

EMURCE No: 306 – 12th December 2019
EDITED THIS WEEK BY: REVD PETER MEEK

Dear Friends,

It has been a great privilege to serve you as Synod Moderator for the last nearly eight and a half years. A huge thank you to all of you who have sent me cards and good wishes for my retirement and to those who were able to attend my farewell service. It was such a blessing to have a full church and a wonderful service organised by Rev Peter Stevenson. It helped me say farewell to both my ministry as a Synod Moderator and to my thirty one and a half years in stipendiary service. Retirement will be my next adventure with the Lord and I'm looking forward with eagerness to what God has in store for me! I am sure to begin with that will be rest and recreation. Journeying into the unknown, which is what it feels like to me, can be exciting but also can be daunting. It seems to me that Mary, the mother of our Lord, found it both. We hear her exhilaration in the Magnificat but also her fear upon the advice of the angel Gabriel that the Holy Family must flee to Egypt. There are several places in Egypt where long tradition holds that Jesus and his family stayed along the way of their journey and churches have been built there. So Christmas is not all about smiles and bright lights, though I love all of that. Its also about thanking God with all our hearts for risking so much to come to us and be with us. I've known more than my fair share of tragedy and bereavement over the last three years but God with me, Immanuel, has been my mainstay. I've not always felt God's nearness but always known God is near; at other times, God has felt very near. But I can still praise God and love God, perhaps all the more, because in Jesus he's known our grief and borne our sorrows and will do for all eternity. So, please this Christmas, as you celebrate, perhaps on your own or with family or friends, thank God that "The Word became flesh" for without this fact, the world would be a very dark place indeed. Instead it is full of light and glory despite the darkness and the darkness cannot put that light out! Thanks be to God!

With my love
Peter

CHRISTMAS MAILING

To all ministers and church secretaries the Christmas mailing will be sent out by post on Monday 30th December. Please note this will contain a copy of the last Synod meeting minutes, the annual return (**which MUST be returned to the Synod office by 31 January at the latest please**) together with other information. If this has not been received by the secretary by 6th January please contact Chris at the Synod office.

OFFICE CLOSURE

The Synod Office will be closed from 3:00pm on Thursday 19th December and re-opens on Monday 6th January.

RETIREMENT OF PETER MEEK

The Revd Peter Meek will not be available from Wednesday 18th December, therefore, until you hear otherwise, should anything urgent arise, please contact the Pastoral Consultants for your area and Jane Henderson for Safeguarding issues.

SAFEGUARDING COVER OVER CHRISTMAS

The Synod Safeguarding Officer will be on leave from 12th December 2019 until 2nd January 2020. During this time please note that urgent safeguarding queries can be texted to the Safeguarding Officer: 07572 291007 and will be responded to as quickly as possible. For non urgent please email safeguarding@urc5.org.uk and you will receive a response after 2nd January.

We hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year!

PEOPLE

It is with sadness that we inform you of the death of Revd Dr Stanley Herbert Russell.

Stanley served at: Oundle & Weldon 1959 - 62; Adams United College, South Africa 1962 - 67; Zion, Wakefield 1968 -76; Streethouse & Flanshaw 1974 - 76; Northern College 1976 - 94.

Funeral arrangements are as follows:-

20th December, 2.30pm at The Heatons URC everybody welcome.

Private cremation first in the morning for family only.

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM PETER AND DEBORAH



Dear Friends

We wish simply to thank you all for our wonderful retirement gift. We are bowled over by the generosity of churches and individuals and humbled by this token of your love. In fact, thank you doesn't seem enough but it's all the words we have in the English language. We will hold East Midlands Synod in our hearts for the rest of our lives.

With our love,

Peter and Deborah

FOLK CAROL CELEBRATION

West Derbyshire URC invite you to come and join the 'Folk Carol Celebration' at West Derbyshire URC, Coldwell Street, Wirksworth, DE4 4FB on Monday 6th January at 7pm.

The Folk Carol Service will be a little different! There will be carols in folk style (some with traditional words, some with new words) mixed with a variety of Christmas readings.

'CONFLICT AWARENESS WORKSHOP' from Northerly Synods Listening and Reconciliation Service

On Saturday 15th February 2020 from 9.30am - 4pm at The Synod Meeting Room
Bring your own lunch

East Midlands Synod are delighted that Jim Coleman from Yorkshire Synod, will be leading the day for us and all are welcome to attend. Booking is essential and limited places are available so please let Hannah Holmes know asap if you would like a place: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk

WALKING THE WAY ADVENT MATERIAL NOW AVAILABLE

As promised, the Walking the Way Advent materials from pilgrims of the recent URC educational visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, literally Walking the Way of Jesus, are now available to view and download here: https://urc.org.uk/images/WalkingtheWay/documents/IOPT_Advent_Resources_2019.pdf

The notes are quite extensive, so worship and Bible study leaders are encouraged to use whatever will be most useful in the materials, including the prayers, hymns and other worship suggestions, in their own contexts.

Any questions, feedback or stories which people would like to submit would be most welcome. Please encourage people to e-mail wtw@urc.org.uk or call 020 7520 2718.

DONATION OF OFFICE FURNITURE

The Synod has been made aware of a company which is offering various furniture to churches as a donation. All items would need collecting from the warehouses, the main warehouse being in Telford. Items include: Operator, meeting and Canteen chairs, Desks and Tables, Storage Cabinets. If you would like to know more please contact Hannah H at the Synod Office, who can put you in touch. Email: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk

BRITAIN AND IRELAND SCHOOL OF FEMINIST THEOLOGY

SUMMER SCHOOL 2020 - Tuesday 16th June to Thursday 18th June 2020

At University of Wales, Trinity St David, Lampeter, SA48 7ED - Ecofeminist Theologies In the Age of Climate Crisis.

Our keynote speakers are: Prof Heather Eaton, [St Paul, University, Ottawa], Prof Agnes Brazal, [DeLa Salle University, Manila], Prof Catherine Keller, [Drew University, USA], Kara Moses [Re-Wilding, Cymru]. Dr Megan Clay will discuss the art exhibition entitled 'Women Dancing with Gaia'.

Cost : £190 inclusive of B&B, lunch, evening meal, teas and coffees throughout the day and conference fee. All meals will be vegetarian

Daily Rates: Full days £60 including lunch; Half Days £30

Early Bird Booking before 15th April, £175.

Closing date for all bookings 30th May, 2020.

If you offer a seminar paper or workshop there is a £40 fee discount for full board participants and £10 fee discount for daily participants. All papers will be considered for publication in the international journal 'Feminist Theology'.

For further information contact: Professor Lisa Isherwood l.isherwood@uwtsd.ac.uk



Is it I, Lord?

Ministry Enquirers' Day

Saturday 22 February 2020

10am - 4pm

Luther King House, Manchester



- Explore opportunities for service through the United Reformed Church
- Ask the questions that are on your mind and heart
- Hear from people engaged in a variety of lay and ordained ministries
 - Listen for the voice of God as we worship and pray together

For full details contact:
Rachel McIntosh

T: 020 7916 8649 E: ministries.pa@urc.org.uk

Abington Avenue United Reformed Church
Tuesday 17 December 2019
7.30pm

The Advent & Christmas Music from
HANDEL'S

MESSIAH

Carols for choir and audience

The Seasonal Singers

Rachel Bedford – Soprano
Mavis Wilmshurst – Alto
Richard Jackson – Tenor
Robert Kingham – Bass

Mark Gibson ~ Conductor
Paul Knappett ~ Organ

FREE Admission

Retiring Collection

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

Copy Date for Next E-Letter: 06.01.2020

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