

## Opening Reflection by the Revd Nigel Adkinson

Deputy Convenor of Ordained Ministries and Churches Group and  
Synod Terms of Settlement Officer

**“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God”.**

This quote is from **Cornelia "Corrie" ten Boom**, a Dutch Christian who, along with her father and other family members, helped many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust during World War II and was imprisoned for it.

We have just begun the season of Lent, a time in the church calendar when we remember Jesus' time in the wilderness. We remember his desert wanderings, alone with nature, facing the hot desert days and the cold desert nights; a time where Jesus' relationship with God was tested, but where his spiritual strength won through his time of testing.



I'm sure we can recall in our own lives those wilderness times, whether long or short. We may be experiencing them now, both individually and in the life of our churches. I believe those of us who seek to live our lives as Christians often find ourselves in the wilderness, cast out by a society that wants to ignore us and push us to the margins. Where everything seems to be collapsing around us, where things no longer seem to make sense to us and where the world so often seems a frightening place.

Our wilderness times can be triggered by many things: illness, family difficulties, loss of job, loss of loved ones, and more besides. It is at these times that the God we know says, "trust me; nothing can separate you from my love." This may be difficult for us to recognise in the loneliness of our wilderness times, yet through the love and support of friends, God's love can and is revealed and shared with us.

Corrie ten Boom knew what it was like to live a life of fear, in a time of wilderness and grave uncertainty, yet through the God known to her, she trusted and her fear was overcome.

Trusting in the love of people we know and whom we have come to trust, is an amazing blessing. To know the love of an ever-present God is an even greater blessing. The first disciples lived through wilderness times. What greater wilderness time could there be for them, than to see the leader they loved and had followed die on a cross. Yet for them and for us, that death brings hope and new life through Christ's resurrection. So, as we travel through Lent and recall our own times of wilderness and those of the first disciples, may we live as a people of hope, worshipping a God from whose love in Jesus Christ we can never be separated.

May we all know the touch of the living Christ as we make our Lenten journeys, walking the way of the Cross to a life of resurrection and new beginnings.

## Opportunities to Join the Synod Team

**The closing dates are fast approaching for these three important roles in the East Midlands Synod:**



The East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church is looking to appoint a

### Synod Clerk

The Synod Council is looking to recruit a new Synod Clerk for 20 hrs per week. The role holder is required to spend time in the Synod office in Nottingham but will be mainly home based with travel across the geography of the EM Synod.

Salary: £30,000 to £35,000 per annum FTE for a lay URC member. A URC minister will receive a scoping of 0.45 of a current ministerial stipend, a manse and related benefits in accordance with the Plan for Partnership. This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

The role of the Synod Clerk in the East Midlands Synod has four principal elements:

- To serve as Clerk to the Synod and Synod Council
- To be responsible for enabling Synod engagement with General Assembly
- To provide advice, guidance and support on the structure, governance and procedures of the United Reformed Church
- To serve as one of the Synod Officers alongside the Moderator and Treasurer.

For an application pack (no CVs) please contact:

East Midlands Synod Office  
1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood  
Nottingham, NG5 3AA  
Tel: 0115 9609241

Email: [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk)

- **Closing date for applications: Wednesday 22 March 2023**
  - **Interviews to be held: Tuesday 4 April 2023**

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

We are committed to diversity and equality of opportunity. We especially welcome applications from women and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups who are currently under-represented in this area of work in the Church.



## **Mission Development Officer**

The East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church is seeking to appoint a **Mission Development Officer** (Ref MDO)

This is a full-time post for 37.5 hours/week (including evening and weekends) on a permanent contract.

Salary: £40,000 per annum for a lay person or a minister from outside the URC. A URC minister will receive the current ministerial stipend, a manse and related benefits in accordance with the Plan for Partnership. This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

The purpose of this role is to help equip churches in their missional discipleship and growth and to facilitate the sharing of good news, practice and opportunities across the Synod and beyond, holding the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way at the heart of their work.

The successful candidate will work to promote, encourage and undertake the promotion of mission to the whole people of God to facilitate the development of the life of the church at all levels by helping churches to identify and understand their particular priorities in mission and, to develop and release people to engage in that mission.

The Officer appointed will be a member of a collaborative Synod team and therefore good team working skills are essential.

For an application pack (no CVs) please contact:

Mrs Chris Willis  
East Midlands Synod Office  
1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood  
Nottingham, NG5 3AA  
Tel: 0115 9609241  
Email: [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications: Tuesday 28 February 2023**  
**Interviews to be held: Friday 23 March 2023**

*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*

We are committed to diversity and equality of opportunity. We especially welcome applications from women and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups who are currently under-represented in this area of work in the Church.



## **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

The East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church is seeking to appoint a **Synod Safeguarding Officer** (Ref SSO). This is a part-time post for 17.5 hours per week (including evening and weekends) on a permanent contract. Salary is £38,239 pro-rata (actual salary £17,845). This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

Safeguarding children and adults at risk is a core part of the Church's mission, and the Synod Safe-guarding Officer is essential to promoting that mission. Working within the structures of the United Reformed Church, their role is:

1. To lead on safeguarding matters and be a trusted advocate for safeguarding in the Synod.
2. To advise and support the synod and local Churches in child and adult protection matters.
3. To ensure that disclosures and allegations of harm, abuse or neglect are appropriately referred to the statutory authorities and that appropriate advice and support is given to survivors of abuse
4. To manage safeguarding cases including liaison with other relevant agencies and services such as the police, children, probation and adult social care services
5. To ensure regular safeguarding training for ministers, workers and those responsible for the care of children and/or adults at risk in the synod and the local churches
6. To keep accurate records, data and information and produce relevant reports.
7. To keep abreast of developments in safeguarding within and outside the URC and maintain appropriate links

For an application pack (no CVs) please contact:

Mrs Chris Willis, East Midlands Synod Office

1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood Nottingham, NG5 3AA

Tel: 0115 9609241 Email: [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk)

Closing date for applications: Tuesday 28 February 2023 Interviews to be held: Thursday 30 March 2023

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# Journey through Lent with East Midlands Synod



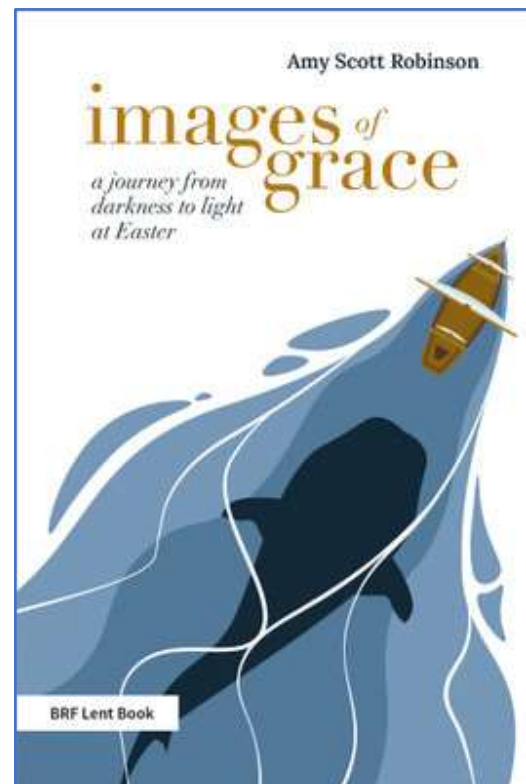
*This seasonally suited street sign was photographed by Synod Treasurer **David Greatorex** on a recent visit to Canada.*

## Evening Prayers: Images of Grace

During Lent, the East Midlands Synod's **Evening Prayers** include a fresh reading and reflection every day from [Images of Grace](#) by **Amy Scott Robinson**, the BRF Lent Book for 2023.

Robinson's book explores the abstract nouns at the heart of the Christian message: **love, sin, forgiveness, grace**... These are words that we use frequently, assuming we share the same sense of their meaning – but how can we establish whether the others we talk to understand them the same way? A wealth of readings from Old and New Testaments explores the different images of repentance, sin, forgiveness and grace offered in the Bible to help us rediscover what they mean at the level of real human experience.

We record our grateful thanks to BRF and to author Amy Scott Robinson for granting us permission to share her reflections nightly during Lent.



Led by Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and a small team of volunteers, the Synod's **Evening Prayers** offer a simple time of scripture, music and intercessions at the end of the day. They continue to be streamed live on our [Facebook Page](#) every night at 9.30pm and for those who do not use Facebook, they are posted soon afterward on our [YouTube channel](#).



## Around the East Midlands

### King Charles visits Christ the Cornerstone

URC minister the **Revd George Mwaura** featured in the [local press](#) recently, as he welcomed **His Majesty King Charles III** on a visit to the **Church of Christ the Cornerstone**. The church was the venue for the ceremony in which His Majesty formally conferred city status on Milton Keynes, following its successful bid as part of Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Members of the bid team were among the guests, alongside representatives of the city's communities and charities and Ukrainian refugees with their host families. Revd Mwaura was joined as host by the Mayor, **Cllr Amanda Marlow**, and other dignitaries.

In his speech, His Majesty recognised that although Milton Keynes may be known as a "new town", it has been a settled community as long ago as the Bronze Age. The ceremony also included the singing of the Olney hymn to mark 250 years of Amazing Grace. Before proceeding to visit the city's Foodbank, His Majesty unveiled a commemorative plaque and added his autograph to the Church Book, which was previously signed by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II when she conducted the official opening of the newly built Church of Christ the Cornerstone back in 1992.



*The Revd George Mwaura looks on as His Majesty signs the Church Book (MK Citizen/jr)*



### New Minister Makes Front Page News

Also making headlines this month is the **Revd Paul Ellis**, whose arrival as minister of **Groby United Reformed Church** featured in the [Spotlight](#), a free community paper delivered to every doorstep in Groby. This press attention follows his Induction as Resource Minister for the West Leicestershire Area at Enderby last December.

Click [here](#) to read Spotlight and its front page article, in which Revd Ellis celebrates Groby URC as "an exciting and dynamic church of all ages and lots on offer during the week".

# General Assembly 2023 - Volunteers are Vital!

Friday 30 June - Monday 3 July  
at The Hayes, Swanwick



This year **General Assembly** is once again taking place in the East Midlands. Volunteers are vital to the Assembly process to ensure it runs smoothly.

**Volunteers** from the East Midlands Synod are requested in the following areas:

- Covering the registration desk as people arrive
- Helping to direct people around the site and rooms etc, during breaks and break-out sessions
- Preparing the meeting rooms for additional meetings
- Monitoring break times and ensuring people get to where they need to go
- Following the programme and supporting others to do the same
- Overseeing and supporting the General Assembly meeting
- Dealing with issues that may arise such as lack of water and refreshments, heating issues, and generally being on hand to support the team
- Offering transport to and from The Hayes to Alfreton station

General Assembly covers volunteers' expenses; this does not include accommodation but does extend to meals at the Hayes.

If you feel able to volunteer some time, please contact **Chris Willis** at the Synod Office: [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk)

## Annual Church Returns and Safeguarding Forms

All Church Secretaries and Safeguarding Co-ordinators should now have received log in details to enable them to complete their churches Annual Return/Safeguarding Return.

**Please note that all returns must be completed by Monday 6 March.** There are still many churches who have not yet begun to fill out their returns.

If you are having any difficulties and require assistance, please contact Chris or Hannah at the Synod Office:

For **Annual Church Returns**: Chris Willis – [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk)

For **Annual Safeguarding Returns**: Hannah Holmes – [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk)

## Net Zero in My Neighbourhood

**Net Zero in My Neighbourhood**

# HOW CAN WE CAMPAIGN FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE LOCALLY?

**JPIT** **HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**

**JOIN US ONLINE for 1 HOUR:**  
**28 February, 7.30pm**  
**or 2 March, 5pm**

Register at  
<https://bit.ly/jpitnzwebinar>

The **Net Zero in My Neighbourhood** programme has been developed by JPIT (the Joint Public Issues Team).

The aim of the **Net Zero in My Neighbourhood** programme is to enable and encourage church congregations big and small to hold to account and support council/local authority net zero targets.

There are two (identical) webinars coming up, joined up with Hope for the Future, who specialise in equipping groups and individuals to communicate the urgency of climate change with their local politicians.

Information and registration details are at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-do-we-campaign-for-climate-justice-locally-with-hope-for-the-future-tickets-525726751867> or <https://bit.ly/jpitnzwebinar>.



# Creation's Climate Crisis: JLG Spring Conference Online

Wednesday 15 March 2.00-5.30pm on Zoom

The [Joint Liturgical Group](#) (JLG) of Great Britain has announced its Spring Zoom Conference on **Wednesday 15 March** from 2.00-5.30pm, on the topic of **Shaping Worship: Creation's Climate Crisis – responding in faith**. We have arrived at, or passed, our Earth Environment's Crisis/Kairos Moment; the conference asks, how can worship help us wake up?

*...the land mourns, and all who live in it languish - Hosea 4:3a (NRSV)*

Themes & Presenters:

- **Creation Power** -- *Can scientific truth wake us up?*
  - **Dr. Kim Holmén**, Special Advisor at Norwegian Polar Institute
- **Bible Power** – *Can the Bible wake us up to Climate Chaos?*
  - **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby**, former Principal of Northern College and Biblical Tutor at Luther King Centre, Manchester
- **People Power** – *Can we wake up our congregations?*
  - **Steve Hucklesby**, Policy Advisor for JPIT, Joint Public Issues Team
  - **Revd Dr Tamas Kodacsy**, European Christian Environmental Network, leads the Eco-congregation movement in Hungary
- **Worship to wake us up**
  - **Phillip Mellstrom**, Worship and Development Worker, Church of Scotland
  - **United Church of Zambia**, Liturgy from 'Sensitization Sunday on our Environment'
  - **David Williams**, URC Composer - 'We hold the Key', a new hymn



Everyone is welcome to attend; there is no registration fee although donations are appreciated. Simply use the following Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85184771951> (Meeting ID: 851 8477 1951).

## St Albans Cathedral Festival 2023

Saturday 14 October

The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban



Will you be one of the singers at this year's **Free Church Choirs Festival of Church Music** at the **Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban** on **Saturday 14 October**? Anthem Books are available from January 2023 from **Adrian Prisk**, 15 Parklands Great Linford, MK145DZ Festival Conductor – **Peter J Williams** Organist – **Rufus Frowde** Email: [aprisk@doctors.org.uk](mailto:aprisk@doctors.org.uk) For more information visit: [Free Church Choirs - Home](#)

# Youth and Children's News

## Love is... 2023 Children's and Youth Work Theme



Resources for everyone engaging with children, young people and young adults.

This resource explores the theme of **Love is....** , based on 1 Corinthians 13 and the commandments to love God & love others as we love ourselves.

You'll find a wide variety of ways to involve everyone, whatever their age or stage, across the year, and you will discover a wealth of material to enjoy with children, young people, young adults and in intergenerational contexts.

The resource headings for sections are only guides – please don't limit yourself to those that most obviously fit your context as you will find great ideas you can adapt in other places.

If you don't have any children or young people connected with your church, please:

- Enjoy the colouring pages and use some of the prayers, Bible studies and other materials with your adult groups
- Pray for those churches near you which do, and the children and young people in your local community
- Offer these resources to your nearest uniformed group or school

Downloadable resources available include:

- [Love is...: 2023 Children's and Youth Work Theme](#) (PDF | 4.5mb)
- [Colouring page – 1 John 4:8](#) (PDF | 857kb)
- [Colouring page – 1 John 3:18](#) (PDF | 659kb)
- [Colouring page – Matthew 22:37&39](#) (PDF | 790kb)
- [Walking the Way Challenge](#) (PDF | 268kb)
- [Puzzle pages](#) (PDF | 450kb)

## Lundie Memorial Award



The **Lundie Memorial Award** celebrates the good work a child or young person is doing for their church and community.

If you know a child or young person who is playing their part in the mission of God in their church or Synod, their local community or the wider world, please nominate them for a Lundie Memorial Award and help shine a light on their achievements.

Each month, a medal and certificate will be awarded to one of the nominated children and young people, along with a financial gift of £100 to be spent to benefit children and/or young people in the church, synod or

local community, however the award winner chooses.

Good work can be interpreted in many different ways, so there are no hard and fast categories for this award. Suggested nomination areas are:

- a young carer
- a young person running a holiday club
- a child volunteering at a dementia café
- a young person fund raising for a Messy Church outing
- a young person providing live music for services
- a child raising money for an overseas development project
- a young person training older people in the use of technology
- a child who turns up early every week to set out the chairs for a club
- a young person volunteering as a peer mentor at college
- anyone under 26 who is playing their part in the mission of God in any way

Anyone under the age of 25 can be nominated and anybody can make a nomination at any time of the year.

To make a nomination, download and complete a nomination form and send it by post or email to

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

You will also need to get the nominee (and their parents if they are under 18) to sign the form to show they agree to you sending us their details.

It would be great if you can send a good quality original sized photo of the nominee, preferably doing something connected with their nomination. If they win, this photograph may be used on the URC website or other publicity to celebrate their achievement.

<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/family-friendly-church/lundie-memorial-awards/>

## Further Situations Vacant

### Missional House

'No. 84', Redcar, Cleveland

Is New Monasticism catching your attention? Does being part of a small innovative residential missional community appeal? Does taking time out to think and pray through new possibilities, or taking a gap year feel timely?

Are you excited by new ways of being and doing Church?

From Spring 2023 onwards for those aged 18 and over, Redcar has a rare opportunity in the Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church to become part of a household of three living within a simple Rule of praying, eating, studying and serving together while accompanying Redcar United Reformed Church & Redcar Baptist Church in missional presence in Redcar.

If needed, a modest maintenance allowance is available. You are invited to register your interest by 31 March 2023.

Information Packs available from:

**Lisa McAvoy**, Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8JJ. Tel 0191 232 1168 [lisa.mcavoy@urc-northersynod.org](mailto:lisa.mcavoy@urc-northersynod.org)

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### Loughborough Baptist Church : CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Loughborough Baptist Church is looking for a part-time administrator to work with the Minister and other church officers. There will be opportunities to play a vital role in developing new directions in mission as part of a dynamic team. The church is seeking a person who is able to support and encourage existing office volunteers, who has good organisational and computer skills (including website management and social media), an eye for detail, and the ability to relate well to a wide range of people.

The administrator will be expected to be proactive and creative in developing administrative systems and ensuring effective communication using a range of media. It is essential that the person appointed be sympathetic to the church's Christian ethos. The post will be for 16 hours, some of which will need to be allocated to regular hours in the building each week as well as occasional evening activities.

Duration: Open-ended, although subject to a six-month probationary period. Salary: £12.50 per hour

A Job Description and Person Specification can be obtained from: **Mrs Margaret Thirlwell** (Church Secretary), Loughborough Baptist Church, Baxter Gate, Loughborough LE11 1TG. Email: [j.m.thirlwell@talktalk.net](mailto:j.m.thirlwell@talktalk.net). If you would like to discuss the post, please call Margaret Thirlwell: 01509 232840.

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter (including the full contact details of two referees) to Margaret Thirlwell at the above address.

**Closing date** for applications: midday on Monday 13 March. **Interview date:** Wednesday 22 March.

## 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/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g>

## 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

CCL1067405

Desert photo by [Jared Verdi](#) on [Unsplash](#)

***Next edition: Thursday 9 March 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 6 March 2023**