

Opening Reflection by Graham Ghaleb

Convenor of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group (JPIC)

A time for remembrance and a time for healing



We are in the season of remembrance with **All Saints Day**, **All Souls Day** and then **Remembrance Sunday**, days when we are encouraged to remember those saints we have known as well as all those who have sacrificed their lives in war. It is important to remember, not only to learn the lessons of the past and to honour those who lost their lives in war, but also to help us shape the future of our world, particularly in the light of the urgent challenges that have emerged through **COP26**.

And yet, as we survey God's world, we see nations torn apart by strife, long drawn-out conflicts that scarcely receive mention any more as others hit the headlines, people dying from starvation and malnutrition because of war and the effects of climate change, and at the same time nations developing bigger and better and more sophisticated weapons capable of destroying our planet many times over. In the face of such challenges it is easy to become despondent, to believe there is little that we can do, to feel that God's call to us to be peacemakers is beyond our capacity, and yet the message from the Bible and indeed from our lives is that through our actions, with God's help, we can make a difference. For we believe in a God of love, a God who walks beside us in times of trouble when we are at our weakest, a God who sustains us at times when hope has all but gone.

The prophets of old knew that feeling all too well. **Isaiah**, in his apocalyptic vision (chapters 24 to 27), predicted the sort of judgements and devastation with which we have become familiar with the earth utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled, dried up and polluted and a curse devouring the earth. And yet in these same chapters is the picture of His chosen people praising God while everything around them crashes

to ruins, for the believer can see the hand of God in what seems nothing but tragedy to others. As we remember during this week, we will be aware that for some, in the devastation of war, death and destruction, there will remain a sense of God's presence, while for others there will be nothing but a sense of abandonment.

Christ tells us: "You shall love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven." For many of us, this command is so difficult. But, as we remember stories from our past, we will all be able to recall examples of how, even in war, love can be stronger than hate.

On the night of 14 November 1940, as some in our community will still remember, **Coventry** and its Cathedral endured a one-off, but relentless, bombing campaign. Overnight, the 'Moonlight Sonata' offensive destroyed much of central Coventry, killing hundreds of its people and leaving its Cathedral in ruins. Only the outer shell of the walls and the tower remained standing.



Coventry Cathedral

In the days that followed, two enduring symbols emerged from the rubble: two charred roof-beams which had fallen in the shape of a cross were bound and placed at the site of the ruined altar, and three medieval roof nails were also formed into a cross, which became the original Cross of Nails (now located at the High Altar in the new Cathedral). Shortly after, the words 'Father Forgive' – deliberately neutral in content – were inscribed on the wall of the ruined chancel, and **Provost Dick Howard** made a commitment not to seek revenge, but to strive for forgiveness and reconciliation with those responsible. Many protested that Dick Howard should have written "Father, forgive them"; but he was clear, we are all in need of forgiveness and only Jesus can forgive sins. During the BBC radio broadcast from the Cathedral ruins on Christmas Day 1940 he declared that when the war was over we should work with those who had been enemies 'to build a kinder, more Christ-like world.' And that is indeed what happened.

At times of division, when people might expect some form of condemnation, it takes courage to stand up and preach a message of peace and reconciliation, but that was something that Provost Howard had done at a time when no one wanted to forgive Hitler's Germany. His message was clear; we Christians say no to revenge. And he didn't just say it; straight after the end of the war he travelled to Hamburg where 40,000 people had been killed by allied bombers and asked, "How can we help you?"

At this time of remembrance, when parts of God's world still suffer the devastating effects of war, when there is so much conflict and division, when so many are experiencing malnutrition and starvation, and when the very earth groans before the threat of climate change, this may be a time when we all need to seek reconciliation with our neighbours across the world and with the very earth itself, to bring understanding where there is conflict and healing where there is suffering and pain - to build a kinder, more Christ-like world.

To aid our reflections, I would like to leave you with the **Coventry Litany of Reconciliation**:

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class, **FATHER FORGIVE**

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own, **FATHER FORGIVE**

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth, **FATHER FORGIVE**

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others, **FATHER FORGIVE**

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee, **FATHER FORGIVE**

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children, **FATHER FORGIVE**

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God, **FATHER FORGIVE**

Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

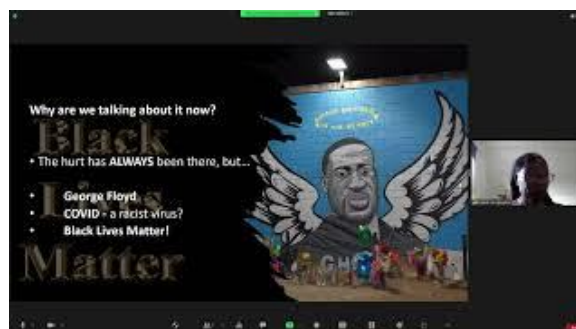
Amen

Recordings from Synod Meeting on YouTube

The following extracts from the Synod Meeting held on Saturday 9 October are now available for viewing on our Synod [YouTube channel](#).

- ✚ Presentation on Legacies of Slavery by **Karen Campbell**, URC Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries:

<https://youtu.be/EcDO7yAT1Ps>



- ✚ 'Finding the right words': a presentation by the Revd Michael Forster:

<https://youtu.be/njnlTJ2C-tw>



- ✚ Closing worship led by the Synod Moderator, the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke**:

<https://youtu.be/m7gM31o7gUw>



Annual Church (ACR) and Safeguarding Returns (ASR)

Important change for Church Secretaries and Safeguarding Co-ordinators to note

This year, the URC plans to introduce **online** Annual Church and Safeguarding Returns.

Churches will be able to submit their statistics and updated information by entering this directly onto the user-friendly **URC Church Update** portal. This will be open to receive updated ACR and ASR data from churches during January and February 2022.

The information supplied from **Annual Church Returns** will be sent electronically to Church House and this will be shared with the Synod. The information supplied from **Annual Safeguarding Returns** will be shared with the Synod Safeguarding Officer. Churches will be contacted with further information about the portal and will each receive an individual login and password in due course.

Greening The Dales

While the **COP26** climate talks have thrown a focus on climate change on a global scale, members at **The Dales United Reformed Church** are amongst those taking action to protect and enhance the environment at a local level.

The church recently hosted a talk by **Lesley Taylor**, the Recycling and Education Officer for **Veolia**. Veolia specialises in waste, carbon and energy management and holds the contract for recycling household waste in Nottinghamshire and elsewhere. Entitled "Talking Rubbish" and taking place aptly in the same week talks began in Glasgow, the talk captivated and challenged church members.

Church Secretary **Janet Clarkson** warmly recommends that other churches, schools and youth groups in the area invite Lesley to give a talk:

"Firstly, it is free. Secondly, it is spellbinding! Lesley is a dynamic speaker: it was a joy to listen to her. We all pride ourselves on being good recyclers, but we certainly found out we were not as good as we thought."

Veolia offer this service in the areas in which they operate, and also (subject to Covid restrictions) arrange community visits to the Materials Recovery Facility in Mansfield, where recyclable materials collected from households are sorted into different types (e.g. plastics, cardboard, paper, metal) and sent on to be used in creating new products. Further information is available online at:

<https://www.veolia.co.uk/nottinghamshire/education/community-groups/community-visits>. To enquire about a talk or tour please email nottsenquiries@veolia.co.uk or call Veolia on **0203 567 4391**.

At the same time, The Dales URC has received the generous donation of a Christmas tree, for which they extend grateful thanks to **A.W. Lymn**, the Family Funeral Service, and to **Mark Ridout**. The tree will be displayed in the church's wild flower garden for Christmas, where it will be lit by solar-powered lights in the shapes of butterflies, bees and flowers.

Personal News

It is with great sadness that we bring news of the death of the following retired ministers. We give thanks to God for all that He achieved through their lives and ministries.

The Synod of Wales reports that the **Revd Samantha Caton** died on Monday 25 October 2021. Samantha trained at Northern College and served at: Ryde (1990-2000); Grange & Tilehurst, Reading (2000-06); Torfaen Pastorate (2006-16); and in Transitional Ministry in East Wales (2016-2018).

The Synod of Wales hope to post the link to the funeral webcast from Monday 15 November. Please check the link below on their website after that date if you wish to view:

<https://www.urcwalles.org.uk/revd-angela-samantha-caton/>

The West Midlands Synod reports that the **Revd John Carrier** passed away on Friday 29 October 2021. John served as the first minister of Lillington Free Church from 1958 to 1968 and later went on to work at a Special Educational School as a Chaplain before serving as a Minister of Radford Road Church from 1993 to 1997. He and his wife moved recently to be nearer to their daughters towards Cambridgeshire.

From the URC Bookshop



Once again the United Reformed Church **Children's and Youth Work** team, with support from the **Joint Public Issues Team** (JPIT) and some fantastic design/art work by their colleagues in **Communications** and others, have produced an **Advent Box** full of prayers, challenges, stories, activities, craft, games and much much more. The box itself can be made into a 3D viewer and there are beautiful illustrated colour slides to use with it hidden inside the weekly envelopes. Come and see with the angels, shepherds, wise ones and the animals.

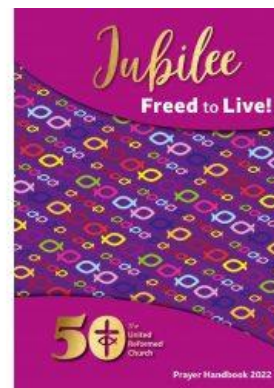
The Advent boxes are offered at cost price - just £7 (plus p&p) per complete box and £5.50 (plus p&p) for a flat pack to assemble yourself, which also enables you to add your own literature and any other extras such as an invitation to your Christmas services. If you choose the latter option, a video is available to help you put the pack together <https://bit.ly/Advent-come-see>. On the URC website you will also find extra resources linked to the Advent Box contents.

Why not purchase some to gift to the families connected to your church, especially those on the fringe? Think of your uniformed organisations, your children's clubs, your toddler group, your local school, your junior church, your messy church..... What better way to share the good news of Christmas than with a gift just big enough to fit through the letterbox but with hidden treasure inside?

If you order now, you will receive your boxes with sufficient time to distribute them before Advent begins.... But time is running out!

Boxes are available to order on <https://urcshop.co.uk/come-see-advent-kit/>

Also available from the URC Shop are the 2022 URC Prayer Handbook, entitled **Jubilee – Freed to Live!**, a range of Christmas cards and much more. To see the full range visit: <https://urcshop.co.uk/>



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 now £145 until

bookings close on 1 January 2022.

Note: a Synod grant of £100 is available to help young people attend – so it could cost you as little as £45! (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

Creating New Christian Communities



Westminster College
Cambridge

A resource centre for learning

Creating New Christian Communities

(TMM1397)

A 3-day course for those interested in
Pioneering and Fresh Expressions of ministry

In person and online

Pre-course preparation via Moodle (Virtual Learning Environment). Classes at Westminster and on Zoom.

This course will enable you to:

- Explore biblical resources and relevant theological themes for the practice of church planting
- Deepen your understanding of what 'church' means today in different traditions and what it has meant in the past
- Discuss what it means to create and sustain new expressions of church
- Reflect critically and theologically on contemporary examples of new Christian communities



Dates:

Mon 6th Dec 9am—

Weds 8th Dec 1pm

Course cost: £105

(URC), £155 (non-URC)

(Bursaries available)

Accommodation and meals

for 3 days: £170 (URC),

£246 (non-URC)

(other meal / pricing options available)

For more information and a booking form please contact the Tutorial Office

01223 330632

admin@westminster.cam.ac.uk



Serving the United Reformed Church

Click here: admin@westminster.cam.ac.uk for more information and to request a booking form.

Situations Vacant



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.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/) continues to host the **Evening Prayers** led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and others during the ongoing pandemic. If you are a Facebook user, please consider **Liking** and **Sharing** this Page and its posts:
<https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/>

Similarly the [Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/) shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: <https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/>



YouTube

On our dedicated [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g>

Contacting East Midlands Synod

The **Synod Office** is 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.urch5.org.uk

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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Coventry Cathedral image by Ian Kelsall on Pixabay

Next edition: Thursday 25 November 2021

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both: trainingpa@urch5.org.uk and training@urch5.org.uk
Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 22 November 2021**