



The
United
Reformed
Church

EAST MIDLANDS SYNOD

EMURCE No: 281 – 29th NOVEMBER 2018
EDITED THIS WEEK BY: REVD SARAH GOWER

On Saturday, the 1st December, we can begin to open the doors of our Advent Calendars. When I was little we did not have the prospect of chocolates to eat but it was still incredibly exciting to open the door and see what picture was inside. I always liked seeing the pictures that related to the Christmas story. I am sure that I wished away most of the Decembers of my childhood, looking forward with uncontainable anticipation to Christmas Day. This coming Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent in our church calendars. I love the season of Advent, and Christmas. It is wonderful to have a season, however we use that time, to expectantly wait for something to happen. Because, of course, the joy of waiting is not in the agonising slowness of the days passing but in the time that we spend in reflection. For me, Advent is a joyous time of reflection, thinking about the awesomeness of our God, looking forward to the birth of Jesus, God coming to us as a baby, so that we could listen and hear what God is saying to us. So that he can tell us and demonstrate to us how much he loves us. In that sort of waiting and anticipation, we can begin to dream dreams and see beyond those things that tend to distract us. I remember, when I was about ten, sitting in a Christmas carol service, feeling filled with the joy of God and thinking in those moments that I wanted to do something for God in my life. Then, I thought that meant that I might be a missionary! I think we had recently visited David Livingstone's birthplace; I was living in Scotland at the time. But I have never forgotten that moment. Let us embrace Advent, and approach Christmas this year, with that all-consuming passion that children so often show, with that awe of expectancy that seems to get a little lost as we grow older. Even in all the busyness of the season that can so often overtake us as adults let us allow God to speak to us, and, like Mary, let us be ready to hear God calling us to all sorts of extraordinary things as his children.

Sarah Gower, Convenor of Children and Youth Group

Deployment

Deployment: As the Pastoral Group continues to implement the decisions of the March Synod regarding ministry, beginning in those parts of the Synod where vacancies occur, there will be an increasing need for lay ministry in the forms we recognise, e.g. Elders and Lay Preachers. However, please be aware that neither the Synod, or the National Church, recognises anyone as a Lay Minister.

Synod Pastoral Group

DERBYSHIRE

You are invited to - XMAS BASH! alt: Derby at 7pm on Saturday 1st December at Derby Central URC, Victoria Street, Derby.

Come along for music, party food and conversation. With special Guest Speaker Dave Tomlinson, Author of: Post Evangelical, Re-enchanting Christianity, How to be a Bad Christian, The Bad Christian's Manifesto, Black Sheep and Prodigals, Still Waters & Sky Scrapers.

SYNOD VOCATION DAY

Synod Vocation Day

Saturday 11th May 2019

10 am – 3pm

Christ Church, Leicester

ELDERSHIP

MINISTRY

YOUNG PEOPLE

EVANGELISM

CHAPLAINCY



CHILDREN'S WORK

YOUTH WORK

LAY PREACHING

CRCW

STREET PASTORS

To book please email: modpa@urc5.org.uk

FLUSH AWAY POVERTY - HAVE YOU TWINNED YOUR TOILETS?

Unbelievably, 2,300,000,000 people still lack anywhere safe to go to the toilet. Imagine what that's like, say, for a young woman. It's not just a matter of dignity – there is a devastating effect on morbidity and mortality. Yet on average it costs only £60 to provide a poor family with a latrine.

TEAR Fund has found a brilliant way to help. For £60 a toilet, churches and families can 'twin' a toilet with one in a community suffering from extreme poverty. You get a photo and the GPS coordinates to find the community on Google Maps. It brings a global problem to a personal level.

What is more, the effect multiplies. People who see the photos are inspired to twin their toilets or maybe to give 'twinning' as a Christmas present. Local church partners in 25 poor countries explain the link between sanitation and health to people and empower households to build latrines and to secure clean water. As the benefits of hygiene become clear, other households follow suit.

Please go to: <https://www.toilettwinning.org> or phone 0300 321 3217 for details.

This affects all of us because as the recent IPCC report high-lighting the need to keep global-warming within 1.5 degC makes clear, eradicating grinding poverty and avoiding catastrophic climate change go together. Let us thank God for our loos and pass the blessing on.

DO SOMETHING SMALL THIS CHRISTMAS AND MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Broxtowe Borough Council are collecting donations for Women's Aid to provide new gifts for children and teens. These presents will be given to the children who are living in refuges over the Christmas period. We are asking for presents for girls and boys of the following age ranges: 0-2, 2-4, 4-6, 6-8, 8-10, 10-12, 12-14, 14-16.

We are acting as a collection point for donated gifts. We will ensure these are appropriately wrapped and passed on to the intended recipients through our links with Women's Aid.

Please call Debbie Johnson on 0115 917 3610 if you are interested in making a donation and we can arrange collection if necessary. If you have any questions or queries, do not hesitate to contact us.

THE STORIES OF LAY DISCIPLES

We have received the request below from Revd Richard Church asking for stories of lay discipleship: We are keen to feature one person each month throughout 2019 by telling their story of whole of life discipleship i.e. faith translated through everyday lives and not just church activities. We need a picture a short account and we will then add a question or two to prompt reflection. The story need not be dramatic but simply of how someone is living out their faith

Please could you send your stories to simon.peters@urc.org.uk as soon as possible so that we can prepare the questions and have them ready to post throughout the new year. If you would prefer, you can send your stories to our Synod Mission Development Officer Revd Robert Bushby: rjbushby12@gmail.com



THEOLOGY SLAM

A search for new engaging voices thinking theologically about the contemporary world.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has endorsed an exciting competition to find engaging young voices who think theologically about the contemporary world.

"Theology Slam" is organised jointly by the Church Times, SCM Press, the Community of St Anselm, and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC).

It is open to anyone, lay or ordained, between the ages of 18 to 30, and consists of two rounds.

In the first round, applicants are asked to write 500 words on one of 12 contemporary issues, which include Theology and Mental Health; Theology and Artificial Intelligence; and Theology and Political Tribalism. Alongside the 500 words, applicants are also asked to submit a 90-second video, introducing who they are and why they are interested in the topic. **The deadline for submissions is 11.59 p.m. on 7 December.**

Three entrants will be chosen to take part in the Theology Slam Final on 7 March 2019 at LICC in central London, where they will deliver talks of between seven and ten minutes, based on the 500-word entry. Each finalist will have been given a half-day training session on public speaking before the final, free of charge.

The three talks will be judged on the night by a panel that consists of Dr Eve Poole, the Third Church Estates Commissioner and theologian; Professor John Swinton, the winner of the 2016 Michael Ramsey Prize; Mark Greene, the executive director of LICC; and the Revd Dr Isabelle Hamley, Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. There will also be an audience Q&A. The talks will be filmed and made available on YouTube and social media.

The winner will receive a collection of books worth up to £200 and his or her 500-word entry will be published in the Church Times.

For more information and to apply, seeing the full list of topics, visit: www.churchtimes.co.uk/theology-slam. Any questions, email: theologyslam@hymnsam.co.uk

TODDLER GROUP TRAINING

Date and Time: Saturday 26th January 2019, 10:00am – 12:00pm

At the Synod Meeting Room

Come along for a chance to meet other Toddler Group Leaders

See resources, share ideas and talk about issues relating to Toddler Groups.

To book, please contact Jane Henderson. Email: cydo@urc5.org.uk

MESSY CHURCH AND HOLY HABITS DAY

Come along to find out more about family ministry and get lots of ideas!

Saturday 9th March 2019 from 10am – 4pm

The Synod Meeting Room

Bring your own lunch

Booking is essential!

To book your place please email Jane Henderson: cydo@urc5.org.uk

AND FINALLY: - This E letter is sent on behalf of The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA. Telephone: 0115 9609241
Email address for E-Letter Editor: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk
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