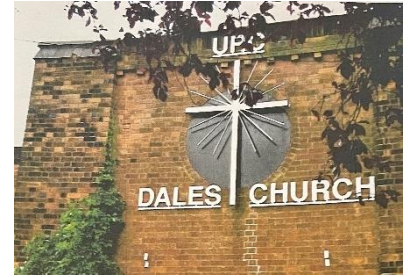
The panel for **Christ Church URC**, Leicester, was stitched by **Alison Leason**: her inspiration came from the simple design of the stained glass window behind its altar.

Similarly, the congregation of **West Derbyshire URC** in Wirksworth chose to reflect their beautiful stained glass, faithfully captured in cross stitch by the **Revd Dr Deborah Baird**.



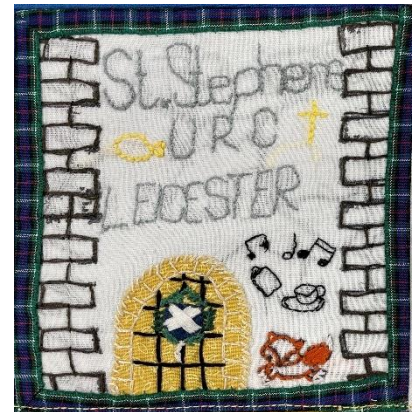


Conversely, the exterior feature marked by **The Dales URC**, Nottingham actually masks a former window, covered over in church renovations. Chosen by competition and created in stainless steel by a local firm, **Janet Clarkson's** design features the cross as sign of Christ's sacrifice, with rays to show God's message of love radiating out to the world, represented by the circular background. It was recreated for our banner by **Linda Norwebb**.



The striking panel representing **Trinity URC**, Lincoln, follows a pattern known as "log cabin", with strips surrounding a central square traditionally of red fabric, to represent the hearth fire. As **Helen Gray** explains, "the 'logs' in Trinity's patch are made up in the colours of the Lincolnshire flag – red for the St George's cross, gold for the crops grown in the county, green symbolising the fields and blue representing the sea and sky." The substitution of tartan in the centre recalls the Scottish people who raised the funds to build the church, which opened in the heart of Lincoln in 1963.

Scottish heritage also gives rise to the tartan border and saltire featured in the patch representing **St Stephen's URC, Leicester**. The window itself represents the church's stained glass by W Morris, while the fox is of course the city's popular emblem. The stonework frame, meanwhile, represents the fact that St Stephen's is "the church that moved" – transplanted brick by brick to its current location in New Walk to accommodate the building of Leicester's railway station in 1891.



To finish with a suitable seasonal motif, the square representing **Whittlesey Queen Street Church** features a more recent addition to local heritage. The URC/Methodist LEP is known in the Peterborough Circuit for the larger-than-lifesize angel that has appeared in the church each Advent since 2018. Fashioned in white card by **David Swinton**, husband of a church member, it boasts a nine-foot wingspan and was saved from destruction after the church which originally commissioned it had finished with it. Having also inspired the children of the church's

Friends of God Club to create four angel posters, the angel was a perfect choice for the panel submitted by **Christine Kell** who adds, "Angels are friends who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."





Designed and assembled by **Ally Ford**, our **Jubilee Banner** incorporates and celebrates every church in the East Midlands Synod as a lasting memento of our 50th anniversary.

The banner is available to borrow for display at your church: please call the Synod Office or email admin@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.

The **Southern Synod** brings us the news of the death of the **Revd. Gordon Palmer**, on Friday 11 November.

Gordon served at: Deal & District Group (1978-85); Crowborough (1985-92); and Broadstairs & Margate (1992-99). His cremation and thanksgiving service has been postponed until January. Please keep Gordon's daughters and family in your prayers.

The **Mersey Synod** brings us the news of the death on Friday 11 November of the **Revd Peter Wright**, formerly of Caldley Valley and later Barton URC (now closed).

Peter was one of the pioneering elders of the late Church of Christ, Northgate Street Chester, a community that voted to join with the URC in 1980. In secular life, Peter was a well-respected train driver.

Peter's funeral takes place at Chester Crematorium at 3:20pm today, Thursday 1 December. Please remember his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchild in your prayers.

The **West Midlands Synod** brings us the news of the death of the **Revd Nina Mead**, on Friday 11 November.

Nina served at: Lower Earley (1988-90); the West of Reading Group (1992-94); Thatcham (1994-98); Trinity, Lower Earley (2005-08); and Three Mile Cross (2004-06).

Nina's funeral takes place in the South Chapel of Oakley Wood Crematorium, Leamington Spa, at 10.30am today, Thursday 1 December. A Thanksgiving Service will be held at Thatcham URC, Wessex Synod, on a date to be arranged. Please remember her sons and daughter in your prayers.

An Invitation from the Revd Craig Muir, Synod Transitional Minister

Change
Said the sun to the moon,
You cannot stay.

Change
Says the moon to the waters,
All is flowing.

"Change" by Kathleen Raine

At **Loughborough URC** we have recently put a couple of new banners up on the tower. One says "**What's**" and the other says "**Next?**" Our hope was to create a bit of intrigue before their replacement by the inevitable

Christmas posters - some things come around every year, whatever else changes around us. But after Christmas we will return to "**What's Next?**" Not just as a holding question until the next festival but as a question for a church looking to see what God is calling us to in the next stage of our life together.



I find it exciting to ask, "What's Next?" and to hear people throwing about different possibilities, ideas, suggestions - getting excited by doing something new and different. It is why I wanted to be a **Synod Transitional Minister** and work with churches who are looking to the future and ready to imagine new possibilities.

Does that sound like your church? Do you know that you need to imagine a different future? Are you unsure what that might be? Are you bursting with ideas but not sure how to focus? Alternatively, are you faced with a very uncertain future but want time to explore some options? Would you like someone from outside your situation who can spend some time with you, helping you to re-imagine?

As Synod Transitional Minister, I have 25% of my time available to work with a church for an agreed number of months, and to lead or be with churches for worship on the fourth Sunday of the month. I am available for some long projects and some short projects and if time allows between those, I can also be available for one-off meetings to help churches take some first steps and see if it might be feasible to work with me on a longer project.

In any church I work with, we will celebrate good stories, we will think positively and we will look at your **Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Resources**. Be warned, we will not wallow in self-pity or memories of the golden age. Even if we are faced with some major problems that will take time to sort through, we will look forward to imagining a time when "the glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house" (*Haggai 2:9*).

If you think that your church is ready to re-imagine the future and ask, "What's Next?", then contact your Pastoral Consultant: they can feed it into the **Ordained Ministry and Churches Group** and we can work out when I might be available. And if you suddenly get offered my services by your Pastoral Consultant, don't be frightened – it must be that OMCG sees opportunities for something new and wants to help you along the way.

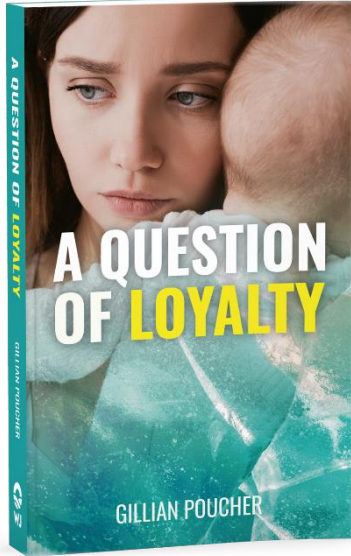
For the unknown, the unborn
In the alchemy
Of the world's dream?

You will change,
says the stars to the sun,
Says the night to the stars.

"Change" by Kathleen Raine

Book Launch – A Question of Loyalty

Saturday 10 December 2022, 11am – 12.30pm



Gillian Poucher's postponed book event for her new novel, 'A Question of Loyalty' will now take place 11am-12.30pm on Saturday 10 December 2022 at Trinity URC, Garmston St., Lincoln, LN2 1HZ.

The event will include author talks, readings and signings and Q&A. Tea/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 on line and from all good bookshops.

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

www.gillianpoucherauthor.co.uk

Christmas Tree Festival



High Street United Reformed Church
Wellingborough

COME TO OUR

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

in the Church

Friday, 2nd Dec - 5pm to 8pm

Saturday, 3rd Dec - 10am to 4pm

Sunday, 4th Dec - 1pm to 4pm

ADMISSION £2

(ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN FREE)

EVERYONE WELCOME

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE



Holocaust Memorial Day Resource for Churches

from the Council of Christians and Jews



The theme for **Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)** on **27 January 2023** is 'Ordinary People'. **CCJ** are delighted to launch their Holocaust Memorial Day resource for churches for 2023, with reflections from a broad range of community leaders and scholars. CCJ explain that the resource develops the theme, set by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, of 'Ordinary People': because it was ordinary people who lost their lives in the Holocaust, it was ordinary people who perpetrated unthinkable acts of cruelty and murder and it was ordinary people who performed heroic acts to save others. What can we as ordinary people do in our communities today to remember and stand together?

Ordinary People
A RESOURCE FOR CHURCHES
FOR HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2023



The resource contains reflections from two CCL Presidents, **Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg** and **Revd Fiona Smith**, as well as a reflection from **His Eminence Archbishop**



Angaelos, on the importance of marking HMD as people of faith. It also includes practical advice for churches on how to commemorate the Holocaust in churches, prayers for HMD, all genocides, and Christian-Jewish relations, and four reflections on ordinary people who demonstrated extraordinary faith. To download the resource visit: <https://ccj.org.uk/resources/holocaust-education>.

Wisdom from the Margins this Advent



The **Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)** is taking the opportunity this Advent to explore what it means to echo Mary's declaration in the Magnificat that, "God has filled the hungry with good things!" Resources range from videos for use in worship to reflections that are perfect for a small group, asking what this might look like today, in the midst of a cost of living crisis and global famine.

JPIT's current newsletter also includes a focus on the **asylum** system, a **calendar** of justice-themed Sundays throughout 2023, **Homes for Ukraine** and more. It can be viewed at: <https://jointpublicissues-news.org.uk/1MV9-83NWS-2BD4B2B88A61B9FD4P1CFJ689E95ADCD070779/cr.aspx>

Situations Vacant



Assistant Data Analyst

Permanent contract, 35 hours per week
Salary: £32,336

Be part of a small team maintaining and developing the database for the United Reformed Church

The Ministries office supports the work of the Ministries Committee and its sub-committees, giving general oversight of ministers, lay preachers and elders with detailed procedures for the movement of ministers and legislative requirements. The office maintains records on behalf of the church and checks them for accuracy.

You will be educated to A level, or equivalent, with experience of maintaining, managing, and developing databases. You have knowledge of data protection and possess discretion when handling sensitive information. You are organised with good administrative, communication and interpersonal skills. Intermediate level of MS Excel and accuracy and attention to detail are essential.

Knowledge of Microsoft Customer Relationship Management (CRM) environment would be a distinct advantage.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment: hybrid working from Church House in London and from home.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form (noting that we do not accept CVs):

Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urc.org.uk/vacancies

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Monday 5 December 2022 Interview date: Tuesday 13 December 2022

Mission and Training Officer Eastern Synod of the United Reformed Church

Full time: 37.5 hours per week (flexible, including some evenings and weekends)
Annual salary: £38 – £42,000 pa depending on experience

The Eastern Synod is seeking an experienced person who is motivated to stimulate and encourage growth within the Synod.

The focus of the work is to assist local churches in their mission and in implementing mission initiatives and by encouraging them to be confident in sharing their faith.

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 Part 1; Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement that the post holder be a Christian. Office based, with some working from home permissible, and regular travel around the Synod is an essential requirement.

An application pack can be accessed via the Synod website: www.urc-eastern.org.uk or by emailing Marion Gentry on admin@urceastern.org.uk. Only completed application forms will be accepted (no CVs).



Closing date for applications is 5.00pm on **Wednesday 21 December**.
Interviews will be held on **Tuesday 3 January 2023**.

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/) 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/UCzXFUurjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUurjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g>

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
Seed Photo by [Joshua Lanzarini](#) on [Unsplash](#)
Candle Photo by [Jessica Delp](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Next edition: Thursday 15 December 2022

In our final edition of the year, we would be delighted to feature news and photos of your special services and events for Advent and Christmas.

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both:
trainingpa@urb5.org.uk and training@urb5.org.uk

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