

### Opening Reflection by the Revd Cliff Winfield

Chaplain to the East Midlands Synod Office

#### *In with the 'in' crowd*

***John said to Jesus, Teacher, we saw a man who was driving out demons in your name, and we told him to stop, because he does not belong to our group. Do not stop him, Jesus told them ...For whoever is not against us, is for us. (Mark 9: 38-40)***

John was in the 'in' crowd and the disciples wanted to exclude people who were not in their group. We are still in the pandemic and only a week or so ago my wife was 'pinged' as being in contact with someone with Covid-19 (probably our younger daughter) and told to isolate for eight days. We were encouraged to be isolated.

Over the summer and when the weather has been good, we have seen people crossing the English Channel trying to get to the UK. This has caused consternation. I am saddened that our Church leaders are not speaking out for asylum seekers. It is a Europe-wide problem, but we are fast becoming like Turkey and Greece in southern Europe turning back people at sea; it is not widely reported that France takes four times the number the UK takes. Of course, this in contrast to taking asylum seekers from Afghanistan; some migrants can be in our 'in' crowd! Yes, this is political comment and often we shy away from this in Church circles.



Having told off the disciples who were arguing who was the greatest, Jesus stood a child in front of them and said if anyone should cause one of these little ones to lose faith it would be better for that person to have a millstone tied round his neck and be thrown into the sea. Jesus gives equally dramatic warnings about cutting off a hand, foot or eye!

Saturdays have seen the return of ***Strictly Come Dancing*** but I have not seen the Hokey-cokey yet! Jesus is the Lord of our 'dance' but it is not the 'Hokey-cokey' where we put our 'left arm in, our left arm out' and 'shake it all about': we must put our whole self into serving Jesus every day of the week.

We are returning to our services on Sundays; I think it is vital that we encourage our mid-week activities and not just the Church-related ones. Scripture Union estimate that 95% of our population have no connection with Churches! We tend to be rich in facilities but poor in numbers; our surrounding community do not come to Church but want to use our rooms for their clubs. We need to encourage this by getting alongside our neighbours who come mid-week, maybe by Church members visiting the activity on a regular basis and showing an interest, maybe by running a mid-week coffee morning. If we are blessed with uniformed groups, then we should support the leaders and help organise activities.

We are encouraged to walk in the way of Jesus and must remember how Jesus befriended outcasts and respectable alike. Today we are called to befriend our neighbours. Jesus did not conform to the respectable religious custom of his day: he was very critical of the scribes and Pharisees. We need to reach out to all in our time; they need see that Jesus loves them and they will only see that if we show them!

Jesus tells us that salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? We are called to be the 'salt of the earth' by not excluding those that don't see our need for Sunday worship. **Edwin Markham** wrote:

**He drew a circle that shut me out –  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle and took him in!**

We are called to care for all God's children, not just those like us. In Matthew 25.37-40, in the parable of the sheep and goats, we read: '**Lord when did we see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick or in prison and cared for you?**' Jesus replied, '**whenever you did this for the least important brother or sister of mine, you did it for me!**'

God does bless us.

## Induction of the Revd Craig Muir

The afternoon of **Saturday 18 September** marked a joyous occasion in the life of the East Midlands Synod as worshippers gathered at Loughborough United Reformed Church to celebrate the Induction of the **Revd Craig Muir**. In a service presided over by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke**, Craig was Inducted as Minister at **Loughborough** and also at **Melton Mowbray with Freeby**, and additionally into the special role of **Synod Transitional Minister**. We all join in welcoming Craig to our Synod and wishing him a blessed and fruitful ministry.



*The Revd Craig Muir (left) at his Induction Service with Synod Moderator the Revd Geoffrey Clarke (photograph courtesy of Pete Smith)*

# Robert Bailey White

6 January 1940 – 22 September 2021



It is with deep sadness that we report the death on 22 September 2021 of **Robert White**, our former Trust and Property Officer and a much-loved colleague within the East Midlands Synod Offices and beyond. Having successfully beaten myeloma, Robert was re-admitted to hospital with problems connected with his liver and kidneys. Despite fighting hard, this was one battle he couldn't win and he passed away peacefully in his sleep with his wife Rachel and daughter Imogen by his side.

Robert began working for the United Reformed Church East Midlands Synod on 22 March 2004 as Trust and Property Officer, following his retirement as a partner of many years at solicitors Young and Pearce in Nottingham. Robert's knowledge of both Property and Trust law meant that the East Midlands Synod was able to offer the churches help with both its buildings and also any property queries which arose, no matter how trivial or difficult. It was noted that, even though Robert like other staff members was employed on a part-time basis, if a problem arose outside those hours they were dealt with as soon as possible.

As the Synod increased its use of IT over the years, we would often hear Robert's dulcet tones as he stared at the screen and called, "the document has disappeared!" or, "where will I find...?" His preference remained to use hard copy files rather than rely on storing everything on the computer. Robert's approach was that you can't take the computer to a church when you need to visit, but you can take a file.

Throughout his years with Synod nothing was too much trouble: from pitching in to help colleagues, whatever their role, to advising on matters unconnected with work, Robert was always ready to help.

Robert finally agreed to retire in March 2020, although even then he continued to serve as Terms of Settlement Officer. Due to the pandemic he never managed to celebrate his retirement with the Synod team, much to his frustration, and his cruise was also cancelled. He did however manage a short break away this year with his family.

Robert was a special person and someone that the Synod Staff hold dear in our hearts, as do many others. We are proud to have known him: a true officer and a gentleman, a person with a heart for all those he met and a warmth enjoyed by all. His many personal qualities make him irreplaceable.

Please join us in praying for Rachel and the family.

**Chris Willis**

Administrator & Office Manager, East Midlands Synod

## A Fair Way to Christmas



To mark the launch of the **2021 Real Advent Calendar**, the Meaningful Chocolate Company is offering free delivery to churches and schools if they buy a case of 18 calendars.

A great way to share the Christmas story, the Real Advent Calendar is designed to support outreach work and mission. Each calendar includes a 24-page Christmas story activity book, the chocolate is Fairtrade, and it supports charitable causes including a baby clinic in Kenya and Fairtrade farmer community schemes. Owing to economic circumstances, Tesco will no longer be stocking the calendar this year but it is available directly from the Meaningful Chocolate Company.

Real Advent Calendars cost £4.50 each. There is a case discount and free delivery if buying at [www.realadvent.co.uk](http://www.realadvent.co.uk). You can view a video of the Christmas story activity book at <https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/collections/christmas/products/real-advent-calendar>

## About ACAT

**What do you think when you see the acronym ACAT?**

**Need a little help with finances at your church?**

**ACAT** is the charity for Treasurers of Christian churches, and we, as treasurers in churches of the United Reformed Church are members.

Whilst the web site [www.acat.uk.com](http://www.acat.uk.com) is available to view as a 'guest', to take advantage of the whole array of information it is necessary to access as a 'member'.

The URC has held membership on behalf of all its churches for many years and if your church is not signed up then please contact the Synod Office where you will get the necessary information for the corporate access.

In recent years **ACAT** is requesting each church / treasurer holds an individual membership - this can be created. The web resources are available 'free' but most courses / events are chargeable.

**David Greateorex**  
Synod Treasurer

# ACAT Virtual Conference



ACAT's 2021 conference, entitled "[Mission-Driven Finance: The Way Forward Post-Covid](#)" takes place online from **Saturday 9 to Friday 15 October**, followed by its AGM on Saturday 16 October.

ACAT has devised the virtual conference to ensure that church treasurers are in the best possible position to fulfil their roles successfully as we emerge from the pandemic, drawing together outstanding speakers from the worlds of faith, finance and law. The conference will feature eight separate one-hour Zoom webinars: each session costs £15 or [all eight](#) can be booked for £80.

Limited places are available. To discover more about the webinars - or to book places - please click on the titles listed below:

[Technology and the church – making the most of 21<sup>st</sup> century IT for the Gospel](#)

Saturday 9 October 2.00pm

[Keystone Law: The impact of Covid on the workplace](#)

Monday 11 October 7.00pm

[Practical banking, Kingdom purpose – How best to support your church in a post-Covid world](#)

Tuesday 12 October 7.00pm

[The National Churches Trust: Grants and support for your church building](#)

Wednesday 13 October 2.00pm

[Strengthening Faith Institutions: The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – Lessons for religious organisations](#)

Wednesday 13 October 7.00pm

[The Diocese of York's Generous Giving Adviser: A Vision for a Generous Church](#)

Thursday 14 October 2.00pm

[CCLA: What is good investment?](#)

Thursday 14 October 7.00pm

[ECCR – Ethical purchasing for churches: Principles and tools for action](#)

Friday 15 October 7.00pm

In addition, everyone is invited to ACAT's [Annual General Meeting](#), held virtually on Saturday 16 October at 2.00pm, followed by a Meet the Sponsor event with opportunities to talk in person to businesses and organisations which work specifically with church treasurers. To reserve a free place click [here](#).

## Abington Avenue gains Eco Church Award

Congratulations are due to the congregation of **Abington Avenue United Reformed Church**, Northampton, which has become the latest church in the East Midlands Synod to gain the **Eco Church Award**. The bronze level award recognises the church's work to become more environment-friendly, including the development of its community allotment.



As it strives to become an **Eco Synod**, the East Midlands Synod encourages all churches to enlist in the **Eco Church** scheme. For more details, visit <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

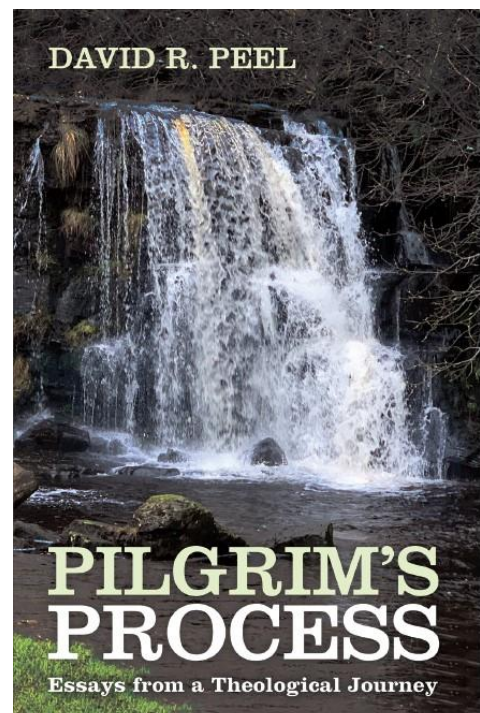


## Pilgrim's Process: Book Offer

**Revd Dr David R. Peel** shares a special offer price for his new book **Pilgrim's Process: Essays from a Theological Journey**. The book traces his intellectual development from his discovery of God through a love of the natural world, to his encounters with thinkers from the Reformed tradition and ecumenical involvement, to a revisionary theology which attempts to integrate a scientific background with the Christian faith.

**David Peel** is a former Principal of Northern College and Moderator of General Assembly, whose first ministry was here in the East Midlands Synod at Geddington & Toller (1976-81).

Copies of **Pilgrim's Process** ordered directly from the author cost just **£14** (postage free). An order form is available from [training@urc5.org.uk](mailto:training@urc5.org.uk) which should be posted to David to arrive by **Friday 8 October**.



## Synod Meeting


**Saturday 9 October 10.30 – 3.00pm**

The autumn **Synod Meeting** takes place on **Saturday 9 October** at **Sherwood United Reformed Church**, Nottingham, commencing at 10.30am.

All Synod reps and ministers should now have received the relevant paperwork. If you have not received this paperwork please contact Chris Willis by phoning the Synod Office or by email to [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk). All churches should seek to be represented at Synod Meetings; please remember that if your Synod Rep is not available on this date, they can ask someone else from your church to attend.

## Post Pandemic Church: a Webinar

**Friday 15 October 7.00-9.00pm**

 ZOOM WEBINAR @7PM

### REIMAGINING CHURCH IN A WORLD OF FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY

OCTOBER 15, 2021 | OLIVE FLEMING DRANE AND  
PROFESSOR JOHN DRANE

*This webinar is designed to inspire new ideas of what a post-pandemic Christian presence might be like. It will not be the last word on the topic, but we have to start somewhere, and identifying the right questions will be the first step.*

*John Drane and Olive Fleming Drane have presented many webinars during Covid-19, working with Christian leaders around the world and in many different cultures. They have extensive experience of working alongside local congregations of many denominations, and currently are teaching practical theology together for Fuller Seminary, the University of Glasgow, and pioneer training courses with the Church Mission Society.*

Our counterparts in the Congregational Federation extend an invitation to a two-hour webinar led by theologians **John Drane** and **Olive Fleming Drane**. Entitled **Reimagining Church in a World of Fear and Uncertainty**, it takes place via Zoom on Friday 15 October at 7.00pm. For more information, please contact [luzia.watt@congregational.org.uk](mailto:luzia.watt@congregational.org.uk).

## Reminders of forthcoming events



### What is God asking of YOU?



Ministry Enquirers' Event to help you think about God's call to Worship Leading, Lay Preaching, Ministry with children and young people, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Work or Chaplaincy.

**Enquirers' Event** Saturday 2nd October 2021  
10am - 4pm on Zoom  
Contact [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk)  
to register and get programme details

### Enquirers' Event

Saturday 2 October  
10.00am-2.00pm

This weekend's **Enquirers' Event** is an opportunity for anyone wondering whether they may be called to a ministry role, lay or ordained, within the URC.

Held on Zoom, the day will include worship, information, time to talk with people serving in different ministries and space for questions.

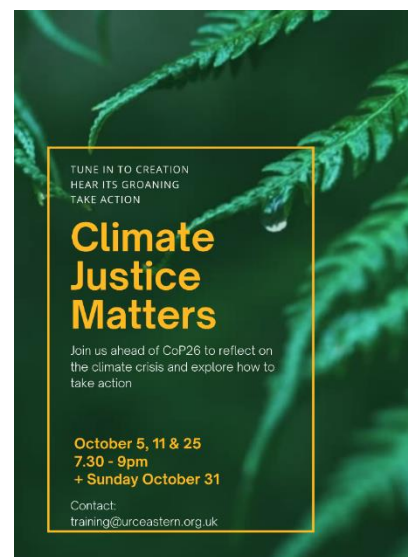
For more information, and to obtain the Zoom link, please contact [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk).

### Tune In to Creation

Throughout the month of October, in the run-up to COP26, the URC's **Eastern Synod** is holding a series of sessions on climate justice. These will take place on **Zoom**: please email [training@urceastern.org.uk](mailto:training@urceastern.org.uk) for the joining details.

Still available to watch is our own Synod's meeting on COP26 and disinvestment from fossil fuels arranged by the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group (JPIC). This can be found on the **East Midlands Synod** [YouTube channel](#) at:

[https://youtu.be/MgL\\_rjS0TSO](https://youtu.be/MgL_rjS0TSO)





## Personal News

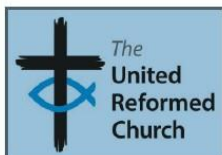
**It is with great sadness that we bring news of the deaths of the following. We give thanks to God for all that was achieved through their lives and ministries.**

The National Synod of Wales informs us of the death on Sunday 12 September of retired minister the **Revd Stella Gwendoline Jones**. Following her studies at Westminster College, Stella served at: Burslem & Silverdale (1979-83); Cheshunt (1983-87); and Rubery (1987-89). Stella's funeral was held on Wednesday 29 September at the United Church in Rhyl, Christ Church, followed by committal at Rhuddlan Cemetery. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends.

The Yorkshire Synod informs us of the death on Sunday 19 September of retired minister the **Revd Adrian Wells**. Adrian served: with the Cuckfield Group (1961-64); at Tiptree (1964-71); Selby (1971-1983); St Ninian's with St Andrew's, Hull (1983-1994); and at Spalding and Boston (1994-2001) before moving back to East Yorkshire. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife and family.

The South Western Synod informs us of the death over the weekend of 18-19 September of former missionary **Miss José Robins**. José served in North India with the LMS and CWM from 1956 to 1980 and contributed the chapter on the organisation's work there to "Gales of Change", part 3 of the history of the LMS, edited by Bernard Thorogood. A Service of Thanksgiving will take place at Penmount Crematorium, Truro on Friday 8 October at 12.30pm. Our thoughts and prayers are with José's family and friends.

## Situations Vacant



### Minister for Digital Worship

**Full time, Home-based  
Seven-year termed appointment  
Minister's stipend**

**Are you excited to help the church explore ways of extending worship and discipleship development digitally?**

The Daily Devotions have become a treasured part of the life of the United Reformed Church. This new role is designed to ensure that Daily Devotions and Daily Devotions Sunday Services are fully integrated into the worshipping life of the URC.

In this role you will extend and develop the Daily Devotions and the Sunday Services. You will explore how emerging digital initiatives can enhance worship, discipleship and mission for individuals and congregations. You will take time to explore the context of a wide digital community and possible ways in which this ministry can develop, and Christian community fostered.

You will be an experienced preacher with an excellent understanding of worship and liturgy in the reformed tradition - acknowledging the diversity of the United Reformed Church. Effective use of technology and a working knowledge of digital editing is essential.

Experience of enabling new forms of ministry and supporting nascent Christian communities to flourish would contribute greatly to the impact this initiative can have on the reach and worship of the United Reformed Church.

**If you wish to nominate anyone for this role please email [recruitment@urc.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@urc.org.uk) by Sunday 12 September 2021**

**If you are interested in this role and can meet the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form:  
Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT  
020 7691 9874 [recruitment@urc.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@urc.org.uk) [www.urc.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.urc.org.uk/vacancies)**

**Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Monday 4 October 2021 Interview date: Wednesday 3 November 2021**

\*In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be an ordained minister of Word and Sacraments of the United Reformed Church.

This role also requires a satisfactory enhanced DBS certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.



**Re-Advertisement\***

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

**Permanent contract, 35 hours per week  
Salary: Circa 50,000**

**Are you a motivated and dedicated professional who has a strong conviction to safeguarding all people?**

In this role you will be responsible for continuing the strategic development of safeguarding within the United Reformed Church and for promoting and disseminating a safeguarding culture throughout all Assembly level teams and programmes.

With extensive experience of advising on a range of safeguarding issues, you will have knowledge in safeguarding case management, preferably in the voluntary sector. Your knowledge of best practice and policy concerning issues related to the protection of children and adults at risk will be key to supporting the synods in the delivery of safeguarding procedures. You will be educated to degree level or equivalent in a relevant field and have excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

We can offer you a flexible work environment with 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](mailto:recruitment@urc.org.uk) [www.urch.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.urch.org.uk/vacancies)

**Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Friday 8 October 2021**

**Interview date: Tuesday 9 November 2021**

*\*Previous applicants need not apply. This post requires an enhanced certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.*



## **Training and Development Coordinator for Safeguarding**

**Home based  
2 year fixed-term contract, 28 or 35 hours per week  
Salary: £27,215 or £34,019**

**Are you passionate about equipping people with skills and resources to safeguard the vulnerable?**

The Safeguarding team is looking for a committed team player to enable and support the United Reformed Church to develop and coordinate its safeguarding training programme.

You already have extensive knowledge of legislative guidelines and statutory guidance related to protection of children and adults at risk. You have experience of developing policy and practice guidance, developing and delivering training and enabling others to do so.

You have excellent interpersonal and communications skills with the ability to work co-operatively and collaboratively in a variety of settings using differing media.

Experience of working in safeguarding within a faith-based charity context would be a distinct advantage.

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](mailto:recruitment@urc.org.uk) [www.urch.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.urch.org.uk/vacancies)

**Closing date for applications: 12 noon, 25 October 2021**

**Interview date: 17 November 2021**

*This post requires a satisfactory enhanced DBS certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.*



**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](mailto:recruitment@urc.org.uk)      W: [www.urc.org.uk/vacancies](http://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](http://www.unc5.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

CCL1067405

Free-to-use photography on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com): “Refugees welcome” demonstration by [Ra Dragon](#)

***Next edition: Thursday 14 October 2021***

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both: [trainingpa@unc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@unc5.org.uk) and [training@unc5.org.uk](mailto:training@unc5.org.uk)  
Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 11 October 2021**