The United Reformed Church

Thames North Synod
NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 1 October 2026

Please circulate this widely so that the great events and opportunities here can benefit as many as possible. Please feel free to copy and paste any of this news for your own church's noticeboards or newsletters.

Events Diary

The Struggle for Land, Justice and Peace in the West Bank. Daoud Nassar: a Palestinian Farmer's Call to Action on 1 October 2026 Doors 6.30, talk at 7pm. https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-struggle-for-land-justice-and-peace-in-the-west-bank-tickets-1998351370744

People's Emergency Briefing Film on Sunday 4 October 2026 at 6:30pm on Zoom Meeting ID: 965 1457 5443

Join JPIT on Iona from 17-23 October 2026. Bookings are now open. Find out more here.

From Silence to Safety on 17 October 2026 10am-1pm Willow Room, Buckinghamshire New University

Church Action on Poverty Sunday on Sunday 18th October 2026, church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

Safeguarding for Trustees Training on 22 October 2026 & 23 November 2026 at 10am. Book safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) Conference from 23-25 November 2026 at Highgate House. Book with Eddie at disc.enab@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Creative Week 26-30 October 2026 at Kench Hill Centre, Tenterden, Kent TN30 7DG cydo@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Meetings of Synod Dates/Venues -
17 October 2026 Venue: TBA
Please note: Synod meetings are usually on the 3rd Saturday of March and October.

Information and News



Last Sunday the Moderator led the Harvest Festival service at Newland Church in Luton. It was also a parade service with various awards being presented including several Duke of Edinburgh awards. The congregation participated enthusiastically in the interactive service. An additional verse was written for Think of a world without any flowers to fit in with the Creationtide theme of Living Waters. After the service a delicious three course lunch was served.





What does community mean to you? To mark Black History Month 2026, United Reformed Church Global Majority ministers, members and staff have written a series of reflections on this year's theme, "Honouring Our Communities".

Starting this week on the URC website, the reflections will be shared each week throughout Black History Month on the URC's Latest News page and via social media. Hear different perspectives on community, belonging and what it means to honour the communities we are part of.

"They Broke Through the Roof", a service for use during Black History Month and beyond, has been produced by the Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, who made history herself when she was inducted as the first Black woman and only the second Black person to serve as Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly in 2023. Download your copy of They Broke Through the Roof for free.





Retired Ministers', Spouses' and Widows' Day

On Tuesday Thames North Synod hosted a day for some of its retired ministers and their spouses and Mrs Jemima Nkusi, one of its widows. They enjoyed a day of fellowship, worship and communion, a very interesting talk by Steve Tomkins, editor of the URC Reformed magazine, and a delicious hot lunch.





Above: Revd Francis Ackroyd played the piano for the worship





Above left: *Mrs Mercy Danso and Revd Jon Dean.* ***Above right:*** *Revd Jon Dean, Revd Derek Lindfield, Mrs Carole Lindfield and Mrs Betti Dean*

Thames North Synod Eco Newsletter October 2026 from the Green Team



Welcome to our eco newsletter for the Autumn. We aim to send a newsletter out for each season of the year, with eco news, useful updates, and upcoming events. Please do send us notices of any events happening near you as well as any recent news you have from your churches.

Eco church

We now have 51 churches registered as eco churches in Thames North Synod. Of these 19 churches have a bronze award, 6 churches have a silver award. If your church is working towards an award we can offer help or support. Feel free to contact us with any requests. If you have recently received an award please send us news of that too.

Carbon Literacy Training

Training is available either online via a trainer, or in-person as a member of a church group. If you would like to organise a group in your church you can find out more here https://carbonliteracy.com/faith/. We can offer support to help you access a course or set one up.

People's Emergency Briefing

This is a documentary film that presents the latest scientific evidence for the detrimental effects of climate change. It is available for churches to show. The "Call to Action for Churches" connected with the briefing was produced by a coalition of major UK churches and Christian organisations, including the Joint Public Issues Team and will provide you with full guidance. https://arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/PEB-Resource-for-Churches-A-Resource-and-Guide-for-Churches.pdf But if you need support in any way do please contact us.

How to live on Earth

This is another film that has recently been released and is available for community screenings. It is a visionary feature documentary that explores our vital connection to nature and its role in our future. Presented by Benedict Cumberbatch, this ultimate 'how-to guide' features inspirational, cutting-edge stories and powerful cinematography from around the world to reveal how humans are learning to team up with nature to solve our biggest challenges. Heart-warming, entertaining, energising, the film presents a hopeful vision of a future within reach – one in which nature thrives, and so do we. More information on the website: How To Live On Earth — Documentary Film

Church of England environmental updates

The CofE Environment team send out regular bulletins by email. They include news, webinar listings, resources and stories to help inspire us. You can sign up to receive these monthly updates on their website churchofengland.org Go to their Environment and climate change page.

The CofE recently circulated the following good news:

From 1st October the VAT on electricity will be reduced for 6 months for all charities from 5% VAT to 0%, and all churches should qualify as charities for this purpose. Please check that your church is paying the reduced rate, and that your treasurer is aware of this change.

Ecotricity have produced an FAQ

0% VAT on Business Electricity FAQs | Ecotricity

ARocha UK updates

ARochaUK recently sent out a report on their 10 year anniversary. You can sign up to receive this and regular updates on their website arocha.org.uk

Arocha UK are also offering a new 6 month online course to train anyone interested in becoming a Christian Environmental Mobiliser. Details and dates are on their website.

Season of Creation

The Season of Creation takes place between 1 September and 4 October each year. This year's theme was Living Water. To catch up on news from this year's event visit seasonofcreation.org

Operation Noah

Operation Noah are organising a series of Green Investment roadshows around the UK. Visit their website operationnoah.org for more information.

Operation Noah are also advertising an evening event on the topic of Faith Politics Planet at St John's church Waterloo on 10th November. Details on their website.

Eco day 2027

Our next eco day is going to be held at Lumen on Saturday 5th June. We are planning to book a speaker on the theme of Theology of Creation. We also want to take this opportunity to celebrate what all our churches are doing to care for creation. If your church has recently worked for an ecochurch award or worked in any other ways to combat the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss you might have a story to tell and it is good practice to share. We should very much like to hear from you, especially if you can come to the Eco Day to talk about it. Although, if that's not practical, a short film, like the one on the TNS website, Environment page, by Amersham Free Church, would be very acceptable.

Quiet Gardens

The quiet garden movement oversees a network of beautiful gardens and outdoor spaces intended for prayer, stillness, contemplation and an appreciation of the natural world. They publish regular newsletters which you can access on their website quietgarden.org

Contacts for the Green Team

Jill Nugent jillnug@hotmail.com
Anna Barrett poppyana57@hotmail.com

Planning Building Works? Speak to Your Insurer

If your church is planning repairs, maintenance or a larger building project, remember to contact your insurance broker before work starts. Edwards Insurance Brokers has recently reminded churches that early notification of building works is a condition of their insurance policy. This can apply to repairs and renovations as well as extensions, structural alterations, projects involving scaffolding and works undertaken under a JCT contract.

Notifying your broker early allows the insurer to confirm whether the proposed works are covered by the church's existing policy or whether additional or specialist insurance is required. For larger projects, the insurance arrangements can be more complex, particularly where a building contract requires cover in joint names.

Churches should be prepared to provide their broker with:

- a description of the proposed works;
- anticipated start and completion dates;
- the contract value, including VAT;
- details of the contractor and their Public Liability insurance; and
- the JCT contract and relevant insurance clause, where applicable.

Your contractor, architect or other professional adviser should be able to help provide much of this information.

There are also particular implications where **scaffolding** is used. Edwards advises that insurers apply a theft exclusion for external metal,

such as lead and copper, while scaffolding is in place. Churches should therefore consider this when planning both insurance and site security.
The important message is simple: **don't wait until work is about to start before thinking about insurance.** Contact your broker while the project is being planned so that the appropriate cover can be established in good time.
Further information is available from Edwards Insurance Brokers.
Churches insured through another provider should contact their own insurer or broker for advice on the requirements of their particular policy.

What's On



Soroptimist International present

From Silence to Safety

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Empowering Women, Engaging Communities, Creating Change

17 Oct '26
10am-1pm
Willow Room, Buckinghamshire New University

To be opened by the Rt. Hon the Countess Howe, Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire

Speakers:

Chris Green OBE,
Male Allies Challenging Sexism (MACS)

Lisa Squire,
It Does Matter campaign

To Register:

Tickets £5
(Students £3)

Soroptimist International

Community Boards

Buckinghamshire New University
EST. 1891

The Clare Foundation

Refreshments provided


The United Reformed Church Youth
THAMES NORTH & SOUTHERN SYNOD PRESENT
CREATIVE WEEK
26–30 OCTOBER 2026
Five days to create, collaborate, and bring your main character energy to the stage.
WHERE: KENCH HILL CENTRE, TENTERDEN, KENT TN30 7DG
WHO FOR: SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGES 11–17)
COST: £30 PER PERSON
CHOOSE WHAT YOU LOVE:
DRAMA | MUSIC | CREATIVE WRITING | MOVEMENT & DANCE | STAGE CRAFT
Catch the FINAL performance at
Lumen, King's Cross
6pm – 8pm on Friday 30th October.
REGISTER AT WWW.BIT.LY/CREATIVE-WEEK-2026
BOOKING DEADLINE WEDS 23 SEPTEMBER
EMAIL LORRAINE FOR MORE INFO:
cydo@urcthamesnorth.org.uk
SCAN ME
SCAN ME
SCAN ME
SCAN ME



Thursday 8 October 2026, 7-9pm

Cultural Witness in an Uncertain World

Lecturer: Bishop Graham Tomlin,
President of St Mellitus College and Director of The Centre for Cultural Witness

Location
St Michael's, Chester Square, London, SW1W 9EF

For further information and to book your place, click here.

Some Important Safeguarding Updates

Safeguarding Sunday
Safeguarding Sunday is an annual awareness campaign taking place on November 15, 2026, designed for churches across the UK to focus on creating safe environments and healthy cultures. Safeguarding Sunday will soon be upon us (15th November) and you can find more information here Theme: Love Protects | and the link to sign up for further resources here Safeguarding Sunday.

Martyn's Law
In light of Martyn's Law receiving Royal Assent in April 2025 premises hosting events that exceed 200 people will be required to consider how they would respond to a terrorist incident. This legislation is coming into force in April 2027, therefore we want to give all local URC's the opportunity to be prepared for this change. Therefore, the Resources Hub now has some useful guidance notes for local churches on what the law entails and gets them to begin thinking about the practical next steps.

Please consider:
Fire evacuation plans • Emergency contacts • Stewarding arrangements • First aid provision • Incident communication methods
Basic terrorism awareness • Suspicious behaviour reporting • Emergency response procedures.

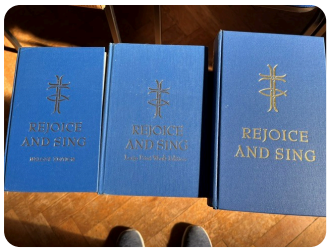
The guidance notes can be found here;
https://urcresourceshub.org.uk/martyns-law-guidance/
Risk Assessments for church buildings can be found here:
https://urcresourceshub.org.uk/risk-assessment-pro-forma/
Activity Risk assessments can be found here: https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/SA1.pdf

We would also like to take this opportunity to invite churches to join a free webinar on **Thursday 22nd October 2026 at 1pm** which is being done in partnership with the Community Security Trust (CST). This session is designed to help local churches, trustees, elders, ministers and church officers understand their responsibilities under the new legislation and what steps they may need to take to comply. Further details of this event can now be found on our new 'Learning' page on the Hub here; https://urcresourceshub.org.uk/learning-development/, as well as the link to register for the event.

Protect UK is also offering further information on Martyn's Law guidance and eLearning on counterterrorism and security.

Training reminder
There are a few remaining training dates before the end of the year. If you or anyone on the church need to renew their training, please get in touch to book on. The training dates are here.

Looking for a Home










The items above are looking for a new home. They are from Letchworth URC and the insurers need them to be rehomed within the next 2-3 weeks. If you are interested in any of the items please contact Carol Dutson at carol.dutson61@hotmail.com

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Safeguarding Training

Just a gentle reminder to book on to your mandated safeguarding training.
Please see below the poster which has all of the dates scheduled for this year.

You will see that there is a new **COMBINED** safeguarding module. This is the Foundation and Intermediate module in one. If you need to complete both modules, that training shortens the amount of sessions that need to completed. You are welcome to book on to the COMBINED module if you need to renew your INTERMEDIATE training. If you *only* need to complete the Foundation module please complete the Foundation eLearning (link below).
https://www.urclearninghub.org.uk/course/view.php?id=24This

In order to book on to the ADVANCED module, you **must** have completed either the COMBINED module or the separate FOUNDATION and INTERMEDIATE modules beforehand.

If you would like to book on to the advertised dates, please click on the link below and complete the form
https://forms.gle/nKrqAeM28XosXbmg7
Your place will only be confirmed once you receive a follow up email with the link to the Zoom training and slides to attend.

For the URC Safeguarding Training Framework document please click here.

SEPTEMBER
WED 16TH 6-8PM ADVANCED PT1
WED 23RD 6-8.30PM ADVANCED PT2
THURS 17TH 6-8.30PM INTERMEDIATE

OCTOBER
WED 7TH 6-8.30PM COMBINED
THURS 29TH 10-12.30PM COMBINED

NOVEMBER
WED 11TH 6-8PM ADVANCED PT1
WED 18TH 6-8.30PM ADVANCED PT2

DECEMBER
THURS 10TH 10-12PM ADVANCED PT1
THURS 17TH 10-12.30PM ADVANCED PT2

The United Reformed Church
Thames North Synod

TO BOOK ON TO ANY OF THESE TRAINING DATES, PLEASE COPY THE LINK BELOW INTO YOUR BROWSER AND COMPLETE THE FORM.

HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/IYFSRTKKWXASXU4N8

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN ORDER TO ATTEND THE ADVANCED TRAINING, YOU MUST HAVE COMPLETED THE INTERMEDIATE OR COMBINED SAFEGUARDING TRAINING BEFOREHAND.



DDC Verifier Safeguarding Training (On Zoom)

To book...

Please email

emma.pearce@urc.org.uk

This training is for all Primary Contact Church Safeguarding Coordinators, Secretaries and DBS verifiers as you act as verifiers for DBS checks within your church.

This training provides all the information for you to access the portal and conduct document verification,

The training also provides additional information on Safer Recruitment Processes for the Church.

PLEASE BOOK ONE DATE ONLY by emailing Emma Pearce emma.pearce@urc.org.uk

21st May – 1pm

9th July – 10am

8th September – 10am

8th October – 7pm

The United Reformed Church Safeguarding

www.urc.org.uk

Safeguarding Training 2026

October
Wed 7th October 6-8.30pm Combined
Thurs 29th October 10-12.30pm Combined
November
Wed 11th November 6-8pm Advanced pt1
Wed 18th 6-8.30pm November Advanced pt2
December
Thurs 10th December 10-12pm Advanced pt1
Thurs 17th December 10-12.30pm Advanced pt2

To book for this training, please complete the booking form here
https://forms.gle/iYFSrtkkWxAsXu4N8

Safeguarding-Committee-Strategic-Plan

The URC Safeguarding Committee's 2026–2028 Strategic Plan sets out a five-year vision to embed safeguarding good practice into everyday life across the denomination, with clear goals in culture, engagement, training, and practice development. The full document may be accessed here.

S2 The United Reformed Church URC Safeguarding Training Framework

The United Reformed Church recognises that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard others and thus needs to ensure that people holding certain roles and responsibilities are specifically equipped to protect vulnerable groups including both children and adults. 2. URC's Safeguarding Training Framework In order to achieve this goal, the URC offers regular safeguarding training for all those working with children and adults at risk as well as those they support. They need to know how to promote the welfare of those they support, reduce the likelihood of harm, abuse or neglect, and respond effectively to concerns or allegations of abuse which arise.

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/6cltwe2kpki65biriqdva/
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/6cltwe2kpki65biriqdva/S2-URC-Safeguarding-Training-Framework.pdf?rlkey=bngnf7ctdykccbx3p6b7vp3mq&st=qe2phzp9&dl=0
.pdf?rlkey=bngnf7ctdykccbx3p6b7vp3mq&st=qe2phzp9&dl=0

See the **Safeguarding page** on the synod website here for more Safeguarding
information.



Minister's Advanced Safeguarding Training

Please email
carrie.kaunda@urc.uk.org
with any questions.

Each course will last 4.5 hours, delivered across 2 Zoom sessions

Please click the link below the relevant date to go to the booking form.

The zoom link will then be sent the week before.

Thursday 15th Jan 1-3pm and Thursday 22nd Jan 1-3.30pm
Ministers Advanced Training Booking Form January

Tuesday 3rd March 10am-12noon and Tuesday 10th March 10am-12.30pm
Booking Form for Advanced Training for Ministers March

Wednesday 6 May 1-3pm and Wednesday 13th May 1-3.30pm
Booking Form for Advanced Training for Ministers May

Monday 5th October 1-3pm and Monday 12th October 1-3.30pm
Booking Form for Advanced Training for Ministers October

The United Reformed Church Safeguarding
www.urc.org.uk



UK Wide Safeguarding Training 2026

Make your booking by emailing: Emma.Pearce@urc.org.uk

All training will take place via Zoom

Foundation Training can be accessed on the Learning Hub

Home | URC Learning Hub

Thursday 2nd July 10.30am-12.30pm	**Domestic Abuse**
Tuesday 7th July 1.00pm-3.00pm	**Supporting Survivors**
Tuesday 14th July 7.00pm-9.00pm	**Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Modern Slavery**
Monday 7th September 1.00pm-3.00pm	**Elders as Trustees**
Tuesday 15th September 7.00pm -9.00pm	**Online Safety**
Wednesday 23rd September 1.00pm-3.00pm	**Spiritual Abuse**
Tuesday 6th October 7.00pm.9.00pm	**Adult Safeguarding**
Wednesday 21st October 1.00pm-3.00pm	**Discriminatory Abuse**

The United Reformed Church Safeguarding

www.urc.org.uk

From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee

Vacancies

All URC vacancies may be found here.

Children, Young People and Families Outreach Worker

Palmers Green United Reformed Church in London N13 is looking for a Children, Young People and Families Outreach Worker

We are a small, friendly and welcoming church keen to increase the number of children, young people and families in our church community. You can find out more about our mission and links with the local community on our webpage at https://palmersgreenurc.org.uk

☐ Do you enjoy working with children, young people and families?
☐ Do you want to be part of our ministry to help build our outreach work with children, young people and families?
☐ Do you believe the Gospel is relevant to today's world? If so, you could be the person we are looking for!

Salary: £29,000 - £32,000, depending on experience, with annual review.

The post is initially for 3 years, with a three month probationary period, and the possibility of extension to 5 years following review of progress. This is a full time post at 37.5 hours per week, which must include most Sunday mornings. Other working hours may be agreed with your line manager.

This role is an exciting opportunity to have a real impact on children, young people and families in our church and community, through Junior Church activities and creatitig new initiatives to develop outreach. We are looking for a committed Christian keen to explore the faith with children, young people and families in creative ways.

The successful applicant will be required to obtain an enhanced DBS with barred list clearance and to undertake comprehensive safeguarding training.

To apply: Please email minister@ursee.org.uk for full job description, person specification and application form.

We anticipate high interest in this position and advise candidates to apply at their earliest opportunity.

Closing date: 31st October 2026

Interviews will take place in mid-November 2026.

Finance Administrator

- **London**
- Fixed term contract (12 months initially), Part-time (21 hours per week)
- Salary: £23,768 per annum

- Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Wednesday 14 October 2026
- Interview date: Wednesday 21 October 2026

https://urc.org.uk/jobs/finance-administrator/ for more information.

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