



THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 11 June 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

Synod Eco Day 2026 on Saturday 13 June 2026 9:30am - 4pm at Amersham Free Church Woodside Road HP6 6AJ. Book with Colleen at modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Leading your Church into Growth: Youth on 13 June & 11 July 2026 at Brunswick Parish Church M13 9SX. www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/youth

Free to Believe Conference 2026 at Highgate House Wednesday 17 - Friday 19 June 2026

Limitless Festival 2026 on 5-9 August 2026 at Stafford Showground. mdoandrew@urcwestmidlands.org.uk or mdosally@urcwestmidlands.org.uk

Join JPIT on Iona from 17-23 October 2026. Bookings are now open. Find out more [here](#).

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

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



On Sunday the Moderator led worship and presided at Communion at Kingsway United Reformed Church in Slough. It marked the 15th anniversary of the Asian congregation joining the local URC congregation Present at the service was Azeem Bakhsh. Azeem candidated for the ministry from Kingsway and trained at Westminster College, Cambridge. He has been called to the Southwark Group of Churches in Southern Synod and will be ordained and inducted on 5th September.



Youth Residential 2026

The last weekend in May saw the 5th Thames North Youth Residential held with Southern Synod. This year we took away 24 participants and were joined by West Midlands Synod. Look out for the youth report on our Synod website in the coming month.

Whether you have one young person you could encourage, a family, or small youth group, all are welcome to come and meet other young people from across the Synod, take part in outdoor pursuits and creative activities, and worship.



We would love to have your young people join us next year so get the date in your Church Diary from now!

THURSDAY 27TH – SUNDAY 30TH MAY 2027
cydo@urcthamesnorth.org.uk



What's On



The
United
Reformed
Church
Thames North Synod

AGES
14-25
YRS

YOUTH BBQ

GAMES, FOOD, WORSHIP,
CRAFTS & MUSIC!



SATURDAY
22ND AUGUST
2026



VENUE:
Lumen Community
88 Tavistock Place
London
WC1H 9RT
England

CONTACTS:



Lorraine : 07716 640575



cydo@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

BRING YOUR YOUTH GROUP
AND COME HUNGRY!





The
United
Reformed
Church
Southern
Synod

The Southwark Group of Churches

invite you to the

Induction and Ordination of Azeem Qadir Bakhsh

As Minister

to Dulwich Grove, Camberwell Green, Copleston
and Crossway group of churches



Service to be held at
Dulwich Grove URC
East Dulwich Grove
SE22 8RH
London UK



Saturday 5th
September 2026
at 2:00pm

Presiding minister
Revd Dr Elaine Colechin
Synod Clerk of Southern Synod



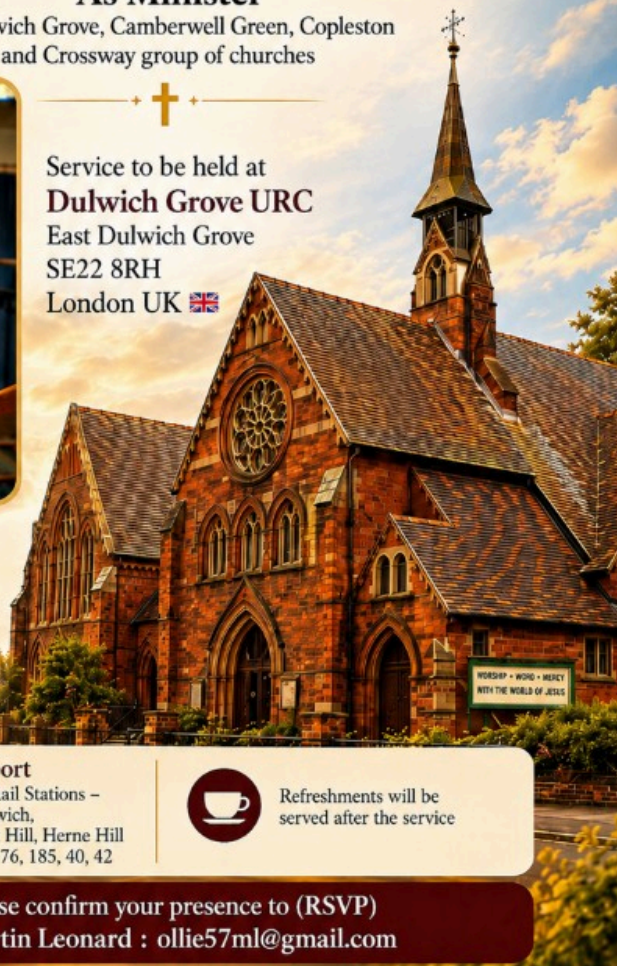
Transport
Nearby Rail Stations –
East Dulwich,
Denmark Hill, Herne Hill
Buses – 176, 185, 40, 42



Refreshments will be
served after the service



Please confirm your presence to (RSVP)
Martin Leonard : ollie57ml@gmail.com





Talking About...

Baptism and Dedication

7–8pm | Thursday, June 18th
book your place at www.bit.ly/T4lkingAbout

Talking About... Baptism and Dedication
June 18th, 7-8pm
www.bit.ly/T4lkingAbout

From babies to believers, Christenings to confirmations, a baptism is often the first display of commitment to following Jesus by an individual, or their parents. It is an event that universally brings a feeling of joy and goodwill to a local church congregation.

How can we make the most of this opportunity to share the sacrament of baptism with those who are new to church in a way that is welcoming, missional, and invitational, helping it become more than simply a service we provide, but an invitation into faith and community?

The United Reformed Children and Youth Team have been developing resources for infant and believer's Baptism, as well as confirmation.

This is your chance to ask questions of those who developed the material, share thoughts, and reflect on what Baptism/Dedication/Confirmation might look like in your context.

POSTCARDS FROM ENFIELD
A Musical Trip Around the World

Saturday 20 June 2026 • 6:00pm
The Salvation Army, Churchbury Lane, Enfield

Enfield Citadel Band • Enfield Songsters
Pianist Susan Avison

*A musical journey around the world —
— right here in Enfield! —*

ENFIELD
20 JUNE
2026
UK



Palmer's Green Mosque
MUSLIM COMMUNITY & EDUCATION CENTRE

SUMMER FAIR




SUNDAY
5TH JULY



1:00 PM – 7:00 PM

➤ JOIN US FOR A FUN-FILLED DAY ➤
for the whole family!



BOUNCY CASTLES




HENNA ART



BBQ & DELICIOUS FOOD STALLS



ICE CREAM & TREATS



RIDES



ARTS & CRAFTS

➤ *And much more!* ➤

ENTRY FEES

ADULTS
£1

UNDER 12s
FREE

INTERESTED IN HIRING A STALL?



CONTACT US AT:
stalls@mcec.org.uk

DON'T MISS OUT – BRING YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS
➤ *for an unforgettable day!* ➤



Thames North Synod URC

Eco Day

Saturday 13th June 2026

9.30am - 4pm

Amersham Free Church

Woodside Road, Amersham HP6 6AJ

Nature on our Doorstep

Join fellow churchgoers from across the Synod in exploring animal and plant life, gardening skills, and energy saving.

Hear our gold medal winning 'Amersham in Bloom' describe how they transform public places for nature and people.

Come for a walk with us (optional!) through the woods to the River Misbourne, a chalk stream. 45 minutes of gentle walking, but bring strong shoes. We'll bus back.

Enjoy a delicious lunch - locally sourced produce, and home-made cakes for tea.



For more information email: Colleen Fraser at modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk



NB Travel Update:

It appears that the Metropolitan Line is going to be disrupted between Aldgate and Harrow on the Hill on Saturday 13th June so that won't be an option sadly for those of you coming from the east of the synod.

However, Amersham is lucky in that it is served by both networks and the Chiltern Line mainline service coming from Marylebone should not be affected. They both end up at the same station in Amersham and directions from there are quite simple.

Cross the road by the zebra crossing in front of you as you come out of the station, turn left and almost immediately right (opposite a mini Tesco) to go up Hill Avenue. At the top of that road by a mini roundabout, turn right (opposite National Westminster Bank) and walk along the main street past the shops right to the end (past St Michael's

church on your right) and you come to a pair of mini roundabouts. Go slightly right to another zebra crossing and Amersham Free Church (postcode HP6 6AJ) is facing you as you cross the road.

If you should get lost you can phone Janet Reid on 07754 408738 but it should be straightforward and take no more than 10 minutes on foot.

There is also parking available, with easy access via the M25.

Thames North Synod Eco Day 2026

At: Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham HP6 6AJ

On: 13th June 2026 - 9:30am- 4pm

Theme: 'Nature on our Doorstep'

Key Speaker – Michelle Catanach and the Amersham in Bloom Team, speaking on 'Transforming Public Spaces for Nature and People'

There will be a wide range of workshops for those on, or considering starting, the Eco Church Journey. There will be a plenary session, and you are invited to submit questions and comments which arise from the day, in writing, by 3pm.

Please include this information in your church newsletters.

Spaces are limited so please book early by emailing Colleen Fraser modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk or via the online [Booking Form](#).

NB The last date for registration is **Thursday 4 June 2026** as the admin team will need an idea of numbers by then to finalise catering.

We would find it helpful if people could **indicate what workshops they would be interested in booking.** The list of workshops on offer is below and it would be particularly helpful if you could indicate whether you are interested in the afternoon accompanied walk so that we can allocate you to other workshops in the morning.

(We are expecting all the workshops, except the Using the Nature App one, to be repeated in the afternoon as an alternative to the walk).

Our Workshops, to be held from 12 noon.

Pop in and Paint (Closely observing and drawing flowers) with Joy Johns

Supporting Hedgehogs in the Garden - (with webcam footage) with Richard Winter

How we set up a Nature Friendly Garden at Vine Church, Ilford - with Peter Musgrave

Hymns – creating new hymns to familiar tunes -with Ian Green

Energy savings for buildings – simple and practical steps - with Andrew Mills and Sacha McArdle

Citizen Science Projects and using the iNature App. Smartphone needed with Anna Barrett - morning only

Programme Highlights:

9:30 AM: Arrival & registration (by 10:10 AM)

10:10 AM: Worship, followed by a presentation on "Transforming Public Spaces for Nature and People" by Amersham's gold medal-winning "Amersham in Bloom" volunteers.

Workshops on eco topics: drawing plant life, hedgehogs in the garden, energy saving in our buildings, setting up a wildlife friendly garden, hymn writing, and using the iNature app.

Lunch: Ploughman's style with vegan and gluten-free options.

Afternoon: Optional walk to the River Misbourne, with easy downhill walking (sturdy shoes needed). We'll take the bus back to the church in time for tea.

Final worship and plenary session.

Children are welcome! School age children will find plenty to interest them in the programme, and if there are younger ones we will provide a space for them to play. A parent or carer will need to stay with them.

We look forward to spending the day with you!

Leading your Church into Growth: Youth

Leading your Church into Growth: Youth is a two-day course for local churches looking to grow youth ministry.

Whether you are looking to grow existing youth ministry or start something new, this course will equip you with an achievable plan for working with young people in your context.

“Many times we feel like our work is failing or not growing but you helped us refocus... and come up with practical ways to achieve our goals as a team while partnering with God” - LyCiG Youth attendee

10am-4pm · 13th June & 11th July
Brunswick Parish Church, M13 9SX
www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/youth



URC - Godly Play Core Training Course

16-18 October 2026

East Midlands Synod Office,
Sherwood, Nottingham
Training facilitated by Richard
Knott & Alison Summerskill

Led by two experienced trainers, this course combines trainer-led sessions with opportunities for participants to practise storytelling with coaching and support.

Throughout the course, we model a Godly Play environment and provide access to a comprehensive set of resources. Together we explore each different form of Godly Play presentation—sacred stories, parables, and liturgical action/church practice—helping you understand how these different genres of Christian language can support spiritual exploration.

Workshops in this core training also include:

- The Spirituality of Childhood
- Setting up a Godly Play environment
- Time and space to discuss your context, concerns, and questions

"The Godly Play training gave me time to explore this brilliant approach more deeply, and it was highly accessible.



Since attending the course, I have used forms of Godly Play regularly in our weekly worship and children's groups. I would highly recommend it."
(The Revd Ruth Maxey)



This course is hosted in partnership with the URC East Midlands Synod and will take place at the Synod Office in Sherwood, Nottingham.

This course follows an intensive format, and attendance at all sessions is required: Friday 5.00–10.00pm, Saturday 8.00am–10.00pm, and Sunday 8.00am–5.00pm.

The cost is £50 for anyone connected with a URC congregation, including Local Ecumenical Partnerships. This reflects a subsidy from the URC Children, Youth and Intergenerational department and includes all course materials, meals, and refreshments.

Places are also available at a full cost of £315. Financial support may be available through your own church or denomination.

If you would like information about nearby overnight accommodation, please get in touch.

For more information or to book your place, please email trainingpa@urc5.org.uk or scan the QR code.



"It was wonderful to meet new people, share laughter, and practise Godly Play together. I love Godly Play—its principles and practices—and if you work with children, it is a must. Beyond that, it is adaptable and can be used with any age group, including those with SEND. I have used its principles in prayers and talks with people of all ages." (Wendy Hall, Elder & Accredited Lay Pioneer)

www.godlyplay.uk

A Christian movement centred on childhood spirituality providing training to transform thinking and practice for the whole of life



Historic England has opened two funds for applications, today, and we would be grateful if you could share this information with any contacts who you think might benefit.

Details of both are below and you'll find a suggested post for social at the end of this email too.

The **Places of Worship Renewal Fund** is a new **£92 million** programme supporting the repair of listed places of worship across England and targeted at areas in most need. Delivered by Historic England and funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the fund will run over four years to March 2030.

The Places of Worship Renewal Fund is **open to all faiths and denominations**, and places of worship do not need to be on the Heritage at Risk Register to apply.

Applicants and projects must meet the fund specific requirements listed on the [Places of Worship Renewal Fund Webpage](#).

The deadline for submitting Expressions of Interest for the first round of grants is midnight, Sunday 14 June, 2026. Further rounds of grants will follow later in the year and in future years.

About the Fund

The fund provides capital grants to support **urgent repairs and long-term sustainability**, helping ensure that listed places of worship remain open, safe and in active use.

It is designed to support the repair of and essential improvements to England's significant places of worship and targeted at places of most need, particularly in areas of deprivation and where communities have the least capacity to raise funds.

The **Heritage at Risk Capital Fund** is a programme, of **up to £75 million**, supporting the repair and conservation of historic

buildings and sites at risk across England. Delivered by Historic England and funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Following the successful first year of the Fund, which saw £15 million invested in projects across England, up to £60 million remains available for allocation over the next four years, to 2030.

The fund supports urgent repairs and conservation works to help safeguard historic buildings and bring them back into sustainable use. It is targeted at areas in greatest need, particularly where heritage investment can deliver wider social and economic benefits for local communities.

Applicants and projects must meet the fund-specific requirements listed on Historic England's [Heritage at Risk Capital Fund webpage](#).

The deadline for submitting Expressions of Interest for this round is midnight, Sunday 7 June, 2026. Further rounds of funding will follow later in the year and in future years.

About the Fund

The fund provides capital grants to support:

- Urgent repairs to heritage assets at risk
- Conservation works to prevent further deterioration
- Project development work as part of a wider repair scheme
- Adaptations that support sustainable reuse and accessibility

The fund aims to help secure the long-term future of historic buildings while supporting regeneration, job creation, skills development and community use.

Details of who can apply are on the website and include:

- Local authorities
- Charities
- Community Interest Companies
- Heritage Development Trusts
- Other not-for-profit organisations with legal responsibility for the repair of an eligible building

We appreciate this is a lot of detail but are keen to ensure this message reaches those eligible to apply.

You might also want to include the following link in any newsletter to help support applicants, including those from non-English speaking communities: [Getting Permission to Make Changes](#).

Safeguarding Training

SYNOD SAFEGUARDING

training

JUNE

WED 17TH 6-8.30PM- INTERMEDIATE

TUES 23RD 2-4.30PM INTERMEDIATE

THURS 25TH 6-8.30PM INTERMEDIATE

JULY

WED 15TH 6-8.30PM COMBINED

MON 20TH 10-12.30PM COMBINED

THURS 16TH 10-12PM ADVANCED PT 1

THURS 23RD 10-12.30PM ADVANCED PT 2

AUGUST

WED 12TH AUG 10-12PM COMBINED

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](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



Safeguarding Training 2026

June

Wed 17th June 6-8.30pm Intermediate

Tues 23rd June 2-4.30pm Intermediate

Thurs 25th June 6-8.30pm Intermediate

July

Wed 15th July 6-8.30pm Combined

Mon 20th July 10-12.30pm Combined

Thurs 16th July 10-12pm Advanced pt1

Thurs 23rd July 10-12.30pm Advanced pt2

August

Wed 12th Aug 10-12pm Combined

September

Wed 16th September 6-8pm Advanced pt1

Wed 23rd September 6-8.30pm Advanced pt2

Thurs 17th September 6-8.30pm Intermediate

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>

Building Bridges Across Generations

Empowering Communities Through Intergenerational Workshops

Training Workshops for Supporting Intergenerational Communities

This series of training sessions aims to foster intergenerational communities, offering insights for working with young people and expanding ministries. Co-delivered by the Children and Youth Team and Safeguarding, these workshops will be conducted via Zoom.

Workshop Details:

- 1. Growing Intergenerational Communities**
 - **Date:** 8th September, 7:30 PM–9:00 PM
 - **Topics:**
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Unconscious Bias / Roles
 - Creating Welcoming Environments
 - Generational Theory
- 2. Developing Spaces for Under 5s**
 - **Date:** 13th October, 7:30 PM–9:00 PM
 - **Topics:**
 - Effective Communication
 - Safe, Spiritual Spaces
 - Creative Storybooks / Activities
 - Missional Opportunities in Toddler Groups
- 3. Supporting Faith Development in Young People**
 - **Date:** 8th November, 7:30 PM–9:00 PM
 - **Topics:**
 - Models of Discipleship / Mentoring
 - Youth Groups in Private Dwellings
 - Engaging Young People
 - Lone Working & Risk Assessments

To participate, please email emma.pearce@urc.org.uk. These workshops are an excellent opportunity to enhance skills in fostering intergenerational relationships and faith development.



Minister's Advanced Safeguarding Training

Please email
carrie.kaunda@urc.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](#)



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



www.urc.org.uk



From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee

Vacancies



UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

Salary: £40,500 pa

The University of Bedfordshire Ecumenical Chaplaincy Trust (UBECT), in partnership with the University, seeks to appoint a **Lead Chaplain** to co-ordinate and oversee the development of a vibrant Chaplaincy for the University, working closely with its Community and Faith team, Student Services and Human Resources on initiatives to support student and staff well-being. The role is based primarily in Bedford and Luton but will involve travel to other University locations.

We seek a committed Christian of any denomination who

- Has experience in a Christian ministry, lay or ordained.
- Is committed to an ecumenical and multi-faith (and no faith) approach, with a solid understanding of other faiths and traditions.
- Has strong communication, pastoral and leadership skills, with experience in team building and planning.
- Is confident, empathetic, self-motivated and reliable, including when working under pressure.
- Has theological and pastoral training or experience.
- Will bring theological insight to contribute to the life of the University.

Deadline for applications: **1st July 2026**

Interview Date: **21st July 2026**

As the role holder will be working for a Christian charity leading a multi-faith chaplaincy to the students and staff of the University of Bedfordshire, they are required to be a Christian, we welcome applications from members of any Christian Church.

For a detailed Job Description and Application Form, please contact
Revd Tricia Reed, PA to the Archdeacon of Bedford
by email tricia.reed@stalbandsdiocese.org or telephone 01727 818167

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