



URC EAST MIDLANDS SYNOD

E-LETTER NO: 260 – 18th JANUARY 2018

EDITED THIS WEEK BY: JANE HENDERSON

Recently I have been reading a book called 'practicing discernment with youth' by David F White. Whilst it is based on American Youth Ministry I feel there is much to interest us in the East Midlands. One of the themes in the book is about recognising the importance of adults and young people sharing stories and understanding the world each other inhabits and how that makes for stronger relationships.

By encouraging young people not just to engage in their own 'programmes' such as junior church, youth groups etc., but also in the life of the church, in church meetings, general church Bible study groups, it enables them to develop their Christian discipleship and identity.

When was the last time you spoke to a child or young person you know about how you struggled with church as a child (or adult), asked them about their lives, what they are doing or hope to do, what gifts they have, about balancing life and faith? Do we recognise the gifts our children and young people have? David F White says that when we fail to honour and utilise these gifts then apathy and alienation can occur.

This weekend over 100 young people including 10 from our Synod are attending youth assembly. During the weekend they will engage in Bible study, workshops, business and worship. All planned and put together by young people of the URC Youth Executive, using skills they can, and many do, use in their local churches. If you have a young person from your church attending ask them about it, talk to them, maybe you attended something similar as a young person, share experiences.

I'm also reminded of the URC Charter for Children point 9, 'as a church community we must learn to do only those things in separate age groups that we cannot in all conscience do together'. Learning and worshipping together does foster a sense of family, of community, of belonging.

It may seem risky to bring children and young people into 'adult' groups, to the Bible study, to the church meeting, to the Elders meeting even. But if we, like Ruth, risking her reputation by visiting Boaz on the threshing-floor (Ruth 3), engage in risk, then God can and will work through those situations and give us hope for our children's and young people's future.

So I encourage you to try and share your stories of life and faith with children and young people, engage in meaningful discussions, listen to each other especially as we 'walk the way, living the life of Jesus today'. Please do pray for youth assembly this weekend and for all those participating.

Jane Henderson

White David F, Practicing discernment with youth: a transformative youth ministry approach, (The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, 2005)

PEOPLE

- We are delighted to inform you that **Revd Robert Bushby** will be inducted to the Pastorate of Riverside and the Mission Development Officer post on Saturday 3rd February at 3pm at Riverside Church, Sleaford. We would like to warmly welcome Robert to the Synod and wish him well as he settles in.
- We regret to inform you that the **Revd Katherine Stocks**, a retired minister living in Corbridge, died peacefully on Christmas Day. Katherine ministered at Malpas from 1990 to 2000 prior to retirement and had been living in a nursing home following a major stroke in 2010. The thanksgiving service for Katherine's life was held on Wednesday, 10th January at 2.30 pm at Corbridge Methodist church where she became a member in 2006.
- It is with sadness that we inform you of the death of the **Revd David Bunney**, who died in his sleep on the 26th December. David, a retired minister in Wessex Synod, served at: Soham 77-87; Newbury Group 88-95; Christchurch, Sudbury, Cavendish & Long Melford 95-04; St Luke's Bedford 04-08; and Cardington Bedford 07-09. David was also a current member of both the Synod Pastoral Committee (North West), and the Silence & Retreats Group. On Monday 15th January there was a service of thanksgiving in Hungerford URC, followed by a cremation at Thatcham crematorium.
- We regretfully inform you of the sad news that, retired minister living in Wessex Synod, **Revd Stella Sivyour**, died on 4th January. Stella served at Bradford-on-Avon 64-70; Ottery-St-Mary 70-75; Glossop & District Group 75-84; Tintwistle 75-84; The Verwood, Three Legged Cross & West Moors Group 84-99. The funeral will be at Mere URC, on Thursday January 18th at 11:30.

- It is with sadness that we inform you of the death of **Gordon Hunt** on Sunday 7 January 2018. Gordon was a dedicated member of Marlpool URC and over the past years has worked on property matters for the East Midlands Synod. Our thoughts and prayers are with Gordon's wife and family and this time.
- It is with regret that we advise you of the death of the **Revd Sidney Woodget**, a retired minister living in Wessex Synod, who died peacefully on the evening of 9th January at his Care Home. He had recently celebrated his 99th birthday. Sidney served at: Immanuel Church, Basingstoke 51-55; & Tadley 52-55; Sarisbury Green & Warsash 55-62; Southwick 62-67; Westcliff, Bridgwater Drive & Eastwood 68-76; Darnall, Sheffield 76-84. His funeral has been arranged for Wednesday 24th January at 4:15 at Basingstoke Crematorium. Please remember his son Trevor and his family in your prayers.



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

CHAPLAINCY VOLUNTEER VISITORS – Could this be you? We need people who; have a strong Christian faith, are able to communicate their faith sensitively, can relate to people in a warm and relaxed manner, are open-minded and non-judgemental, can meet the physical & emotional demands of hospital visiting. The Chaplaincy Dept at Northampton General Hospital are seeking to appoint new Chaplaincy Visitors in addition to their present visiting team. For further information about the scheme and any other information please contact: Revd. George Sarmezey or Revd. David Dean, Chaplaincy Dept, Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust, Cliftonville, Northampton, NN1 5BD. Tel (01604) 545773

TLS LITE: - We hope to set up a TLS LITE study group in the Rothwell, Kettering, Northampton area within the next few months. This is for people who wish to study with a view to recognition as a Lay Preacher or other ministry or to deepen their own faith. Successful completion could qualify those who wish to commence Gateways into Worship in September 2019. We are also looking for a minister or assembly recognised lay preacher to lead the study group. Please contact Charles Jolly for more information: 01298 22557 or charles.jolly13@btopenworld.com



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

THE DALES URC - are holding a Coffee morning on Saturday March 3rd from 10.30am - 12 noon at The Dales URC. This is a charity Event for Admiral Nurses, supporting Dementia. Please do come & support this worthwhile cause. All profits to Dementia Admiral Nurses.

SYNOD MEETINGS 2018

Now we have all got our new diaries, please add the dates for East Midlands Synod meetings this year to them:

17 March 2018 – Abbots Road

13 October 2018 – Marlpool

Please reserve the date as there is important information/decisions are to be shared with all churches. Remember if your Synod rep is not available for the meeting another representative can attend the meeting for your church.

OTHER

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

Is your church ready for GDPR? The strengthened regulations to protect personal privacy come into effect on 25th May 2018. They apply to churches and charities as well as businesses and public bodies. There is a legal requirement on local churches to comply, just as there is for many aspects of church life such as safeguarding and managing premises and money.

Church House intends to publish GDPR advice and materials specifically designed for churches at the end of January 2018. This will be made available through the URC website. Those materials will contain:

- A template privacy notice;
- A checklist to guide you towards achieving good data protection practice;
- A list of tips and hints;
- A template consent form.

Synod hopes to arrange a training event for local churches in early March and information will be circulated once details are confirmed.

There is also a series of free Webinars run by I Know Church during January and February. These will cover:

GDPR Background: Information for Churches, Accountability and Security, Your responsibilities as a Church, How to gather permission, Your existing Church membership.

You can access these from your own PC or laptop at home. Sign up on their website at support.iknowchurch.co.uk

Other online resources can be found on the Information Commissioners Office website at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

The Church of England has information on its Parish Resources website:

<http://www.pariahresources.org.uk/gdpr/>

Those of you within reach of Lincoln may be interested in the day conference on GDPR arranged by Churches Together in All Lincolnshire. Booking details can be found here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/are-you-ready-for-gdpr-tickets-41822899418>

By Pentecost 2018, all our churches need to be compliant with the new regulations. So do take advantage of the various resources which are available.

SYNOD MISSION FUND

Do you have a project which would benefit by receiving a grant from the Synod Mission Fund? Applications for the next round need to be sent to the Chris Willis at the Synod Office by **Tuesday 13th February 2018**. The Fund can provide grants of up to £30,000 and for not more than 50% of your project costs. You can find the application form and guidance notes on the Synod website, under Mission/Mission Resources.

Before you submit your application, you need to discuss it with your local Synod Mission Enabler. They will also need to sign the form approving the application. For churches in the south of the Synod, your Mission Enabler is Revd Simon Ellis on revsellis@uwclub.net Tel: 07891 000785. For churches in the north of the Synod, your Mission Enabler is Revd Marcus Hargis on marcushargis@outlook.com Tel: 01332 865426. The Mission Development Officer, Revd Robert Bushby, will shortly be inducted to Sleaford URC (3rd February) and the Synod MDO post and will then be available to advise on mission projects. Robert's start date is 1st February. Contact the Synod Office for his details.

If you have an idea, but are not yet ready to submit an application, talk to the Mission Development Officer or your Mission Enabler and aim for early September.

NEW SAFEGUARDING OFFICER AT CHURCH HOUSE

We are pleased to let you know that there is now a new Safeguarding Officer at Church House, please see the details below:

Safeguarding Officer: Ioannis Athanasiou Email: ioannis.athanasiou@urc.org.uk Phone: 020 7916 2020

Please note that your first port of call is still our Synod Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Jane Henderson: cydo@urc5.org.uk Tel: 0757 229 1007

NEW SECRETARY FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY

We are delighted to let you know that the URC has a new Secretary for Church and Society, to work with the URC Mission Team and the Joint Public Issues Team. Simeon Mitchell started in his new role on 8 January and brings to it rich experience of working with Christian Aid, All We Can (the former Methodist Church Relief and Development Fund), Results UK and the Fairtrade Foundation. In these varied roles he has been involved in campaigning and education work on national and international social, political and economic issues, major policy research, strategic leadership and marketing and developing resources. We look forward to working with Simeon and to all that he will bring to the life of the church. Simeon can be contacted on simeon.mitchell@urc.org.uk

GREEN HEARTS ACTIVITY GUIDE

Commitment for Life encourages people to be creative with green hearts for St Valentine's Day this year. God loves this wonderful world that God created and there is much that we love even if we take it for granted: back gardens, birds, woodlands, pets, parks, fields, flowers on windowsills or by the side of the road, 'Blue Planet' . . . But much of what we love and depend on is in danger from Climate Change and other environmental threats. Green hearts symbolise our love for the Creation that God loves and open conversations about the changes that we need to take to protect it. This should appeal especially to children and those with child-like hearts. Please let Charles Jolly ('Green Apostle') know of what you do! For more information and ideas go to:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58b40fe1be65940cc4889d33/t/5a1ea8560d92971bbc8bb638/1511958698680/Communitu+Guide.pdf>

BLACK SHEEP AND PRODIGALS

An Antidote to Black and White Religion presented by Dave Tomlinson

Black Sheep and Prodigals is aimed primarily at people who are on the edges or outside of mainstream religion—those who reject, question, or have little interest in the tenets of traditional faith. It sets out to present a more contemporary and more humane approach to faith, drawing on honest doubt, common sense and spiritual experience. Dave Tomlinson is an Anglican priest and founded the legendary Holy Joe's, a church in a pub in Clapham

for disaffected church drop-outs. He is now Vicar of St Luke's, Holloway, a thriving parish church in north London and a regular contributor to *Pause for Thought* on BBC Radio 2.

Date: Thursday 22nd March

Venue: Wellingborough URC, High Street, Wellingborough, NN8 4HW

Time: 19:30

Further information from: Revd Martha McInnes Email: contact@wellingboroughurc.org.uk

This event is sponsored by the Progressive Christianity Network, Britain.

Join the conversation at: <http://www.pcnbritain.org.uk/membership>

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

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

3 SYNOD YOUTH WEEKEND

13th—15th April 2018. At The Pioneer Centre, Kidderminster This is a chance to meet together and have fun. If you are between 11 and 17 then we hope you'll join us. For more information contact Hannah Holmes:

trainingpa@urc5.org.uk or Jane Henderson: cydo@urc5.org.uk

EVENTS FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S LEADERS

- Children and Youth Leaders Training Session - Synod Meeting Room, Nottingham, Saturday 3rd February 2018 from 10am - 3pm

**** PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ABOVE SESSION HAS BEEN CANCELLED ****

- Children and Youth Leaders 'Meet Up' – Scunthorpe - Saturday 3rd March 2018 from 10am - 2pm
- Children and Youth Leaders 'Meet Up' - Bulwell URC, Notts - Saturday 12th May 2018 from 10am - 2pm
- Children and Youth Leaders Training and 'Meet Up' - The Dales URC - Saturday 15th September 2018 from 10am - 3pm

To book for any of these events please contact Hannah Holmes at the Synod Office: traininpa@urc5.org.uk

YEAR BOOK CHANGES

- Please note that **Mr Phil Holmes**, Secretary at Groby URC, has a new email address:
- Please note that **Mr Arthur Davis**, Treasurer at Castle Square URC, has a new email address:
- Please note that **Mrs Christine Booth**, Treasurer at Enderby URC, has a new email address:
- Please note that **Revd Louise Gee**, interim moderator at Arnold, Burton Joyce and The Dales, has a new email address:
- Please note that **Mrs Julie Froggatt**, Secretary at Sinfin Moor, has a new phone number and email address:

**** AVAILABLE FROM THE SYNOD OFFICE ****

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: 29.01.2018