THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 17 September 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

Racial Justice Event for Advocates and Activists at Lumen 10:30am on 19 September 2026. Contact Sandra Ackroyd sga322@gmail.com

Carbon Literacy Courses for Christian Congregations on Wednesdays 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th September and 7th October - 6:30pm to 8:30pm. To book a place visit: https://buytickets.at/stalbansunitedreformedchurch/2298655 or Tuesdays on 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th September and 6th October - 6:30pm to 8:30pm ; sign up via this Eventbrite link: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/carbon-literacy-for-congregations-online-creation-time-2026-tickets-1991352776761
Final booking date 27th August 2026

Meeting on AI Generated Complaints on Thursday 10 September, Online
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82757997549?pwd=lqfrAv7mUpfd8UpVCWiBXOxVuA7TaE.1
Meeting ID: 827 5799 7549
Passcode: 214109

LCRF Annual Speaker Meeting "Roots and Refuge" Brother Johannes Maertens on Thursday 17 September 2026 at 6.30pm (doors open at 6pm)at Wesley's Chapel EC1Y 1AU

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.

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

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

The Moderator had the privilege of joining with members of the Coptic Orthodox Church to celebrate the feast of Nayroux - the Coptic New Year. The service was led by Archbishop Angaelos of the Coptic Church who has a strong commitment to ecumenism. The service was also attended by other church leaders, the ambassadors for Egypt and Palestine, several politicians including Lord Alton and local dignitaries from London and Stevenage where their cathedral is. It was also an opportunity to remember the 20 Coptic Christians martyred in Libya in 2015 along with one Ghanaian.

The service was held in the beautiful St Margaret's Church next to Westminster Abbey

Coptic Orthodox Church
United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

The service of
Raising of Evening Incense

For the Annual Celebration of
Coptic New Year (Nayrouz)

St Margaret's Church
Westminster Abbey

Monday 14 September 2026









Last Thursday a large number of family, friends and colleagues gathered at St John's, New Barnet and online to celebrate the life of Tony Alderman. Tributes were paid to his considerable contribution to the Church, Community and various Charities. There were very personal stories shared by the family.

In the Synod he was a valued member of the Executive, a Trustee of Island House, District Treasurer and an Interim Moderator. He was a popular Lay Preacher in several local churches continuing to lead worship almost until the end despite ill health.

Tony leaves a big hole in our lives and especially for the family and our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Myra, his children and grandchildren.

A Note from the Green Apostles



Living Water - Season of Creation 2026
Immersion in Living Water
Ezekiel 47: 9,12

The theme of Living Water during this Season of Creation continues as we reflect on the importance of water.

The heat waves and drought conditions of the summer have been a stark contrast to the wet, winter months. Large ponds have dried up in parts of the country which have affected the ducks and other wildlife. Perhaps rain is something we have taken for granted.

We realise the importance of more permanent sources of water from aquifiers and man-made reservoirs, even if water levels are lower than normal. Lakes such as at Ashburnham Place, one of A Rocha UK's Partners in Action programmes, which are fed by spring water that flows into the valley floor were created by those people in the past who had the foresight to create three hand-dug lakes.

At the heart of the garden at Ashburnham Place is a fountain which is a reminder of the 'water of life' in Revelation 22, flowing to nourish the tree of life. It is a powerful image of life sustained by water and of the interdependence and close relationship we have with all living things. Whether it arrives in seemingly endless rain or is something we desperately need, water connects us – to the land, to each other, and to the life around us.

As we reflect on the importance of water we can think about ways of reducing our own water consumption such as using butts to catch rainwater, using grey water for watering plants in the garden, fitting a water saving bag for the flushing system of the toilet or shower using less water.

A Rocha UK are also starting a new initiative, the Christian Environmental Mobilisers course, which starts in October. This will equip people to bring about positive environmental change in their communities. A Rocha UK want the course to bring 'living water' to the participants, and they will be equipped to spread that living water even further. Further details can be found on the 'A Rocha UK' website.

The Green Team

News from Trinity Church Enfield

Trinity Church Enfield have majored on The River of Life for the Season of Creation, with three regular Sunday services in September being on the theme, our Harvest Festival and our Taize Service, and as a prayer focus. On 13th September we were very pleased to welcome Philip Nalpanis from A Rocha leading our worship and sharing his knowledge and expertise.

One of our members has signed up for the 6-month online A Rocha 'Christian Environmental Mobiliser Course', beginning in October.

Carbon Literacy Course Success



In July this year 4 members of Bush Hill Park URC took part in the carbon literacy project course.

The 4 members, Martin and Lisa Hamblin and Rev Ruth and Stuart Dewis met over 1 morning and 2 evenings (10 hours) to discuss the course material which was very thought provoking and educational!

After the course the 4 participants submitted what they had learnt about being carbon literate and what they would endeavour to do to change their behaviour in regard to CO2 emissions.

For anyone thinking of doing the course, we highly recommend it because it is a well written course, is challenging and was enjoyed by all those participating.

To find out more about doing the course contact the Green Apostles Team through Colleen at modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Funeral Arrangements - Revd Janet Sowerbutts

The funeral will be held at Taunton Crematorium at 12:40 (BST) on Thursday 24th September. Following the service, you are invited to refreshments at the Rumwell Farm Shop, Taunton. For catering purposes an indication of numbers would be helpful.

The service will also be live-streamed – streaming link as follows:-

Watching Live & On Demand
Website
https://watch.obitus.com

Username
wasu4241

Password
060055

(Obitus will never ask viewers for payment to watch a Live Stream or service recording.)



Members of both congregations of Newland United Reformed Church (URC), located at Katherine Drive, Dunstable, and Crawley Green Road, Luton, gathered for a joyful induction and welcome service for their new minister, Rev Naomi Young-Rodas. The occasion was also marked by the presence of civic representatives, ecumenical partners, and leaders from Luton's diverse faith communities. Each of them, not only shared words of welcome and encouragement to Rev Naomi, but also offered blessings, encouragement and assurances of support to Rev Naomi as she begins her ministry at Newland URC, highlighting the importance of friendship, collaboration and mutual understanding between faith communities.

You can view a short article and pics here:
https://www.grassrootsluton.org.uk/news-events/2026/9/14/rev-naomi-welcomed-to-newland-urc

What's On



Racial Justice Event for Advocates and Activists- Thames North Synod



You are invited to this event. Please invite others too. Sandra (Convener of Thames North Advocates) would value knowing if you would like to add your name. Thank you!

When: Saturday 19 September 2026 from 10.30am to 2.30 pm
Where: Lumen Community, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS
Lunch is included

Programme

- Worship
- Listening to experiences of ministers from overseas, now working in churches in our Synod - **Revd. Margaret Ali**
- Discussion involving all of us including our Synod Moderator about the role of Advocates in our Synod.
- 'Singing truthfully, finding words for racial justice in worship- Revd. John Campbell'
- Developing our knowledge and understanding of the URC work on Reparations, **Revd Dr. Tessa Henry-Robinson**
- Information concerning URC Global Ministries (Windrush, Jason Arday, + ?????)

We also have a poster, headed (Unconditional Love)

Contact Sandra Ackroyd **Phone**: 020 8558 5270 or 07790 792818
Email: sga322@gmail.com

WCC World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel



Please find some useful resources for use during the WCC World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel between 20th & 26th September: https://urc.org.uk/your-church/church-local-and-global/commitment-for-life/israel-and-the-occupied-palestinian-territory/

The persistent failure to secure a lasting solution to the conflict between the Israeli state and Palestinian people deepens inequality and poverty. Violence and despair persist. Christian Aid has been working with the poorest people in the region since the early 1950s.

Today it works with more than twenty Israeli and Palestinian organisations to protect human rights, access services, and build peace based on justice for all. Its development and humanitarian relief reaches Palestinians and Israelis; Jewish, Muslim, Christian and secular.
The latest report on inequality in Palestine and Israel, authored by Christian Aid's William Bell, can be found here:

- Where is Palestine? A story of loss, inequality, and failure

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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

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

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.



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.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.

URC nominated Trustee on the Board of Westhill Endowment

The URC is looking for someone with a passion for faith-motivated community projects, inter-faith cohesion, and religious education to serve as a URC nominated Trustee on the Board of Westhill Endowment.

You can see the ad here in the 'volunteer positions' section of the URC Jobs page:
https://urc.org.uk/jobs/ with more details and all the documents (Job Advert, Person specification, Job description, Prospectus for New Trustees).

URC Representative on World Day of Prayer National Committee (Voluntary Role)

Closing date: Tuesday 15 September 2026

At the heart of the United Reformed Church (URC) lies a strong commitment to active ecumenical partnership and global Christian unity. We are looking for someone with a passion for prayer and ecumenical unity to serve as a URC representative on the World Day of Prayer National Committee for England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

The World Day of Prayer service is held annually on the first Friday in March. There are approximately 1,500 local branches which hold about 3,000 services each year. It is part of the international World Day of Prayer movement with over 100 countries and islands involved. Representatives are expected to be able to commit to an initial 3-year term, followed by a further 2 terms if willing (max. 9 years).

Why volunteer with us?
• Make a Global Impact: Connect with a worldwide movement active in over 120 countries, while helping allocate vital charitable grants funded by service offerings globally.
• Enrich Your Spiritual Journey: Immerse yourself in worship materials, theology, and lived experiences shared by Christians from countries around the globe (such as Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Italy).
• Build Ecumenical Bridges: Form deep friendships and collaborate creatively with committee members representing different Christian traditions across the UK.

• Grow Your Skills: Gain valuable hands-on experience in publishing, proofreading, workshop facilitation, Bible study leadership, and charity governance. (Mentoring and training are provided to help build your confidence!)

More information:
Job advert
Job Description
Person Specification

If you're interested in volunteering for this role or would like more information, please contact Victoria Blunt, Convenor of Nominations Committee at nominations@urc.org.uk

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http://urcthamesnorth.org.uk/

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