



## THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

**Welcome to our News Roundup for 26 March 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

**Presiding at Holy Communion - Initial Training for Elders seeking Authorisation** on Saturday 28 March 2026 from 10:30-12:30 at Lumen.

**Ministry Enquirers - Learn what God might be asking of you** webinar on 11 April 2026 on Zoom at 9:30am to 12:30pm email: [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk)

**Playful "Liturgy": A Theology of Worship for a Postmodern World** on Date: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026. Time: 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Richard Goldring for further information: [rgoldring23@gmail.com](mailto:rgoldring23@gmail.com)

**Godly Play UK Conference 2026** 5-6 June 2026 at St Andrews Church, Rugby. Information and booking [here](#).

**Limitless Festival 2026** on 5-9 August 2026 at Stafford Showground. [mdoandrew@urcwestmidlands.org.uk](mailto:mdoandrew@urcwestmidlands.org.uk) or [mdosally@urcwestmidlands.org.uk](mailto:mdosally@urcwestmidlands.org.uk)

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

### **Meetings of Synod Dates/Venues -**

17 October 2026 Venue: TBA

**Please note:** Synod meetings are usually on the 3rd Saturday of March and October.

## News & Information

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### Installation of the New Archbishop of Canterbury



It was good to see Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson taking part in the installation of the new Archbishop of Caterbury, Dame Sarah Mullally. Tessa serves as a URC minister in East London, Moderator of the Free Churches Group and one of the Presidents of Churches Together in England.



The Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly has expressed deep alarm and concern following the unacceptable arson attack on ambulances operated by Hatzola, a non-profit charity providing free medical transportation to the North London community.

Catriona Wheeler said that the United Reformed Church stands in prayerful solidarity with UK Jewish communities at this distressing time. Any act of violence or intimidation directed toward a faith community is an affront to the dignity of all people. It is a direct contradiction of the values of justice, compassion, and peace to which we are all called. As a Church committed to reconciliation, peace, justice, and to the flourishing of all communities, we unequivocally oppose such acts.

Through our ongoing interfaith relationships and partnerships, we have come to value deeply the trust, friendship, and shared witness we hold with our Jewish neighbours. When one community is targeted, all of us are diminished. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to stand alongside the Jewish community in both word and action.

We also recognise the confusion and speculation that can arise in the aftermath of such incidents. In light of this, we call on the police and relevant authorities to conduct a full, transparent, and thorough investigation.

It is essential that the truth is established clearly, both to ensure accountability and to counter harmful narratives or misinformation. Such clarity is vital in offering reassurance, restoring trust, and safeguarding community cohesion.

We pray for those affected, for the safety and wellbeing of all faith communities across the country and call for a renewed commitment

across society to reject hatred in all its forms. May we continue to work together for a future marked not by fear, but by mutual respect, understanding, and peace.

To donate to Hatzola, you can donate directly: [hatzolanw.org/support](https://hatzolanw.org/support)

or via a fundraiser  
[www.charityextra.com](https://www.charityextra.com)

[www.gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com)

Statement on the URC website: <https://urc.org.uk/urc-stands-in-prayerful-solidarity.../>

## Cheshunt



On Sunday afternoon the Moderator presided at a service of thanksgiving for the life and witness of Cheshunt Free Church over 144 years. Stories were shared by three people including two young people of how the church had shaped their faith. The congregation have made the decision to amalgamate with nearby Broxbourne URC.

The minister, Revd Mark Robinson, welcomed members past and present along with a previous minister and two local leaders. The Mayor of Broxbourne, Councillor Patsy Spears, was also in attendance.

A foundation stone, dated 1889, indicates that it was part of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion that had a training college in Cheshunt. In 1921 the church became a Union Church when it joined with a Baptist congregation. In 1972 members voted to join the URC.



## Meeting of Synod Saturday 21 March 2026



The Moderator presented three Locally Recognised Worship Leaders with certificates at the meeting of Synod last Saturday. Margaret Jenkins,

Lynn Harvey and Rosemary Milns completed the Aspiring to More course and assessments. They have been commended by the Synod and will be commissioned in their home churches. *Photo left to right: Julian Templeton, George Watt, Margaret Jenkins, Lynn Harvey and Rosemary Milns.*

We also welcomed Oli Smith as the new Lumen Manager and Revd Isabella Senior as the Pioneer Minister at The Hyde in Colindale. Synod concurred with the decisions made by the congregations of St James (Buckhurst Hill), Muswell Hill and Letchworth Free Church to close, and Cheshunt Free Church to amalgamate with Broxbourne. We gave thanks for the faithful worship and witness of the congregations in those places.

A resolution was passed asking General Assembly to recognise four mission projects in the Synod - Seedbeds (Manor Park), Lumen, The Hyde (Colindale) and Island House (Isle of Dogs).

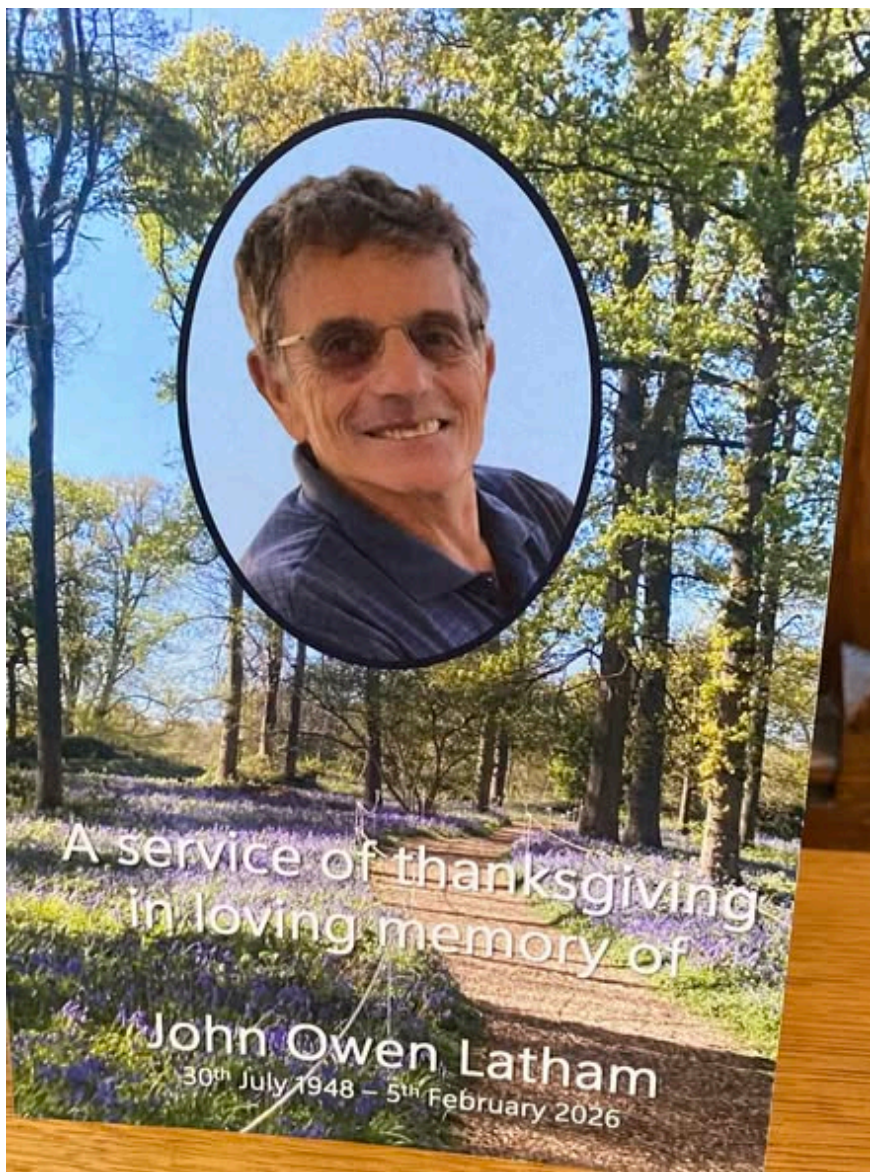
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## Hounslow



Last Sunday the Moderator led worship at Hounslow United Reformed Church. The service was an opportunity to give thanks for the life of John Latham who died in February after a short illness. John had served as Local Leader for over 2 years until last year. There were moving tributes to someone who had touched the lives of the congregation over many years having previously been a frequent visiting preacher.

Appropriately the Gospel reading was the raising of Lazarus when we are told that Jesus wept because of the death of his friend but also declared 'I am the resurrection and the life.' It is a story of grief, love, faith and hope.



## Racial Justice and Reparations

**REV DR TESSA HENRY-ROBINSON**  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH &  
MODERATOR-ELECT OF THE FREE  
CHURCHES GROUP



At the Synod on Saturday the Moderator referred to an excellent talk on reparations given by Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson at the 2025 Churches Together in England Forum.

You can see it by following this link. Her talk begins after about 10 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOGCBiCITLM>

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## Green Team Lent Reflection



Earlier in Lent, one of the URC Daily Devotions focused on the Parable of the Ten Virgins. I must admit, I felt rather sorry for the five foolish ones. While their wiser companions may have been prepared, they didn't seem very kind. Not only were they reluctant to share their oil, but it also appears they hadn't offered advice or guidance to the foolish virgins—or perhaps their counsel had been ignored.

Beyond the spiritual message the parable imparts, there's a sound maxim for everyday life: *"Fail to prepare, and prepare to fail."* Since becoming involved with Eco Church and learning more about climate change, I've become increasingly convinced that this is a maxim we all need to embrace.

I am particularly drawn to the simplicity of the 5 Marks of Mission, especially number 3: "*Tend to human need with loving service.*" What gave the wise virgins their edge was their forethought—they considered all possibilities, including the worst-case scenario, and were prepared for it.

That's why I wholeheartedly commend the newly available *Carbon Literacy for Christian Congregations* course. This is an excellent resource, providing congregations with knowledge and tools to understand climate change and empowering them to take meaningful action.

The course materials are free, and the Synod has pledged to cover the cost of certificates. It also meets one of the requirements for Eco Church. For more information, please email Colleen at [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk).

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## Planning Works in Your Church? A Friendly Reminder

It's always encouraging to see churches taking good care of their buildings, whether that's small maintenance jobs or larger building projects. As you start to plan any works, it's worth keeping a few simple insurance considerations in mind to help everything run smoothly.

If your project involves a formal building contract (such as a JCT contract), it's important to be aware that there are specific insurance requirements that usually come with this type of work. It's always worth making sure these are properly in place before anything gets underway.

For more general works, there are a few good practices to follow. Do check that your contractor has **adequate Public Liability Insurance** in place — ideally sufficient to cover the rebuild value of the church. It's also really important to have a **risk assessment and method statement (RAMS)** in place, to help keep everyone safe while the work is going on, especially if the building remains in use. Alongside this, do make sure the building is kept **secure and watertight**, and think about whether any contents need to be moved or protected while works are taking place.

A quick but important point to be aware of - where **scaffolding is in place**, insurers usually apply an exclusion for theft of external metal

(such as lead). Full cover is reinstated once the scaffolding is removed, so it's worth being particularly mindful during this time. And finally, if your building is going to be unoccupied at any stage during the works, do take this into account, as it can affect insurance arrangements. If in doubt at any stage, or if you'd like to talk anything through, please do feel free to get in touch with your insurers or the Synod Property Team — we're always happy to help.

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## What's On

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# Expressions



Mill Hill East Church  
Salcombe Gardens, London NW7 2NT



**THEME: TO BE LOVED  
AND TO LOVE**

## Music & DANCE



**MARCH 28  
7:15PM - 9:00PM**

11 - 18 yrs



# Expressions

| 7:30-9:00PM |

MILL HILL EAST CHURCH, SALCOMBE GARDENS,  
NW7 2NT

Expressions is a new space for young people to explore life, faith, and creativity together. Each session offers something different — from art and music to conversation and reflection.

## 2026 Dates

28th March - Music/ Dance

23 May - Poetry and Drama

11 July - Photography/ Videography



A creative youth night

Art | Faith | Friendship | Snacks Provided

11 - 18 yrs

# Presiding at Holy Communion

Initial Training for Elders seeking Authorisation



**Saturday 28 March 2026**

10:30 AM - 12:30 PM, in person

Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place  
London WC1H 9RS

Initial training in the theology, liturgy and practice of Communion Presidency is offered to Elders who have the support of their local church.

Upon completion of initial training, Elders will need to seek Authorisation from their Local Area Group.

Led by:  
Julian Templeton  
Training and Development Officer

To register, email:  
[\*\*training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk\*\*](mailto:training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

To register

# Church Leadership Programme (CLP) Taster

## Reflective Practice & Sustaining Leadership

- Explore your call through reflective practice.
- Discover how Luther King and the URC can inform your leadership.



Online via Zoom



6 May 2026  
7:00pm-8:00pm



Sign up for free!



[learning@lutherking.ac.uk](mailto:learning@lutherking.ac.uk)



[lutherking.ac.uk/courses/CLP](https://lutherking.ac.uk/courses/CLP)

We are writing to let you know about our upcoming Church Leadership Programme (CLP) online information session on 6 May at 7pm. I have attached a flyer. Please forward this email to anyone who you think might be interested and don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Information about the Church Leadership programme can be found on our website. Church Leadership Programme - Luther King

**Date:** 6 May 2026

**Time:** 7pm-8pm

**Location:** Online via Zoom

To sign up, [fill in this form](#). (or email [christine.hufton@lutherking.ac.uk](mailto:christine.hufton@lutherking.ac.uk))  
If the above hyperlink doesn't work, copy and paste this link into your search bar: <https://forms.office.com/e/RS3Qh7ECCV>  
We would be delighted if you could join us.

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*Webinar*

# Ministry Enquirers

## Learn what God might be asking of you

Join us in thinking about God's call to:

Stepwise, Worship Leading, Lay Preaching,  
Lay Pioneering, Ministry with children and young  
people, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or  
Church Related Community Work.

Email us for joining details: [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk)

**11th April on Zoom**  
**9:30am - 12:30pm**



# Playful “Liturgy”: A Theology of Worship for a Postmodern World

Speaker - **Revd Dr Charisa Hunter-Crump**

Charisa currently serves as the Training and Development Officer for the Southern Synod. She was ordained in 1993 by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and has served in pastorates in the Eastern Synod of the URC, and with congregations of the Christian Church in Lakewood, Evergreen, Thornton, and Lafayette Colorado. She has a particular interest in postmodernism, Christology and liturgy/worship, reflected in her doctoral research on *A Christological Deconstruction and Reimagination of Liturgy in the Local Congregation*. Charisa writes, “In this presentation I will consider why a playful and communal approach to our creation of worship is critical for the times in which we live and how this might be approached in the local congregation. I will also consider why ‘liturgy’ may be a more helpful concept than worship for this approach.”

**Date: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Time: 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. via Zoom**

If you have not yet registered with the Theology of Worship Group and may be interested in attending this meeting, please contact Richard Goldring for further information: [rgoldring23@gmail.com](mailto:rgoldring23@gmail.com)

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Friday 29 May - Sunday 31 May 2026  
Whitemoor Lakes, Staffordshire

Cost: £75 (£30 deposit  
required at booking)  
Age: 11 (must be in Year 7)  
to 16 years

**Thames North, Southern & West Midlands  
Synod Youth Residential 2026**

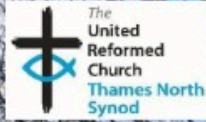


**“WISE WORDS”**



Book by 22 March  
[www.bit.ly/residential2026](http://www.bit.ly/residential2026)

Outdoor Activities  
Creative Workshops  
Games  
Discussion  
Worship



Thames North Synod URC

# Eco Day

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> 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 information email: Colleen Fraser at [modpa@thamesnorthurc.org](mailto:modpa@thamesnorthurc.org)

### Thames North Synod Eco Day: Nature on Our Doorstep

Saturday, June 13th, 2026 | 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM

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

Join us for the Thames North Synod Eco Day at Amersham Free Church! We're looking forward to welcoming fellow churchgoers for a day of eco-themed workshops and discussions. The church is a 10-minute walk from Amersham Station (Metropolitan and Chiltern lines). There is also parking available, with easy access via the M25.

Please contact Colleen Fraser at [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk) to let us know you're attending and to help us plan for lunch. Booking details will be provided later.

#### Programme Highlights:

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

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

**Workshops on eco topics:** drawing plant life, caring about hedgehogs, energy saving in our buildings, gardening, and hymn writing.

**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 there will be a space for younger ones to play.

We look forward to spending the day with you!

Please [click here](#) to download a poster to display in your church – Thank you!

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***Please ask YOUR Church  
to help LCRF raise the final  
£1,250 of our 2026 Lent Appeal!***

Dear friends,

♥ Despite the huge generosity of so MANY  
LCRF supporters we still  
**need to raise £1,250**

*to reach the £25,000 target we have  
set for our May 28th Grants Round!*

**Please can you ask your Church to  
kindly make a donation, or hold a  
collection, to help LCRF bridge the gap?**

**To DONATE please Visit [lcrf.org.uk](http://lcrf.org.uk)  
or request LCRF bank details for transfer**

***and THANK YOU! on behalf of the thousands of  
people seeking asylum in London fleeing from war,  
oppression, & famine, who will receive food, travel  
cards, phone credit, nappies, hygiene items and  
emergency payments thanks to an LCRF grant !***

***(All the work of the Charity is undertaken voluntarily by  
the trustees - we have no staff or office - so nearly every  
penny we receive goes towards our grants)***

# Safeguarding Training 2026

## Synod Safeguarding Training

### ADVANCED

Part 2 Mon 30th Mar 10-12.30  
(both sessions are required to be attended)

There is a new Safeguarding Training Framework which was agreed at the most recent General Assembly, as well as a document highlighting the key changes in the training framework which shows who is mandated to complete training may be accessed [here](#) - please take the time to note these as it will have an impact on Ministers, Elders, Children's Workers and Church Safeguarding Coordinators.

You will see that there is a COMBINED safeguarding module. This is the Foundation and Intermediate module in one. If you need to do both modules, that training shortens the amount of sessions that need to be completed. If you *only* need to complete the Foundation or *only* the Intermediate modules, **please do not** book on to that module, but rather complete the Foundation eLearning (link below) and book an Intermediate only date to attend.

There is also national training available for Ministers who need to complete the Advanced level. Ministers will need to have completed the Foundation and Intermediate within the last 3 years prior to attendance on the Advanced training. This training is being facilitated by Carrie Kaunda, the Training Development Officer (Safeguarding) so please contact her directly to book on to that training using the details in the attached document.

I am trialling a new way to book on to training, so if you would like to book on to the advertised dates, please book via this link

<https://forms.gle/yPiNNdikjU7oHUxM8>

Your place will only be confirmed once you receive a follow up email with the link to the Zoom training and slides to attend.

Please note that the Foundation training is now available online via eLearning. You do not need to login to access this training.

This is the link to access the eLearning:

<https://www.urclearninghub.org.uk/course/view.php?id=24> This it takes approximately an hour to complete, and a certificate will be generated and sent to you straight away.

There will be more training dates advertised in due course so please do share this email with those who need to update their training.

If you have questions on what training you need following referencing the framework, please let me know.

Regards

Belinda Herbert



## Minister's Advanced Safeguarding Training

Please email [carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk](mailto:carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk) 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 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 1-3pm and Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 1-3.30pm

[Ministers Advanced Training Booking Form January](#)

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 10am-12noon and Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 10am-12.30pm

[Booking Form for Advanced Training for Ministers March](#)

Wednesday 6 May 1-3pm and Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 1-3.30pm

[Booking Form for Advanced Training for Ministers May](#)

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 1-3pm and Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 1-3.30pm

[Booking Form for Advanced Training for Ministers October](#)



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church  
Safeguarding

[www.urch.org.uk](http://www.urch.org.uk)



# UK Wide Safeguarding Training 2026

Make your booking by emailing: [Emma.Pearce@urc.org.uk](mailto:Emma.Pearce@urc.org.uk)

All training listed below will take place via Zoom

First date	Event
Tuesday 13 January 7:00pm	Domestic abuse
Monday 26 January 7:00pm	Safeguarding for Pastoral Workers and Elders supporting survivors
Thursday 5 February 1:00pm	Refugees and Asylum Seekers Including Modern slavery
Tuesday 24 February 7:00pm	Elders as Trustees
Thursday 5 March 1:00pm	DDC Verifiers training and safer recruitment
Monday 23 March 1:00pm	Substance abuse
Tuesday 21 April 1:00pm	Online Safety
Wednesday 13 May 1:00pm	Safeguarding for Ministers supporting survivors
Tuesday 19 May 6:30pm	Spiritual abuse
Thursday 28 May 1:00pm	Adult safeguarding

Foundation Training can be accessed on the Learning Hub

[Home | URC Learning Hub](#)



[www.urch.org.uk](http://www.urch.org.uk)



From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee



# UK Wide Safeguarding Training 2026

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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](http://www.urc.org.uk)



From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee

## Vacancies

# URC Resources Hub & Helpdesk Coordinator

- London (Hybrid)
- Permanent contract, Full-time, 35 hours per week
- Salary: Circa £38,599 – £40,180 per annum
- Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Wednesday 15 April 2026
- Interview date: Tuesday 28 April 2026

## Job Advert

We are seeking a proactive and organised Hub and Helpdesk Coordinator to oversee the day-to-day operation of the URC Resources Hub and deliver an efficient, user-focused helpdesk service.

In this role, you will be the first point of contact for enquiries, triaging and tracking queries through to resolution and escalating issues as needed. You will monitor Hub performance, flag content and technical issues, maintain service documentation and coordinate closely with the relevant teams and users to ensure a consistent and reliable service. The role also involves preparing regular performance reports and escalating risks or development needs, helping to support continuous improvement of the Hub's operations.

The successful candidate will demonstrate excellent judgement, strong risk awareness and confident use of IT tools. You will have outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, the ability to manage a complex workload within the tight deadlines and the confidence to act on your initiative when appropriate.

This is an excellent opportunity for someone who thrives in a service-oriented digital environment. We offer you a flexible and friendly hybrid work environment from the Office of General Assembly in London and from home.

## Apply for this post

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please read the job description and complete the job application form.

- [Job description \(PDF | 149kb\)](#)
- [Job application form \(Word | 975kb\)](#)

Send the completed job application form to: [recruitment@urc.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@urc.org.uk)  
Please note, we do not accept CVs.

If you would like to keep your inbox clear, please feel free to unsubscribe at the bottom of the page.

This email was sent to {{ contact.EMAIL }} You received this email because you are registered with URC Thames North  
<http://urcthamesnorth.org.uk/>



[Unsubscribe here](#)