



## THAMES NORTH SYNOD NEWS ROUNDUP

Welcome to our News Roundup for 6 February 2025.

Please circulate this widely so that the great events and opportunities here can benefit as many as possible.

Please note that this newsletter will be going out every Thursday from the beginning of 2025 as I will be working Monday to Thursday from 1 January.

### Events

**Synod Resources Day for Secretaries, Administrators and Treasurers** on Saturday 8 February 2025 from 10am online and at Lumen Centre. For more information and to book contact Colleen at [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

**Racial Justice Sunday** on 9 February 2025

**Holy Communion Presidency Training for Authorised Elders**

via Zoom, 7:30 to 9:30 pm on either Friday 7 February 2025

Or Monday 10 March 2025. Contact: Julian Templeton, Training and Development Officer Email: [training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:training@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

**Talking about...Holiday Clubs** 27 February 7-8pm Online Book [here](#)

**URC Youth Assembly** 7 - 9 March 2025 Kings Park Conference Centre NN3 6LL [Book here](#)

### News

## Assembly Executive



Assembly Executive 2025 has concluded. For your round-up of the business discussed, decisions made and new appointments, please see <https://ow.ly/ro2j50TUCn>.

## Visit to Prague



*From left to right: the Moderator, Revd Sujeeth Kumar, Revd Sohail Ejaz, Alzbeta and Michael, (representative from the Czech church to attend the Spring School in May 2025, UK)*

Thames North Synod's Revd Sujeeth Kumar (Vine, Gants Hill and Barking URCs) represented the synod at the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) Ministers' Conference at Prague last month.

He reports: I would like to thank the synod for giving me the opportunity to represent Thames North Synod at the Minister's Conference at Prague. It was a meaningful time to learn about the wider church and mission and ministry. I had the privilege to meet many other ministers and representatives from other countries as well. Neil Thorogood led one session about the life of the URC in the UK. Sohail Ejaz and I thank God for the privilege and opportunity given to us to experience and learn from other churches.

The Moderator of the Evangelical church of the Czech Brethren, Pavel Pokorny, the General Secretary, the other officers of the church and Alzbeta Hanychova have conveyed their warm greetings and wishes to you and to the entire synod and they look forward to continue the ecumenical partnership with the URC Thames North Synod.

## What's On

# Resources Day for Church Treasurers, Secretaries and Administrators



The annual Resources Day for Church Treasurers, Secretaries and Administrators will take place on Saturday 8 February 2025. The aim is to give you a helpful guide to what it takes to run your church in 2025.

The Synod team, with external experts, will present and take questions on the latest developments in property, employment, legal and charity matters. In particular, we will be looking at the likely impacts of the Renters' Rights Bill, Safer Recruitment, and the relationship of the local church to LAGs and Synod.

Lunch will be provided.

**Saturday 8th February from 10am online and in-person at the Lumen Centre.**

We look forward to seeing you.

**PLEASE NOTE: Booking has now closed. You can obtain the Zoom link from Colleen at [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk).**

*Photo by [NORTHFOLK](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

# Talking About... Holiday Clubs

Thursday, February 27th 7-8pm



Are you looking to make your holiday club for children more engaging and impactful? Join us for an informative session where you'll learn how to effectively use the latest holiday club material from the United Reformed Church exploring the 2025 theme: **All Are Welcome**

📅 Date: February 27th  
🕒 Time: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
💻 Platform: Zoom

Book your place at [www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout](http://www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout)

## Volunteering with the URC team at Greenbelt festival 2025

The online application form to volunteer with the URC team at Greenbelt festival 2025 is now available to complete by visiting the URC Greenbelt webpage here:

<https://urc.org.uk/greenbelt/volunteer-registration>

The festival takes place on Thursday 21 – Sunday 24 August 2025, at Boughton House, near Kettering. If you would like more information about the festival itself, head over to <https://www.greenbelt.org.uk>

Please feel free to share this information with colleagues, friends and family who may be interested in getting involved. You may even be tempted to volunteer yourself? We have a double-sided postcard which explains more (below).

**The closing date for volunteer applications is 24 April 2025.**

If you are interested in joining the Youth venue team at Greenbelt (which is a different team to the URC venue) please contact the Children and Youth work team directly. I attach a flyer which you are free to share. Greenbelt's theme for this year (and the theme we have adopted) is:

## HOPE IN THE MAKING

Hope is a practice. It's something we make together, in the fields. Hope has been in the making at Greenbelt for more than a half-century, and it's our theme for this year's festival. We choose to roll up our sleeves, open our hearts and be reminded that, together, we can be the change we want to see in the world. We'd love you to join us.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Find out more about Greenbelt's theme here: [Hope in the Making - Greenbelt](#)



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church



Contact  
[children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk)  
for more information

## Artistry • Activism • Belief

**Thu 21 – Sun 24 August 2025**  
**Boughton House, nr Kettering**

Are you aged 18+?  
Do you enjoy supporting 12-17 year olds?  
Have you experience, gifts and skills to share?  
Then volunteer on the URC run Youth Engagement Team





**Join the United Reformed Church at Greenbelt Festival**  
**21-24 August 2025, Boughton House, Kettering**

 The United Reformed Church

Greenbelt Festival's theme for 2025 is Hope in the Making. The world really needs a little more hope and humanity right now, so Hope in the Making will thread its way through everything we do in our new venue at this year's festival.

**Volunteer with us**

Could you join our team at Greenbelt? We primarily need volunteers to work in our café – yoURCafé – now in its fourth year offering meals made from food saved from landfill. It's a popular venue so prepare to be kept busy!

As well as delicious food, our venue offers talks, crafts, music and more.  
As a thank you for being with us, you will receive:

- a weekend pass • meal vouchers • a t-shirt • a car or caravan pass (if you need one)
- and all the fun and support of being part of a great team.

You will also get to enjoy the huge programme of arts, talks, worship and activities the festival has to offer, with plenty of free time to explore.

 For more information on how to become a volunteer, what is involved and how to apply, visit [urc.org.uk/greenbelt/volunteer-registration](https://urc.org.uk/greenbelt/volunteer-registration)

Closing date for applications: **24 April 2025**

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## Theology of Worship Group invites you to our next Speaker meeting on Preparing to Preach to an Unfamiliar Congregation



**Speaker:** Revd. Dr. Richard Goldring  
Secretary, Theology of Worship and Semi-Retired Minister

**Chair:**

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Welch  
Chair, Society for Ecumenical Studies (2011-2023); Co-chair International Reformed Anglican Dialogue (2015-2022); Emeritus Honorary Ecumenical Canon, Worcester Cathedral; Former Chair of Theology of Worship Group; Semi-retired Minister.

**Date:** Tuesday, 25 February 2025

**Time:** 7:30 - 9pm via Zoom

How do you decide what to preach upon, particularly to an unfamiliar congregation? To what extent is it helpful to use the Lectionary? Richard will reflect upon the process by which he makes such decisions, and the theological basis underlying that process. We expect his thoughts will prompt lively and enjoyable discussion!

To book, please contact Richard: [rgoldring23@gmail.com](mailto:rgoldring23@gmail.com)



# Information

## Fire Safety – Protecting Your Place of Worship



A fire can have a devastating impact on your church and community. While fires aren't always preventable, you can reduce the risk by checking fire extinguishers, inspecting buildings, maintaining your church, conducting fire risk assessments, and using candles safely. Stay prepared and protect your place of worship! The National Churches Trust highlight the need to retain detailed records—photos, plans, and historical documents—as they are essential for restoration in the event of a fire.

Keep them updated to safeguard your church's heritage and story! [Click here](#) to read how Antrim All Saints, Northern Ireland's oldest active church, recently faced this challenge.

# Your Church Community Project could win £2,000

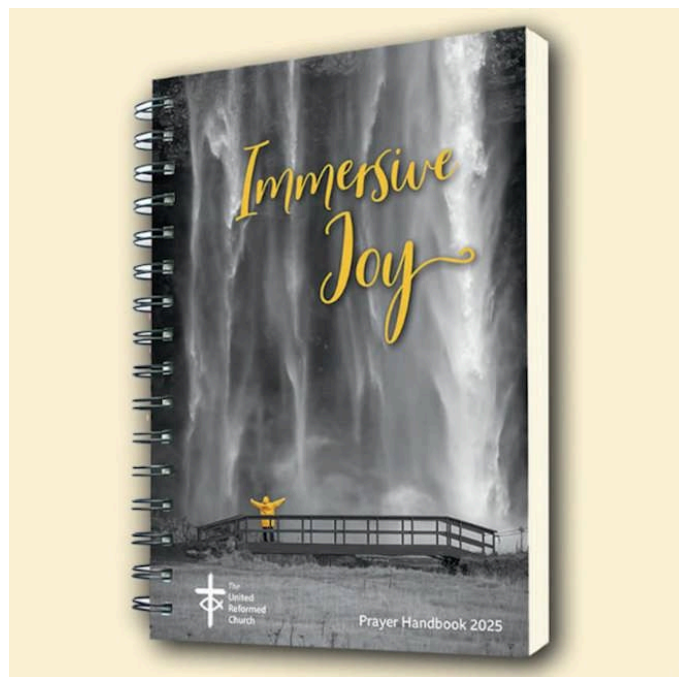


For 26 years, the United Reformed Church has been recognising outstanding community projects taking place in its churches – projects that don't get the recognition they deserve, but which demonstrate the mission of the church by reaching out in many different ways to the local communities which they serve.

Our partners Congregational have again donated £9,000 in prizes - three awards of up to £2,000 and three of £1,000, which are presented to projects at the URC General Assembly in July.

Your project could win! The entry form is available here: [download the entry form](#). Thinking about it? [Watch videos about previous awards winners](#). **The deadline is 21 February, 2025.**

## Submit your prayers for the 2026 URC Prayer Handbook



Your prayers for the 2026 Prayer Handbook, titled *Touching God*, are invited by 21 February, 2025.

Our new Prayer Handbook Editors, the Revd Dr Susan Durber and the Revd Jonnie Hill, invite you to consider the theme and the ways it relates to the church and its life and work, as well as your personal experiences. Prayers which express gratitude for, or a yearning to experience, the touch of God in our lives — moments when the sacred mystery of God breaks into the everyday, filling it with awe and wonder. Prayers that celebrate the sacramental nature of all life, affirming the presence of the divine throughout the world we share.

Please submit your prayers by email by 21 February to: [phb@urc.org.uk](mailto:phb@urc.org.uk). To read more about the Prayer Handbook, visit the [URC website](https://www.urc.org.uk)

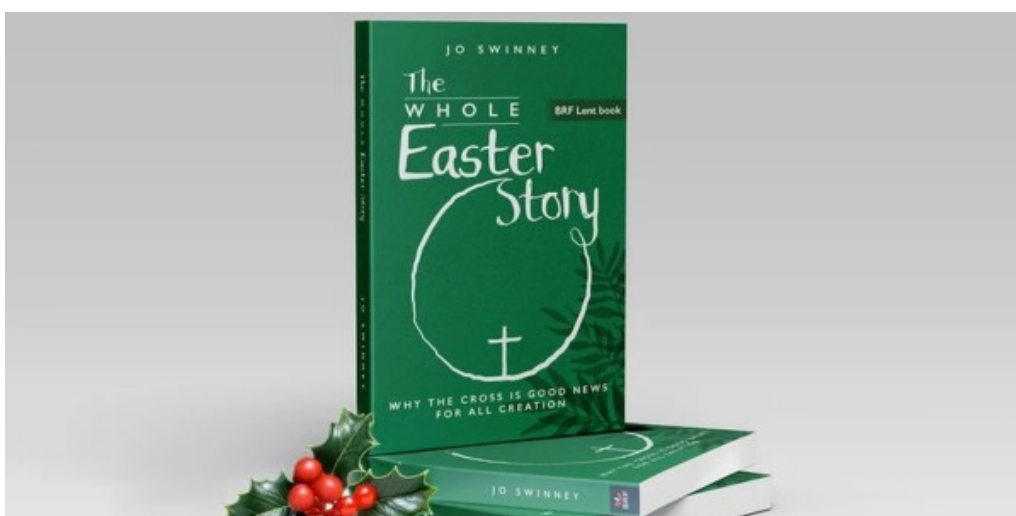
## Roses are Green this Valentine's Day



Encourage your loved ones or friends in church to buy sustainable flowers this Valentine's Day!

The environmental cost of imported, out of season flowers is huge – an estimated 570 tonnes of roses are shipped into the UK each February. Opt for a UK-grown seasonal flower instead, such as daffodils from Cornwall. Find out more on the [RHS website](#).

## A Rocha International Launch New Lent Book



A Rocha International, a Christian conservation charity, has launched a new Lent Devotional dedicated to creation. 'The Whole Easter Story: Why the Cross is Good News for All Creation' by A Rocha International's Jo Swinney explores how the cross transforms not just our own individual connection with Jesus, but also our relationships with each other and our world. Find out more [here](#).

# Could your church host a farmers' market



Support is available to help churches host sustainable farmers' markets, food hubs, cafes, as well as cooking and growing projects.

Better Food Traders, a UK-wide organisation which supports independent food traders who focus on selling climate and nature-friendly produce, would like to support churches to use their buildings and churchyards to host farmers' markets and similar events.

Email Julia at Better Food Traders - [julia@betterfoodtraders.org](mailto:julia@betterfoodtraders.org) to find out more

## URC Church Life Review Administrator

The URC has appointed a Church Life Review Administrator – Ornella Mbula will join us on Friday 14 February.

Ornella will be a key point of contact for the Church Life Review, and will be involved in all aspects of the programme. Please note that the Church Life Review inbox will remain the primary point of contact for general enquiries, [churchlifereview@urc.org.uk](mailto:churchlifereview@urc.org.uk).



Do you have chapel chairs, church pews, or vintage church furniture your church is looking to dispose of? It might be worth contacting Peppermill Interiors via their [Sell to Us](#) form to see if they can help find a new home for the furniture.

## Vacancies

## URC Roles

For all URC Roles see here <https://urc.org.uk/jobs/>

## Safeguarding Training

# UK Wide Safeguarding Training 2025

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
<b>14 January, 2025</b> 1:30pm	<b>Domestic abuse</b>
<b>23 January</b> 7:00pm	<b>Supporting survivors</b>
<b>4 February</b> 7:00pm	<b>Modern slavery</b>
<b>13 February</b> 1:30pm	<b>Elders as Trustees</b>
<b>4 March</b> 7:00pm	<b>Substance abuse</b>
<b>18 March</b> 1:30pm	<b>Refugees and asylum seekers</b>
<b>27 March</b> 7:00pm	<b>Adult safeguarding</b>
<b>24 April</b> 1:30pm	<b>Spiritual abuse</b>
<b>13 May</b> 7:00pm	<b>Online safety</b>

Foundation Training can be accessed on the Learning Hub  
[bit.ly/3Txldm4](https://bit.ly/3Txldm4)



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



From the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee

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# Visit to Prague



**Above from left to right:** ECCB Moderator, Revd Sujeeth Kumar, Revd Sohail Ejaz, Alzbeta Hanychova and Michael (representative from the Czech Church to attend the Spring School in May 2025, UK)

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