



URC EAST MIDLANDS SYNOD

E-LETTER NO: 230 - 13th OCTOBER 2016

EDITED THIS WEEK BY: HELEN LIDGETT

"You know it's 15th October today? It's an important day!", the lady said. "Why? Why is 15th October important?" "Because today we sow the seeds and tomorrow on 16th October it rains." But that was 40 years ago. Then we could get three harvests a year in Malawi. Now we are lucky to have one. Today the rains may not come until December. In 2015 the crops were washed away in dramatic floods as a month's rain fell in 24 hours in January. In January 2016 the El Nino effect left 6.5 million people without food through drought.

This was the dramatic heart of Victor Mughogho's presentation to Synod. He is the Director of Eagles Relief and Development, Malawi, which is a Christian Aid partner. Victor is here at Christian Aid's invitation during their 'Speak Up - Week of Action' on climate change to share the work Eagles is doing in Malawi. We gave him 10 minutes after lunch at Synod - and he held us spellbound. Eagles was set up in 2002 by Living Waters Church Malawi, in response to a food crisis. 85% of the population of Malawi are subsistence farmers - and if there is no rain, there is no food. The church declared "we must be relevant to our people". It mobilised every church in all 28 Districts in the country to respond.

Supported by Christian Aid, Eagles is helping people adapt to changing climate patterns through irrigation farming, drought tolerant crops, solar energy, micro-finance for small businesses, fuel efficient stoves. They currently reach some 6000 families, comprising 35 to 40,000 people, and now they are determined to scale up. "We want to bring food security, better health, abundant life."

www.eaglesmalawi.org. Take a look at what abundant life looks like in Malawi.

Helen Lidgett, Synod Clerk

PEOPLE

- We are pleased to tell you that **Revd George Mwaura** will be inducted to the Christ the Cornerstone church at 3pm on Sunday 16th October at Christ the Cornerstone LEP, Saxon Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 2ES. George will also be Area Minister and Pastoral Consultant for Milton Keynes. We would like to welcome George to the East Midlands Synod.
- We regretfully inform you of the death of **Revd Keith Fisher**. Keith died on Tuesday 4th October, following a fall some days before. He has suffered with Dementia for many years. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Barbara. Keith served the URC in the following pastorates: Feltham 1951-55; Palmers Green 1955-66; Eden Street, Kingston upon Thames 1966-83; Bridport, Stoke Abbott & Ven 1983-90.
- It is with sadness that we bring you the news of the death of **Revd William Connelly** who died on 10th October. William served the following pastorates: Uppermill 1953-56; Newport, Salop 1956-64; Friary, West Bridgford 1964-74; Queens Drive, Nottingham 1965-74; Goring-by-Sea 1974-91. He has lived in Worthing since retiring, and has spent the last 6 months or so in a care home, suffering with dementia. His wife described his death as a matter for rejoicing as he is now with his Maker.



DERBYSHIRE

CHURCHES TOGETHER FOR DERBYSHIRE - A New Vision for Ecumenism, a day to explore where ecumenism is heading and what that means for us in our local churches and communities. Speaker: Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary Churches Together in England, on Saturday 22nd October from 11am to 4pm at Matlock Methodist/United Reformed Church, Oak Road, Matlock, DE4 3FJ. There is no charge but bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be supplied. It would help with our planning if you could let us know that you are coming. Please contact Tony Harvey 01332 673777 judi_tony_harvey@btinternet.com (spaces are underscores)



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

THE DALES URC - Invite you to join them for an evening with - Pollyanna Pickering, International Wild life Artist, at The Dales United Reformed Church from 7.30pm. Admission £6 reductions for children. Subject: "THERE BE DRAGONS". Please call 01159875605 for tickets until 21st Oct, after that: 01159117115 (Janet Beavis)

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WORLD CHURCH SUNDAY- November 20th at Friary URC 4-6pm. This will be a cafe church event. Speakers Shelagh & Ian Baird-Smith on "Working with Christians in Uganda". All are welcome.

HUCKNALL URC - On Saturday 15 October at 7pm there will be a concert at Hucknall URC by the Bestwood Male Voice Choir. Ticket only (numbers limited), available from Sue Ware (0115 9680896 susan_ware@hotmail.co.uk) £5 including cheese and wine. Everyone welcome.

BULWELL URC - Save the date! Saturday 22nd October at 7pm. Join us for a singalong concert with the Nottingham Ukulele Orchestra at the United Reformed Church, Broomhill Rd, Bulwell, NG6 9FL. Tickets £3 (contact- Joy Rice - riced@hotmail.co.uk) Tea/coffee/juice included. Home-made cakes to buy. Proceeds to NUO, Bulwell Forest Garden & URC



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

WELLINGBOROUGH URC- will be holding An Autumn Fayre & Craft Fair at Salem Hall, Salem Lane off High Street from 10.30am to 2pm on Saturday 29th October 2016. ALL ARE WELCOME - A variety of interesting stalls will be there, including - Toiletries, Tombola, Toys, Books, Bric and Brac, Crafts, Cakes, Fair Trade, Raffle, Gifts, Jewellery etc; Refreshments will also be available in the parlour café. Please come along and support us.

OTHER

M&M OFFERS FOR 2017

The requests for offers to be made were sent by email - or posted - to all treasurers (also secretaries and ministers) on 25 May 2016.

So far we have received details from 34 churches - thank you very much.

For those yet to send the form (and accounts) back to the office please do so without further delay.

The details must be received in time for the information to be collated and sent to Church House at the end of October 2016.

David J Greatorex, Treasurer Leslie Allwood, M&M Officer

MESSAGE FROM SYNOD SILENCE AND RETREATS ORGANISER

I would like to try and run a Quiet Morning or Afternoon in each of our Synod counties in 2017. The months I have available are March, May, July, August and October. If you would like to host one of these please contact me on RevRAllen@aol.com or 07974 835171 (text is best as we have appalling telecommunications where I live). I shall take bookings on a strictly first-come-first-served basis, so get your booking in quickly!

In case you're wondering what these Quiet times consist of: typically we meet in a church or hall, start with a drink, and then a little bit of input from me. Then the main part of the time is taken up with 3 half-hour slots with a short break in between, and there will be sheets of paper with reflections to work on if you wish. But if you wish just to be still before God, that is absolutely fine. Finally we come together for the chance to comment, if we want to; a final prayer, and home we go. The whole thing lasts about 2 and a half hours.

Ruth Allen



WHAT IS....? STARTING THE CONVERSATIONS

Ever wanted to understand a bit more about the Church and Christianity?

At 6pm for 6 weeks at Newport Pagnell URC, food available from 5pm- let us know you are coming!

- Sunday 30th October- What is Church? Geoffrey Clarke

- Sunday 6th November- What is Christian Faith? Peter Sharrocks
- Sunday 13th November- What is the Bible? Deborah Baird

- Sunday 20th November- What is Salvation? Lawrence Moore
- Sunday 27th November- What is Sin and Forgiveness? Stephen Norrish.
- 4th December- What did we think? Open Discussion

Looking at faith and the Church and where God is in all this. Come along and join in the discussion and ask questions! Anything you have ever wanted to ask- in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Open to everyone. You do not have to go to Church in order to come along!

Find us on Facebook URC Newport Pagnell or contact revdjmills@btinternet.com or call 07703485017.

REFRESHER & TRAINING EVENING FOR PRESIDING AT COMMUNION

Wednesday 9th November at 7.30 p.m. in the 'schoolroom' of Enderby URC, LE19 4NE.

For those who have been exercising this valuable ministry for many years, please do bring along the resources that you use and tips that you have found helpful, especially when going to serve in this way in different churches, so that we can all learn more. For those who have not yet presided, or are very new to doing so, here is the opportunity to undergo some training. All are welcome and I look forward to seeing you. Please let me know if you are coming, by email mary@spiritualseekers.co.uk or phone 0116 2849623



Are you interested in learning more about Evangelism, Mission, Ministry, Youth and Children's Work, Community Work or Training for Learning and

Serving (TLS)? Come along to meet with our Training and Development Officer, Children and Youth Development Officer and other representatives from around our Synod who can answer your questions, tell you about what's on offer and how we can help. Everyone welcome! Join us at Riverside Church, Sleaford on Thursday 3rd November 2016 for one of our drop in sessions from 2pm - 4pm or 7pm - 9pm. Booking is essential, please contact Hannah B at the Synod Office to book your place: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk Tel: 0115 9609241

BELIEF EVENTS

Queens Park Faith Tour on Saturday 22nd October 2016 10am - 1pm

The tour will start at All Saints Church Westbourne Road MK40 4LD meeting at 9.45am for a prompt 10am start, where there will be a short presentation, coffee and a tour of the Church (please park in the side street around the Church) We will then move to Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Ford End Road and Jamia Masjid Gulshane Baghdad (Westbourne Road Mosque) to tour both of these and have an interactive presentation.

All visitors are asked to respect the religious and cultural traditions by:

- dressing modestly, ensuring that shoulders and legs are covered
- removing footwear before entering the Mosque and Gurdwara
- ensuring that all participants bring a headscarf (not hats or handkerchiefs)
- Headscarves must be worn by all people entering the Gurdwara (there are spares at the entrance for those who forget). Females also need to wear a headscarf in the Mosque. No meat, fish or eggs are allowed into the Gurdwara on account of the Sikh belief in the sanctity of all life.

£10 per person (including refreshments) payable on the day Children are welcome to attend and are free but must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday 5th November 2016 10am - 1pm St Andrews Church Kimbolton Road Bedford MK40 2PF

Living alongside or living together? Beyond tolerance... with Revd Ruth Gouldbourne

In a multifaith, multicultural community, is religious tolerance simply living together without fighting, or might it have more substance than that? What resources might our history offer to explore this?

Ruth is currently one of the co-ministers at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in London, though her first ministry was as assistant minister at Bunyan Meeting Free Church in Bedford. In between those, she has taught history and doctrine at Bristol Baptist College, and has a particular interest in Baptist history and identity. £10 per person (including refreshments) payable on the day

For more information visit: www.beliefbeds.org or Email: belief@standrewsbedford.org

DAILY DEVOTIONS

A new series of Daily Devotions will be sent out by email from the First Sunday of Advent. These are being compiled by Andy Braunston, former NW Synod Clerk, and have been written by writers from across the URC. Each day a reading, short reflection and prayer will be sent to those people who sign up for them. The series will continue for everyday of the year. You can sign up for them by going to this address:

<http://tinyurl.com/URCDailyDevotions>



SYNOD ADVENT REFRESHER

East Midlands Synod Development Team invites you to an Advent Refresher Event!

Led by Revd Dr Deborah Baird, all are welcome, come together to hear and discuss new ideas for your church this advent - Saturday 26th November 2016 from 2pm-5pm at Sherwood URC. To book please contact Hannah B at the Synod Office: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk or call 0115 9609241

BBC ONE'S SONGS OF PRAISE IS COMING TO ST. JAMES THE GREATER, LEICESTER

Join us for the following recordings at St James the Greater, 216 London Road, Leicester, LE2 1NE

- Traditional Hymns - Saturday 29th October 2016, 2.30pm - 5.30pm
- Gospel Hymns - Sunday 30th October 2016, 2.30pm - 5.30pm

Limited tickets are still available. Apply now! To book your FREE tickets, go to www.bbc.co.uk/songsofpraise
Apply by Thursday 13th October

NEWS FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Karen Morrison, Head of Children & Youth Work has indicated that she will leave her post here on February 24th 2017. Karen has worked for the United Reformed Church for eighteen years, serving in her present post for the past three years. Her caring manner, and her commitment to the Christian development of young people have been an inspiration and we shall miss her.

There is presently a review taking place of the post and the work which will report in December after which we shall recruit for the post with an intention to advertise the position in February Reform. This will mean that it is likely that there will be a vacancy from March to probably July during which plans are being put into place to carry forward the work of the Children's and Youth team. If anyone wishes to contribute to a leaving gift for Karen, please let Bea Minta in the Finance team have your gift by the end of January indicating clearly who it is for.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN



HOW TO LEAD ALL AGE WORSHIP

Saturday 12th November 2016 from 10.30am - 2pm at Christ Church, Leicester

Led by Deborah Baird (TDO) and Jane Henderson (CYDO). Come along to share ideas, discover new resources and much more! Please bring a packed lunch. Booking is essential, to book contact Hannah Bones at the Synod Office: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk Tel: 0115 9609241

URC YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2017

Booking for the URC Youth Assembly 2017 is now open for anyone between the ages of 14 and 25 (inclusive). The URCYA17 will take place from 27 to 29 January 2017 at Whitmoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffordshire. The theme for the Assembly is 'Feasts & Festivals' with URC Youth adding the tagline of 'We're all invited!' Record numbers are expected for 2017 so book early because the price goes up after 9 November (on or before 8 November: £100/on or after 9 November £120). The aim of the weekend? To 'focus on Jesus, to share in community with other young people, and to explore what it means to be church together.' Please contact Jane Henderson CYDO if you would like to go - funding is available to help with attendance.

AND FINALLY: - Please send any comments or feedback on this e-letter to: admin@urc5.org.uk

The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.

Email address for E-Letter Editor: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk Copy Date for Next E-Letter: 24.10.16