

E-LETTER 361

3 March 2022



Opening Reflection by the Revd Nigel Adkinson

Deputy Convenor of the Ordained Ministry and Churches Group

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

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

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

I'm sure we can recall in our own lives those wilderness times, whether long or short. Where everything seems to be collapsing around us, where things no longer seem to make sense to us and where the world seems a frightening place. This certainly seems to be the case with the recent invasion of Ukraine. War on our doorstep, with so much fear and loss of life. We pray for peace.

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

The church is also facing a wilderness time. The URC that came into being 50 years ago, is not the church envisioned by our predecessors. We must have visions and dream dreams, but the church is led by Jesus Christ, and it is through him that we work to build a Kingdom of justice and joy. The work is demanding yet exciting as we seek to discern where God is at work in the world and join in. Where is God at work in your community, in your street, in your life? Being unsure of our future, demands ever greater trust and reliance on God, through praying and sharing our lives with one another.



The road ahead I would suggest is exciting, but also fearful as we negotiate the wilderness and seek new beginnings. But we don't need to fear. In the words of **Martin Luther King**, "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just to take the first step."

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

Trusting in the love of people we know and who we have come to trust over the years is an amazing blessing, from which we gain much strength and confidence as we share our stories of faith and doubt and walk together the wilderness road.

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

In Christ and with every blessing for the days ahead,

Nigel

Pray for Ukraine



The unfolding tragedy of warfare in **Ukraine** gives us all great concern. The <u>United Reformed Church</u> <u>website</u> hosts prayers created by the **Joint Public Issues Team** (JPIT) and the **Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe** (CPCE) at: https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-and-worship/praying-for-peace-in-ukraine/.

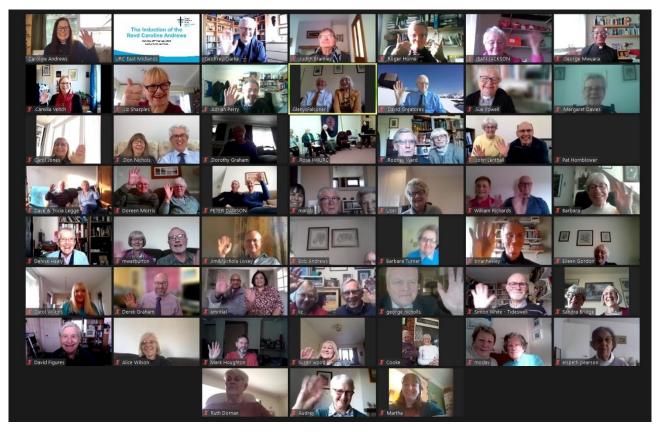
Prayers for peace in Ukraine have also featured in the **Evening Prayers** offered by Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and his team every night at 9.30pm on the Synod's <u>Facebook Page</u>. You are welcome to join in with this supportive online community of worshippers at:

 $\frac{\text{https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717}}{\text{Alternatively, catch up with the prayer sessions on our } \underline{\text{YouTube channel}}.$



Induction of the Revd Caroline Andrews

The Induction of the **Revd Caroline Andrews** to the **North Derbyshire Resource Area** proceeded via Zoom on Saturday 26 March 2022. Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** officiated with other contributors including the Revd Camilla Veitch (Interim Moderator and Synod Clerk), the **Revd Sue Powell** (Pastoral Consultant) and **David Greatorex** (Synod Treasurer).



Some of the virtual attenders at Caroline's Induction (photo capture and montage courtesy of AJ Mills)

The **North Derbyshire Resource Area** includes: Buxton URC; Calow URC; Fountain Square LEP, Tideswell; Holymoorside URC; Rose Hill URC, Chesterfield; and St Andrew's URC, Chesterfield. All six churches were represented on screen to express their optimism and joy in greeting Caroline. The service is available to view on **YouTube** at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQH30m0Qil0

We are delighted to welcome Caroline to the East Midlands Synod and pray that she will enjoy a fruitful and fulfilling ministry amongst us.

Church Accounts: a Reminder

All Churches are reminded that they should submit their final examined/audited accounts to the Synod Office within three months of their financial year end.

David Greatorex

Synod Treasurer

Legacies of Slavery – Discussion Evening this Monday

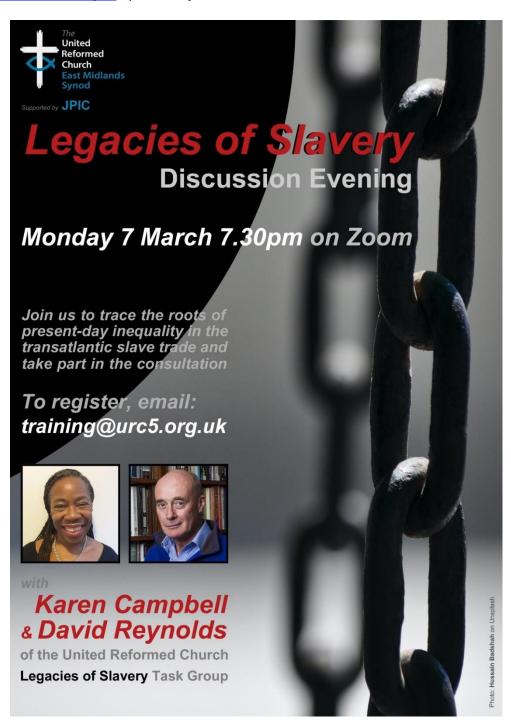
Monday 7 March 7.30-9.00pm on Zoom

Have you sent your response to the **Legacies of Slavery** consultation yet? The task group requests feedback from churches and members on its draft **Apology and Confession**, before presenting it for adoption by General Assembly this summer. You are asked to email your comments, including any statements of support, to **global.intercultural@urc.org.uk** by **Thursday 31 March**.

To help you in this process, there is still time to join in the Zoom discussion this coming Monday, 7 March, offered by the East Midlands Synod supported by JPIC.

Join David Reynolds (Task Group Convenor) and Karen Campbell (Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries) to explore:

- How our own region has been shaped by transatlantic slavery
- How its legacy persists in the inequalities of our own time
- How the United Reformed Church might act on it now



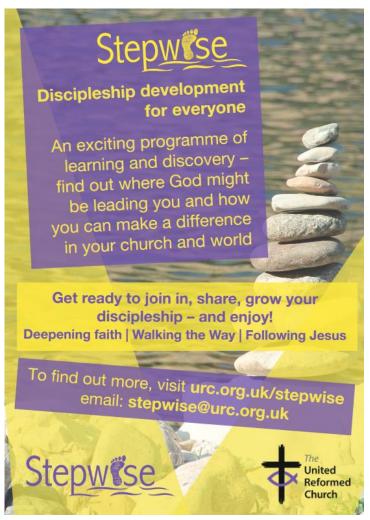
To take part, please email training@urc5.org.uk by Friday 4 March.

Details of the proposals are available at https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/legacies-of-slavery/.

Begin your Stepwise Journey

Our online Faith-Filled Life group begins on Thursday 31 March

More and more people across Britain are taking part in **Stepwise**, the URC's special programme to help you discover more about your own discipleship. It's carefully designed so that everybody can take part in their own style – no matter how young or old, no matter how well-versed or freshly-formed they might be as followers of Christ.



Stepwise begins with the short Faith-filled Life stream – and now is a perfect opportunity to jump in.

The Synod is launching a group for people from different corners of the East Midlands, who will come together via Zoom to share and support one another in their explorations. The Facilitators will be the **Revd Jenny Mills** (URC Secretary for Education & Learning) and **Derek Graham** (EMS Training & Development Officer).

This virtual Stepwise group will begin on **Thursday 31 March**, meeting fortnightly on Thursday evenings for around three months.

If you would be interested in one of the remaining places, please email training@urc5.org.uk as soon as possible.

We would also be delighted to help other Stepwise groups form locally and meet in person: simply get in touch.

There is no obligation, but after **Faith-Filled Life** you can go on to explore **Faith-filled Confidence**, **Faith-filled Community**, **Faith-fuelled Leadership** or **Faith-filled Worship** (which you can do as part of the pathway to becoming a Locally Recognised Worship Leader – or simply for your own enjoyment).

Not sure yet if Stepwise is for you? <u>Click here</u> to enjoy a short video featuring a few of the people who have been already inspired and encouraged in their growth as disciples. This video is also available on the **Stepwise** website page at https://urc.org.uk/stepwise/ alongside recorded webinars about each of the five **Stepwise** streams and other resources to help you find out more.



If you'd like to join in to reflect on your faith and make a difference in your life and the lives of others, email training@urc5.org.uk now to secure a place in the virtual group starting on 31 March.

Demystifying Worship – Free Workshop

Build your confidence in planning worship at an interactive development day led by **Lesley Moseley**

Saturday 2 April 10.00am-3.30pm

at Christ Church URC, Leicester



A free one-day workshop for:

- elders and members who are occasionally asked to lead worship or parts of worship
- all those who would like to know more about putting a service together
- anyone who thinks God might be calling them to help with praying or preaching in their own church

Take the worry out of worship-leading at this friendly, interactive workshop, kindly led for us by the **Revd Lesley Moseley**. Lesley will lead you through the essentials of structuring a service before guiding you in how to choose readings and hymns. Try your hand at producing and populating an Order of Service and progress to writing a prayer or even the outline of a sermon.

There will be tea, coffee and of course times of worship to enjoy. By the end of the workshop, you will have a sound grasp of the basics and be bolstered to go back to your church and play a part in leading its people in praise.

If you have ever been asked to consider preparing worship, or worried you wouldn't know how to go about it, our **Demystifying Worship** day is designed for you. It will be held in compliance with sensible Covid precautions and any health guidelines that may apply at the time.

To register for your place, free of charge, please email training@urc5.org.uk.

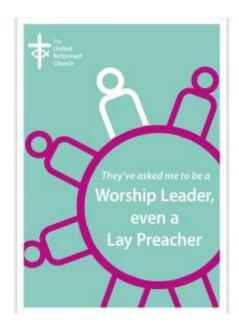
Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher course

All those willing to take the next step in their worship leading will be interested in the following news from the **Revd Jenny Mills**, Secretary for Education & Learning:

Calling all those leading worship in our local churches and wishing to learn and grow as a Lay Preacher!

The next course to train to become an **Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher** begins in **September 2022**. This is a two-year, part-time course leading to Assembly Accreditation. Learning is by mixed mode with some sessions on Zoom, some pre-recorded, and work to be done in between; there are also two residential weekends a year. The programme covers personal development, crafting worship, the Bible in worship, theology of the URC, safe boundaries in pastoral care, equality and diversity and intergenerational worship.

For further details please email our Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner **Mark Hodgson** at markgoodwillhodgson@gmail.com or Secretary for Ministries **Nicola Furley-Smith** at ministries@urc.org.uk



The URC has produced a booklet to help consider lay preaching and worship leading and it can be found here: https://urc.org.uk/your-church/taking-a-role-in-your-church/become-a-worship-leader-lay-preacher/

Quinquennial Inspections

Every five years churches and Manses have to be inspected for the Synod – these are called **Quinquennial Inspections**, and are a legal requirement. The purpose is to inform Synod about any structural and maintenance issues that may be present and to re-assure Synod that its properties are fit for purpose. These inspections are carried out on a rolling programme and I am about to issue instruction for this year's tranche of inspections.

If you get a phone call or an email from a Surveyor asking for an appointment to inspect your church and/or Manse, then it is a legitimate contact and I would be grateful if you will make the necessary arrangements.

The cost of these inspections is divided between Synod and the Local Church, the latter paying half the cost up to a maximum of £1000. If the Manse is let and the local church gets the rent, then the church will pay the full cost.

If there are any queries, please contact me via property@urc5.org.uk.

Geoff Milnes

Synod Property Officer

Around the East Midlands

Coffee and Chat at Holymoorside

Holymoorside United Reformed Church shares these photographs of its popular Coffee and Chat event. With bacon cobs for £1.50, toasted teacakes for £1.00 and drinks, some treat it as a late breakfast, others as an early lunch.

Held on the first and third Saturday every month, **Coffee and Chat** began after lockdown ended in the church's meeting room and has been successful in attracting villagers to come and socialise.







Support the Mead Centre

We are delighted to share the following appeal from **Victoria Paulding**:

The **Mead Centre** in Newport Pagnell has set up an <u>Amazon wishlist</u> for small items we would like to purchase to go in the centre, predominantly to kit out the **Sensory Room**. If you were able and willing to buy something from the list, we would be very grateful. There are a range of items at a range of prices, starting from £3.45. If you purchase an item, it can be delivered directly to the Mead Centre. To see the list, click on:



Unfortunately, Amazon does not notify us of who purchases an item. Therefore, if you do decide to buy something, we would be grateful if you contact email <u>victoria.paulding@urcnewportpagnell.org</u> to let us know so that we can ensure that your delivery arrives safely.



Personal News

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

In the **East Midlands Synod** it is with deep regret that we announce the death of our Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher **Dennis Jolley** on 17 February 2022. Dennis served the Church in many different ways: as an Elder and Church Secretary at Loughborough and then Elder in Pastoral Charge at Bardon Park, and as a Lay Preacher and a Mentor to other Lay Preachers. We hold Dennis's wife, son and grandchildren in our thoughts and prayers.

It is likewise with deep regret that we announce the death of our retired minister the **Revd Michael Thomas Bond** on 24 February 2022. Michael served at: Daventry (1983-85); Tideswell (1985-94); Daventry & Badby (1994-97); Crick & Kilsby (1995-97); and Bude (1997-2003). Since his retirement he has continued to serve the churches in North-West Northamptonshire. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Peggy, their family and members of the congregation in the North-West Northamptonshire group. Funeral details will be circulated when known.

West Midlands Synod reports the death of the Revd John Rammell, a retired minister living in the Sedgley area, on 25 February 2022. John was ordained in 1964, serving at: Tintwistle (1964-68); Glossop Group (1968-72); Halifax, Sowerby, Luddendenfoot & Highroad Well (1972-80); Booth (1976-80); Pype Hayes (1980-88); Hardware Street, West Bromwich (1988-94); and Gornall (1992-94). We remember John's family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.

A Simple Rule – Lent Prayer Journey from LICC

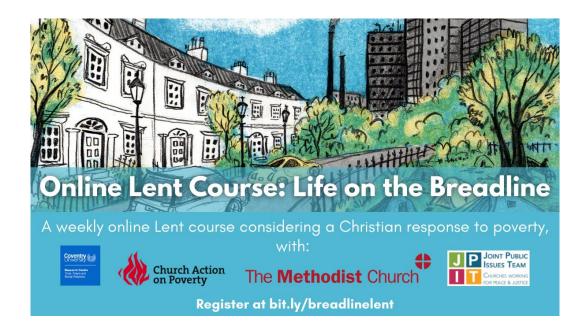
Lent may just have begun, but there is still time to join in "A Simple Rule", a daily prayer programme from LICC (the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity).

Each day during Lent, you will receive a short prompt to pray, following the Apostle Paul's encouragement to "rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances".



To subscribe to "A Simple Rule" by daily email – or take part by downloading a phone app – visit: https://licc.org.uk/ourresources/prayer-journeys/a-simple-rule/.

Life on the Breadline - Online Lent Course from JPIT



The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is working together with key partners to host four online sessions during Lent, exploring the state of poverty in the UK today and how churches can be part of the response. Join in for interactive, discussion-based sessions following the Life on the Breadline Lent material.

All sessions are free, and when you sign up you can indicate which sessions you're able to attend. For details please visit: bit.ly/breadlinelent.

GEAR - Lent Series on Zoom



GEAR, the Group for Evangelism and Renewal within the URC, is hosting a **Lent series** which is open to any individuals and churches who wish to join in.

Each week there will be worship, Bible Study, discussion and prayer as the sessions unpack the aims of **GEAR**.

Wednesday 3 March - Growing Close to Jesus, led by Sally Willett

Wednesday 10 March - Enthusiastic about the Bible, led by Andy Twilley

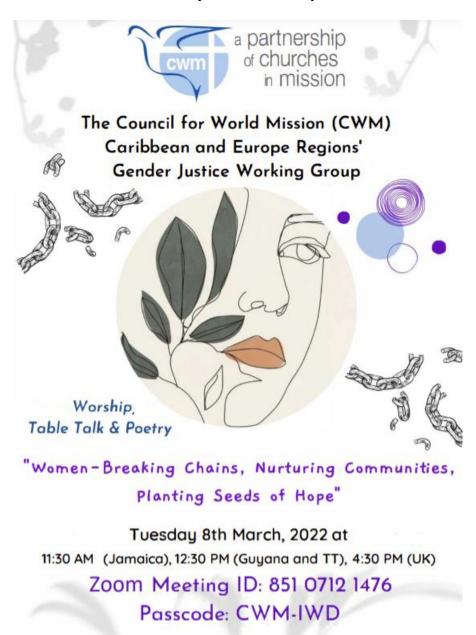
Wednesday 17 March - Alive in the power of the Spirit, led by Paul Stokes

Wednesday 24 March - Reaching out with the good news, led by Ashley Evans

All sessions take place from 7.30-9.00pm on Zoom. The sessions (excluding discussion) will also be recorded and made available the next day in case churches wish to use them. Please contact **Matt Stone** to request the Zoom details by emailing: matt.stone@cantab.net.

CWM International Women's Day event – this Tuesday

Tuesday 8 March 4.30pm



CWM (the Council for World Mission) has arranged a free online event to mark **International Women's Day** next week. Combining worship, discussion and poetry, the event is entitled "**Women – Breaking Chains, Nurturing Communities, Planting Seeds of Hope**".

Organised by the Caribbean and Europe Regions' Gender Justice Working Group, the event takes place this coming **Tuesday**, **8 March**, at 4.30pm UK time, with participants joining simultaneously in Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago. There is no need to register to attend: simply enter the Zoom Meeting ID **851 0712 1476** and Passcode **CWM-IWD**.

Online Open Day – Westminster College

Saturday 19 March 2022 from 10.30am



Westminster College, Cambridge online open day 19th March 2022 10.30am

> degree programmes short courses community resources worship URC

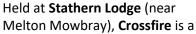
bursaries available

to express interest please email office@westminster.cam.ac.uk

Crossfire Camp

Wednesday 1 – Saturday 4 June 2022 at Stathern Lodge Farm, near Melton Mowbray

Crossfire Camp is an exciting event for young people aged 12+. We meet together each year to explore more about faith in Jesus Christ through small groups, teaching, worship and a whole range of fun activities. Join at one of the great weekends for fun, meeting new people and exploring the gospel.





camp for young people aged 12+ years (year 7 upwards), brought to you by **GEAR** and **URC Youth**. It is an exciting weekend of talks, small group sessions, sung worship led by the Crossfire worship band and fantastic cooked food. Expect a great weekend of fun activities, meeting new people and learning more about faith in Jesus Christ.

When: Wednesday 1 – Saturday 4 June 2022

Where: Stathern Lodge Farm, nr. Melton Mowbray, LE14 4EX Cost: Early Booking Only £30 – Tent hire available from £5

To Book: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/crossfire-camp-2022-tickets-214999628677

More info: https://crossfirecamp.org.uk/crossfire-camp-2022/

JPIT Conference – From the Ground Up

Saturday 11 June 2022 In London and online



Bookings are now open for the next **Joint Public Issues Team** Conference, taking place both online and in London on **Saturday 11 June**, and entitled '**From the Ground Up: unearthing hope and seeking justice'**.

The conference will focus on the increasing significance of the 'local' in action for change. During the pandemic, the local has taken on a renewed importance, and the needs, characteristics and opportunities in our communities have been seen in different ways. The local is playing a new role in the political landscape too, with the 'levelling up' agenda and regional and national identities assuming prominence, and grassroots community organising bringing new power to campaigning.

Beginning here, the conference will ask how we can listen to our communities and amplify local voices in order to work for change at national and international levels.

Keynote speakers at the conference will include **Emma Revie**, CEO of The Trussell Trust, **Marsha De Cordova MP**, **Zrinka Bralo**, CEO of Migrants Organise, and **Bishop Mike Royal**, incoming General Secretary of Churches Together in England.

The conference is open to anyone who is inspired about working for change, from those already active to those who don't know where to begin. There will be opportunities to respond creatively, to share in worship and to gather the tools needed to go out in hope.

To make it as accessible as possible, free tickets are offered for those who have low incomes and for anyone aged under 25. These tickets are supported by the opportunity for other attendees to 'donate a ticket' when they purchase their own. Tickets can be booked at bit.ly/JPIT2022

The conference will be an opportunity to come together and be re-energised to speak, pray and act boldly as Christians committed to seeing transformation in our communities and beyond. For full information visit: www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/conference

Situations Vacant



Finance Assistant London

Permanent contract, 21 hours per week Salary: £18,524

Are you keen to ensure excellent financial services are maintained to support a busy team?

The Retired Ministers Housing Society (RMHS) exists to assist retired and retiring ministers to meet their housing needs during retirement, aiming to provide appropriate housing suitable for long-term occupation. We maintain around 300 properties tenanted by retired ministers, arranging inspections and repairs and manage around 20 properties occupied as manses by centrally appointed ministers.

We are looking for a dependable team player to provide finance administrative support to a small team. In this role you will record and process all invoices and keep and maintain accurate records. You will already have experience of working in financial administration within a service organisation and have operational knowledge of finance systems and databases.

You are an excellent communicator with good numeracy skills. Accuracy and attention to detail are essential. An AAT Book-keeping (or similar) qualification and experience of working in the housing sector would be distinct advantages.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment.

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 21 March 2022 Interview date: Thursday 31 March 2022

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> 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 <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

Following the relaxation of the government's Covid guidance, the **Synod Office** is now open again from **Monday to Thursday** each week. As a continued precaution, members of staff are each working two days per week on site and otherwise working from home, in two alternating "bubbles". 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.

Arrangements remain under regular review and any update will be posted on our website: www.urc5.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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Stairway: photo by <u>Guillaume QL</u> on <u>Unsplash</u>
Ukrainian flag: photo by <u>Max Kukurudziak</u> on <u>Unsplash</u>

Next edition: Thursday 17 March 2022

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