THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 6 November 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

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

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

On Sunday 25 October the Moderator commissioned Hannah Henderson as an Elder in Local Leadership at Clapton Park United Reformed Church in Hackney. The Church has a wide age range and so he told the parable of the Good Shepherd using Godly Play to set the scene.

The church is a warm, diverse fellowship with a passion for justice and serving the community. Another Elder in Local Leadership, Sue Agyakwa from Bromley-by-Bow brought greetings from the wider church. It is good to see the growing number of Elders in Local Leadership serving in the Synod.









Trinity URC, Upminster









Trinity United Reformed Church, Upminster celebrated their 225th Anniversary with a service and tea. The service was led by their minister, Revd Brian Buschkill. The preacher was Revd Stephen Newelll, (the son of a previous minister) who preached his first sermon there when he was 16. The service included two hymns by Revd Dr Brian Wren who grew up in the church. The Moderator shared greetings from the Synod.

Bush Hill Park URC



Wonderful new cross made by Men in Sheds who meet on our premises. Thank you!

Safeguarding Letter October 2026

Download here

Report - Our Changing Climate

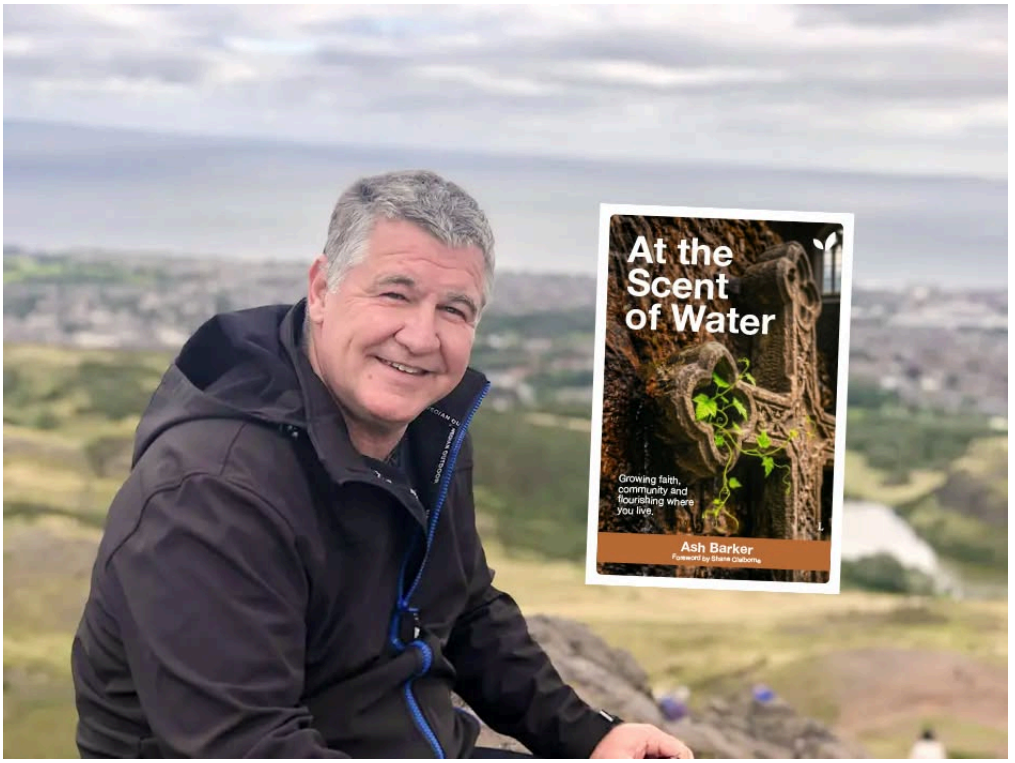


The recent weather events in this country and abroad have helped to highlight the need for urgent action to reduce the detrimental effects of climate change.

In November 2025 the National Emergency Briefing (NEB) brought together leading experts to present the latest evidence on the climate and nature crisis to politicians and other influential people in Westminster.

In order to bring climate issues to the attention of the wider public a 50-minute documentary film was produced known as the 'People's Emergency Briefing.' The film has been made available at a number of venues and Valerie and I attended the screening at the Wyllyotts Theatre in Potters Bar on 27th September 2026.

To read the rest of this report



Ash Barker is at **Lodge Road Community Church**.

Are you ready to flourish where you live?

After 35 years of living and working from within local communities around the world, I share a message of hope, renewal and transformation in my new book, 'At the Scent of Water'.
A reminder that even in the hardest places, new life can begin.

Get the book:
https://bookshop.org/.../at-the-scent.../ac7101e0e1c6b292...

Birmingham Book Launch — 13 November, 6 pm
Free tickets:
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/.../book-launch-for-rev-dr...
Discover how your community can flourish:
Take the free 8-minute Local Leaders Readiness Survey:
https://local-readiness-survey.scoreapp.com

A missional gardening club







This story went live on Monday on the URC Latest News pages. You can find it here then click on the story to read the whole piece: Community News & Stories | United Reformed Church.

And I meant to say, also, that the video is available to you simply clicking on the link in the main article. So go to Creating a wildlife-friendly garden - United Reformed Church and then click on the sentence about the video: Watch this YouTube video to hear Peter tell the story of the Vine Gardening Club.

Grassroots leader rejects MPs divisive claims



Newland URC and Director for both Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots, **has rejected claims by Blake Stephenson MP, a Tory shadow Home Office minister**, that there are "no-go zones" where “white people won’t go” in Luton. "Such descriptions do not reflect the reality of the Luton that we know and serve," said Johny, responding to the claim. "For more than 35 years, we have worked alongside people of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds, building relationships, fostering understanding and strengthening community cohesion across our town.

[At the end of September] hundreds of people from different faiths, ethnicities and backgrounds, including white people, walked together in Luton’s 30th Annual Peace Walk and they all felt welcomed in the areas that have been inaccurately characterised as “no-go zones”. Johny called on all to reject such narratives that create fear, division or hostility, and instead to work together to promote understanding, inclusion and good relations between all who call Luton home. Read Johny's reflections on 25 years of inter-faith relations in Luton in the latest edition of Reformed (Issue 7/2026).

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!)

We made it onto the Piccadilly billboards! Massive thanks to YouVersion



Did you know that 270,000 people see the Piccadilly Circus billboards every day? 🤯

Last week, one of those screens was ours. In partnership with YouVersion, and as part of Global Bible Month, LICC appeared in the heart of London, in front of people just getting on with their day.
Join us in praying that the campaign encourages ordinary people to open the Bible, perhaps for the first time, and see how it connects with their Monday to Saturday lives.

Find out more

What's On



LGBTQI+
Remembrance Service
and Communion
Sunday 8th November
at 6.00 pm
followed by refreshments
Wanstead United Reformed Church
Nightingale Lane, London E11 2HD

Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) November Conference

23 to 25 November 2026 at Highgate House

Leading your Church into Growth

There are still places available to book for the **Leading Your Church into Growth (LyCiG) Conference**, and I would encourage you and the leadership teams from your churches to consider joining us.

This is a valuable opportunity for learning, reflection, and encouragement.

More importantly, LyCiG is about helping churches grow spiritually and numerically. Its focus is not simply on getting more people through the door, but on becoming healthier, more faithful, and more effective disciples of Jesus Christ. As LyCiG often reminds us, the goal is **not more, but better**: deeper discipleship, stronger relationships, greater confidence in sharing faith, and congregations that are better equipped for God's mission.

If you have been considering attending, now is the time to book your place. We would love to welcome you and to share together in what promises to be an inspiring and encouraging event.
Please contact **Eddie at disc.enab@urcthamesnorth.org.uk**

The conference is 23rd to 25th November at Highgate House, Northampton.



Youth Assembly 2027



Early Bird places are available for the 2027 URC Youth Assembly until 6 December. Youth Assembly will take place at King's Park in Northampton, 26-28 February, when the theme will be "Peacemakers, Peacebuilders". Open to Year 10/S3 up to age 25 incl. £135.00 for a place until 6 December - after that, £165.00 until the deadline of 24 January. Contact your church or synod for help with funding if required. To register, go to URC Youth Assembly at Linktree or email children.youth@urc.org.uk

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025: Martyn's Law

Following on from the success of our webinar on Martyn's Law last week, we are pleased to confirm that the Community Security Trust are running the webinar again for those who were unable to attend. This time the webinar is being run in partnership with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) who will be leading the Q&A at the end. We strongly advise that as many churches attend at least one of the webinars so they understand the implications of this new piece of legislation, as well as start thinking about what practical steps they can implement.

The webinar will be taking place on Thursday 3rd December at 10am GMT. Details on the webinar and the link to register can be found on the Resources Hub here. Please do share with your Synod staff members and local churches as I know there were a number of people unable to attend the previous session. If you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.


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
7th November on Zoom,
9.30am – 12.30pm
The United Reformed Church

Presiding at Holy Communion

Refresher Training for Authorised Elders





This will be a hybrid event held on:

Saturday 28 November 2026, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

either:

In person at:

Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9RS

Or:

Via Zoom

The refresher will invite Elders to reflect on their practice of presiding and learn from the reflections of others

Co-led by:

Julian Templeton
Training and Development Officer

John Campbell
Tutor and Minister

To register, email:
training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

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

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.

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