The United Reformed Church

Thames North Synod
NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 24 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

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

On Sunday the Moderator received a warm welcome as he led worship at Trinity Church, Enfield, a URC/Methodist Church. The theme was ‘Enough is enough’ continuing to mark the Season of Creation.





Last Saturday the Rt Revd Andrew Rumsey was installed as the eleventh Bishop of St Albans in a packed Cathedral. The Moderator along with other ecumenical and other faith guests greeted the new bishop as part of the service





On Sunday 20 September Natasha Appiah was commissioned as a Locally Recognised Worship Leader in the North Lea Valley Pastorate.

The photograph shows Natasha with Revd Mark Robinson at Broxbourne URC following the commissioning service. It was a joyful occasion for Natasha, her family, the church and the wider pastorate, as we celebrated her call to this ministry and this new stage in her service within the URC.



On Tuesday 8th September at Westminster, The Gather Movement together with Zoe Franklin MP presented the report Heart of the Neighbourhood – How the church is providing essential services in every part of the country.

The report highlights the significant impact churches have in our communities. The report noted of the 1,632 participating churches there was a staggering 12,840 initiatives covering mental health, food security, children and families and housing and homelessness being run by local churches.

The event was attended by a number of URC members including Geoff Felton, Michael Hopkins, Mike Thomason and George Watt. Highlighting the good work that is happening nationally the report had no specific denominational focus and drew on a wide range of ecclesial traditions.

A Certificate of Achievement Awarded to GRASSROOTS Luton at the Prestigious National Diversity Awards 2026



Community engagement programme GRASSROOTS Luton has been awarded a **'Certificate of Achievement'** at the National Diversity Awards 2026, recognising its long-standing contribution to building understanding, peace and stronger relationships across Luton's diverse communities.

Commenting on the recognition, David Jonathan (Johny), Director GRASSROOTS Luton said it reflects the collective efforts of the many volunteers, faith leaders, Luton Council of Faiths, Near Neighbours Programme, Luton Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police, and Luton residents who have worked together over the years to make Luton a more connected and welcoming place for all.

And GRASSROOTS could not have worked without the contributions and the financial support from our key partners, including;
Luton Council of Faiths | Near Neighbours Programme | The C of E Diocese of St Albans | The Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire Methodist District | The Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton | The United Reformed Church Thames North Synod.

These partners have supported the work of GRASSROOTS Luton for almost three decades.

The National Diversity Awards, now in its 15th year, celebrate individuals and organisations that champion diversity, equality and inclusion across the UK.



A Note from the Green Apostles

Living Water
Season of Creation 2026

Immersion in Living Water
EZEKIEL 47:9, 12



An outdoor lido is not everyone's cup of tea. But swimming in one on this sunny mid-September morning, I was struck by how wonderful it was to be in the "heated" water, front-crawling alongside the other swimmers. There is something wonderfully liberating about being outdoors and immersed in water.

The verses chosen for this year's Season of Creation take us to the river in Ezekiel 47. Ezekiel sees water flowing from the sanctuary, bringing life wherever it goes:
"Where the river flows everything will live." **Ezekiel 47:9**

Trees flourish beside it, continually bearing fruit, their leaves bringing healing. Everything depends upon the water flowing from its source. Perhaps there is an invitation here for us. We are part of creation, not separate from it. We depend upon clean water, healthy ecosystems and the abundance of the earth — gifts which we are also called to cherish and protect.

And we too need to return to our source.

This Season of Creation, make some space to immerse yourself. In actual water, if you fancy it! Or soak yourself in the living water of the Spirit: through worship, the Word, prayer, a podcast, a walk, or simply being still.

Receive from the source — and consider how the life we receive might flow outwards, bringing life and healing to God's creation.

Sacha McArdle, Synod Green Team
Photo by Robert Anderson on Unsplash



Disability Awareness Sunday



How will you mark **Disability Awareness Week 20–27 Sept '26?** Get the free resources.

Every part of the body United, Needed and Honoured

1 Corinthians 12 shares a truth that the Church is not complete without disabled people. Becky Tyler, a young wheelchair user who was on BBC Songs of Praise (6 Sept 2026) says: 'Let's overcome our fears and have more conversations about including disabled people in church life, because we have a lot to offer and you are missing out!'

So, join Triona Brading, a young autistic author, who's calling on churches in the UK to mark **Disability Awareness Sunday 2026.** The official date is **27 September** 2026, but you can celebrate on any Sunday. Hold your own DAS event or join in the national events including **20 Sept's CofE online service and the 36-hour prayer chain from 26–27 Sept**.

Get **free resources** from charity Through the Roof and let's be **'One Body, Many Parts'**!

Church Action on Poverty Sunday

Hi,

This is Gavin from Church Action on Poverty. Many of you kindly shared a small note from us back in April about Church Action on Poverty Sunday.

The resources are all now available, and I wondered whether you might share this little snippet too, in your Churches Together group newsletters or social media? We've had a very encouraging response so far, but would be delighted to attract even more sign-ups.

Resources for Church Action on Poverty Sunday on 18th October are now available.

The theme this year is Food, Faith and Fellowship, and more than 120 churches have registered so far. Available resources include art resources; suggested hymns, prayers and sermon notes; posters; and tabletop conversation cards and placemats for churches hosting lunches. Resources can be accessed at www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/resources

Gavin Aitchison from Church Action on Poverty says: "It's been fantastic seeing so many churches signing up this year, including many taking part for the first time. It is shaping up to be an enjoyable and really thought-provoking day of worship, reflection and fellowship."

Very best wishes and thank you for all of your ongoing support!

Gavin Aitchison
Communications and storytelling coordinator
Church Action on Poverty
church-poverty.org.uk
Facebook: churchpoverty
Bluesky: @church-poverty.org.uk

What's On

Rivers of Bengal and East London on November 11th



Dear Friends
Last year I invited a lot of you to a fringe event, where I did a photo presentation during the Season of Bangla Drama.

This year, I am taking part in a similar presentation on Wednesday November 11th. It is called "Rivers of Bengal and East London" and it will be held at Queen Mary University BLOC One cinema. This is close to Mile End Tube Station.

The doors will open from 5.30 pm and there will be pop up Exhibitions of photos both of rivers in different part of Bengal, but also of rivers flowing around East London. Here is a link to the event.
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rivers-of-bengal-and-london-by-peter-musgrave-and-friends-tickets-2001172123692

Any of you would be most welcome to join me again. Many of you also supported me to put on the event. Although it says doors open at 6.00 pm, I am hoping that you can come into to look at the photo exhibition from 5.30pm.

The photos will be curious about the beauty of the rivers flowing through Bangladesh, but will also be concerned about implications of climate change, flooding and the pollution of Rivers - both in Bangladesh and in East London.

There will also be one or two river songs and a chance to share your thoughts with other there too.

You can find more about the Season of Bangla Drama which is on throughout the month of November and always has lovely interesting events to attend.
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/a-season-of-bangla-drama-2026-lb-tower-hamlets-7313572131

Please come if you can and let others know about it too



Sight Loss Sunday



Sight Loss Sunday is an initiative by Torch Trust, an organisation dedicated to enabling blind and partially sighted people to encounter Jesus, grow in their faith and thrive in Christian community. Sight Loss Sunday is a great opportunity to celebrate those who are blind and partially sighted in our congregations and communities; and to equip the church to achieve it's aim of welcoming all of God's people. Even if there is no one in your church who you can currently think of that has sight loss, the RNIB suggest that one in five people will live with sight loss in their lifetime. As we seek to reach out to the world with the good news of Jesus, having churches that are welcoming and accessible for those with sight loss is a demonstration of God's love in action.

This year, Sight Loss Sunday will be taking place on Sunday 11th October 2026.

There are lots of ways that you can mark Sight Loss Sunday – through a full 'Sight Loss Sunday service' or including sight loss in other aspects of church life e.g. in the prayers. Our website has a wealth of Sight Loss Sunday resources that you can access to assist you in this, organised into four different themes.

· **Is seeing believing?** Resources which look at the many and various gifts people with sight loss have which can be used to enrich their church
· **Made in God's image.** Resources with a focus on how blind and partially sighted people are unique and valuable and made in the image of God
· **Walking by faith, not by sight.** Resources which remind us that we don't need to have sight to be able to have faith in God and journey with Him

· **Who does God call?** Resources which look at God's call on our lives and how God doesn't see sight loss as a barrier to leading and serving We would love churches to celebrate Sight Loss Sunday with us on 11 October but if that date doesn't work for you, the resources can be used at any time of the year.

If you would like any more information about the work of Torch Trust and how we can support you as you welcome those with Sight Loss, please do have a look at our website www.torchtrust.org or get in touch slfc@torchtrust.org

SUNDAY 4th October 6.30pm

Live "Choral Music in Motion"
A unique & deeply enriching audience experience in this glorious church



All are Welcome!
Free entry: Donations to LCRF

Please Join us
& kindly publicise to:
Friends, at Church & on Social Media!

United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship Visit to Italy May 2027

The **United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship** is organising a visit to the Waldensian Valleys on the Italian/French border, with the possibility of a further few days based in Parma visiting Methodist Churches in Emilia-Romagna. It is possible to participate in either or both of the two parts of the trip.

The visit to the **Waldensian Valleys** will last one week, from **May 6th to May 13th,** and will cost around **£600 per person** in a shared room or **£700 per person** in a single room – plus travel to and from the United Kingdom.

The centre we will be using is the *'Foresteria Valdese'* at Torre Pellice, in the historic 'heartland' of the Waldensian Church, about 35 miles southwest of Turin, in the Cottian Alps. We shall be spending the week learning about the history of the Waldensian Church and its current activities, as well as enjoying the beautiful surroundings. A set of good walking shoes is advised for our travels in the Waldensian Valleys. Local travel will be by coach, but some short(ish) walks – some of them up and down hill – will be involved.

The second part of our trip is still at the planning stage, and more information, including costs, will be available in November. We hope to be staying at a hotel in **Parma** over the Pentecost weekend – **May 13th to May 18th** – with visits to the Methodist churches in Bologna and Cremona.

Some participants may wish to spend longer in Italy and others may wish to travel by rail rather than by air; so we leave it up to you to decide how and when you arrive – and how and when you return. If enough people arrive or depart together, or at a similar time, using the same airport (such as Milan Linate), a coach will be organised. We are happy to advise on travel arrangements.

If you are interested, please contact John Bremner bremner.johns@gmail.com or tel. 078 8075 5378 as soon as possible.
A booking form will be sent in the near future.

Come and See …. Get to Know …… and Participate!!

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

Kevin Mayhew's "No Organist? No Problem" - 10 CDs - very little used. Contact jeanwyber@aol.com

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.

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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