



The
United
Reformed
Church

THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 5 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

The Upper Room on Tuesday 17 March 2026 at St Pauls URC, Newton Road W2 5LS at 7pm

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

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 or 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 -

21 March 2026 Venue: The Lumen Community
17 October 2026 Venue: TBA

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

News & Information

A Lent Note from Green Apostles



Spring Flowers

Hopefully you are spotting the onset of spring all around now, especially flowers – daffodils, crocuses, magnolia, cherry blossom. Perhaps you are using spring flowers to decorate your church? The Church of England organisation 'Sustainable Church Flowers' encourages everyone to decorate their churches using only locally found plants and flowers. A recent post of theirs encourages people to decorate churches at Easter using only seasonal and local flowers.

There is an Easter tradition of decorating churches with lilies, which is relatively new and has no Biblical basis. Lilies, like many other flowers are forced into flower in heated greenhouses to be ready for Easter. Their use at Easter is linked to their emergence from the soil into the light, symbolising resurrection, although many other spring flowers do so naturally at this time of year, without wasting extra energy. Tulips are

especially colourful at Easter. So if you are using flowers in church during Lent and at Easter, can you be local and sustainable? The Sustainable Church Flowers website has much information to help <https://www.suschurchflowers.com>

And the Church of England General Synod has backed a Diocesan Synod Motion encouraging churches and cathedrals to explore ways of arranging flowers that are both beautiful and environmentally responsible. Watch here.





This is one of the ex Woodford Green URC artefacts that went to St James URC and now needs to find a new home. Its official name according to a fellow member of the URC History Society is a Reredos.

There is also a Nativity set but that is not in season at present. Contact [Colleen](#) if interested.

URC Thames North Trust

Are you a member of a United Reformed Church or an LEP with a URC element? Are you interested in becoming an executive trustee/director?

We currently have vacancies on our board of trustees and would be pleased to hear from you if you believe you can contribute to our aims and objectives. Meeting three times a year (March, June, and November), mainly online, your role will primarily be executive in nature. A team, mainly consisting of the Legal and Trust Officer and the Company Secretary, handles the day-to-day operations of the Trust to ensure its effective management. All key matters and transactions addressed between meetings are reported to the board before each

meeting, allowing the board to recommend appropriate actions to guide and support the final collective decision-making.

We are particularly keen to hear from individuals with a legal, financial, and/or business background. For more information or details on how to apply, please email us at trust@urcthamenorth.org.uk

Commitment for Life News



This is their hope...'

In 2025, Peter Musgrave (Vine URC, Ilford) visited the banks of the River Jamuna. 'I always thought climate change happened on the coast of Bangladesh, but this visit showed me that it is in fact happening much further inland.'

The Jamuna River is huge and is continuously eroding, removing large slices of land on one side and then depositing the silt further downstream. Gosaibari town is 5 km from the Jamuna River. But river erosion has destroyed Nickil and Rani's home four times already.

'Nickil and Rani are holding a seedling in their hands,' says Peter. 'This is their hope. They keep some for themselves while they sell others in the bazaar.' Nickel and Rani run a demonstration plot where local people can learn and copy vegetable gardening suited to climate adaptation. A big thanks to avid Commitment for Life supporters like Peter!

What's On



Sunday 8th March
at 6.00 pm

Inclusive Communion Service

followed by refreshments

Join us at Open Table Wanstead
on the SECOND Sunday of every month.

Open to LGBTQIA+ people and allies of any
Christian tradition and none.



Wanstead United Reformed Church
Nightingale Lane, London, E11 2HD

You are more than welcome here

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

To register

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"

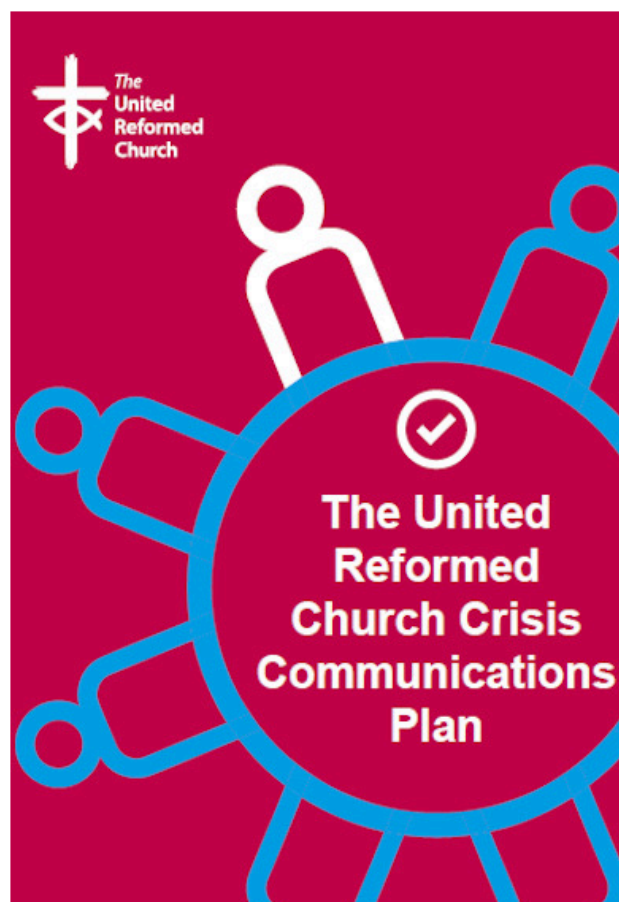
Outdoor Activities
Creative Workshops
Games
Discussion
Worship

Book by 22 March
www.bit.ly/residential2026

The United Reformed Church Youth



URC Crisis Communications Plan



The URC Crisis Communications Plan has now been updated and is available on the website.

The plan sets out how we respond and communicate in the event of a crisis affecting the United Reformed Church. We've taken the opportunity to review and refresh it to make sure it reflects current practice and learning, and that roles, processes and key contacts are clear. You can read and download the updated plan here:
<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/church-guides/church-crisis-communications-plan/>

Please do take a few moments to familiarise yourself with it. If you have any questions, or would like to talk anything through, please do get in touch with me. If helpful to know, the Comms person covering weekend out-of-hours for the month ahead is as follows:
27 Feb - 1 Mar / Andy Jackson
6-7 Mar / Laurence Wareing
13-15 Mar / Ann-Marie Nye
20-22 Mar / Laurence Wareing
27-28 Mar / Ann-Marie Nye

The number to call to reach any of us out-of-hours is: **07976 753 950.**

Post Easter Prayer

Wednesday 15 April · 7–8pm · Zoom

After walking through Lent in John's Gospel,
we gather again in the light of resurrection.

A simple, reflective hour of prayer and shared hope and
gentle

Please bring a small palm sized stone and permanent pens,
paint or paint markers.

All are welcome.



Dear friends

As part of our Eastertide journey together, we'll be hosting an online ecumenical prayer gathering on Wednesday 15 April from 7–8pm (link below). This will be a simple and reflective hour of shared prayer and gentle creativity as we continue to live in the light of resurrection. During our time together we'll be using a small palm sized stone as a prayer focus, so please bring a small stone (light in colour is best) and permanent pens, paint (acrylic is best) or paint marker to draw on it. There's no artistic skill required, just a willingness to pause, pray, and mark something of hope into this season.

Click <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81028349565?pwd=UmGFhvWnI2Xpm2RvC2PMlwwIbSL4ne.1> to start or join a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Holiday Forum



We hope you are all keeping well and are putting the woolly jumpers and thick coats away ready for these warmer days ahead.

We write to you with a reminder that we have several discounts available to reduce the cost of attending Forum - there is a 10% discount for new people and those who haven't attended Forum in the last 5 years. We'd love to see some new faces and to welcome back old friends. (Please see the link above for further information on when the discount can be applied).

We have also re-attached a copy of our new Holiday Forum poster for you to print out and hopefully pass to friends, family and your local churches. As our Forum Family changes, we are aware that our numbers are dwindling and if we cannot keep numbers up to a viable level this may affect the future of Forum. Therefore, the more we can promote the wonders of Holiday Forum, the more new (and returning) people we can encourage to join us. A few years ago, Michael Harvey spoke to us about the power of invitation and there has never been a better time to encourage as many of us as possible to invite people to join us.

We look forward to seeing you online for Holiday Forum in a Day on Saturday 21st March (more details on that coming soon!)

[Link to booking form](#)

Vacancies

Here is the link to the URC's job page: <https://urc.org.uk/jobs/>

Safeguarding Training 2026

Synod Safeguarding Training

COMBINED (FOUNDATION & INTERMEDIATE)

Wed 18th Mar 10-12pm

INTERMEDIATE

Thursday 5th Mar 6.30pm-9pm

ADVANCED

Part 1 Mon 23rd Mar 10-12pm

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 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](#)

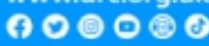
Wednesday 6 May 1-3pm and Wednesday 13th May 1-3.30pm
[Booking Form for Advanced Training for Ministers May](#)

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 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.urc.org.uk



From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee

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](#)