



## URC EAST MIDLANDS SYNOD

E-LETTER NO: 249 – 20<sup>th</sup> JULY 2017

EDITED THIS WEEK BY: REVD PETER MEEK

Dear friends, in her history the church has faced very many challenges and even dangers. Yet God is faithful and has always been faithful to the church and therefore we do not give in to fear. We can think of the churches of North Africa, once the power house of Christianity, now a minority faith there. The church of Augustine and Tertullian is a shadow of its former self but it is not gone. For fifteen hundred years small but faithful Christian communities have continued to bear witness to the Gospel of our Lord.

Today, like all traditional Christian denominations the URC faces numerical decline and the challenges that come from that. One such challenge is the falling numbers of people available to the church as stipendiary ministers and as you are aware, that fall is forecast to be precipitous from 2020. This leaves each Synod with huge challenges. There will need to be a culture change in our churches and with our stipendiary ministers. The role that ministers play from now on needs to change if we are going to move into the future with energy. With a forecast of eighteen ministers for the whole of East Midlands Synod by 2025 (I think that number will arrive before 2025 based on the low number of successful vocations) we are going to have to think big.

I've been very encouraged so far by the response from churches where the minister has moved on. There is a real sense of wanting to "grasp the nettle" and doing so with great faith in God. But the response, such as it is, since we've only just begun the conversation, from one or two places has been parochial and even hurtful. To face the challenge we need to think big and creatively.

To that end a paper I wrote and endorsed by Synod Pastoral Group and Synod Enabling Group will come to the October Synod for information. We will discuss it too in the County Gatherings. A resolution based on the paper will then come to the March Synod for a decision. May God the Holy Spirit inspire and hold us all as with God we move into a very different future.

With love in Christ, Peter

### PEOPLE

- We have recently found out that **John and Jo Moulding** celebrated their Golden wedding anniversary on 11 June 2017. Belated congratulations to them both. From all at the Synod office.
- We regretfully inform you of the death of the **Revd Griselda Langdon**, who died on the 4th June. Her funeral was held on 7th July - her 96th birthday. Griselda served at: Tilehurst & Spencer's Wood Reading 86-87; Radipole Weymouth 87-93.
- It is with regret that we advise you of the death of the **Revd John Joseph**, a retired minister who was in the Surrey & Sussex Synod Area and resided at Bognor Regis. John died on Wednesday evening, 28 June 2017. His ministries were: Saintwell, Cardiff, 1972-75; Newbury Group, 1975-81; Sutton, 1981-92; Tenby Group, 1992-98; Redhill, 1998-2016.
- We are sorry to inform you that the **Revd Peter Arthur** passed away last Saturday. Revd Arthur served in the Mid-Scotland District for 14 years. He served in the Churches of Christ and was President of the Association of Churches of Christ. He was widowed but survived by his three children: Sheila, David and Moira. The funeral is being held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July at 10.30am at Craigton Crematorium, South West Glasgow.
- It is with sadness that we advise you that the **Revd Margaret Dorothea Jones** (known as Thea), a retired minister from East Midlands Synod, passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> July, aged 93. There will be a Thanksgiving Service (all welcome) on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August at Middleton Cheney Parish Church at 2.30pm. Further information about the venue is available by ringing: 01295 265424. Thea's ministries were at – Banbury 1990-96; Brackley 1997-2001. Our thoughts and prayers are with Thea's son, David and daughter Bridget.



## DERBYSHIRE

**MARTIN LUTHER, THE REFORMATION AND HOW CHRISTIAN LIFE CHANGED** - An afternoon of singing, listening and praying in celebration of a key time in the life of the church, led by Revd Professor Stephen Orchard. Sunday 15th October 2017 at 4pm at West Derbyshire United Reformed Church, Coldwell Street, Wirksworth DE4 4FB. Followed by a "Bring and Share Tea" in the Glenorchy Centre, Chapel Lane, Wirksworth. If you are staying for the Tea, you are invited to bring food to share. Please let the Church Secretary, Ian Wright, know if you plan to attend on [wright.ian24@gmail.com](mailto:wright.ian24@gmail.com)

**MELBOURNE URC: KNITTED BIBLE STORIES** - You are warmly invited to come and see knitted Bible stories from the Creation to Easter (as featured on BBC 'East Midlands Today' in 2016) on Saturday 16th September 10am to 5pm and Sunday 17th September 12noon to 5pm (as part of the delightful Melbourne Festival of Arts and Architecture); and Monday to Friday 18th to 22nd September 2pm to 4pm.

## OTHER

### ARE ALL YOUR CONTACT DETAILS UP TO DATE !!!!!

We will shortly be preparing all documentation for both the Synod and National Yearbooks. If your church has changed their Minister, Secretary, Treasurer we need to know as soon as possible. Also have any of these people changed their address, telephone number or e-mail? It's surprising how easily these amendments can be missed.

If there are any alterations please contact Chris in the Synod office or e-mail her on [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk)

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY CHOIR 2018 - CALLING ALL SINGERS!

The 2018 General Assembly of the URC is to be held in Nottingham on the 6-8th July. As the 'local' church St Andrew's with Castle Gate has been asked to coordinate a choir to support worship on the Sunday morning (8th). It is hoped that we might form an East Midlands Synod Choir, with singers drawn from URCs across the Synod. Music would be sent out in advance and county based rehearsals would be planned.

If you, and others from your congregation, are interested in finding out more please email [stawithcchoir@gmail.com](mailto:stawithcchoir@gmail.com). Once the level of interest is known music etc. can be chosen.

Mrs Phil (Pippa) Hodgson, Choir Director, St Andrew's with Castle Gate URC

### RURAL MINISTRY COURSE - GERMINATE

The next Arthur Rank Centre Rural Ministry Course is Tuesday 7 – Thursday 9 November 2017. Based at the King's Park Centre in Northampton, the three day residential programme, employs a variety of approaches including practical sessions, group work and workshops led by practitioners. It is designed for lay and ordained ministers across the denominations who may be entering a rural appointment for the first time, or who may already be in rural ministry but feel the need for a 'refresher'. Sessions cover: Rural contexts, Mission and growth, Leadership, Working with children and young people in the countryside.

Cost £255. For more information and to book go to <http://germinate.net/training/ruralministrycourse/>

### A ONE WEEK PILGRIMAGE IN HALF TERM BASED IN JERUSALEM AND GALILEE 10TH -17TH FEBRUARY 2018

with McCabe Pilgrimages.

Jane Wade, Minister at Abington Avenue and Paulerspury URC's is hoping to lead a party to the Holy Land. If you are interested and would like to see a sample programme please get in touch with Jane.

*It is always very moving to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, there is so much to see and experience and learn together. St Jerome said: 'Five gospels record the life of Jesus. Four you will find in books and the one you will find in the land they call Holy. Read the fifth gospel and the world of the four will open to you. We invite you to come and know this for yourselves whether you are new to the Holy Land or have been many times before; there are always new sights and sounds to reflect upon. Reading the gospels will never be the same again and by*

visiting the Holy Land we are standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters there too. To have the chance to meet the 'living stones', the local Palestinian and Israeli Christians who are the ongoing, living church in the region, is humbling.

Our pilgrimage will include the sites where the most important events in Our Lord's life and ministry took place: in Jerusalem and the surrounding area and further north in Galilee. We hope that if you have never been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land before you will choose to join us and, if you have been before, we welcome you back. Our journey is a life changing as well as faith changing experience.

The cost would be £1,675 per person sharing a twin/double room and includes everything as stated in the programme - but is based on a minimum group size of 15.

If you are interested in going please let me know asap: jane@thewadetribe.co.uk - as I want to know if there is any interest before I firm up details of the trip.

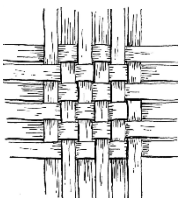
Revd Jane Wade AAURC



## FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

❖ **CONSTANCE COLTMAN CENTENARY SERVICE** – It is a great pleasure to invite you to a special Service to celebrate the centenary of the ordination of the Revd Constance Coltman, who was one of the first women to be ordained to the ministry in a mainstream British denomination. The service will take place on Sunday 17 September 2017 at the American International Church on Tottenham Court Road in London at 3pm and will be followed by refreshments. The centenary is an important event in the life of the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation and we would be delighted and honoured if you would attend. RSVP: Tracey Hardingham at [tracey.hardingham@urc.org.uk](mailto:tracey.hardingham@urc.org.uk)

❖ If you held a 'CELEBRATING FREEDOM' event on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June, then please let us know what you did and email your pictures to Hannah Holmes: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) or post to: Synod Office, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA We would love to display them on our Synod website!



### WEAVING THE WORD - Workshop and Bible Study

You are invited to join us for a craft afternoon of Bible Study and fellowship, led by Revd Dr Deborah Baird at Marlpool URC, Heanor on Saturday 19th August 2017 from 12.30pm - 4.30pm. To ensure enough materials are available please contact Hannah Holmes to book: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) Tel: 0115 9609241 Cost: **£5.00** payable on the day

### CELEBRATING WHAT WE ACHIEVE TOGETHER

The United Reformed Church's communication department have produced a leaflet on stewardship on behalf of the finance committee, entitled 'Celebrating what we achieve together – Thank you for all that you give'. "We hope that, on reading this, you feel proud to be part of the URC family – of this community of disciples who believe that money is to be given where it is needed, to best serve our communal needs."

To download this leaflet please visit:

[http://www.urc.org.uk/images/Finance/Stewardship/MM\\_leaflet\\_2017.pdf](http://www.urc.org.uk/images/Finance/Stewardship/MM_leaflet_2017.pdf)

### THE URC GOLFING SOCIETY – WHITEHORN CUP GOLF DAY

On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Bromsgrove Golf Centre . Entries by 23rd August 2017.

This popular event is an 18 hole Stableford competition which is open to Free Church Ministers (including retired ministers), who play for the Whitehorn Cup and members of the URC laity who play for the Patrick Figgis Putter. Book your place today by contacting the Revd John Maile Telephone: 01562 515423 Email: [johnfmaile@gmail.com](mailto:johnfmaile@gmail.com) £38 per person, includes, goodie bag, bacon bap, range balls, 18 holes of golf, dinner,

presentation and prizes.

## YOUTH AND CHILDREN



### CHILD FRIENDLY CHURCH AWARD

Have you considered exploring this award? You do not have to have children attending regularly to gain the award, it is about how welcoming and friendly you are to children and their families when they visit.

Please get in touch with Jane Henderson to find out more, we have 16 Churches with a current award and many working towards it within our Synod. Email: [cydo@urc5.org.uk](mailto:cydo@urc5.org.uk) Tel: 0757 229 1007



### YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S LEADERS WEEKEND

Are you a Youth or Children's leader? Why not come along to East Midlands Synod's Youth and Children's Leaders Weekend? Join our CYDO, Jane Henderson for a weekend of:

- Worship Ideas
- Bible Study
- Social Time
- Idea Sharing/ Renewal

From Friday 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at the Hayes, Swanwick, Alfreton, DE55 1AU. Spaces are limited, so booking is essential. There is no charge for this event but you may like to make a voluntary contribution of £20. For a booking form contact Hannah Holmes: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) Tel: 0115 9609241



### THREE SYNOD'S YOUTH WEEKEND

From 17- 19 November 2017 at The Pioneer Centre, Kidderminster. East Midlands together with Wales and West Midlands Synod's are holding this exciting weekend. This is a chance to meet together and have fun.

If you are aged between 11 and 17 then we hope you'll join us. This is an inclusive event at which everyone is welcome.

How much does it cost? £69

How do I get involved? - Just ask for a booking form and send it in

Funding may be available towards costs. For a booking form contact Hannah Holmes at: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) Tel: 0115 9609241

If you have any queries then give Jane Henderson (CYDO) a call on: 0757 229 1007 or email: [cydo@urc5.org.uk](mailto:cydo@urc5.org.uk)

## YEAR BOOK CHANGES

- Please note that Liz Adams will be moving in to her manse on 18<sup>th</sup> July. Her address is: 2 Harlestone Close, Northampton, NN5 7BD E-mail [liz.adams5@icloud.com](mailto:liz.adams5@icloud.com)

**AND FINALLY:** - Please send any comments or feedback on this e-letter to: [admin@urc5.org.uk](mailto:admin@urc5.org.uk)  
The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.  
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