

E-LETTER 382

9 February 2023



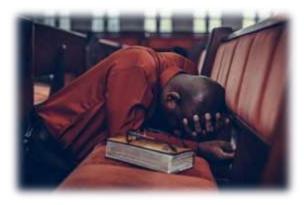
Opening Reflection by Geoff Milnes East Midlands Synod Property Officer

I was doing the washing up. Nothing remarkable about that, you might think. This time, however, I was doing it in the bath. Not that I was in the bath, but the crockery and cutlery were in a washing up bowl in the bath, and I was kneeling over the side and getting them clean.

The reason for this is that we are having our kitchen refitted, completely. Everything has been stripped out and the kitchen is back to bare walls. All that we have been accustomed to using is gone – no sink, no dishwasher, no oven, no washing machine or tumble dryer. The dining room has become a 'make do' kitchen with the fridge, microwave, slow cooker, toaster and kettle all perched in various places. Cooking has become a different challenge!

As I was drying the pots, it occurred to me that I was doing nothing that millions of people around the world weren't doing. So many people live in conditions much worse than we do, and to wash the pots in a bath would be a bonus to them. That made me think that we are so blessed to live where we do and in the comfort that we have, and I gave thanks to God there and then for the gifts He has bestowed upon us all.

Then came the earthquakes. Not just one, but two of the most powerful earthquakes possible, and the worst for 200 years in Turkey and Syria. Countries already ravaged by civil wars and conflict suddenly devastated by catastrophe and death. At the time of writing over 11000 people have died — that's more than the population of Melton Mowbray where I live. 11000 lives snuffed out in the most terrifying few seconds possible, with no chance of escape or survival. Whole families wiped out in an instant, generations gone. Those who survived are left with nothing but the clothes they are wearing, in sub-zero temperatures, and with no shelter, no power, no water or electricity. And there was me, chuntering about washing up in the bath.



Where is God in all this? How can He let these things happen? Is this a loving caring and compassionate God to do this to His people, His creation? Questions like these will be asked by many, and I am not theologically trained enough to give any meaningful answers. What I do know is that God's Creation is ongoing, that we must adapt to that and its consequences. I know, too, that this is a time for miracles — a family of 6 was rescued from the rubble, and I am sure you have seen the pictures of the new born girl, umbilical still attached, lifted from the remains of her house and being taken to hospital. Even

as her mother was dying, she gave birth to new life. That surely is a reminder to us that in Jesus we too have new life. The old is gone, we are born again through the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is through that death and resurrection that God shows His presence in all our lives, and His love for us as followers of Jesus. It reminds us, too, that this life is but temporary, and that few of us have any control over the timing and manner of our death, but we can hold to that promise of an everlasting life through God's saving Grace.

How, though, does that help those whose lives have been torn apart by the tragedy in Turkey and Syria? Or those affected by wars in Ukraine, or famine and civil wars in Southern Africa or by modern day slavery or anywhere else where there is tragedy? How can we show the love of God to those in such a way that they will find hope?

We can, of course, pray. Pray that they will know the love of God and be comforted by that and upheld by it in their suffering and trauma. That though is not enough. We have to be moved by God's love to put our faith in to deeds, to find a way to help these folk in practical terms. Few of us are blessed with the time or talents to go out to these places and give help, but we can do something here. We can give to the aid agencies which are there on the ground, we can send food and aid parcels, we can run coffee mornings to raise funds. Anything we can do will be of help – the parable of the widow's mite tell us that – and all that we do in His Name will be blessed by God.



In his letter to the Romans, Paul tells us that 'we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord'.

Hold fast to that, and in some way prayerfully and practically let us take that message to those who really need to know it.

Earthquake Relief Appeal

Within hours of the devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake in south-eastern Turkey on Monday (6 February), **Christian Aid** launched an <u>emergency appeal</u>, which was swiftly promoted by the United Reformed Church.

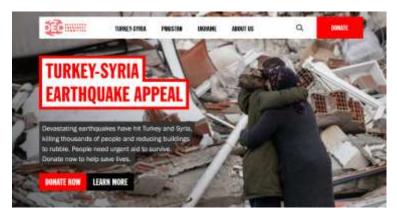
At time of publication the earthquake has claimed an estimated 16,000 lives in Turkey and Syria and left untold thousands without shelter or supplies.

If you wish to support the relief effort through Christian Aid, please donate at http://bit.ly/3HYeNqb



Christian Aid is also a key partner in the **Disasters Emergency Committee appeal** launched this morning (Thursday 9 February). The UK Government undertakes to match donations made through the DEC appeal pound-for-pound, up to £5 million.

To donate via DEC, please visit: https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal



East Midlands Synod Support Scheme for Local Churches

It was agreed at October Synod meeting to offer support of up to £250,000 to create an emergency support scheme to assist with energy costs.

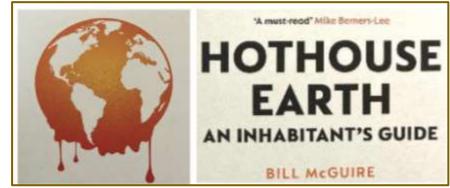
Details were previously circulated to Church Secretaries in December, a link to the documents can be found here: Resources | East Midlands Synod (urc5.org.uk)

HotHouse Earth - An Inhabitant's Guide

Thursday 16 March 2023 7.00 for 7.30pm at Wellspring Church, Wirksworth

A warm invitation is extended to hear **Professor Bill McGuire** address the themes of his book **Hothouse Earth – An Inhabitant's Guide** on the evening of Thursday 16 March. This event is hosted by **Wellspring Church**, St John's Street, Wirksworth DE4 4DS.

Prof. McGuire is a renowned climate scientist, able to speak with authority on the current crisis. He talks with scientific detachment, bluntly but with authenticity - and has the rare ability to explain scientific complexities so that all listeners can make up their own minds about the truth. For more see: http://billmcguire.co.uk/.



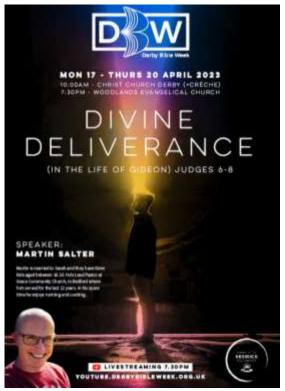
Doors open at 7.00pm with light refreshments. The talk begins at 7.30pm and will be followed by a Q&A session. Be prepared to be challenged...

Entry is free; however, due to an 80-seat venue limit, booking is essential via: paulheppleston5@gmail.com.

Derby Bible Week 2023

Divine Deliverance

Mon 17 - Thurs 20 April 2023 10:00am - Christ Church Derby (with crèche) 7:30pm - Woodlands Evangelical Church



Derby Bible Week are pleased to announce that **Martin Salter** will be speaking, from Judges 6-8, on the theme of Divine Deliverance (in the life of Gideon).

Martin is the Lead Pastor at Grace Community Church, in Bedford, where he's served for the last twelve years. He is also a regular speaker at the Keswick Convention.

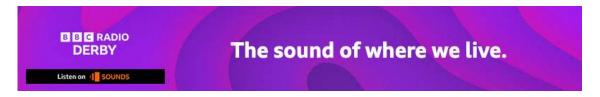
Derby Bible Week say, "We are so looking forward to meeting together and expressing our unity in the Lord Jesus".

The meetings will be held each evening at 7:30pm, from Monday 17 to Thursday 20 April, at Woodlands Church, Blenheim Drive, Allestree, Derby, and also at 10am at Christ Church, Great Northern Rd, Derby.

The evening meetings will also be live-streamed on our YouTube channel (youtube.derbybibleweek.org.uk).

For more information please visit: <u>Home | Derby Bible Week</u>

World Record Attempt in Crocheting



Friday 24 February



BBC Radio Derby are attempting a Guinness World record for the number of people crocheting together in one room.

It currently stands at 604.



The BBC Radio Derby Make a Blanket Appeal has seen over 1,600 blankets distributed to those who most need them this winter. They are hoping that will total 2,000 by the end of February. As a way of marking this fantastic achievement, and thanking those involved in the appeal, they are inviting them to be part of this world record attempt.

Vicky Longbone, CRCW at East Midlands Synod's **A2C project** tells us that as part of the appeal, they themselves have "distributed nearly 150 blankets to people struggling with heating costs, and have been part of the appeal on air."

If you too would like to be involved and get yourself in the Guinness Book, then you need..

- To be able to crochet, even at beginner standard
- To bring your own crochet hooks and wool or yarn
- Arrive Derby Arena on Pride Park between 3pm and 4pm on Friday 24 February, with the attempt being finished by 5.

The address is Derby Arena, Royal Way, Derby DE24 8JB. There is free parking for 3 hours, make sure you register your car at reception. The café will be open at the Arena.

If you want to be involved, please send a list of all names to bbcradioderbyworldrecord@bbc.co.uk

Citizens UK Seminar Series

Five Thursdays beginning 23 February, 4.00-5.30pm online



Citizens UK is offering a series of online sessions about Community Organising, building on its Community of Practice sessions last year. Hosted by **Alison Webster**, Citizens UK's Mission Theologian in Residence, the new series will explore component elements of Community Organising through a theological lens, building resources and tools to support ministers and clergy, lay people and church institutions in their work for social justice with Citizens UK.

Registration is for the whole 2023 series, with dates as follows:

- Thursday 23 February, 16:00 17:30
- Thursday 4 May, 16:00 17:30
- Thursday 22 June, 16:00 17:30
- Thursday 5 October, 16:00 17:30
- Thursday 23 November, 16:00 17:30

You can register for the entire series here: Citizens UK Churches' Community of Practice 2023

For a taste of what to expect, you can find all of the recordings from the series in 2022 at: <u>Learning</u> Thursdays Videos & Resources.

The Coronation of Charles III

Baroness Scott of Bybrook, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Faith and Communities, has written a letter inviting churches and others to participate in events planned for the weekend of the Coronation of **His Majesty King Charles III**, which takes place on **Saturday 6 May**.

Baroness Scott writes:

The Coronation aims to reflect the modern, diverse, multi-faith United Kingdom and to promote the themes of youth, community, diversity and sustainability. To mark the Coronation, you may wish to think about holding an event in your own place of worship or community centre, perhaps encouraging younger members of your community to get involved. There is of course no template for marking the day; any celebrations you arrange should reflect your own communities' traditions and expectations.

The Coronation Big Lunch

The Coronation Big Lunch, taking place on Sunday 7 May, will encourage communities to come together and to celebrate their connections and get to know each other better. It will bring the Coronation festivities into the heart of every community. Further details about getting involved in this can be found at here: https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch

The Big Help Out

The Big Help Out, on Monday 8 May (a bank holiday), will provide an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of His Majesty's service and showcase the impact of volunteering within communities. There will be opportunities for people to get involved right across the UK. More details of how to get involved can be found here: https://thebighelpout.org.uk/



National Lottery funding

Funding of up to £10,000 is available for events and activities through the National Lottery 'Awards for All' programme; this may include events to mark the Coronation but please note, applications for the Coronation weekend should be made by mid-February. See more here

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 Wessex Synod brings us the news of the death of the Revd Margaret Tilley, on Tuesday 31 January. Margaret was a retired minister who served at Dorset District 1992 and in the West Moors Group 1992-2006. Our thoughts and prayers are with all who held Margaret dear.

Visit to the Waldensian Church in Italy

The **URC Waldensian Fellowship** is planning a visit to the **Waldensian Church** in Italy, to take place in the period from 4 to 18 May, 2023.

The visit will be based in comfortable and well situated Church Centres in two areas of Italy. The programme for the visit is as follows:

A week in the historic Waldensian Valleys in the Cottian Alps, west of Turin, visiting historic sites set in dramatic alpine scenery;

Four days at a Waldensian Centre on the Ligurian coast, a few miles from the French border, to experience something of the Waldensian Church's witness in wider Italian society.

The URC Waldensian Fellowship would be delighted if you were interested in joining this trip.

It is possible to join the group for the entire visit, or for one or other of the two parts. Total cost of the visit (excluding travel to and from Italy) will be around £750. Part One of the visit on its own would cost £400 and Part Two would cost £350.

For more information please contact Revd. John Bremner on ecumenical@urcscotland.org.uk

Synod Safeguarding Training Dates

East Midlands Synod is pleased to bring you the dates of our **Safeguarding Training** for the first half of the year. Foundation training is also available to take as a self-led online course. For details of how to access the online foundation course contact **Hannah Holmes**: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk



ZOOM TRAINING

Foundation Training on Zoom:

Tuesday 9 May 6.30pm

Intermediate Training on Zoom

Tuesday 28 February 6.30pm Thursday 23 March 10.00am Tuesday 25 April 6.30pm

Advanced Training on Zoom (a two part course)

Part 1 – Friday 17 April 6.30pm

Part 2 - Friday 24 April 6.30pm

IN PERSON TRAINING

Intermediate Safeguarding: Friday 17 February 2023, 1.00-3.30pm – St Andrew's URC, Chesterfield

To book to attend any of the above training or queries please email **Hannah Holmes**: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk

Changes to Reform Subscriptions



The United Reformed Church have taken the subscriptions to **Reform** back into Church House, to save the church a sizeable amount of money. They have set up a new website to manage subscriptions, and have phone and email support during office hours.

Please visit: www.reformsubs.co.uk to manage your subscription.

Phone: 020 7520 2721 Email: reformsubs@urc.org.uk

Cheques and correspondence: Reform, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

Youth and Children's News



Faith Adventures for Children Together

New from URC Children's and Youth Work, **Faith Adventures for Children Together**, is a weekly Bible-based resource for church children's groups. It provides a structure with stories, activities, prayers and challenges for ages 12 and under, the age range covered by URC Children.

Why not consider using it to resource your clubs and groups, Pilots, Messy Church, junior church, holiday clubs, toddler groups and more, or use the 'take-home' sheets to give to church members to share with their extended family?

And keep your eye on a new Facebook page for FACT https://bit.ly/FACT_URC

Talking About Mentoring Young People

23 February Talking About ... Mentoring Young People



Supporting young people to explore and grow in the faith is a vital element of the Mission of the Church. 'Walk with Me' is a unique Christian mentoring approach which invites young people to on a journey of faith (walkwithmejourneys.org).

To find out more we will be joined by Jill Senechal from Walk with Me to help us discover more about this approach. There will also be an optional follow up training session online for anyone interested from the United Reformed Church.

https://bit.ly/TAMentoring Sign up to get your invitation to join this Zoom meeting between 7-8pm on Thursday 23 February.

Joined Up Conference 2023

Saturday 4th March 2023 9.45am to 4pm Victoria Hall, North Street, Sheffield



The Joined Up Conference is taking place at Victoria Hall Methodist Church in the centre of Sheffield on Saturday March 4th for anyone working with children, young people and / or local schools. **Lucy Moore** is our keynote speaker this year along with 20 workshops on a wide range of topics. Tickets cost £15 including lunch; to book a place, and for more information, visit www.joinedupconference.com

Reminders of Other Forthcoming Events

Changemakers Supporter Conference Saturday 4 March

Save the Date!

Changemakers Supporter Conference Saturday March 4 2023

Sign up from January 2023 via: caid.org.uk/conference2023

You are warmly invited to our online annual supporter conference.

Get connected with the people and stories behind the global work of Christian Aid, explore how you can make positive change by engaging with climate justice, and join with fellow volunteers across the UK as we share creative ideas and experiences of fundraising success.

This year, we will be hosting a one-day online event, packed with sessions to leave you inspired for Christian Aid Week 2023. We're excited to see you there.



When: Saturday March 4 2023, 10am - 4pm

Where: Online

RSVP: Sign up from January 2023 via: caid.org.uk/conference2023

Mental Health Friendly Church Training Days

Venues including: Milton Keynes – Saturday 25 February Derby – Saturday 17 June



Kintsugi Hope is offering a number of one-day training events to help churches and their communities become **mental health friendly** spaces. Two of these events take place in the East Midlands: in **Milton Keynes** on Saturday 25 February and **Derby** on Saturday 17 June, led on both occasions by **Lynette Brooks, Rachael Newham** and **Claire Miles**. Priced from £12.00, the training is designed to increase understanding, eradicate the stigma against mental health issues and encourage a compassionate response through gentle presence.

For further details, and to book, please visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/mental-health-friendly-church-training-days-1075579?aff=eand

Situations Vacant



Mission Development Officer East Midlands Synod

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.

Email: admin@urc5.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 28th February 2023 Interviews to be held: 23rd 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 East Midlands Synod

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

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



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

Closing date for applications: 22nd March 2023
 Interviews to be held: 4th 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.

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 Friday March 31st 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-northernsynod.org

As with all the vacancies listed, please consider whether you might draw the following to the attention of anyone eligible who you think may be suited to the role.

Moderator – National Synod of Scotland

Full-time, seven-year termed appointment Minister's Stipend

General Assembly wishes to appoint a United Reformed Church minister to serve as **Moderator of the National Synod of Scotland** from December 2023.

Our congregations in the National Synod of Scotland want to grow – through welcoming more members, through sharing God's love with our neighbours, and through deeper personal relationships with God. The national synod has been through a period of transition and restructure. Drawing upon the excellent leadership from our interim moderator, the national synod feels ready to offer an opportunity for a new moderator to build upon this work and to lead us forwards in the desire to explore living our aspirations in a post-lockdown world. These aspirations form the foundation for our national synod's objectives and strategies, details of which can be found on the website and in our profile. We seek an inspirational, discerning, and prayerful moderator who has the skills to help strengthen God's mission in our congregations and communities. Experience within an ecumenical setting is important as the national synod represents the wider United Reformed Church in Scotland.

This may be a small national synod, yet we have been described by many of our ecumenical friends as having an influence beyond our size. The United Reformed Church in Scotland covers a wide geographical area – from near the Borders to Orkney – and so it is important that the moderator can travel. Most congregations are accessible by public transport. We rely on technology to connect us with each other, and IT skills are essential. In addition, the moderator's interpersonal and communication skills, plus their integrity and compassion, will assist them in exercising pastoral leadership to congregations and ministers.

Apply for this role

If you wish to nominate a minister for this role, please write to: Deepti Upadhyaya at recruitment@urc.org.uk by Sunday 26 February 2023.

If you wish to apply for this post, please read the role description and complete the role application form, which can be found here: Moderator - National Synod of Scotland - United Reformed Church

Find Us Online



The <u>East Midlands Synod website</u> is the one-stop shop for all essential information: https://www.urc5.org.uk/



Our <u>East Midlands Synod Facebook Page</u> 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 <u>Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page</u> shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/



On our dedicated <u>YouTube channel</u>, 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.

This E-letter is produced on behalf of: The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA. Telephone: 0115 960 9241

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Opening photo by <u>Samuel Martins</u> on <u>Unsplash</u> Praying hands hoto by <u>Milada Vigerova</u> on <u>Unsplash</u>

Next edition: Thursday 23 February 2023

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both: training@aurc5.org.uk and training@urc5.org.uk

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on Monday 20 February 2023