



URC EAST MIDLANDS SYNOD

E-LETTER NO: 257 – 30th NOVEMBER 2017
EDITED THIS WEEK BY: DAVID GREATOREX

What is Advent?

Many in the secular world think it marks the start of the season of Christmas, which actually begins at the end of Advent on Christmas Eve and lasts for twelve days, ending on the 6th day of January.

No - the time *before* Christmas is Advent, *a season of preparation for Christmas*, a time of anticipation and hope for looking beyond the commercialisation, when we, as Christians, prepare for celebrating the birth of Jesus - the Messiah.

In Advent, we are reminded of how much we ourselves also need a Saviour, and we look forward to our Saviour's second coming even as we prepare to celebrate his first coming at Christmas.

The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming" or "visit."

So, in this season of Advent let us keep in mind both "advents" of Christ, the first in Bethlehem and the second yet to come.

Advent is the spiritual journey that we take, through the truths of Scripture that point to the birth of Messiah, to a reaffirmation that he has come, is present in the world today and will come again in glory.

So, 'Happy Advent' for now, and an early best wishes for a truly Wonderful Christmas!

David Greatorex

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

Would you like to represent East Midlands Synod at General Assembly?

The Synod is invited to send 16/18 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.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered so far. We still need more!

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. We need names by Thursday 25th January at the latest.

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.

Thank you for those who have already volunteered and to Church Secretaries for **promoting this** opportunity. We need more people to volunteer!

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.

OTHER

SUPPORTING CARERS – CARERS RIGHTS DAY

"New research published by CARERS UK today reveals that even though 1 in 8 adults are carers, half the UK public believes there isn't a single carer among their family and friends.

If you're caring right now, I wonder how many of your family and friends know about your caring role? And, more importantly, are able to give support and understanding?

This year's Carers Rights Day is about making each of the 6.5 million of us who care for someone more visible and better connected to information and support. More visible as a whole, but also more visible in our own individual families and networks."

In a recent issue of their magazine, Carers UK featured the Rev Hazel Barkham and her partner Margaret, both retired United Reformed ministers. Sadly Hazel now has Alzheimer's and her partner Margaret is her carer.

For more information about Carers UK visit: <http://www.carersuk.org/>

HOPE INTO ACTION CONFERENCE: ENABLING CHURCHES TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS AND REFUGEES

Save the date: Friday 16 March 2017

We would like to invite you to join us for our fourth annual conference - for a day of informative talks, interactive seminars, networking, inspirational testimonies and tenant awards. We will be looking at many aspects of churches housing the homeless and refugees.

Venue: Salvation Army Church, 1203 Bourges Blvd, Peterborough PE1 2AU

Date: 16 March 2017 from 9.30am to 3.30pm.

Pricing: £30 or £20 if you book your ticket before the 31/12/2017 at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hope-into-action-conference-2018-tickets-40098110528>

All church leaders free.

Light refreshments will be served throughout the day as well as a buffet lunch. If you have any question or dietary requirement, please contact Carole on info@hopeintoaction.org.uk

APPEAL: THE ROHINGYA PEOPLE - PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MYANMAR

A message from Michael Jagessar, Global & Intercultural Ministries (Mission), The United Reformed Church:

Dear Friends,

At our recently concluded Mission Council (November 2017), the moderators of General Assembly kindly allowed me to inform Mission Council of our intention to write to congregations of the United Reformed Church to consider contributing to an appeal on behalf of the Rohingya people, whose plight continue to be that of displacement, suffering, persecution, death and rebuilding lives.

We have been briefed of the work (small but significant) that our partner Church, the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM) has been doing on the ground. These include the provision of shelter, food, clothing, and care especially for the displaced children. We are also aware that the Council for World Mission is working with both the PCM and the Church of Bangladesh (another CWM Partner) to find helpful ways to respond to the situation.

Mindful that many in our churches are concerned about the situation and may wish to contribute towards helping the Rohingya people (if they have not already done so), we wish to let you know that you can, through a Special URC Appeal for the Rohingya People of Myanmar, make a contribution.

All monies received will be sent to support the work that PCM churches and partners in Bangladesh are already doing from their meagre resources to address the needs of their persecuted sisters and brothers.

Should your congregation or an individual wish to contribute, kindly send donations (payable to **The URC Trust**) and in care of Global and Intercultural Ministries, The United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

Please specify that the contribution is for the Rohingya people.

Whether it is through this appeal or your own charity of choice, let me thank all on behalf of the United Reformed Church and our Partners in Myanmar and Bangladesh for their ongoing prayers and tangible support towards the plight of these sisters and brothers.

May grace, love, and generosity continue to abound.

SYNOD ELDERS GATHERINGS

An opportunity to meet with other elders to share experiences and ideas within our churches and take part in bible study. All elders are welcome to join us on either of the following dates, please note that spaces are limited and will be given on a first come first serve basis.

- **Saturday 27th January 2018** from 10.30am - 2.30pm (bring your own lunch) at The Synod Meeting Room, Nottingham, NG5 3AA, Led by Revd Dr Deborah Baird
- **Saturday 3rd March 2018** from 10.30am - 2.30pm (bring your own lunch) at Loughborough URC (blue room), LE11 3BH, Led by Revd Dr Deborah Baird

To book contact Hannah Holmes, Email: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk Tel: 0115 9609241

HOLY HABITS RESOURCE BOOKS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE URC ONLINE SHOP

I am pleased to be emailing you with full information about the availability of all ten of the new *Holy Habits* resource books through the URC online shop. The books are available to buy from 19 January 2018 and will be available to pre-order from the URC online shop from this Friday, 1 December, ready for despatch from 19 January.

As many of you will know, *Holy Habits* is a key resource of Walking the Way, the United Reformed Church's focus on lifelong Christian discipleship and mission. Each of the ten books in the series focuses on one 'holy habit'; the ten habits are: biblical teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, sharing of resources, service, eating together, gladness and generosity, worship, prayer and making more disciples. Each of the ten books, and the introductory guide) retails for £4.99 (+p&p). The books can be read in any order, and work well as standalone titles, as well as being part of a complete series. I encourage you to visit the store from Friday and peruse, choose, and pre-order!

I am delighted to be offering two bulk purchase discount schemes from the URC shop as follows:

The *Holy Habits* pack (copy of each title plus the introductory guide) – £49.90

(eleven books for the price of ten)

- 2 packs 10% discount
- 3 packs 15% discount
- 5 packs 20% discount
- 10 packs 22.5% discount

Bulk purchases of single titles

- 15 or more copies – 10% discount
- 30 or more copies – 15% discount
- 50 or more copies – 20% discount
- 100 or more copies – 25% discount

Pre-order from the URC shop available from Friday 1 December.

INFORMATION FROM ACAT

You will doubtless be aware that the commencement of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is looming. The GDPR will impact on all churches, is unaffected by Brexit, and you have to be fully compliant with it by **25 May 2018**. In conjunction with Stone King, our longstanding Partner in Ministry, ACAT is holding **half-day seminars** in three different locations to give practical guidance on this new legislation, with particular relevance to churches and faith organisations. **Please see <https://www.acat.uk.com/gdpr.html> for more details.**

We do hope one of these will be convenient for you - the venues & dates are:

LONDON - Saturday 27 Jan 2018 at UCL Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

NEWARK - Thursday 22 Feb 2018 at Everyday Champions Centre, Unit 2 Jessop Close, Brunel Business Park, Newark NG242AG

DURHAM - Thursday 8 March 2018 at The Durham Centre, Belmont Industrial Estate, Durham DH1 1TN

Registration for all seminars will begin at 10:00, with the seminar itself from **10:30 to 13:15**. We anticipate that these seminars will be of interest to many members of the church leadership, not just to the treasurer, hence we are incorporating a discount for multiple delegates from the same church. Prices include all materials & tea/coffee:

1 delegate: £35; 2 delegates: £30 each; 3 or more delegates: £25 each

Booking is available via the ACAT website at <https://www.acat.uk.com/gdpr.html>

You can book instantly online using Paypal or credit/debit card, or print out a postal booking form to send with a cheque. Your booking will be acknowledged by email and will include a map with directions to the venue you have selected.

As always, you do not have to be a member of ACAT to take part in our training. **Please book early to secure your place if you wish to attend.**

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2018

Theme: Pilgrimage: Are we there yet? From 19-21 January 2018 at Whitemoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffs.

Age: school year 10 to age 25

It is a great weekend to meet up with other young people in the Synod and around the country. Worship, workshops, activities and some business.

Cost: £140

Book your place at: www.urch.org.uk/urcya

More information from Jane Henderson – Funding is available from Synod.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

MAINTENANCE SURVEYOR - HOUSING SOCIETY, LONDON- BASED WITH UK TRAVEL

Full time, Salary: £37,992 - £40,260 plus car

Are you a qualified building surveyor with experience of social housing? This key appointment will manage repairs and maintenance operations within a small team. You will play a crucial role in the review and efficient delivery of the asset management strategy.

The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society is a Community Benefit Society providing housing for church ministers in retirement. Our 350 properties are dispersed across England, Scotland and Wales. Based in London, this role requires significant travel. You will therefore need a clean driving licence.

You will be assessing properties for their ongoing suitability and specifying repairs and adaptations to meet the needs of elderly tenants. Managing planned maintenance forms an important part of the role, alongside the need to deal promptly and effectively with reactive repairs. You will prepare specifications and technical drawings and select and manage contractors within budget.

The successful candidate will have residential maintenance and surveying experience ideally within the context of social housing. Understanding of adaptations for the disabled or elderly tenants is important. A good communicator, you will have the ability to write and present complex technical reports. You will have experience of controlling budgets. It is important that you are a team player and willing to support your colleagues.

Candidates should be educated to a degree level and hold a RICS or CIOB accreditation with at least 3 years post qualification experience. Good IT skills are essential.

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@urch.org.uk W: www.urch.org.uk/vacancies

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Wednesday 20 December 2017 Interview date: Thursday 18 January 2018

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

AND FINALLY: - Please send any comments or feedback on this e-letter to: admin@urch5.org.uk
The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.
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