

Opening Reflection by Geoff Milnes

East Midlands Synod Property Officer

How did it feel to be back in Church? I know some took the decision to open before Pentecost, but it seems to me that the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit was an ideal time to open our Churches for worship – worship of the God we adore who loves us beyond our imaginings, and who sent His Holy Spirit to guide and intercede for us in all that we do.



The way we have conducted services over the last 15 months or so has changed, in some ways quite dramatically. No longer have we been bound by the four walls of our Churches, but we can and do reach out to the world through Zoom, Teams, streaming of services and other uses of technologies that 20 years ago would have been thought impossible. The numbers of people streaming or listening to services and other devotional materials have in some cases been higher than those coming to our Churches.

There is a lot of talk about the ‘new normal’ and we must not consider ourselves as being exempt from those discussions. Life has changed and we must adapt to those changes, and quickly. In some cases it has been realised that we can ‘be’ church without our buildings, and some of our buildings are becoming liabilities rather than assets – in my 18 months as Property Officer I have sold two church buildings, and two more will be coming to market very shortly.

At a Church Awayday a few years ago, the Church I attend was challenged to decide whether it was a ‘yacht club’ or a ‘lifeboat station’. In other words, was Church a means of socialising, perhaps seen as a bit of a clique and separate from the world, or was it a base from which we could go out into the world, with all its perils and adversities, and save souls for Christ.

John Barnard’s hymn perhaps puts the way we should be church better:

“Go forth and tell, O Church of God awake,

God’s saving news to all the nations take”.

We cannot do that if all we use our buildings for is to meet our friends, sing a few hymns, listen to some nice words from the preacher, have a cup of coffee and go home – a yacht club.

We *can* do that if we use our buildings as a base for the mission that God has set before us, and that means that those buildings – our Churches - must be fit for that purpose in today's, and tomorrow's society, so that they can be used as a base for rescuing souls for Christ – a lifeboat station.

As we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, let us use this opportunity as we re-open our Churches to discover what the 'new normal' should be for us, who are Church, and our buildings, which are churches, and how both can be used as lifeboat stations to serve the Lord.

“Go till all nations His great Name adore

And serve Him, Lord and King forever more”.

The Journey to COP26

An important event on our journey to the international conference on climate action in November is the **G7 Summit** meeting to be held at Carbis Bay in Cornwall from 11-13 June. This year the UK holds the presidency, which gives our government an additional opportunity to prioritise issues.

According to the G7 website the goal of this year's G7 Summit, as set out by Prime Minister **Boris Johnson**, is to “help the world fight, and then build back better from coronavirus and create a greener, more prosperous future.’

With the help of **Christian Aid** we can encourage our government to press for decisive action by the free world's richest countries on tackling climate change and protecting biodiversity. Please go to:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/take-action-ahead-g7>

For further ideas for climate action see:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-justice-resources>



Climate Sunday

If you have not yet planned your **Climate Sunday** Service, now would be a good time. For details control-click this link: [Climate Sunday | Service Resources | Worship | Commit | Speak Up](#)

Please note that from this website you can register your service ahead of the national climate service on **5 September**.

Charles Jolly

Green Apostle

On behalf of the **JPIC** group

God With Us: Refugees, Migration and Sanctuary

[Refugee Week](#) takes place from 14-20 June 2021.

CTBI (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) has produced a series of worship resources on the theme of refugees, migration and sanctuary, which include Bible studies, hymns, prayers and liturgies and suggestions for services and multi-generational work. These may be viewed and downloaded at:

<https://ctbi.org.uk/god-with-us/>

God With Us

Worship resources
on the theme of
refugees, migration
and sanctuary



In addition, CTBI is offering three online Bible Studies on Zoom during the month of June, to explore these themes and resources:

Part 1: **God with us... in diversity:** Thursday 3 June, 7.30 – 8.30pm – register [here](#)

Part 2: **God with us... in vulnerability:** Wednesday 9 June, 7.30 – 8.30pm – register [here](#)

Part 3: **God with us... in strangers:** Monday 14 June, 8.00 – 9.00pm – register [here](#)

ZOOM MEETINGS

God With Us

Worship resources
on the theme of
refugees, migration
and sanctuary



THREE PART
BIBLE STUDIES SERIES

1. 3 June, 7.30pm – 8.30pm
2. 9 June, 7.30pm – 8.30pm
3. 14 June, 8.00pm – 9.00pm

Racial Justice Advocates Sought for the Synod

We are looking to appoint one or two people for this voluntary role in the East Midlands Synod. The URC is fully committed to being an inclusive, anti-racist church and we want to promote and raise awareness of this in our Synod. The advocate/s would take a lead in ensuring this happens.

For a full role description and to express interest in taking this role on, please contact our Synod Clerk, the **Revd Camilla Veitch**, at: clerk@urc5.org.uk

Personal News

It is with great sadness that we report the deaths of the following faithful servants of the East Midlands Synod:

Our retired minister the **Revd Malcolm Deacon** died peacefully on Thursday 13 May after a period of illness. Malcolm served at: Duston (1988-91); Doddridge & Commercial Street, Northampton (1991-2001); and Castle Hill, Northampton (1991-2002). Following a private family funeral on Friday 28 May, a service of thanksgiving for his life will be held at a later date. Our thoughts and prayers are with Malcolm's wife Steph, their daughter Tessa and son Julian and their family and friends.

Mrs Anne Mews died on Saturday 22 May. Anne served as Church Secretary at Spalding United Reformed Church. Our thoughts and prayers are with Anne's husband Patrick, their family, friends and the church.

Our retired minister the **Revd Michael Pevy** died on Sunday 23 May after a period of illness. Michael served at: High Street, Smethwick (1956-59); Wigston (1959-1971); Herne Bay (1971-1981); Melton Mowbray and Freeby (1981-85); and the Rose Hill Group, Chesterfield (1985-1995). Michael's funeral will be held in Chesterfield on Monday 7 June. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife June, son Mark and their family and friends.

In addition, the **Northern Synod** has informed us of the death of its retired minister the **Revd Tom Ellison** on Wednesday 12 May. Tom served at: Durham District (1987); St Bede, Sunderland (1987-89); the Sunderland & Boldon Group (1989-1993); and in Prison Chaplaincy (1993-2000). Our thoughts and prayers are with his son and daughter and their family and friends.

Around the East Midlands

Coronavirus testing at St Andrew's URC, Peterborough

Andrew Spillett, who administers Hall Bookings for St Andrew's United Reformed Church in Peterborough, shares this news of the church's support in the fight against Covid-19:



At the beginning of April, **St Andrew's** was approached by the Public Health Directorate of Cambridgeshire County Council with a request for the use of our Church Hall for Coronavirus Asymptomatic Testing. This is an attempt to break the cycle of infections being passed on by people who show no signs of the virus. The test is the Lateral Flow Test (LTF) which requires the individual to use a swab and run it around the back of their throat for 10 seconds, and then up one nostril for a further 10 seconds. You then place it into a phial, and it is then sent for testing. It only takes five minutes to take and results are sent to your e-mail address or mobile phone within the hour.

We were delighted to be able to offer our premises for such an important community initiative. On 12 April 2021, the doors were opened to the public to come in and get tested. The initiative is for three months and will end on 30 June 2021. Hopefully, the cycle of infections in Peterborough will be broken. The site is open Monday through to Saturday from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm.

A number of our community and congregation have taken the test and fortunately results have come back negative. But these tests have to be done on a regular basis, at least twice a week if it is possible.



If something notable is going on in your church or community, we would be glad to share it in this e-letter. Please email training@n5.org.uk.

Changes to Marriage Registration

Following the changes in marriage registration in England and Wales, the only records are those run by the General Register Office under their system. The question has been asked whether churches have to keep some sort of copy of evidence that a marriage took place in their church, as under the new procedures no copy of the Marriage Certificate is not given to the church.

The advice from the URC's Clerk to General Assembly is not to set up any parallel church system, or keep any records of marriages in church, since that immediately becomes sensitive personal data, and subject to particular GDPR requirements.

Revd Camilla Veitch

Synod Clerk

Keen Photographers Wanted



The United Reformed Church hopes to publish a calendar featuring some of its churches around the 13 Synods for 2022, when it celebrates the 50th anniversary of the denomination. To that end, the Communications department has issued an appeal to all keen amateur photographers to send high quality pictures of their church buildings.

The hope is to give a flavour of our buildings from the length and breadth of the denomination – it doesn't matter whether they are in good or bad condition. Victorian churches, post war pre-fabs, churches opened in the last couple of years - all buildings are welcome.

Photographs should show the exterior of buildings only, please. Landscape images are preferred but square and portrait images will also be considered.

If you are submitting a photograph, please label the file with the name and location of the church (eg st-columbas-north-shields.jpg), which will enable the Communications team to keep track of which church is shown without having to send lots of emails. Submitting a picture will have the effect of the photographer granting the URC permission to use the photographs in print and digitally.

Photographs should be sent to andy.jackson@urc.org.uk in either JPG or PNG file formats, no larger than 3600 pixels wide (or around 3 MB in size). Please make sure to include the name of the photographer.

Situations Vacant



The
United
Reformed
Church

Content Editor London

Permanent contract, 17.5 hours per week
Salary: £16,365

Do you have experience of writing and producing a monthly or weekly magazine or website?

The busy and thriving Communications team at the United Reformed Church seeks a Content Editor to commission, proofread, sub-edit and write copy for *Reform*, the URC's monthly magazine, and to help with other communications too. You will play a key role in the production of *Reform*, working alongside others to ensure content is delivered, copy adheres to house style and maintaining consistency across a range of high-quality resources produced by the team.

You'll love this job if:

You love to capture and convey a compelling story;
You are a confident, compelling and empathetic communicator, both in written and verbal contexts;
You enjoy working across and with a wide range of communication tools and approaches;
You are well organised and good at multi-tasking;
You want to be a part of producing resources for mission and Christian life.

You will be educated to degree level with an excellent command of English. A clear written style and attention to detail is essential. We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment with a generous final salary pension scheme.

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, Friday 25 June 2021 Interview date: Thursday 15 July 2021



The
United
Reformed
Church

Designated Safeguarding Lead London

Permanent contract, 35 hours per week
Salary: £46,070

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 in a relevant field and have excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment with a generous final salary pension scheme.

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 June 2021 Interview date: Tuesday 20 July 2021

This post requires an enhanced certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Zoom Workshop from the Kingdom at Work Project

The **Kingdom at Work Project** invites all those who are interested in the role of faith in the workplace to its online conference on **Saturday 5 June**:

If you are passionate about a post-Covid world of work that is shaped by kingdom values, you are warmly invited to... a Zoom workshop on



'Transforming Work'

Saturday 5 June, 2021, 9.30-3.30

Organised by the Kingdom at Work Project,
in association with St. Peter's Saltley Trust



The purpose of the Kingdom at Work Project is to develop a new approach to transforming the world of work through a process of discernment and intervention, informed and empowered by a communal theology of the kingdom.

The aim of the workshop is to enable participants...

- to learn about the project and explore its core theology and methodology
- to share their own insights and experience of engagement with the world of work
- to consider becoming involved in developing the project's ideas and practice

The day will be facilitated by **Dr David Clark**, Kingdom at Work Project Coordinator, and members of the Kingdom at Work Project Steering Group.

A second day zoom workshop will be held on **Saturday, 3 July, 2021** for those wishing to...

- learn more about the purpose and scope of the project
- explore how to pilot the methodology of the project in their own work situation
- contribute to the project's digital development
- become part of a team introducing the project to church and secular agencies

To book a place for 5 June, please contact Lynne Hayes-James

[\(bursar@saltleytrust.org.uk\)](mailto:bursar@saltleytrust.org.uk)

0121 427 6800

Reminders of other forthcoming events

Tomorrow: "Final Friday"

Joint Midlands Synods Youth Event

Friday 28 May 7.30-9.00pm



The latest in the "Final Fridays" series of informal Youth Events, for young people aged 11-25 across the East Midlands and West Midlands Synods, takes place on Zoom tomorrow evening. Young people can register to attend via the **Eventbrite** booking platform [here](#).

Christians on Ageing Conference Calls



Christians on Ageing's Conference Calls are a series of free Zoom discussions on aspects of Churches' work with and for older people. Early booking is advised by emailing discussion@coa.org.uk.

Supporting those who care for us - Tuesday 15 June at 10.30am

The Importance of Faith amongst Black Older Christians - Tuesday 20 July at 10.30am

Older people and spiritual strength in the world of nature - Tuesday 17 August at 10.30am

Rural Ministry Course

Tuesday 15 – Thursday 17 June
OR Tuesday 2 – Thursday 4 November

King's Park Conference Centre, Northampton



Arthur Rank
Centre

CONFIDENT RURAL CHRISTIANS

The Arthur Rank Centre's **Rural Ministry Course** is designed for lay and ordained church leaders entering a rural appointment for the first time, and those already in rural ministry who would appreciate a "refresher". Costing £300, this three-day residential programme is held in Northampton and runs from **Tuesday 15 – Thursday 17 June**, repeated from **Tuesday 2 to Thursday 4 November**. For more information, please visit: arthurrankcentre.org.uk/ruralministrycourse



Communications skills: free workshop series

This series of free workshops, jointly offered by **URC Children's & Youth Work** and **Education & Learning** to help improve communication skills, continues with:

Inclusive worship using signs and symbols - follow up session: Thursday 17 June 7.30pm

Sharing stories more effectively - session 1: Thursday 27 May 7.30pm

Sharing stories more effectively - follow up session: Thursday 1 July 7.30pm

Find out more and book to attend any or all of these workshops, visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/series-of-workshops-building-skills-confidence-and-capacity-in-comms-registration-144181152709>

Congregational lament and growth: emerging from lockdown

A free online conference on Zoom from Northern College

Friday 25 June (2.00-5.00pm) & Saturday 26 June (9.30am-12.30pm)

OR Mondays 4, 11 & 18 October 7.00-9.00pm

Northern College's free annual conference for Lay Preachers, Worship Leaders and those in church leadership will be offered twice: on the afternoon of Friday 25 and morning of Saturday 26 June, and again on three successive Monday evenings on 4, 11 and 18 October.



The three sessions are:

Telling the Stories: Old Testament as resilience playbook, led by **Dr Meg Warner**

Sharing the Tears: The Gospels join our weeping, led by the **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby**

Touching the Wounds: Post-traumatic growth and worship, led by the **Revd Dr Adam Scott**

To register, please email: paul.barrett@lutherking.ac.uk



HOLIDAY FORUM
faith, fun and fellowship

Saturday 21 – Friday 27 August

The URC's **Holiday Forum** is scheduled to return to The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, this August, with parts of the programme also to be streamed online.

This year's theme is **Living with and loving difference: the challenge of being human in a fractured world.**

To book (whether to attend physically or virtually), visit:

<http://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk/wpsite/booking-form/>

Find us online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk/wpsite/booking-form/) remains the one-stop shop for all essential information:

<https://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk/wpsite/booking-form/>



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/>

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/UCzXFUrk8XOGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. Evening Prayers are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrk8XOGeZU5SgN95g>

Contacting East Midlands Synod

In view of government guidelines regarding the current pandemic, the **East Midlands Synod Office** building is presently closed. All members of staff continue to work from home: please email them in the usual way. You may continue to use the Office address for any postal business and mail is collected at least once a week. The office number **0115 960 9241** is answered from Monday to Thursday, 9.00am-3.00pm and calls will be forwarded as necessary.

Any update to these arrangements 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

CCL1067405

Free-to-use photography: woman at prayer by Yvon Mbougne on Unsplash, camera by Patrick on Unsplash.

Next edition: Thursday 10 June 2021

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

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Tuesday 8 June 2021**