The United Reformed Church

THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 29 October 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

Theology of Worship - Liberation Theology in Worship on Tuesday 3 November 2026 7:30- 9:30 p.m. via Zoom rgoldring23@gmail.com

Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) Conference from 23-25 November 2026 at Highgate House. Book with Eddie at disc.enab@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Love Thy Neighbour at St Dionis, Parsons Green London Saturday 24 October • 9 AM - 6:30 PM

Creative Week 26-30 October 2026 at Kench Hill Centre, Tenterden, Kent TN30 7DG cydo@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

JPIT 20 years' service in the Chapel at Methodist Central Hall Westminster, in London, on Monday 2 November 2026, at 4pm. Book

Ministry Enquirers on Saturday 7 November 2026 on Zoom, 9:30am - 12:30pm. ministries@urc.org.uk training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Preaching Paul: bringing the letters of Paul to life for our day on Saturday 21 November 2026 10:30am - 12:30pm at Lumen lpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Aspiring to More Taster Sessions on Tuesday 24 November 2026 7:30-9:30pm via Zoom or Saturday 5 December 2026 10am-1pm at Lumen Book training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Elders seeking Authorisation to Preside at Holy Communion, Initial Training on Saturday 28 November 2026 2:00-4:30pm at Lumen

Meetings of Synod Dates/Venues -

20 March and 16 October 2027 venue TBC

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

Information and News

THAMES NORTH SYNOD YOUTH Youth, Community and Belonging in Luton

By Stan and Ore • URC Thames North Synod Youth Representatives

Our visit to Newland URC in Luton gave us an opportunity to explore how churches and community organisations can work together to support young people and strengthen local communities. The visit was hosted by David Jonathan (aka Johny), who oversees the Grassroots Programme in Luton. As Synod Representatives we were accompanied by Lorraine, the synods' Children and Youth Development Officer (CYDO).

Through worship, conversations and meeting young individuals of the Luton and Dunstable communities, we saw the importance of building relationships, promoting social interactions and creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds to work together. The day also gave us a chance to share our work as Synod Youth Representatives and our commitment to encouraging young people's voices and participation in church life.

As Synod Youth Representatives, we were particularly interested in how these approaches could help us improve youth engagement across our communities. The visit reminded us that supporting young people involves more than organising activities; it means listening to their voices, nurturing their leadership and creating spaces where they feel valued and included.

We left feeling encouraged to explore stronger partnerships with other churches and amongst other young people in the Synod, turning our faith into practical action that makes a difference. We are grateful to Newland URC and the Grassroots programme for their hospitality and for sharing their experiences with us.

And a Report from David Jonathan (Johny) on the Visit

Two youth representatives from the **URC Thames North Synod**, accompanied by the Synod's **Children and Youth Development Officer**, recently visited **GRASSROOTS Luton** for a day of learning, reflection and community engagement.

The visit began at **Newland URC**, where the group joined the Sunday congregation for worship centred on the theme of light. Drawing on Isaiah's call to be "a light to the nations" and Jesus' declaration, "I am the light of the world," the service encouraged worshippers to reflect on how faith opens our eyes to the needs of the world and inspires service rooted in God's love.

During the service, the youth representatives shared how they seek to represent the voices of young people across the Synod, encourage participation in church life and build connections between congregations. They spoke about youth gatherings, leadership opportunities, and Synod-wide events.

Following worship, the visitors toured key parts of Luton. In **Lewsey**, they viewed colourful children's peace artwork displayed on lamp posts, celebrating friendship, hope and community harmony. In **Bury Park**, they learned about the area's rich cultural diversity, heard stories of interfaith relationships and community resilience, and visited the site of the former **Bury Park URC**.

A highlight of the day was meeting **Pastor Lloyd Denny**, Pentecostal minister, Deputy Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, former chaplain to Bedfordshire Police and the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, and author of the *Denny Review* on health inequalities. Drawing on his extensive experience in faith and civic leadership, Pastor Denny spoke about community cohesion, the **Luton in Harmony** campaign, interfaith engagement and the vital contribution churches can make to public life.

Reflecting on the visit, the youth representatives Stan and Ore said: "What stood out for us was seeing faith lived out beyond the church walls. Hearing how churches, community leaders and people of different faiths work together for the common good showed us how Christian witness can make a real difference in society."

The URC Thames North Synod's Children and Youth Development Officer Lorraine Downer said, "The visit offered an inspiring insight into how churches, community organisations and local leaders are working together to build stronger, more connected communities across Luton."

The day concluded with generous Luton hospitality, while continuing conversations about faith, youth leadership, and community service.

With best wishes,

David Jonathan (Johny)






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(VEG & NON VEG)
Uber Eats



London Churches Refugee Fund

Christmas Cards and Welcome Gift Cards 2026



"Joy Peace and Warmth" this charming image was painted for us by a refugee friend who is a community member of a refugee project, regularly supported by grants from LCRF"

"Finding Sanctuary - Mary and Joseph arrive at the stable": This intimate Christmas scene was painted especially for us by artist Alastair Burn, a supporter of LCRF.



LCRF supports destitute asylum seekers in London
Buying our Christmas cards and Welcome gift cards makes a real difference to the lives of those in desperate need

Two beautiful Christmas cards - see images above

Welcome gift cards - purchased on behalf of family and friends help destitute refugees with phone credit, food, and warm clothing as you offer the gifts of friendship, hope, and love

A stunning Wall Print - "Flight to Egypt"

To see the full range and buy safely on line, go to:
https://LCRF.onlineweb.shop (Thank you!)

What's On

The United Reformed Church

Theology of Worship Group

exploring the practice and nature of worship today

Exploring
Reflecting
Living

Liberation Theology in Worship

Speakers: Two members of the Planning Team, **Elisa Gusmão and the Revd Dr John Burgess.** Following an overview of Liberation Theology, the presentation will explore how it is relevant for us today and can inform our understanding of, and forms of worship.

Date: Tuesday 3rd November 2026

Time: 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. via Zoom

If you have not yet registered with the Theology of Worship Group and wish to attend this meeting, please contact Richard Goldring by 29 October:
rgoldring23@gmail.com



Register here

Aspiring to More

Locally Recognised Worship Leader Training



The United Reformed Church
Thames North Synod

2027-2028 Course

Thames North Synod is recruiting people who want to learn more about the Bible, theology, worship leading and preaching, beginning in January 2027 for 15 months.

Aspiring to More is a free part-time course delivered via Zoom on weekday evenings, with 5 in-person Saturday Study Days. It can be done either for interest or to become a Locally Recognised Worship Leader with an added mentored Learning by Doing module.

Taster Sessions:

Either:

via Zoom, Tuesday 24 November 2026, 7:30 - 9:30 PM

Or:

in person, Saturday 5 December 2026, 10 AM – 1 PM at Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS

To book your place, contact:

Julian Templeton
Training and Development Officer
training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Book your place

Thames North Preachers' Circle Presents:
Preaching Paul: bringing the letters of Paul to life for our day



Led by Hannah Fytche
An Associate Tutor in New Testament at Westminster College, Cambridge, and is finishing a PhD on 'body of/in Christ' metaphors in Paul's letters. She is a writer (God's Daughters' and 'Rooted in God's Grace', the Bible Reading Fellowship). Hannah preached regularly at her church in Cambridge during her time as a student.

Venue: Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RS
Date: Saturday, 21.11.2026
Time: 10:30 – 12.30pm

During our time at the Preachers' Circle, we will pay attention to the many voices and perspectives on Jesus that Paul's letters reveal to us - perspectives like Chloe's (1 Corinthians 1:11), Prisca's (1 Corinthians 16:19 and Romans 16:3-4), and Lydia's (Acts 16:11-40; Philippians), asking what they contributed to how Paul and others understood Jesus. We'll consider how paying attention to their perspectives shows us new things in Paul's letters we might not have seen before. And we'll explore how we can preach today on Paul's letters with awareness of the many people, both then and now, who are making sense of how Christ reshapes our lives.

Lunch 12.30 -1.30pm followed by Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders Annual Meeting from 1:30 - 2:30pm.

To book your place at this free event, please email, Ola Lawal, **lpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk**

Elders seeking Authorisation

to Preside at Holy Communion, Initial Training





Saturday 28 November 2026

2:00 - 4:30 PM
Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place,
London, WC1H 9RS

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

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

Co-led by:
Julian Templeton
Training and Development Officer

John Campbell
Tutor and Minister

To register, email Julian Templeton
training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Book your place



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

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

Gerrards Cross URC has on offer approximately 50 church chairs. Contact Bill Nelson at dalnabreck@uwclub.net.

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



Safeguarding Training 2026

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.

Vacancies

All URC vacancies may be found **here**.

Convenor of the Faith in Action Committee – United Reformed Church (volunteer)

An exciting opportunity to help lead the work of the URC's newest Core Committee, **Faith in Action**. The Faith in Action Committee brings together the work on mission and discipleship. It guides our staff team in delivering the Assembly's work that covers evangelism and ecumenism, public issues, racial justice and intercultural church, net zero, global ministries and inter faith, ministry with children and young people, intergenerational discipleship, and lay learning. The staff team, based in the Offices of the General Assembly, is focused on serving the synods and local churches through their work.

As Convenor, you will chair the committee, support the team as they develop the Faith in Action strategy based on the 5 Marks of Mission,

take its business to General Assembly and Assembly Executive, and help build a diverse, inclusive membership.

Commitment: Four committee meetings a year, two online and two in person, plus General Assembly, Assembly Executive and Business Committee meetings. Planning or follow up meetings in between. Induction, training and admin support are provided, and expenses are reimbursed.

To find out more or apply go to https://urc.org.uk/jobs/ and scroll down to Volunteer posts where you will find more information and an application form. DEADLINE for applications: 30th November 2026.

Link to application form:
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/u3p2amj2gzlmopdjuuc42/Application-Form-FiA-Committee-Convenor.docx?rlkey=ucyqzk1km345kbarrm7368jir&st=785uv5fl&dl=0

If you would like more information about the role or an informal conversation, please contact jenny.mills@urc.org.uk who is the Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action) or Sarah Lane-Cawte at slanecawte@gmail.com who is the current Faith in Action Committee Convenor.

Lay Worker (Mission & Community)

Keld-in-Swaledale, North Yorkshire
Full Time (35 hours per week) | Fixed Term: 3.5 Years | 37.5k per year

Keld URC, working in partnership with the URC Northern Synod and Lady Hewley Trust is seeking an enthusiastic and committed Christian Lay Worker to develop and lead mission, outreach and faith-based community involvement across Upper Swaledale. The successful candidate will develop innovative projects, retreats, youth and family activities, prayer and discipleship opportunities, environmental initiatives, and partnerships with local churches and community groups. We are looking for someone who:

- Is a practicing Christian with a passion for mission and community engagement.
- Has experience of working with volunteers, churches or community groups.
- Has excellent communication and organisational skills.

- Can work independently and collaboratively.
- Holds a UK driving licence and has access to a car.

This is a unique opportunity to help grow Christian witness and build lasting impact in one of the most beautiful parts of the country.

There is a genuine occupational requirement for the postholder to be a practicing Christian in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010.

The successful applicant will be expected to live within reasonable proximity of Keld to enable effective delivery of the role.
For further enquiries and application procedure, please contact Rev Nadene Snyman at:- teesandswaleurc@gmail.com

Children, Young People and Families Outreach Worker

Palmers Green United Reformed Church in London N13 is looking for a Children, Young People and Families Outreach Worker

We are a small, friendly and welcoming church keen to increase the number of children, young people and families in our church community. You can find out more about our mission and links with the local community on our webpage at https://palmersgreenurc.org.uk

☐ Do you enjoy working with children, young people and families?
☐ Do you want to be part of our ministry to help build our outreach work with children, young people and families?
☐ Do you believe the Gospel is relevant to today's world? If so, you could be the person we are looking for!

Salary: £29,000 - £32,000, depending on experience, with annual review.

The post is initially for 3 years, with a three month probationary period, and the possibility of extension to 5 years following review of progress. This is a full time post at 37.5 hours per week, which must include most Sunday mornings. Other working hours may be agreed with your line manager.

This role is an exciting opportunity to have a real impact on children, young people and families in our church and community, through Junior Church activities and creatitig new initiatives to develop outreach. We are looking for a committed Christian keen to explore the faith with children, young people and families in creative ways.

The successful applicant will be required to obtain an enhanced DBS with barred list clearance and to undertake comprehensive safeguarding training.

To apply: Please email minister@urcsee.org.uk for full job description, person specification and application form.

We anticipate high interest in this position and advise candidates to apply at their earliest opportunity.

Closing date: 31st October 2026

Interviews will take place in mid-November 2026.

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