

Opening Reflection by David Greatorex

East Midlands Synod Treasurer



Our e-letter two weeks ago alerted us to the upcoming **UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)** - it starts this weekend!

It appears to be a huge affair with hundreds of people from around the world gathering in Scotland - but can we be any part of it without being in attendance? You may think 'No' - or perhaps, 'what can I or my church do?' You may feel it is a waste of time.

Coincidentally, on the publication date of the e-letter two weeks ago, almost 100 people from the URC gathered together online courtesy of Zoom and the **URC Buildings Forum** - <https://urcbuildingsforum.co.uk>

The forum holds regular meetings and this one was on the topic of 'Environmental issues for church buildings, including Eco-Church and Eco-Congregation.' Recordings of the meetings are usually posted on the website - this one has yet to be posted, but I suggest everyone should view it when available.

The very informative session gave some of the answers to my earlier questions, raised a few more and issued challenges to all present particularly around what 'small things' churches might do to put in place environmentally friendly processes - many of which could set the church along the route of becoming an **Eco Church** and/or **Eco Congregation**. See <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk> where there is information about COP26.

Additionally, the 2016 General Assembly commended the award scheme to churches through the **Eco Synod** initiative: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/denominational-awards/eco-synod/>

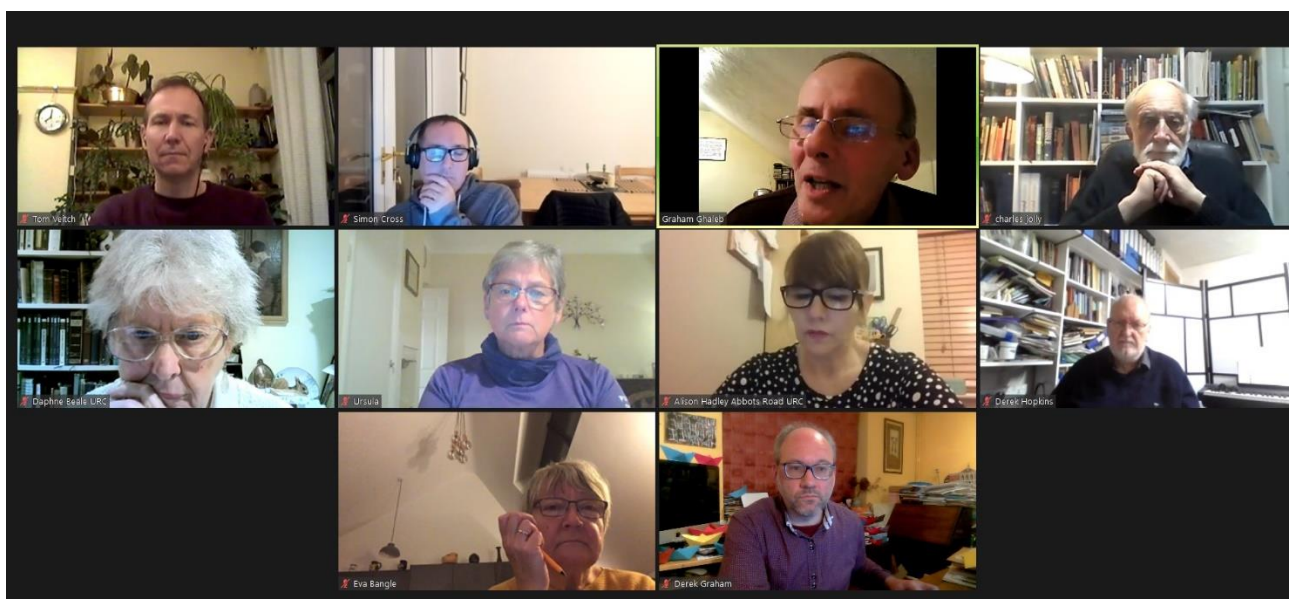
A handful of churches in the East Midlands Synod have so far registered for Eco Church and in some cases, gained an award. So you may wonder why the Treasurer is writing on this topic.

Whilst the work and tasks involved may mean spending money, we were told the potential for savings should not be overlooked (always welcome!) - but most of all, the potential for saving where we live, and particularly for those who follow us, is of utmost importance.

So I hope I can encourage all to be more aware of our environment and to do the small things that will hopefully lead to helping with the bigger issues. Should we become an Eco Church and Eco Synod? That is for all to consider and decide.

Dreams and visions for COP26

The COP26 climate talks begin this coming week in Glasgow. The East Midlands Synod's Green Apostle **Charles Jolly** summarised our aspirations for the summit in this short address for the "Prayers for the Planet" hosted on Zoom this week by **JPIC** (our Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation group).



What we want from COP26

Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** has described the COP26 conference as a "turning point for humanity." I pray that he is right. More prosaically, **Alok Sharma** said: "I think keeping 1.5 °C alive has to absolutely be the aim." For this, the world needs to cut CO₂ emissions by 45% (of 2010 figures) by 2030. Many nations have committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by the amounts they think they can cope with (NDCs). The problem is that, far from a fall, commitments to the end of July indicated an increase of 16% in emissions (according to the UNFCCC Synthesis Report 17th September).

The answer lies squarely with the world's main economies, the G20, which are responsible for four fifths of current emissions. China and Saudi Arabia promise net zero by 2060 but India, Russia and others were dragging their heels or, by some reports, being obstructive. We must pray that the robust diplomacy no doubt going on behind the scenes bears fruit – maybe some world leaders are biding their time so that they can make dramatic announcements closer to the summit?

It is in our own self-interest to keep average global warming within 1.5 °C of pre-industrial temperatures because that would just about be manageable for the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States and other rich countries. Uncomfortable and expensive, yes, but manageable.

What we need to remember, however, is that even the present 1.1 °C global warming is proving catastrophic for increasing numbers of communities in poor countries. For people on the edge, climate change may be the last straw. Add that to environmental degradation, bio-diversity loss, pollution . . . never mind unpayable debt, unfair trade, tax-dodging companies and conflict . . . and the only surprising thing is that there are not more refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants.

As well as “keeping 1.5 °C alive”, COP26 must ensure that poor countries receive the support they need to cope with present and future climate change. Not only is this the right thing to do; without it, the West will lose credibility with so-called developing countries. If there is not substantial progress it will, in the words of the New Scientist, be a bad COP rather than a good COP.

Specifically, the demands of **Christian Aid** and others, and of course of many actually living in threatened regions, include the following points:

The first is the promised **climate finance**. In 2009, rich countries agreed to pay \$100 bn per year by 2020. Surprise, surprise, they are still some way short, despite some moves by the UK and the USA. \$100 bn sounds a lot but in fact it is not enough, so we want a more ambitious deal for 2025.

The second demand relates to **repairing the loss and damage** resulting from global warming. This is the third pillar of climate action. We need to get used to saying: “Mitigation, adaptation and paying for loss and damage.” Unfortunately, progress has been close to zilch, so this is a big challenge for Alok Sharma.

The third is depressingly familiar: **debt cancellation**. When will they ever learn? Three quarters of international climate finance is provided as loans. But many climate-vulnerable poor countries already face crippling debts, exacerbated by covid. Climate change is not their fault, so they should receive grants . . . and for good measure, existing unpayable debts should be cancelled.

If you want to judge COP26, ignore the 'blah, blah, blah' condemned by **Greta Thunberg** and look for progress on these three points: **climate finance, loss and damage and debt**.



*Attendees at the Synod's **Prayers for the Planet** this week heeded Christian Aid's call to write our prayers for the COP26 talks onto origami prayer boats. Group Convenor **Graham Ghaleb** will carry our words to the climate summit in Glasgow next week.*

Hope for Home Conference



How to Die Well with Dementia at Home
Tuesday 23 November 2021 from 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Building on the success of the 2019 conference, **Hope for Home** and **Ardgowan Hospice** are hosting another conference, this time with the focus on enabling people with dementia to die at home. Due to the constantly changing pandemic environment the conference will be held virtually but will still include both presentations and workshops to share best practice, learn from each other, and connect around the desire to ensure the very best end-of-life care for people with dementia dying at home.

Speakers comprise a diverse range of experienced practitioners (including the winner of Hope for Home's Thelma Harvey Award 2019), researchers and people with lived experience and consequently this conference will have something for everyone.

For further info click on: [How to Die Well - Hope For Home Conference 2021 - Ardgowan Hospice](#)

Zoom joining instructions will be sent to the email address provided at time of booking.

Loneliness in Older People

Guidance on how Christian faith organisations can support older people facing loneliness

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Written for **Faith in Later Life** by Professor Keith Brown and Karen Grimshaw, and endorsed by the **All Party Parliamentary Group on Longevity**, this guidance resource expertly sets the context of loneliness amongst older people (in the UK) as well as the work that Christian organisations are involved in in this area, and shares helpful ideas and tools to enable groups and individuals in engaging with loneliness in a variety of contexts.

Church communities and Christian organisations have been and remain at the forefront of civil society efforts to raise awareness of the debilitating impact of loneliness as well as creating communities and relationships that go some way

to tackling loneliness, and this guidance shares information about a variety of Christian organisations involved with addressing loneliness – as well as reminding us of the inherent value of older people. This resource is free to download at:

<https://faithinlaterlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Loneliness-in-Older-People-Digital.pdf>

NHS CADETS PROGRAMME (St John's Ambulance)



NHS Cadets is a new scheme created by **St John Ambulance** in partnership with the NHS, providing opportunities to explore skills, knowledge and volunteering roles within healthcare. It is aimed at young people aged 14 to 18 who are from communities currently under-represented within the NHS and St John Ambulance.

There are quite a few spaces still left for the Derby and Chesterfield area! It really is a fantastic opportunity to get a taster of what it is like to work for the NHS and hopefully inspire young people to pursue a career in the NHS/Healthcare sector.

The programme offers young people health awareness sessions, courses to develop their leadership and communication skills and an insight or experience in volunteering within the NHS.

It is a free programme, consisting of weekly, 2-hour sessions for 11 months. Cadets will be supported throughout their volunteering journey by the NHS Cadets Team.

Who can get involved?

The initiative is seeking young people who might not have previously considered volunteering in healthcare. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Young people living with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Young people in the care system, or recent care leavers
- Refugees or Asylum Seekers
- Young Carers
- Homeless young people
- Those not in education, employment or training, or with school results lower than hoped/needed
- Those living with mental health concerns
- Those who identify as being part of the LGBTQI+ community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer intersex+)
- Those coming from low-income families/young people in receipt of free school meals
- Young people from ethnic minority communities

For further information about the programme, please visit <https://nhscadets.sja.org.uk/> where you will find details on how to register to join the NHS cadets programme in the Derby and Chesterfield areas.

Personal News

It is with great sadness that we bring news of the death of the following retired minister. We give thanks to God for all that He achieved through his life and ministry.

The North Western Synod reports that the **Revd Ron Lewis** died on Sunday 17 October. Ron trained for the ministry at Westminster College 1956-59. He was minister at: Jarrow (1959-61); Trinity Harlow (1961-72); Redcar (1972-90); Westbury Gardens, Blackburn (1990-95); and following retirement in 1995 was Honorary Oversight Minister at Great Harwood, Blackburn (1999- 2009). We hold his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.

Book now for Youth Assembly 2022

Bookings are now open for URC Youth Assembly 2022, taking place at Whitemoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffordshire, from Friday 28 – Sunday 30 January 2022.

Next year marks the Jubilee celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the URC, so the Assembly will explore the theme of jubilee through three perspectives: commemorating the past; celebrating the now; creating the future.

The programme includes discussions, worship, keynote talks, workshops and a silent disco.

The cost of tickets is £115 if you book on or before 11 November; and £145 if you book from 12 November until bookings close on 1 January 2022.

Note: a Synod grant of £100 is available to help young people attend – so book early and it could cost you as little as £15! (For details, please email cydo@urcwestmidlands.org.uk .)

To book your place, visit:

bit.ly/URCYA2022bkgs The Assembly is open to all young people with a connection to the URC from Year 10 or S3 up to 26-year-olds. (The age limit has been extended for 2022 due to the cancellation of the 2021 Assembly.)

A creche will be available for children aged 0-5 years-old.

The URC **Youth Leaders' Gathering**, for all who work with young people aged 11-25 that are in any way connected to the URC, will also be taking place over the weekend as a separate event. Places cost £115 and can be booked at: bit.ly/URCyouthlg21 .



An invitation to Pray4URC on Facebook

Thursday evenings at 8.15pm from 28 October for four weeks
on www.facebook.com/Pray4URC



**Group for
Evangelism
And
Renewal**
*within the United
Reformed Church*

GEAR, the **Group for Evangelism and Renewal** within the URC, is hosting a fresh season of short live prayer times in the run up to the meeting of Assembly Executive (the new name for Mission Council) in late November. All are welcome to tune in and pray: you don't need to be a Facebook user to use the link (although those who are will be able to add greetings, comment and prayers during the live meeting).

The series begins on **Thursday 28 October** when the URC's General Secretary the **Revd Dr John Bradbury** is the guest and prayers will include the Church Life Review he is leading. Later sessions will focus on Walking the Way, Communications and Synod Moderators as well as prayers for the Assembly Executive meeting (22-24 November).



Simply click www.facebook.com/Pray4URC on Thursday 28 October, 4 November, 11 November or 18 November to join in. For any further query please contact GEAR's Prayer Secretary, the **Revd Richard Turnbull** on prayer@gear.org.uk

Situations Vacant



The
United
Reformed
Church

Personal Assistant

**Permanent contract
21 hours per week
Salary: £19,159**

Are you passionate about communication and organisation, working within the faith-based charity sector?

The role supports the Deputy General Secretary for Discipleship, responsible for a team of staff, co-ordinating their work with that of the Church's main councils and with the needs of its congregations and people.

You will have a vital role in seeing that the Deputy General Secretary is properly supported in this busy schedule, acting as an administrative anchor, balancing a range of responsibilities confidentially and carefully. You will be part of a diverse team and your reliability as a team player will be key in enabling the Deputy General Secretary to manage this work.

You will be a highly organised, experienced PA with excellent communication and interpersonal skills. You will have the ability to multi-task and work to tight deadlines whilst maintaining a high level of accuracy and attention to detail. Being proactive and the ability to work without constant supervision is essential. Experience of using IT to manage projects and events 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 15 November 2021 Interview date: Tuesday 7 December 2021



Director of Ministry Formation

Westminster College, Cambridge

URC Minister's stipend – 7 year termed appointment, from August 2022

or Permanent Contract, Salary: £42,149-£53,348



Are you an educator who is passionate about whole church witness and mission?

Westminster College has many aspects to its life: as a Resource Centre for Learning (RCL) for the whole United Reformed Church (URC); as a key member of the Cambridge Theological Federation (CTF); and as part of the Cambridge academic world. In this role you will relish the opportunity to share in networks of teachers and trainers in the CTF, in the two other RCLs and across 13 Synods of the URC. You will play a full part in fostering the church's desire to be a learning church in which all are encouraged to grow in faith and service. You are excited at the prospect of sharing in the URC's life in tune with its ethos of broad theological diversity, alongside openness to ministry and leadership by people from all backgrounds. You will help people to reflect on pastoral practice, on training for practical aspects of ministry and discipleship, while engaging fully in the Church's mission in ways appropriate to our contemporary context.

The successful candidate will:

- have a Master's qualification in theology;
- have experience of a diverse range of ministries;
- be an experienced minister or lay person, committed to delivering a high standard of theological education with passion, creativity and vision.

Applications are invited from candidates who are ordained Ministers or members of the United Reformed Church or a church belonging to Action of Churches Together in Scotland, Churches Together in England, Cytun, Free Churches Group, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council or the Council for World Mission.*

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

T: 020 7691 9871

E: recruitment@urc.org.uk

W: www.urc.org.uk/vacancies

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Monday 10 January 2022

Interviews will be held in Cambridge over two days on 1 and 2 February 2022

**In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian
The post holder requires an Enhanced DBS certificate*

Find Us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urc5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:

<https://www.urc5.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 continuing 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/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 now open from Monday to Thursday each week. As a continued precaution, members of staff are attending the premises in two alternating “bubbles” and otherwise working from home. In the first instance please contact the staff by email in the usual way, as this will receive a direct response from the staff member you wish to correspond with. The office phone (**0115 960 9241**) will be answered Monday-Thursday, 9.00am-3.00pm.

Any further update to these arrangements will be posted on our website: www.unc5.org.uk

This E-letter is produced on behalf of:

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

Telephone

CCL1067405

With thanks to Eco Church for opening image

Next edition: Thursday 11 November 2021

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both: trainingpa@unc5.org.uk and training@unc5.org.uk

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 8 November 2021**