

Opening Reflection by the Revd Geoff Townsend

Convenor of the Ordained Ministry and Churches Group

Given all the present restrictions it seems highly appropriate that for the February issue of [Reform](#), the question was asked, "[How will churches look after the pandemic?](#)" One of those asked was the Synod's own Pioneer Minister in Milton Keynes, **Ruth Maxey**. In **Church Without Walls**, Ruth has already broken the traditional concept of Church – for when restrictions allow, Sunday worship might be either Quiet Church, Forest Church, Dinner or Café Church.

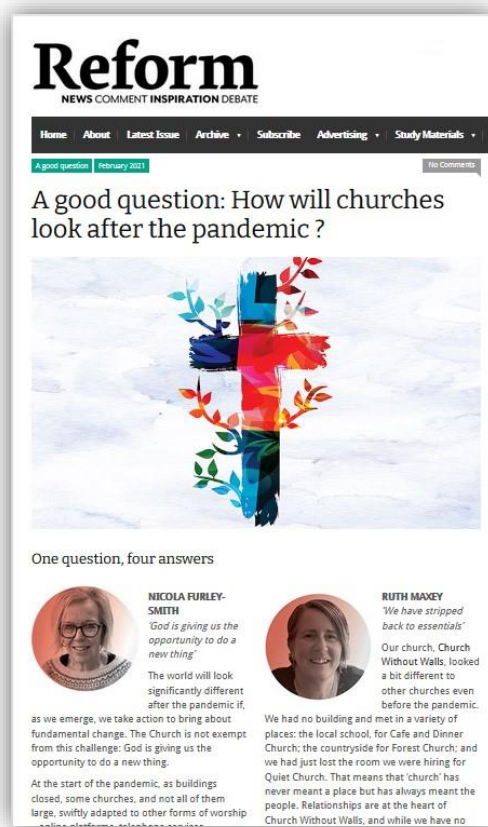
Stories of the Church's resistance to change are endless. Many years ago when I was serving in the North West Synod, I shared in an ecumenical service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with **Bishop John Finney**, the Suffragan Bishop of Pontefract, who has just been appointed by the Church of England as their Officer for the Decade of Evangelism. He told of a visit he made to an isolated parish in the wilds of the Yorkshire Dales. He arrived earlier than anticipated but found the church open and got in conversation with an elderly farmer who told him he had been Church Warden for over 40 years. "You must have seen many changes," said the Bishop. "Yes, and I've opposed every one," replied the Church Warden.

Today with worship in church not being possible, increasingly churches are turning to Zoom and as time has gone on, numbers in many cases have started to increase, although for some it's the opportunity to share news before and after the service that is the attraction. For some churches Zoom is also being used for Bible Studies, Prayer Meetings and Coffee mornings.

Many churches are having to rely on their financial reserves as lockdown has meant that relied-upon income from lettings has ceased. The Synod's Finance Networkers and Pastoral Consultants are there to help, so please do not hesitate to contact them.

Gradually there are some distant glimmers of hope that as the numbers of those receiving vaccinations increase, some of the present restrictions will be eased, but the jury is out whether what was once "normal" will return.

As Winston Churchill said, "There's nothing wrong with change.....if it's in the right direction."



Change of date for March Synod

Our March Synod meeting will be **virtual** in order to enable as many people as possible to attend safely.

We were blessed with a very able and competent team who ran our November Synod meeting and we have asked them to facilitate our March Synod as well. Unfortunately they are not available on our original date, hence we have decided to change the date.

The date of our March Synod will now be on **Saturday 27 March** from **10.30am - 2.45pm**, with an hour's lunch break, wholly virtual. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, but hope you understand that we are working within and adapting to an ever-changing situation.

More information will be sent out nearer the time, but please change the date in your diaries for now.

Camilla Veitch

Synod Clerk

The Revd Matt Rigden Ordained and Inducted in Lincoln



Left to right: Mrs Barbara Moses, the Revd Geoffrey Clarke, the Revd Matt Rigden and the Revd Robert Bushby (photo by AJ Mills).

The Ordination of **Matthew James Rigden** as a Minister of Word and Sacrament took place at Trinity URC, Lincoln last Saturday, 30 January, in strict Covid-secure conditions. The same service included Matt's Induction as Pioneer Minister in the **South East Lincolnshire** New Housing Area. It was conducted by East Midlands Synod Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** with the participation of the **Revd Robert Bushby**, Interim Moderator and **Barbara Moses** on site and several other contributors online.

The Pioneer Ministry is an ecumenical mission project supported by the Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches, to develop ministry to the major new housing developments in Bracebridge Heath and Canwick where 3,500 new homes are expected to be built by 2036.

We share in the joy of this important moment for **Matt**, his wife **Sasha** and daughter **Cara** and pray they will be richly blessed as they embark on this exciting new venture. The Act of Ordination and Induction remains available to view on our **YouTube** channel: https://youtu.be/v_Y_Hukju9c



(Screen captures by Hannah Willey)

The Revd Camilla Veitch Inducted in North Derbyshire

The Induction of the **Revd Camilla Veitch** as Area Minister to the **North Derbyshire Resource Area** took place via Zoom on **Saturday 23 January 2021**. The North Derbyshire Resource Area comprises Buxton, Tideswell, Holymoorside, St Andrew's Rose Hill and Calow URCS, with Wirksworth envisaged to join the Area in fullness of time. Camilla now serves Wirksworth 25% of her time and the North Derbyshire Area for another 25%, with a further 25% devoted to her work as Clerk of the East Midlands Synod. When a full-time minister has been called to the Resource Area, currently in vacancy, Camilla will work with that minister.

We congratulate Camilla as she assumes this new role of supporting, equipping and encouraging these churches and pray that all her work may be fruitful.



(Screen captures by David Greatorex)

Personal News

We have received news of the deaths in recent days of several significant figures in the **East Midlands Synod**. It is with deep sadness, then, that we report the following. We remember their families and friends in our prayers.

Gwen Balding died on 21 January 2021. Born in December 1913, Gwen was the widow of the **Revd Alan Balding**, who served the East Midlands Synod until his death in 1989. She had moved from London to Newport Pagnell in 1958 with her two young sons Roger and Frank after the death of her first husband Arthur, also a minister, and attended Newport Pagnell Congregational Church. She married Alan in 1965. She is survived by Frank and three generations of grandchildren.

The **Revd Ralph Leonard Eveleigh** died on Monday 25 January 2021, following some years of declining health. Ralph served at: Bush Hill Park (1964-72); Clacton-on-Sea (1972-84); Ealing Green (1984-92); in the Wellingborough Group (1992-99); as Link Minister for Great Doddington (2007-08); and at Dean (1999-2012). Ralph's wife died in September 2020; they are survived by their family. His funeral is to be held at 1.00pm on Tuesday 23 February and can be viewed live or for the following 28 days at: <https://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/funeral-notice/25-01-2021-ralph-leonard-eveleigh/>

John Shaw died on Wednesday 27 January 2021 at the Glenfield Hospital, following some years of declining health. John was Local Church Leader at Westcotes URC, Leicester and served many other churches in Leicestershire as an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher. Following a private cremation, his family and church hope to hold a Memorial Service when circumstances permit.

Sheila Watson died on Tuesday 2 February 2021, following a stroke and after contracting Covid-19. Alongside her husband the **Revd Douglas Watson**, retired Non-Stipendiary Minister at Burton Joyce, Nottingham, Sheila was known to many in the Synod from the bookshop she and Douglas ran at Synod Meetings and at the Synod Office. She is survived by Douglas and their family.

We are also saddened to hear of the deaths of the following United Reformed Church ministers and hold too their families and friends in prayer:

The **Revd Peter McIntosh** (Southern Synod) died on Monday 25 January 2021. Peter served at: Byker (1968-74); Priory Green (1974-76); the Elephant Group, London (1978-84); Christ Church, Dulwich (1984-90); as Southern Province Training Officer (1987-92); Portslade & Hounsom Memorial, Hove (1992-94); as Director of the Windermere Centre (1994-2001); as Moderator of General Assembly (1999-2000); and as Director of Lomas House (2001-03). He is survived by his wife Kay. His funeral was due to be held at Haywards Heath Methodist Church. A fuller tribute is published at: <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3706-the-revd-peter-mcintosh-1938-2021.html>

The **Revd Kathie Bennett** (Mersey Synod) also died in January. Kathie served at St Stephen's, Wavertree Liverpool (1998-2002). She is survived by Steve, David, Helen and Mike and their extended families. Her funeral is to be held at 11.15am on Friday 5 February at St Bartholomew's Church, Roby and can be viewed live or for the following two weeks at: <https://vimeo.com/504882133/acd3367210>

Change of contact number

The **Revd Liz Adams**, Pastoral Consultant for Northamptonshire, has changed her mobile and asks us to share her new number: ****Contact the Synod Office for details****

Holiday Forum in a Day



Saturday 20 March

*The Steering Group for the **URC Holiday Forum** shares news of a special one-day event next month:*

Are you thinking about whether to attend this year's summer conference? Are you a regular Forumite keen to get a mid-year fix of your favourite Christian get-together? Come and experience our free event - **Holiday Forum in a Day!**

Following the success of our Virtual Conference last year, we listened to feedback about hosting a mid-year online event - so we're back for more fun, faith and fellowship. **Holiday Forum in a Day** is a drop-in event which will feature morning prayers, all-age worship, open meeting, afternoon activities and an evening quiz: all the best bits of Forum rolled into one day.

It will also include what promises to be a fascinating talk and discussion on the theme of 'Naming the Elephants in the Room' with world-famous theologians **Professor Anthony Reddie** in the UK and **Revd Dr Munther Isaac** in Bethlehem. **Lawrence Moore** will interview **Anthony Reddie**, this summer's Forum theme leader, about the way our churches need to recognise and deal with the issues of white privilege here in the UK, and to **Munther Isaac** about the situations faced by the Christian church in Israel, Palestine and the Occupied territories.

The day will also include an Open Meeting to discuss proposed changes to Forum's Constitution and Bursary policy.

For full details and to [sign up](http://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk/wpsite/), please visit: <http://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk/wpsite/>.

Lent Resources



Walking towards Easter together is an intergenerational resource for **Lent 2021** for churches to give to students, seniors, households and families to reduce isolation and offer hope in these challenging times.

The pack invites them to join a journey through Lent with opportunities to build connections with Jesus, others and their local church. The materials include a wide range of activity suggestions so there should be something for almost everyone to engage with in their own home.

While stocks last, this Lent resource is available from the [URC shop](#) at a cost of **£4.50** plus P&P. You can also choose to buy multiple copies (at £4 plus P&P if 15 or more) which will be supplied unsealed so that you can customise the packs with additional material before posting on.

To help extend and customise the pack, a comprehensive set of add-on resources is now available via [www.urch.org.uk](#). These include a Church Guide for linking worship, a Family Supplement with additional material for under-11s, Prayer Ideas, Things to Make and even a Recipe Book. These can be downloaded at: https://urch.org.uk/lent?fbclid=IwAR3A7KMFKKMZe7UIX77IEZMBboJQRI6zu82Y_kwy726ikxO0Lc_nj1aJ8c



The Poet's Gospel is this year's Lent resource published by **Churches Together in Britain and Ireland**, featuring a version of the gospel in blank verse by John Alan Davis, available in the form of sound files as well as in written form. Designed to make a moving Lenten pilgrimage as well as a fascinating group study, The Poet's Gospel brings comfort and reassurance in strange times. For details, visit: <https://ctbi.org.uk/lent-study-2021/>

Practical Advice for Churches

Our Synod Property Officer **Geoff Milnes** draws the attention of all Church Secretaries and Property Officers to the following:

Electrical Tests on Manses

There is some legislation which affects electrical safety of Manses which comes in to force on 1 April this year – and no, I am not joking!

An 'Electrical Installation Condition Report' will be required on all let properties from 1 April. It will be valid for five years and will then need to be renewed. This is similar to the Landlord's Gas Certificates which are required but last for a year. The Trust has decided that it will be good practice to have Manses that are occupied by Ministers or CRCWs to have this Report carried out as well – after all, they are occupiers of Church property, as are tenants.

Please arrange to have these Reports carried out as soon as possible, and before 1 April for tenanted Manses, so that we comply with the law but also ensure that our properties are safe for our Ministers as well as our tenants.

I understand that the cost should be around £120 – 150 + VAT, but you will need to get quotations before proceeding.

Geoff Milnes

Synod Property Officer

Situations Vacant



This role has been modified since last advertised to reflect more clearly the needs of the Church

Deputy General Secretary Discipleship

Helping lead strategic change for the United Reformed Church
Church House, London

Full-time: Salary £64,994; Plan for Partnership for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs

Do you have the organisational skills and experience to lead our Discipleship team as we seek to serve the rapidly changing needs of local churches and Synods in the 21st Century?

As the Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) you will lead this key department, managing and working with the teams which play a vital role in our Children's and Youth Work, Church Related Community Work, Education and Learning, Ministries and Safeguarding. You will enable the development of the department as it seeks to resource the wider Church, serving local churches and Synods as they grow disciples.

As a member of the General Secretariat you will also share in the exercise of theologically-informed Christian leadership of the United Reformed Church, ensuring the resources of the Church serve the needs of local worshipping and witnessing communities.

You will have a good understanding of discipleship and its development, knowledge of the complex nature of the URC and an ability to ensure that vision becomes reality through effective policy making and governance. You will be a leader, and a proven people manager with the skills and confidence to manage a range of complex people and organisational situations.

If you wish to nominate anyone for this role, please email recruitment@urc.org.uk by: Friday 12 February 2021

Applications are invited from candidates with membership of a Church in the 'Reformed' tradition.* If you are keen to help us grow in Christ and can meet the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form:

**Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
020 7691 9874 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urc.org.uk/vacancies**

Closing date for applications: 12 noon Friday 12 March 2021 Interview date: Tuesday 20 April 2021

*In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian in the Reformed tradition.



The
United
Reformed
Church

Moderator Eastern Synod

Full-time, seven-year termed appointment; Minister's stipend

General Assembly wishes to appoint a United Reformed Church minister to serve as Eastern Synod Moderator from July 2021 or shortly after.

The Eastern Synod is seeking a person of deep spirituality with the energy and enthusiasm to inspire others and the ability to demonstrate:

- a commitment to providing effective pastoral support to ministers and congregations
- a desire to develop a clear vision for the Synod
- a commitment to building relationships ecumenically
- initiative and an ability to manage change
- a style of leadership that is empathetic, consultative, collaborative and inclusive
- good spoken and written communication skills.

An information pack and application form can be found on the jobs page of the website: www.urc.org.uk/vacancies

If you wish to nominate a minister for this post, please write to:

Deepti Upadhyaya at recruitment@urc.org.uk by Sunday 7 February 2021

If you wish to apply for this post, please complete an application form and send it to:

Deepti Upadhyaya at recruitment@urc.org.uk by 12 noon, Friday 26 February 2021

Human Resources, The United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, 020 7691 9871

Interview dates: Tuesday 6 and Wednesday 7 April 2021

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 Part 1; Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a Minister of Word and Sacraments of the United Reformed Church.

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



Warden and Site Supervisor/Gardener

Methodist Homestead Charitable Trust

The **Methodist Homestead Charitable Trust** operates 24 independent living almshouse cottages in Northampton providing a small ecumenical Christian community for those of retirement age in its own peaceful grounds; personal and nursing care are not provided by the charity.

The Trustees are seeking to fill two vacancies that will be created when the current job holders retire in May 2021 for:

A **Warden** who will be a caring, flexible person providing support and assistance to our residents. The role will be part time (24 hours a week) and whilst a first-floor flat offering two-bedroom accommodation is provided, the Trustees will consider applicants who live locally and wish to remain in their own home. Preference is for a car owner/driver. Experience in a caring profession would be an advantage.

A **Site Supervisor/Gardener** who will be a caring and flexible person to look after the communal gardens and grounds and carry out basic maintenance jobs in the homes. The role will be part time (20 hours a week) although some flexibility will be needed as work varies depending on the season. Experience of working with the elderly and health and safety awareness is essential.

DBS checks will be carried out for these roles. Full details and further information are available from the Clerk to the Trustees: Alistair Cochran, 14 Methodist Homestead, Homestead Way, Northampton, NN2 6JH – telephone **07704 371890** or email office@homesteadcottages.org.uk . Information is also available at www.homesteadcottages.org.uk .

Webinar Series from CWM Europe



BUILDING LIFE FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES A SERIES OF WEBINARS WITH CWM EUROPE



REVD. DR. PETER CRUCHLEY
'WHITENESS AND ANTIRACIST PRACTICE: FROM TALK TO ACTION'
MONDAY 8TH FEBRUARY (14:00-15:30)

Can whiteness and white privilege be dismantled? Peter's presentation will aim to help participants move from talk to action regarding more effective antiracist practices in the church.

REVD. MELANIE SMITH, REVD. DR. AL BARRETT & DAVID JONATHAN
A PANEL DISCUSSION ON LIFE-FLOURISHING ACTIVISM
MONDAY 22ND FEBRUARY (14:00-15:30)

The panellists will be exploring 'what would life-flourishing activism look like and mean'. This would include new ways of grassroots activism towards transformation. These three colleagues are involved in local community advocacy in a variety of ways.



CAROL TROUPE
'LOOKING BACK: LOOKING FORWARD'
MONDAY 8TH MARCH (14:00-15:30)

Carol is a Research Associate on the CWM Legacies of Slavery project and has been exploring LMS mission magazine archives. She reflects on her journey so far, and wonders what, if anything, can be drawn from the archives to help the church reflect on issues of mission, race and justice in the present day.

DR. EVE PARKER
WHAT WOULD A LIFE-FLOURISHING CURRICULUM FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION LOOK LIKE?
MONDAY 22ND MARCH (14:00-15:30)

In her presentation, Eve will focus on case studies from her ongoing research - addressing the barriers to belonging in theological education, whilst exploring the liberative potential of engaged and transformative pedagogy and curriculum.



For each presentation, individual Zoom links will be provided. Please contact Sai & Michael at cwm.europe@cwmission.org

Enquirers' Event: Saturday 27 February

The next URC Enquirers' Event takes place on Zoom on **Saturday 27 February 2021**, from 10.00am to 3.00pm.

This is an ideal opportunity for anyone interested in exploring their call to any of the following forms of ministry:

- **Worship leading**
- **Lay Preaching**
- **Ministry with children and young people**
- **Ministry of Word and Sacraments**
- **Church Related Community Work**

If that applies to you – or someone you know – please email ministries@urc.org.uk to register to attend.



What is God asking of YOU?



Ministry Enquirers' Event to help you think about God's call to Worship Leading, Lay Preaching, Ministry with children and young people, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.

Enquirers' Event Saturday 27th February 2021
10am - 3pm online
Register with ministries@urc.org.uk to receive Zoom details

Find us online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urb5.org.uk/) remains the one-stop shop for all essential information: <https://www.urb5.org.uk/>



Our [East Midlands Synod Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/) continues to host the Evening Prayers led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and others during the continuing pandemic. If you are a Facebook user, please consider **Liking** and **Sharing** this Page and its posts: <https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/>

The [Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/) shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: <https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/>



On our dedicated [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. Evening Prayers are also uploaded here. Please subscribe: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGeZU5SgN95g>

Contacting East Midlands Synod

Owing to the continued restrictions mandated by the UK government, the building of the **East Midlands Synod Office** remains closed at present. However, all members of staff continue to work from home: please email them in the usual way. Please continue to use the Office address for any postal business, including Annual Returns. Mail is collected weekly. The office number **0115 960 9241** is answered from Monday to Thursday, 9.00am-3.00pm and calls will be forwarded as necessary.

Any update to these arrangements will be posted on our website: www.urb5.org.uk

This E-letter is produced on behalf of:

The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.
Telephone: 0115 960 9241

CCL1067405

Next edition: Thursday 18 February 2021

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both: modpa@urb5.org.uk and training@urb5.org.uk

Copy date for next edition: 12 noon on Tuesday 16 February 2021