The United Reformed Church

THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 27 August 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

URC Holiday Forum on 23-28 August 2026 at The Hayes.
Please visit our website: **http://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk**

Grange Park URC Annual BBQ on Saturday 29 August 2026 from 1pm to 5pm. More information at 07944 871 416

Celebrating Season of Creation - Reflection and Action Day for Wildlife on 5th September 10am - 4pm at St Albans URC https://buytickets.at/stalbansunitedreformedchurch/2298589

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

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

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

Death of Tony Alderman

I am sure you will be deeply saddened to hear the news from St Johns New Barnet that their Member and former Church Secretary, Tony Alderman, died at Barnet GH earlier this month, having lost his long battle with multiple health issues. More will be said about all he has done for the church and the community in due course but for now, we pray for his family, as they, like us, begin to come to terms with 'Life without Tony'.

We are grateful that Tony's suffering is over and we commend him to God's loving care and protection.

In thankfulness for all that Tony has achieved in his life, may he now rest in peace and rise in glory.

A Thanksgiving & Memorial Service to celebrate Tony's life will take place on **Thursday 10 September 2026 at 2pm** at St John's URC, New Barnet.

The Committal service for close family only, will have taken place earlier on the same day.

Refreshments will be served after the service in the Large Hall at St John's. The family have agreed for the service to be relayed on Zoom and details of this invitation will be shared in due course.

Season of Creation



At a time of climate crisis, the United Reformed Church has embraced the celebration of the Season of Creation. 1 September - 4 October. Reflections and worship notes available at https://bit.ly/embracecreation

DBS Rule Change for Volunteers & Some Other Supervised Workers

From **1 September 2026**, an important DBS rule change will affect organisations that use volunteers and some other supervised workers to teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children.

The change **removes the existing supervision exemption from regulated activity with children**. This means that the fact that volunteers are supervised will no longer automatically keep an otherwise qualifying role outside regulated activity.

Further guidance is here, including what constitutes a 'volunteer', and the type of check volunteers will need in line with new regulations.



Christmas is fast approaching - the bookshop is now taking orders for the Advent resource. This year's resource will comprise of an Advent calandar, little characters to colour in, cut out and stand up inside the calandar to create your own nativity. There are suggested activities and questions to help explore Jesus birth aswell as an accompaning humorous story book – They should have used a camel.
bit.ly/AdvenT2026

What's On

transforming conflict • embracing difference
place for hope

Place for Hope is offering the following new day courses. They are available to attendees from the United Reformed Church at no cost: just select the "partnership ticket" option.

Responding to Polarisation: October 3rd, Union Chapel, London (Book here)

- This one-day course equips learners to understand and respond constructively to growing polarisation within churches and the wider communities they serve.
- Developed by Place for Hope with input from Alison Goldsworthy, co-author of Poles Apart and lecturer at Stanford University, it combines expert-led learning with guided reflection.
- Participants will explore the causes and impacts of polarisation, develop practical approaches for bridging divides, and build confidence in navigating difficult conversations and relationships.

Rebuilding Faith Communities: Post-Incident Recovery and Culture Change, October 21, Glasgow, venue tbc (Book here)

- Designed for those leading or supporting faith communities after a serious incident, this course focuses on restoring trust, strengthening relationships, and creating safer, healthier cultures.
- Through a blend of expert input and reflective practice, participants will gain an understanding of post-incident recovery, community dynamics, and the practical steps needed to support positive culture change.
- The course aims to build confidence in leading recovery processes with care, accountability, and resilience.

One Body, Many Voices: Peacebuilding in Diverse Communities, October 22nd, Augustine United, Edinburgh (Book here)

- This course supports faith and community leaders to foster inclusion and respond effectively to conflict in diverse congregations.
- Combining practical learning with personal reflection, participants will explore the causes of tension, develop skills in inclusive communication and collaborative problem-solving, and learn approaches that encourage constructive dialogue.
- The course helps leaders build confidence in creating environments where difference is valued and communities can thrive together.

Place for Hope also has a number of bitesized courses running over the next few months looking at various topics around understanding and engaging conflict. More info can be found here: https://www.tickettailor.com/events/placeforhope

Those who need assistance with the cost of travel can apply to the Training and Development Officer, email: training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk



If you haven't yet booked your place, there are still spaces available to join us at **Chelmsford Cathedral** on **Wednesday 30 September 2026** for a special evening of worship, celebration and hope.

📅 **Date**: Wednesday 30 September
🕑 **Time**: Service at 5:15pm followed by panel event at 6:30pm
📍 **Venue**: Chelmsford Cathedral, New Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1TY

Everyone is welcome to join for all or part of the evening. The event is free, and light refreshments will be provided, but **please book to help us with numbers for catering**.

Book your place.

4 October 2026: People's Emergency Briefing Film



On 1 May 2019 the UK parliament became the world's first national parliament to declare a climate and ecological emergency. The National Emergency Briefing (NEB) was a high-level, non-partisan event taking place at Central Hall, Westminster on Thursday 27 November 2025. It was a unique response to the worsening climate and nature crisis, bringing together 850 invite-only guests from politics, business, finance, culture, faith, and the media. Eight world-leading experts gave an unfiltered and concise assessment of the latest science. Where we are, where we're heading, and what we can do, in a single authoritative account.

This film of the event is being as widely distributed as possible. **yourchurch** has been asked by the NW Synod to put on a URC-wide screening during our 4 October service to ensure that people who are not able to attend a local showing are able to watch online. This is part of service to the wider church and communities, and is an example of the

way in which being an online church gives us unique mission opportunities as a church. It forms a vital part of our commitment to addressing the climate emergency as one of our 2026 mission priorities. Please make this one of your own priorities, and invite friends and families.



🎨 From Gaza to London: Painting Through the Trauma 🕊️Introducing Fayza—an extraordinary human, brilliant art therapist, and an outstanding Palestinian artist widely known as the Phoenix of Gaza.

Fayza's life was shattered early in the genocide when her husband, a dedicated doctor, was killed. Forced to flee to Cairo with her 5-year-old triplets, she turned her profound grief into a sanctuary for others. Over the last 2.5 years, she has dedicated her life to teaching widowed mothers and orphaned children from Gaza how to use paint as a tool to process and survive their deep trauma.

Her own art serves as a visual journal—a powerful testament to living life

under genocide while stubbornly offering light, hope, and survival to those around her.

After a deeply moving, successful 4-day exhibition in Colchester, Fayza's historic work is arriving in London for a month-long collective showcase.

📍 Where: Brixton Library, Brixton Oval, London, SW2 1JQ

🗓️ When: 6 August – 6 September 2026

🖼️ Exhibition: Margin Art & Media: 'Art & Politics – Part III Internationalism – Art as an Expression'

Come witness a profound living testament to resilience. Stand in solidarity with Palestinian voices, see the incredible journals of survival, and support the Phoenix of Gaza.

2027 URC Yearbook

The 2027 yearbook will include all information present in the database as at 31 October 2026, so please remember to enter changes or to let Colleen know at modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk The synod yearbook will this year again be available in both hardcopy and electronic format.

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

---

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/

Sent with Brevo

Unsubscribe here