



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

## THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

### Welcome to our News Roundup for 7 May 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

### **Thames North Preachers' Circle Presents: Pastoral Care in Practice** at Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RS

Date: 09.05.2026

Time: 10:30 – 4:30pm [lpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:lpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

**Buildings for Mission Forum Webinar** on Tuesday 19 May 7.30pm.  
[Register for the webinar here.](#)

**Presiding at Holy Communion - Refresher Training for Authorised Elders** on 30 May 2026 at 10:30am in person at Lumen WC1H 9RS

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

**Synod Eco Day 2026** on Saturday 13 June 2026 10:30am - 4pm at Amersham Free Church Woodside Road HP6 6AJ. Book with Colleen at [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

**Free to Believe Conference 2026** at Highgate House  
Wednesday 17 - Friday 19 June 2026

**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](#).

**Church Action on Poverty Sunday** on Sunday 18th October 2026,  
[church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://church-poverty.org.uk/sunday)

## Meetings of Synod Dates/Venues -

17 October 2026 Venue: TBA

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

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## Join A Church With People at the Margins' second webinar



**David Jonathan MBE**

**Vicky Longbone**

**Mike Hart**

THANK YOU to all those who have signed up to attend the second webinar in the 'A Church with People at the Margins' series taking place on Monday 11 May at 7pm.

There's still time to register to attend. Please register to receive joining details. If you can't find the joining details in your emails, follow the link to register 'again' and you'll receive a reminder.

Our second webinar is all about knowing your community. How do we really get to know our neighbourhood? Where are our blind spots? How do we better understand our place and calling within the community in which we are placed? What practical steps can help us notice, listen to and walk alongside those around us?

The event will feature three speakers:

### **David Jonathan**

David (known as Johny) is the Director of a multi award winning community engagement programme called GRASSROOTS in Luton. He has been working for 25 years alongside churches and diverse faith communities to advance justice, peace, and reconciliation. There'll be an opportunity for breakouts to reflect on what you've heard with others and plenty of time to ask questions.

### **Vicky Longbone**

Vicky has been a Church Related Community Worker for the URC since 2017 and serves Ashbourne Road Church and Mackworth United Reformed Church's Derby Alive to Community (A2C) project.

### **Mike Hart**

Mike Hart is Transformation Director for North Western Synod. With a background in accountancy, Mike now leads North Western Synod's strategy to create a network of local churches working not just for their communities but with the people in these communities who experience disadvantage to enable them to live their lives with dignity, agency, and power.

Register for "Knowing your community", the second session in the A Church with People at the Margins webinar series, hosted by URC Public Issues.

**When:** 11 May at 7pm

**Where:** Zoom

Pre-register at <https://urc.org.uk/webinar-series-a-church-with-people.../>

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## **A Million Acts of Hope**



Drown out division with A Million Acts of Hope - across Wales, Scotland and England, URC congregations, community groups and projects show up for people in their neighbourhoods every day. As part of the national A Million Acts of Hope week of action, taking place on 13-20 May, the URC wants to celebrate these acts of care, kindness and connection. Read more at [www.urc.org.uk/hope](http://www.urc.org.uk/hope)

*Photos: Community Projects in URCs in Shotton, Ilford and Leeds/Andy Jackson*

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## Community Payback Projects

A message from **Venerable Dave Middlebrook**  
**Archdeacon of Bedford**

I was wondering if I could ask your assistance with an ecumenical across the churches in Bedfordshire, and send some information around to your

contacts.

I am the link person for faith and the Eastern Region Prison and Probation Service, and one role is to encourage faith groups to consider how they could support and encourage ex-offenders.

We know that a positive encounter with churches and other faith groups whilst on probation, or having recently been released from prison, helps in rehabilitation and prevents ex-offenders from slipping back into bad habits and the previous relationships that led to people become entangled in drink, drugs, and crime. In addition a number of offenders encounter faith while in prison, through the hard work of the prison chaplains, and they need help in growing their faith once they are released from prison.

There are three prime ways that faith can play their part:

**Welcome:**

Encourages churches to sign up to the "Welcome Directory" ([The Welcome Directory](#)) which designates faith communities that welcome and support ex-offenders. In a church context a conversation can be held with the relevant denominational Safeguarding Team around risk management when a known ex-offender comes to church to ensure any risks are minimised and managed. I suspect other faith groups will have a similar arrangement.

**Community Payback:**

Many churches and places of worship already benefit from Community Payback, where a team of supervised individuals, on probation, come to the church to carry out agreed tasks (e.g. grounds maintenance, painting, ...). This can be on a regular or one-off basis. I would encourage faith communities not just to see this as 'cheap labour' but as mission and offer hospitality (tea, coffee, toilets, conversation) to the work team. Attached is a brief article, with contact details, if you want to know more.

**Speaker:**

Have a speaker come to a meeting or act of worship on behalf of the local or regional prison or probation service.

A useful links could be:

Faith Advisor for the Probation Service Chaplaincy and Faith Services – Kashmir Garton – [Kashmir.garton@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Kashmir.garton@justice.gov.uk)

The above may be able to speak, or suggest a speaker, to raise awareness.



We want to encourage better engagement with probationers supervised by the Prison and Probation service. Community Payback is a good opportunity for churches to welcome the workforce and thank them for the work they have done and helping the people to feel valued. One way of doing this is to invite probationers to be involved in churchyard maintenance, ground clearance, etc. The Prison and Probation service says they *"rely on these to help our People on Probation complete their UPW hours as painlessly as possible"*.

For Hertfordshire, please contact Nicolette Rawlings  
[nicolette.rawlings@justice.gov.uk](mailto:nicolette.rawlings@justice.gov.uk)

In Bedfordshire are Jacqui Layne, Bedford area  
[Jacqui.Layne@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Jacqui.Layne@justice.gov.uk) or Pam Gray, Luton area  
[Pam.Gray@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Pam.Gray@justice.gov.uk)

The service is happy to receive project requests direct to them by email but here is the link for any Churches to nominate a project if outside of these areas or if it is easier for them to fill out the form on the web site.  
[Nominate a Community Payback project - GOV.UK](#)

## Buildings for Mission Forum Webinar - Tuesday 19 May 7.30pm

*Webinar*

### URC BUILDINGS FOR MISSION FORUM

# What is our Mission?

*Join us as we explore  
what joining in with God's  
activity can look like*



**19 May 7.30pm**



### **What is our Mission?**

Join us as we explore what joining in with God's activity can look like .  
Register for the webinar here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/buildings-for-mission-forum-4814853?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=creatorshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=odclxcollection&utm-source=cp&aff=escb>

# Presiding at Holy Communion

## Refresher Training for Authorised Elders



**Saturday 30 May 2026**

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

Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place  
London WC1H 9RS

Elders who have been authorised to preside at Holy Communion are expected to refresh their training every three years.

This refresher will assume that Elders already have experience of presiding and wish to reflect on their practice and learn from the practice of others.

Co-led by:

Julian Templeton  
Training and Development Officer

John Campbell  
Tutor and Minister

To register, email:

**[training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)**

[Book here](#)



Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants – including Christians fleeing persecution in their home country – have found welcome and nurturing in local congregations in the UK thanks to the Welcome Churches network. The blessing goes both ways, as churches discover the joy of befriending new individuals and families.

Could your church be added to the Welcome Churches network? It's free to join, and the team offers trauma-informed support to help the experience be safe and uplifting for everyone involved.

Our Welcome Churches webinar on Wednesday 10 June (7-8pm) will explore the positive impact that being part of Welcome Churches has had on member churches and migrants. Hear for yourself the power of connecting newcomers with a local congregation to reduce isolation, share faith and promote flourishing.

[Please register to attend the Welcome Churches webinar.](#)

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## What's On

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**COMBINED**  
**SAFEGUARDING**  
*training*

**TUES 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY**  
**2026**

**1.30PM- 4PM**  
**ST ALBANS URC**  
**HOMEWOOD ROAD, ST ALBANS AL1 4BH**

EMAIL:  
**SAFEGUARDING@URCTHAMESNORTH.ORG.UK**  
TO BOOK

# SYNOD SAFEGUARDING

*training*

## JUNE

WED 17<sup>TH</sup> 6-8.30PM- INTERMEDIATE

TUES 23<sup>RD</sup> 2-4.30PM INTERMEDIATE

THURS 25<sup>TH</sup> 6-8.30PM INTERMEDIATE

## JULY

WED 15<sup>TH</sup> 6-8.30PM COMBINED

MON 20<sup>TH</sup> 10-12.30PM COMBINED

THURS 16<sup>TH</sup> 10-12PM ADVANCED PT 1

THURS 23<sup>RD</sup> 10-12.30PM ADVANCED PT2

## AUGUST

WED 12<sup>TH</sup> AUG 10-12PM COMBINED

## **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**



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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](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](mailto: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](mailto:emma.pearce@urc.org.uk)

21<sup>st</sup> May – 1pm

9<sup>th</sup> July – 10am

8<sup>th</sup> September – 10am

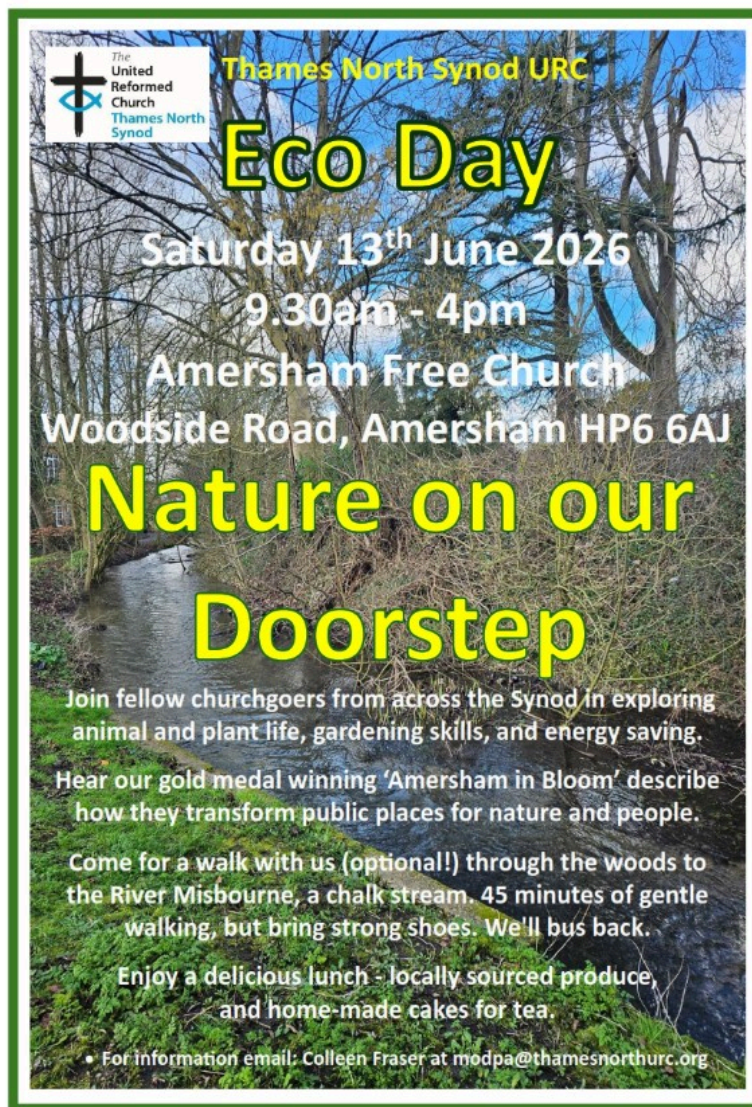
8<sup>th</sup> October – 7pm



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





## **Thames North Synod Eco Day 2026**

**At:** Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham HP6 6AJ

**On:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2026 - 10.30am - 4pm

**Theme:** 'Nature on our Doorstep'

**Key Speaker – Michelle Catanach and the Amersham in Bloom Team**, speaking on 'Transforming Public Places for Nature and People'

*There will be a wide range of workshops for those on, or considering starting, the Eco Church Journey. A draft programme can be found [here](#). If you have any particular topics you would like information on, please let us know. If you would like to share the story of your Eco Church journey, either as a workshop or a display, we would be delighted to hear from you.*

*Please include this information in your church newsletters.*

*Spaces are limited so please book early by emailing Colleen Fraser [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk) or via the online [Booking Form](#).*

**NB** The last date for registration is Thursday 4 June 2026 as the admin team will need an idea of numbers by then to finalise catering.

We would find it helpful if people could **indicate what workshops they would be interested in booking.** The list of workshops on offer is below and it would be particularly helpful if you could indicate whether you are interested in the afternoon accompanied walk so that we can allocate you to other workshops in the morning.

(We are expecting all the workshops, except the Using the Nature App one, to be repeated in the afternoon as an alternative to the walk).

**Our Workshops. To be held from 12 noon. Choose one.**

Most of them can be repeated in the afternoon for those who would rather go to a workshop than do the walk. TBC

**Pop in and Paint** (Closely observing and drawing flowers) - *Carey Room*  
with Joy John

**Caring about hedgehogs** - (with webcam footage) *Hall Vestibule*  
with Richard Winter

**Gardeners Question time** - *Sanctuary* with Peter Musgrave

**Hymns** – creating new hymns to familiar tunes - *Wesley Room* - with Ian Green

**Energy savings for buildings – simple and practical steps** -  
*Owen Room* - with Andrew Mills and Sacha McArdle

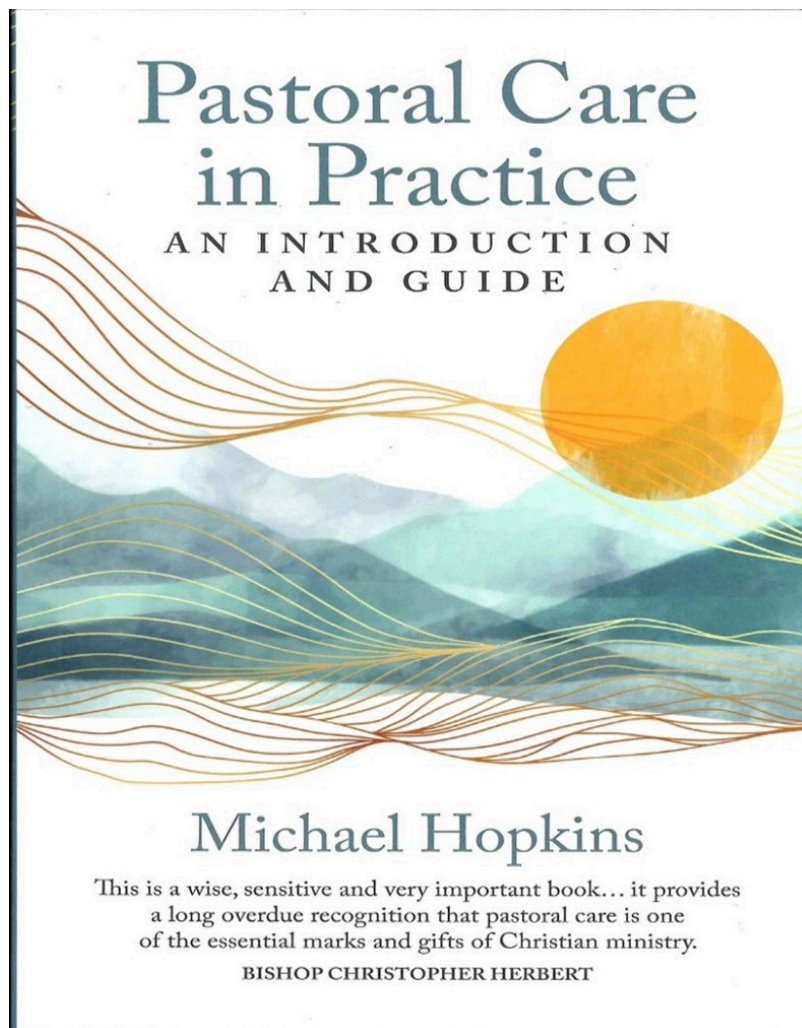
**Using the Nature App on our phones** - *vestibule and outside*  
with Anna Barrett



**Revd Francis Ackroyd**, who will kindly be presenting a workshop, needs a lift to Amersham, either all or part of the way. He lives in Ilford, but would be prepared to drive to your home/church to meet part of the way, as it is too long a journey for him to do all the way from his home to Amersham. Please contact me, Colleen, at [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk) if you're able to help him.

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# Thames North Preachers' Circle Presents: Pastoral Care in Practice



## ***Led by:***

### **The Revd Dr Michael Hopkins**

Moderator of Wessex Synod

Clerk of the URC General Assembly 2014-2024

**Venue: Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RS**

**Date: 09.05.2026**

**Time: 10:30 – 4:30pm**

A day for lay preachers, worship leaders, elders and members to explore some practical and spiritual aspects of our provision of pastoral care. Lunch included.

**To book your place** at this free event, indicating any food intolerances or allergies, please email, Ola Lawal, [\*\*lpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk\*\*](mailto:lpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

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# Safeguarding Training 2026

## **June**

Wed 17th June 6-8.30pm Intermediate

Tues 23rd June 2-4.30pm Intermediate

Thurs 25th June 6-8.30pm Intermediate

## **July**

Wed 15th July 6-8.30pm Combined

Mon 20th July 10-12.30pm Combined

Thurs 16th July 10-12pm Advanced pt1

Thurs 23rd July 10-12.30pm Advanced pt2

## **August**

Wed 12th Aug 10-12pm Combined

## **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>

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# Building Bridges Across Generations

Empowering Communities Through Intergenerational Workshops

## 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](mailto: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.org](mailto: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 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](#)



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

 The United Reformed Church Safeguarding

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



From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee



# UK Wide Safeguarding Training 2026

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



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



From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee

## Vacancies

# Advert: Mission Enabler, Leaside Church, Ware

**Part-time** – 18 hours per week (flexible, including some evenings and weekends)

**Annual salary** (at 0.5 FTE) – £12,600 – £17,000 pa depending on experience

- ***Can you come alongside our town centre church to develop practical mission opportunities in partnership with the congregation?***
- ***Do you have the skills and experience to build stronger links between church and community centre users helping meet users' needs?***
- ***Are you confident working alone and building the team you need with local volunteers?***

We are seeking a person who is experienced in mission and outreach to work with us within an urban / suburban setting in the town of Ware in Hertfordshire. The role will be based at Leaside Church which is a URC/ Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership.

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 Part 1; Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement that the post holder be a Christian. Work will be split between engagement on the church premises and wider outreach within the town and local area. Office and administrative work can be carried out from home. Willingness to travel will be expected within the local area (e.g. to churches in neighbouring towns: Harlow, Hertford, Bishop's Stortford) and will enable engagement with those in similar roles working across the Synod and Methodist District for training and fellowship.

An application pack can be accessed via the Synod website:

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

or by emailing Elizabeth Stockdale

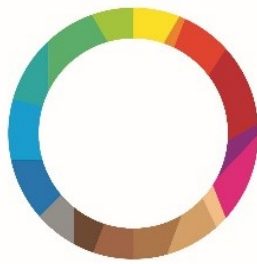
on: [elizabeth.stockdale@perfectgroundssolutions.co.uk](mailto:elizabeth.stockdale@perfectgroundssolutions.co.uk)

Only completed application forms will be accepted. No CVs.

**Closing date for applications is 4pm on May 28th**

**Interviews** are expected to be held on the afternoon of Friday June 5th 2026; applicants will be notified by Monday June 1st.

As part of the interview, you will be asked to discuss your previous experience in mission and outreach and to outline some practical mission opportunities that you think would be appropriate in Ware. These discussions should allow you to display the essential knowledge and skills and abilities listed in the person specification.



American  
International  
Church

American International Church is looking to add to our receptionist team to support our busy building with commercial events, church activities and community outreach every day.

We are seeking candidates with a friendly, professional manner; reliability; good communication skills; helpfulness; spatial awareness; confidence engaging with people from diverse walks of life; and attention to hospitality and security in engaging with members of the public.

Employment is casual, with shifts set in advance based on building needs. The building is usually open seven days a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., with shifts generally a minimum of five hours. Weekend and evening availability is a must. Hourly pay at London Living Wage.

Minimum Qualifications: at least 18 years of age; physical requirement to move chairs and tables, lift delivery boxes, and walk stairs frequently; basic computer usage to handle email and MS Word documents. undergo the church's safer recruitment process, including a DBS check that confirms suitability for working in a position of trust.

Full job description available [here](#).

Please send letter of inquiry or resume to [info@amchurch.co.uk](mailto:info@amchurch.co.uk).



**Children and Young People's Worker at Hampstead Garden  
Suburb Free Church**

Based: London, NW11

Contract: Fixed term (3 years), full-time

Salary range: £30,000 to £32,000

Applications close: Monday 1 June

Interviews: week commencing 15 June

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<http://urcthamesnorth.org.uk/>



[Unsubscribe here](#)