



URC EAST MIDLANDS SYNOD

E-LETTER NO: 251 – 7th SEPTEMBER 2017

EDITED THIS WEEK BY: REVD GEOFFREY CLARKE

At the end of May I joined friends from Worksop Priory for the National Pilgrimage to Walsingham. One solitary arch, standing high against the sky, is all that remains of Walsingham Priory. The altar, canopy and dais, used for the service, are erected in front of it, representing, as it does, the east end to which the congregation has looked since its foundation. And it was while gazing at it during the service that it took on, for me, a deeper and abiding symbolism. Walsingham Priory was just one of the many such sacred buildings that Henry VIII plundered in the Dissolution. His lack of respect or reverence for Walsingham, however, had a somewhat more personal and subjective dimension. In the early years of his marriage to Catherine of Arragon, Henry was among the many who made pilgrimage to Walsingham – walking the final mile, from the ‘slipper chapel’ barefoot. His devotion to Rome and the doctrines and rites of the Catholic Church were such that in October 1521 Pope Leo X conferred on him the title ‘Fidei Defensor’ (Defender of the Faith) as a reward for the king’s pamphlet *Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* (“Declaration of the Seven Sacraments Against Martin Luther”), written against Luther. Henry’s devotion to Rome, of course, was relinquished as and when Catherine failed to bear a son as heir and, ultimately, when the Pope refused to grant him a divorce. Despite all his piety and devotion, prayers and pilgrimages, Catherine and Henry did not have the son they longed for. I can’t help thinking, therefore, that Henry’s plunder of Walsingham was – even if only in some small part – an act of vengeance on a place where his prayers had not been answered as he wished. (Perhaps, too, Walsingham’s Priory and shrine may have remained intact had Catherine borne a son. And Henry’s support for Luther’s Reformation principles might never have been kindled?)

Over time the plundered Walsingham Priory and shrine became ruins and it was not until the 1920s that Fr. Hope Patten, newly-appointed as Vicar of Walsingham, inspired the rebuilding of the ‘Holy House’ and church and, from the 1930s, an ever-increasing number of pilgrims returned to the place where Lady Richeldis claimed to have had her vision back in 1061.

So why did the ruins of the Priory become, for me, a powerful symbol? Because despite the attempts of Henry, almost five centuries ago, to snuff out the faith inspired and practised in Walsingham, I was among those who, across the last eight decades, have gathered there and offered prayer and praise. Where we worshipped that day was the same place that had inspired faith and pilgrimage; how and why we worshipped was in faithful succession to those who went before us. Henry’s attempts had not put an end to faith and worship. But whereas once there was a building recognisable as a church now our worship is offered amid the ruins. To a large extent we did not need a building in order to worship. The power of kings and their plunder – the present challenges of our own day – do not, ultimately, extinguish the flame of faith or our ability to be the Church of Christ.

In these uncertain times, in which the future of the Church feels very uncertain, perhaps the arch at Walsingham can offer us hope – to persist in faith, worship and service and to entrust the church’s future to God. There is a further challenge too: to remain faithful even when our prayers and policies do not result in the ways we had hoped. I am always inspired by the resolve of Daniel’s “but if not”, when facing the prospect of the fiery furnace: *If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.*’ (The New Revised Standard Version (Anglicized Edition), copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)

May God enable us to be a people who sustain faith amid the ruins.

PEOPLE

- We send our congratulations to **Jean and Michael Forster** who celebrated their Sapphire Wedding Anniversary (45 years) on the 19th August.
- It is with deep regret that we advise you of the death of the **Revd Robin Diffey**, retired minister living in Axminster, who died on Monday 7th August. Robin had recently been admitted to hospital having suffered a stroke. His ministries were at Chard 1963-68; Radipole & Upwey 1968-70; Mount Pleasant, Pontypool 1970-76; Horfield, Bristol 1976-88; Heavitree & Pinhoe, Exeter 1988-96 and Axminster, Charmouth & Seaton 1996-2005. A private cremation took place on Friday, 1st September to be attended by family members only. This was followed at 3pm by a Service of Thanksgiving at Seaton United Reformed Church.

- We are sorry to inform you of the death of the **Revd John Berryman**, a retired minister living in Southern Synod, who died peacefully on Friday 18th August. John served at Hartlepool, Brigg & Barton on Humber, Brigg, as industrial Chaplain and at Bradford on Avon & Holt before retiring to Faversham in Kent. John is survived by his wife June and daughters Sarah and Joane. John's funeral took place on the 6th of September at 1.20pm Charing Crematorium, Kent. Our prayers are with all who knew John and, particularly his wife June and daughters Sarah and Joane.
- It is with sadness that we advise you of the death on Monday 21st August of the **Reverend Ronald Blick**, retired minister living in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Ron's ministries were at Shepherds Bush 1975-86; Argyle Morley & Staple Hill, Bristol 1986-99; & Horfield 1995-99; Lavington, Appledore, Bideford & Northam 1999-2005. The funeral service was held at 11.00am on Friday, 1st Sept at Bradford on Avon Cemetery Chapel.
- We regretfully inform you that the **Revd Donald (Don) Powis** died on Sunday 20th August. His funeral will be on Monday 11th September at 11am at Kirkcaldy Crematorium, Rosemount Avenue, Kirkcaldy, KY2 6HQ. Don served in Bethesda, Manchester & Oldham; Gledhow Road, Leeds; Shawlands, Glasgow and Christ Church Manchester.
- We are sorry to inform you of the death of **Revd David Gordon Robinson**, a retired minister living in North Western Synod, who died on 28 August 2017. David served at: Dennistoun Wardlaw, Glasgow 1958 - 63; Barrhead 1963 - 70; St Anne's-on-Sea 1970 - 92; Trinity Church Centre, Barrow-in-Furness 1992 - 98. The Service for the Celebration of the Life of the Revd David Gordon Robinson M.A. will be held on Wednesday 13th September at St Annes U.R.C Church at 11.45am.
- NWNorthants Pastorate wish to inform friends of the peaceful death of **Beryl Lees**, long-standing member and former secretary of Kilsby URC. Beryl died peacefully after a long struggle with failing health. For some years Beryl was an officer in the Salvation Army and has now truly been "promoted to glory".
- It is with regret that we inform you that **Ann Blakemore** passed away on Monday 28th August. Ann was the widow of Revd Wesley Blakemore, a URC minister who was at Walney Island; Liverpool; St Leonard's near Hastings and finally St George's, Newcastle upon Tyne till his death in 1982. Ann moved to Chesterfield in 2014 and was a member of St Andrews in Chesterfield.
- It is with great sadness that we let you know that **Revd David Littlejohns** died on Saturday morning, 2nd September. David was serving at Weoley Hill, Weoley Castle and Bournville in Birmingham. Please remember his wife, Hilary and the family in your prayers. David's funeral will be held on Wednesday 27th September at 3.15pm at Weoley Hill URC, Green Meadow Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4DE followed by refreshments at Weoley Castle Community Church, 115 Quarry Road, Weoley Castle, Birmingham B29 5LE. There will be a private service at the crematorium beforehand for the family.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 6-9TH JULY 2018 - ALBERT HALL, NOTTINGHAM

REPRESENTATIVES TO ASSEMBLY

East Midlands Synod can send 16 representatives to General Assembly meeting in Nottingham next year. We need an equal balance of lay and ordained, women and men, at least two black and minority ethnic representatives and two people aged between 18 and 26. We hope to have a mix of people who have been before and people new to Assembly.

Accommodation will be provided in a hotel in Nottingham close to the Albert Hall. All travel and other expenses will be paid. We will hold a briefing session prior to Assembly for all the Synod representatives. Youth representatives will meet immediately before Assembly for a preparatory conference, based at St Andrew's with Castlegate URC, Nottingham.

If you would like to attend please email the Synod Clerk, Helen Lidgett, on clerk@urc5.org.uk or phone the Synod office and leave a message.

VOLUNTEER STEWARDS NEEDED

Are you able to offer a few hours of your time to assist in stewarding at General Assembly next year? We need people to meet representatives at Nottingham railway station and give directions, staff the registration and information desk, hand out Assembly papers, provide assistance to representatives during Assembly, act as servers at communion, and a host of other tasks. Travel expenses and subsistence will be paid. Training will be provided.

If you would like to volunteer to be a General Assembly steward, please email Chris Willis on admin@urc5.org.uk or phone the Synod Office. Chris will provide further information and an application form.



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

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

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN DERBYSHIRE – Come and be inspired by stories of mission from across the county as we hold another event in Matlock (at the Methodist/URC Church) on Saturday 7th October 2017 from 10am – 3pm (parking at County Hall). Free entry and drinks are provided – bring your own lunch. For further information or to book contact Ian Sant: ian.sant@ntlworld.com Tel: 01332 721927



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

THE DALES URC - Once again, welcome Pollyanna Pickering who is giving an illustrated talk and slide show on her work & travels dealing with conservation & rescue of animals. October the 4th 2017 at 7.30pm. Title, " Gone Walkabout.....A Wildlife Artist Down-under." Cost £6. Tickets: Janet - 01159875605 or Rod Beavis – 0115 9117115



LINCOLNSHIRE

ST. ANDREW'S URC, LEDBURY ROAD, PETERBOROUGH - Will be holding an open day on Saturday 23rd September between 10.30am and 3.30pm. Our aim is to raise awareness in our local community of the role that our church fulfils both as a place of worship and as a venue for performing groups and local organisations supplying important local services. Many of the of the local groups that regularly use the church and hall will be present to tell visitors about their activities and, of course, church members will be there bearing witness to our Christian Faith and offering a warm welcome to our neighbours who join us on the day.

OTHER

MISSION FUND APPLICATIONS

This is a reminder that all Mission Fund Project applications need to be sent in to Chris Willis at the Synod Office: admin@urc5.org.uk by 13th September.

Details and application forms can be found on the Synod Website: <http://www.urc5.org.uk/MissionFund>

DOWN IN THE RIVER: FESTIVAL-ON-SEA

Saturday 23rd September 11.00am - 9.00pm

In the URC's year of Feasts and Festivals, come down to the River Thames and celebrate a multicultural festival of music, art, poetry, film and more.

'Down in the River' is the gospel song which resonates with the voices of those transported by sea and river as part of the slave trade, old and new, and those now fleeing war and persecution.

We will explore theme through workshops, poetry and film, and also celebrate the diversity of our communities with everything from art and craft to classical music to performances by young adults with learning disabilities.

Come for the morning, afternoon, evening or all three!

Please sign up on Eventbrite and watch Facebook for details:

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/down-in-the-river-tickets-33111659866 www.facebook.com/events/1313833455375813

For directions to Crowstone St. George's: goo.gl/maps/DEsc8Wkt46k

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH – INTERCULTURAL FESTIVAL

Saturday 23rd September 2017

Bring your fabric food & flowers of many colours and share their story at New Malden URC! 10am - 3pm.

Come and Sing 'Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' at Kingston URC! Rehearsals 10am - 3pm. Concert Performance 4pm.

All information: www.kingstonurc.org or contact Rev Peter Flint: plflint2@gmail.com



UNITED REFORMED CHURCH VOCATIONS DAY

Is it I, Lord?

All are welcome on Saturday 4 November 2017 from 10am-4pm at Westminster College, Cambridge

- 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: Vivienne Williams - T: 020 7916 8649 E: vivienne.williams@urc.org.uk

ST ALBANS STUDY CENTRE COURSE "AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE"

This 10 week course is being run in conjunction with BELIEF at St Andrews Church in Bedford on Tuesday evenings from 19th September 2017. The course is inviting you to explore a Christian understanding of God and humanity. Taught by Barnabas and Silvianna Aspray from the University of Cambridge. Running on Tuesdays 19 September - 28 November (excluding 24 October) from 7.15pm - 9.00pm at St Andrew's Church, Kimbolton Road, Bedford. Course costs £110, book online at www.stalbanscathedral.org or call 01727 890290

HELP FOR RURAL CHURCHES

The United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church have produced a new resource for rural churches called 'A Discipling Presence'. <https://vimeo.com/229712314>. In this video, Revd Elizabeth Clark, the two denominations' Rural Officer, introduces the resource and encourages rural churches to use it. It contains stories to inspire, exercises and Bible passages to help you reflect, practical suggestions to get you started or move you forward. This book supports those living and serving God in the countryside. It contains thinking about worship, evangelism, children and young people and making the best use of church buildings. It encourages, challenges and inspires. Copies cost £3.49 (plus p&p), available from Methodist Publishing, Tel: 0845 0178220 Website: www.mph.org.uk

CREATION TIME

Creation Time this year runs from 1st September to 4th October.

This is a special season to contemplate God's wonderful Creation, to praise God for the glory that surrounds us and to recognise our calling to treasure this fragile planet. Churches across the world now celebrate these weeks and there are lots of resources readily available for worship in words and actions. Control-click on the following: For resources related to the lectionary during this time: www.ecocongregationscotland.org/materials/creation-time For other resources and background: www.ecen.org/content/creation-time A lot of information also: <https://ctbi.org.uk/creation-time-2017> and a lot more information: www.seasonofcreation.org

Do please look at what is available and include Care for Creation in your prayers especially over the next month. I would be delighted to hear if you hold a Creation Time Service this year.

Charles Jolly, Synod 'Green Apostle' charles.jolly13@btopenworld.com

MANAGING YOUR HISTORIC PLACE OF WORSHIP

Thursday 19 October 2017 from 10.00am–3.15pm at Jubilee House, 8 Westgate, Southwell, Nottinghamshire NG25 0JH

Are you a volunteer looking after a listed church or historic place of worship? Do you wonder how to adapt it for the 21st century, or keep it in good repair? Would you like to get help from heritage experts and meet fellow officers?

If so this free course from Historic England is for you. It is designed for church officers and other volunteers responsible for the fabric of a listed place of worship. Some of the East Midlands' key advisers will be on hand to help you think through your plans for maintaining, repairing, developing and adapting your building – finding solutions

which help you sustain and enhance it.

Reserve your place today by visiting <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/managing-your-historic-place-of-worship-tickets-36056869066>. Two bookings can be taken from each congregation.

For any queries please contact paul.bodenham@historicengland.org.uk

TWELVE FACES OF HOPE

Marking the 50-year mark of the occupation of the West bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, the WCC has launched a social media campaign in which a dozen strong voices from different religions and backgrounds in the Holy Land express their hopes for justice and peace. The campaign, which is also featured on the WCC website: www.oikoumene.org, also includes an exhibition that is now available to all member churches and ecumenical partners all over the world.

The feedback on the 12 Faces social media campaign has been overwhelming. The exhibition version provides an opportunity to raise further awareness of the situation under occupation and convey messages of hope from people living under occupation. It is thus an important and powerful ingredient in our Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. A pre-launch of the exhibition was well-received at the Peace Consultations in Beit Sahour in June. The first full-scale version will be displayed at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva during the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, 17 - 24 September. For more information: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/world-week-of-peace-in-palestine-and-israel>

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

YOUNG PEOPLE AT SYNOD

The young people will be meeting alongside Synod on Saturday 14th October at Sherwood URC. Come along and join us! In the morning we will be working with John Proctor and in the afternoon helping him to lead part of the Synod Meeting where we will be focussing on 'Hopes and Dreams'. To book please contact Hannah Holmes at the Synod office: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk

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. The cost is £69. Funding may be available towards costs. For a booking form contact Hannah Holmes at: 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

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER - CHURCH HOUSE, LONDON

Full Time, Permanent Contract, Salary: £38,548

We have an opportunity for a highly motivated and dedicated professional who possesses a strong conviction regarding the need to safeguard the vulnerable. In this role you will oversee the implementation and development of operational procedures and be our voice and adviser in all matters relating to safeguarding, providing support to synods and local churches.

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, statutory, and other guidance or policy concerning issues related to the protection of children and adults at risk, will be key in playing a role in arranging and leading the training others. You will be able to work with minimal supervision and have excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Previous applicants need not apply.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet all the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form (noting that we do not accept CVs):

Human Resources Office, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

T: 0207 691 9874 E: recruitment@urc.org.uk W: www.urc.org.uk/vacancies

Closing date for applications: 12 noon Monday 25 September 2017 Interview date: Monday 16 October 2017

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

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS – CHURCH HOUSE, LONDON

Full time, Salary: £50,982

Are you an experienced communicator ready for the challenge of managing a busy, multi-disciplined team and delivering an excellent communication service for and about the United Reformed Church (URC)? Can you make the Church's voice heard within and beyond the walls of the denomination? Can you demonstrate the ability to determine priorities consistently within available resources? If so, then you are the dynamic person we're looking for to lead the communications work of the Church.

You will have responsibility for internal and external communications including media and website, URC publications, the design and production of promotional and educational materials, Reform magazine and many ad hoc projects and events that support the work of the Church both centrally and at the local level.

You will have a proven track record in developing and delivering strategic communications and will be highly organised, keeping track of the small things as well as the big. In addition, you'll have good financial and people management skills and will thrive under pressure. To succeed in this role, you'll need to operate at pace and deliver through others effectively.

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

T: 020 7691 9874 E: recruitment@urc.org.uk W: www.urc.org.uk/vacancies

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Monday 25 September 2017 Interview date: Friday 13 October 2017

PIONEER MISSIONER

Derby Methodist Circuit seek a Pioneer Missioner - lay or ordained to develop a pioneering ministry in a new housing development in Derby City Centre, from a house owned by the Circuit called Susanna Wesley House.

Offered full-time at a salary of £23,556, with accommodation in a 4-bedroomed house next door.

For the right candidate(s), part-time or job share could be considered.

For details and application form, contact Revd Jenny Dyer on jenny.dyer@methodist.org.uk.

Closing date: 5pm Friday 15th September 2017

Interview date: Monday 25th September 2017

Start date: Negotiable

YEAR BOOK CHANGES

- Please note that **Revd Helen Croft** is the new Methodist Minister at Old Brumby United Church. Address: 62 West Street, Winterton, Scunthorpe, North Lincs, DN15 9QF Tel: 01724 733307 Email: helen.croft@methodist.org.uk
- Please note that Cowper Memorial, Olney, have a new Treasurer: **Mrs E Grant**, 51 Langlands, Lavendon, Olney, Bucks, MK46 4EL Tel: 01234 712737
- Please note that Cross and Stable Church, Milton Keynes, have a new Secretary: Gwen Green, 34 Noth Twelfth Street, Milton Keynes, MK9 3BT Tel: 01908 240634 Email: peter@pg34.eclipse.co.uk

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.
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