

Newsletter

The Synod Office is now closed under the current lock-down guidance. You can still contact us by telephone on 0161 769 1122. Office opening hours at the moment are 9am—3pm.



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War memorials

Before Christmas I sent out a request for information, the response has been fantastic.

Thank you to all those who have come back to me, it is lovely to see all the photos and fascinating to hear the stories behind the photos of memorial being moved, being lost and happily being rescued.

Even if you have no memorials please let me know and I can keep a record. For those who cannot get to church at the moment, if you have any memorials of any kind let me know we can always follow up with the details at a later date.

To complete the register of all the war memorials that are situated in URC buildings and grounds and any that are shared please:

Confirm via email how many plaques/stones/rolls you have

Confirm via email where they are situated i.e. on wall in church/ in the garden/ cupboard in the cellar

Confirm via email what the memorial is for i.e. First/second world war

Send me a photo if possible, via email or post

The email address is information@nwsynod.org.uk

I look forward to hearing from you.

Tracey Booth

Preaching Online: 10-15 Minute Sermons that Transform 1-2 March 2021

The Internet - and Zoom in particular - make it easier to preach short sermons aimed at transformation. It's not a case of simply lifting a sermon you'd preach in church and preaching it online, though!

The key is recognising how the same congregation that meets in a church building to listen to a sermon will behave very differently online.

This 2-session course explores the distinctive ways in which we behave online and relates that to how we preach differently online. Each session lasts 2 hours, with time for input and discussion. There are two opportunities to join these sessions: Day time or Evening time.

DAYTIME

Session 1: 10am - 12 noon (1 March)

Session 2: 2pm-4pm (1 March)

EVENING

Session 1: 7pm - 9pm (1 March)

Session 2: 7pm - 9pm (2 March)

Join each session using the following details:

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/92584144811>

Meeting ID: 925 8414 4811

Preaching online: 10-15 minute sermons that transform

1st & 2nd March 2021

Lawrence Moore



Discover the whys and hows of effective preaching on the Web

You can't just take a sermon and preach it online - it won't work.
Discover why and explore how to preach effectively on the Web.

Session One: 10 am & 7pm (1 March)

1. Why we behave differently online
2. How to engage and keep attention
3. Creating a climate of commitment
4. "Less is more"
5. Ringing the changes
6. Entertain - they'll love it!
7. Interacting with your congregation
8. What's a sermon for, anyway?
9. Building credibility: "The messenger is the medium!"

Session Two: 2pm (1 March); 7pm (2nd March)

1. Preaching for transformation
2. Relationship
3. Permission
4. Content
5. "Purple Cows" and value added
6. "Tribes" and "Sneezers"
7. "Here's what I see; here's how you can be part of it"
8. The transformation Funnel
9. Constructing a sermon

Meeting ID: 925 8414 4811 (all sessions)

DARE (Darwen Asylum Seeker and Refugee Enterprise)

Our DARE group, which comprises of all different faiths and churches in Darwen, is continuing to flourish despite being in lockdown.

We have a dedicated team of people who make food deliveries each week and through our DARE Whatsapp and Mosque Whatsapp we are able to make sure all emergencies are catered for. Here is one example:-

One of our asylum seekers (a lady on her own with a 5-year-old child) was cold due to the electricity supply in her flat having failed and she was unable to cook a hot meal. Within 4 hours of receiving her email, the DARE Team and Mosque Team sprang into action and between us we were able to make sure she had warm food and hot drinks immediately. Someone from the mosque was able to contact her landlord to sort out the electricity problem and also one of the ladies from the mosque was able to provide a hot meal. I think without this support her flat would probably have been colder for much longer. She was very grateful for all the help she received.

Through our DARE Whatsapp we are able to respond for offers of help, including distributing bikes, helping out with IT queries and, most importantly, being able to keep in touch with people on a daily basis and responding to their needs.

Also, in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Darwen, we have started to distribute hot meals prepared by the Tauheedul High School in Blackburn.

Face Masks donated by the Chaiyi Presbytery of Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

The North Western Synod has a Global Partnership with the Chaiyi Presbytery of Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. The Synod World Church Group has organised several exchange visits including a Youth Exchange in 2015 and return visit 2016.

At the start of the pandemic we received a generous donation of 10,000 masks from the Chaiyi Presbytery of Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

The face masks were distributed to all the churches in the Synod (120) for their general use, e.g. if they were open for worship, or with any other users of their halls.


We provided additional masks to a number of churches with particular community outreach as part of their mission, so as some example:

- Darwen Central received masks to support DARE which is a long standing project working with refugees and asylum seekers who have settled in the area
- Fleetwood and St Annes churches received masks to support their work with local foodbanks who make extensive use of the church's premises
- Chorley URC were provided with masks to support a number of the community uses of their buildings, for example their community kitchen providing food for the homeless
- St Mark's Wythenshawe (Dandelion Community) for the work through their food hub with the local community

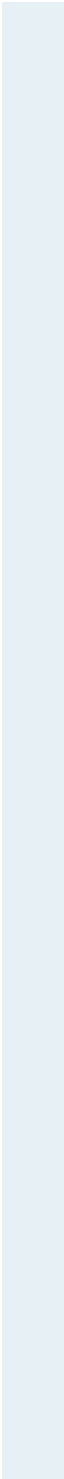
On a personal level the gift of the masks prompted some wonderful conversations about generosity and hope as I delivered bags of parcels of masks for despatch at my local post office, and of course Radio Lancashire picked up on the gift and I was interviewed on their Sunday morning programme which provided an opportunity not just to celebrate the wonderful gift with a wider audience, but also to share something of the fruits of the long standing partnership between us.

Mike Hart
(Treasurer
NW Synod)





A big thank you from DARE to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan for the donation of Face masks during the Covid19 outbreak. DARE Darwen Asylum Seeker Enterprise supports the needs of asylum seekers and refugees and is part of an outreach mission supported by Central URC Darwen. Picture show volunteers including Lilian Salter Mayor of Darwen second on right and clients at the Meeting places drop in Darwen Town Centre.



Support for Lancashire Area Missional Partnerships

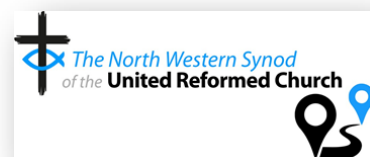


You are invited to an online Coffee morning for your Lancashire Partnership

We start the year by sharing in fellowship and faith
If you fancy popping in, please send me an email in order for me to send you the zoom link- that is, if you are not on my regular Coffee morning contact list. Don't forget to bring your coffee/tea in your favourite mug!

27th January @ 10am- Lancashire East Missional Partnership
28th January @ 10am- Lancashire North Missional Partnership
29th January @ 10am- Lancashire South Missional Partnership

Looking forward to see you all!
Daleen.TenCate@nwsynod.org.uk



Due to demand, additional sessions added to the Basic Safeguarding training programme

Basic Safeguarding Training is being delivered by the Synod Safeguarding Adviser and started week commencing 23 November 2020.

Due to lockdown and the ongoing restrictions, all training until further notice will be delivered via Zoom.

The two hour online training session is for ***ALL volunteers, paid workers, elders and Ministers*** within the churches who have **NOT** attended any URC Safeguarding training in the last 3 years.

The sessions are limited to a maximum of 20 people per session. Anyone who registers to attend the training will then be sent the Zoom link for the relevant training session.

Please register for one of the training sessions with the Synod Safeguarding Adviser, by emailing Julie Rafferty on: safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk

Session no	Date	Day	Time
7	18/01/21	Monday	6.30-8.30pm FULL
8	26/01/21	Tuesday	1-3pm - FULL
9	01/02/21	Monday	10.30am-12.30pm FULL
10	09/02/21	Tuesday	7-9pm
11	17/02/21	Wednesday	1.30-3.30pm
12	25/02/21	Thursday	10-12pm
13	11/03/21	Thursday	6.30-8.30pm
14	16/03/21	Tuesday	1-3pm
15	22/03/21	Monday	10.30-12.30pm
16	31/03/21	Wednesday	1.30-3.30pm
17	20/04/21	Tuesday	7-9pm
18	29/04/21	Thursday	10-12pm



What is God asking of **YOU?**



Ministry Enquirers' Event
to help you think about God's call to Worship Leading, Lay Preaching,
Ministry with children and young people, the Ministry of Word and
Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.

Enquirers' Event **Saturday 27th February 2021**
10am – 3pm online
Register with **ministries@urc.org.uk**
to receive Zoom details

CWM—upcoming webinars



BUILDING LIFE FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES A SERIES OF WEBINARS WITH CWM EUROPE



REVD. DR. PETER CRUCHLEY

'WHITENESS AND ANTIRACIST PRACTICE: FROM TALK TO ACTION'
MONDAY 8TH FEBRUARY (14:00-15:30)

Can whiteness and white privilege be dismantled? Peter's presentation will aim to help participants move from talk to action regarding more effective antiracist practices in the church.

**REVD. MELANIE SMITH,
REVD. DR. AL BARRETT &
DAVID JONATHAN**

A PANEL DISCUSSION ON LIFE-FLOURISHING ACTIVISM
MONDAY 22ND FEBRUARY (14:00-15:30)

The panellists will be exploring 'what would life-flourishing activism look like and mean'. This would include new ways of grassroot activism towards transformation. These three colleagues are involved in local community advocacy in a variety of ways.



CAROL TROUPE
'LOOKING BACK: LOOKING FORWARD'
MONDAY 8TH MARCH (14:00-15:30)

Carol is a Research Associate on the CWM Legacies of Slavery project and has been exploring LMS mission magazine archives. She reflects on her journey so far, and wonders what, if anything, can be drawn from the archives to help the church reflect on issues of mission, race and justice in the present day.

DR. EVE PARKER
WHAT WOULD A LIFE-FLOURISHING CURRICULUM FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION LOOK LIKE?
MONDAY 22ND MARCH (14:00-15:30)

In her presentation, Eve will focus on case studies from her ongoing research - addressing the barriers to belonging in theological education, whilst exploring the liberative potential of engaged and transformative pedagogy and curriculum.



For each presentation, individual Zoom links will be provided. Please contact Sai & Michael at cwm.europe@cwmission.org

Dear friends and colleagues,

You may be aware that during the latter part of 2020, we began to host a series of online webinars and presentations around the theme of 'building life flourishing communities.' We will be continuing these webinars from February 2021, **with the first webinar on 8th February.**

All sessions will start at 14:00 and will run for an hour and a half.

We would like to both invite you to sign up and also encourage you to share this with your colleagues and networks, as we believe the sessions would be of great interest and benefit to many.

Each session will have their own individual Zoom link, so if you would like to join, please email cwm.europe@cwmission.org indicating the session(s) you would like to attend.

Do also note that if you are unable to attend a session, with the presenters' permission, we will record it and share via the CWM Europe webpage and Facebook page at a later date.

As always, your presence and engagement would be greatly appreciated

With all good wishes,

Michael & Sai

Pray4URC - another short series of weekly prayer meetings on Facebook Live from 18 February

The GEAR team is hosting another short series for four Thursdays leading up to Mission Council in March. As in the two series last year, a guest will introduce some prayer needs in the URC family and then a panel will lead prayers for just 15 minutes while others can listen in and chip in with comments and prayers via the Comment facility. Rev Steve Faber, Moderator of West Midland Synod, will share in the first meeting. He has been at the heart of URC responses to the Covid crisis.

Everyone is welcome to tune in on the dedicated Facebook page which goes live at 8pm in readiness for the 8.15pm start. Please do join in **each Thursday from 18 February** - <https://www.facebook.com/Pray4URC>

Short prayer videos are also posted on the page each Thursday at 8.15pm - do tune in or watch them at any point later - and "like" the page.

For further information please contact GEAR's Prayer Secretary, Richard Turnbull - prayer@gear.org.uk



Youth Assembly



It may not be possible for Youth Assembly to gather as normal at Whitemoor Lakes this year, but this does not stop URC Youth. Together in spirit, if not in body, there will be a series of online events on our theme of Heroes and Villains throughout the year, starting with two events on the weekend which might already be marked in your diary.

Saturday 30 January 2021, from 8pm to 9.30pm, join for a social evening with contributions from the fabulous 'Folk On' , known to many from their appearance at Greenbelt in 2019 and comedian Paul Kerensa. Then gather on Sunday evening, from 8pm onward, for worship, prayer, discussion and chat. the event is open to all young people aged 14 to 25 with a connection to the URC.

Use the URC Youth Assembly 2021 button on the Children's and Youth Work home page or go directly to [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/urc-youth-dis-assembled-2021-tickets-131014348443) to book.

Please note that you will need to read and submit some paperwork for this event. This information can be found on our [URC Youth](#) page.

Spread the news, encourage participation, tell anyone who might be interested - let's make this an event that goes down as a high point in URC Youth history.

The event is FREE OF CHARGE – closing date for applications is 27th January.

Lent Resource – Walking Towards Easter Together

[Walking towards Easter together - URC Lent resource \(urcshop.co.uk\)](http://urcshop.co.uk)

The intergenerational resource produced for Advent was very quickly sold out – so don't waste time ordering the Lent resource for churches to give to students, seniors, households and families to reduce isolation and offer hope in these challenging times.

Please note - these are being posted out in February.

The pack invites you to join a journey through Lent with opportunities to build connections with Jesus, others and your local church. The materials include a wide range of activity suggestions so there should be something for almost everyone to engage with in their own home.

Contents: A3 poster – a map from Shrove Tuesday to Easter Sunday; hundreds of stickers to use with the map and journal; A5 spiral bound stand-up diary/journal with pull out activity pages; a booklet of seasonal and fun recipes.

Each day take a step towards Easter – mark your way on the map, use the creative diary/journal and dip into the activity suggestions: cook * make * give * pray * connect * think * do * discover * share * challenge * dream * play * smile * thank

Diary includes: Monday to Saturday read a real life story of someone walking the way of Jesus, reflect on a Bible verse, and use the space provided to record something of your day. Sunday pause to engage with a story about Jesus, a reflection and some suggested ways to pray, with space to record your responses.

The packs are £4.50 (order 15 or more and get them for £4.00)



(Virtual) Gathered Youth Group – every Tuesday evening at 7pm on Zoom

As the lockdown continues, a group of young people from across the North Western Synod (and one or two interlopers from further afield!) meet up to play games, discuss issues, whatever takes our fancy, really! Aimed at young people of secondary school age and above, the sessions are overseen by our CYDO, Leo Roberts, along with Georgina Bowen and Julie and Andy Platt from the Rochdale, Bury and North Manchester Missional Partnership, the sessions last an hour or so and new people are always welcome!

The next session is Tuesday, 26 February. Please encourage your young people to give it a try!

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88946500359?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88946500359?pwd=MzdaZkVTdks0R1R0NzhvVTYxZ1NhQT09)

[pwd=MzdaZkVTdks0R1R0NzhvVTYxZ1NhQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88946500359?pwd=MzdaZkVTdks0R1R0NzhvVTYxZ1NhQT09)

Meeting ID: 889 4650 0359

Passcode: 051578

And, finally, a 'save the date'...



Triologue



HEROES VILLAINS

7pm
Thursday 28 January

Watch live

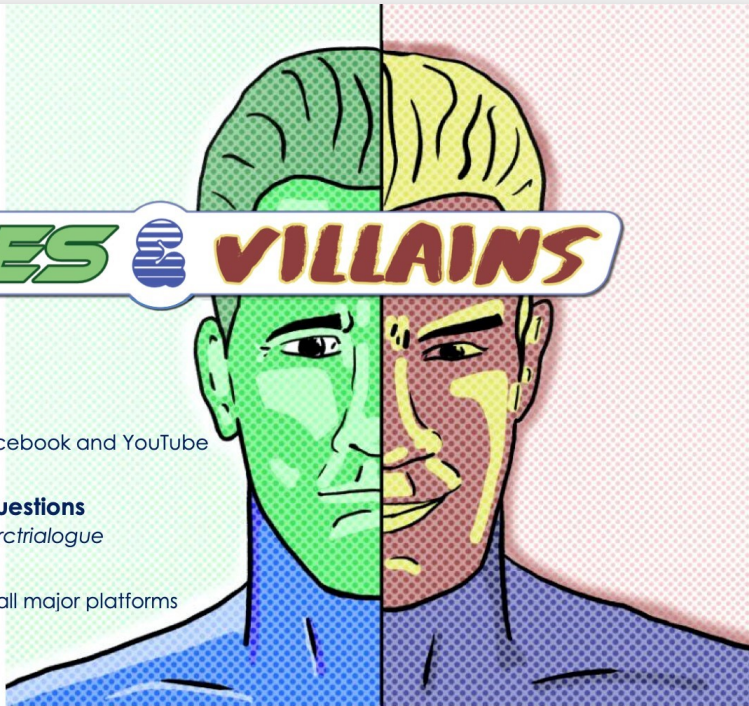
or recorded episodes on Facebook and YouTube
bit.ly/trialogueURC

Share your thoughts or questions

using *Slido.com* and code *urctriologue*

Listen

to episodes as podcasts on all major platforms



Christmas Hamper Packing at Central URC Darwen 21st December 2020

There was definitely a spirit of Christmas in the air as our DARE Team members got together at Central to pack hampers to be given out to our asylum seekers, refugees and also other people in Darwen in need. We had donations of toys from St Cuthbert's C of E church in Darwen and St Joseph's Catholic church in Darwen; sweets and selection boxes from Lindt and friends of DARE; biscuits and cakes from our church at Central, with some of the older ladies lovingly baking cakes for the hampers, and toiletries from Central. We also got a very generous donation of toiletries from our muslim friends at Darwen Mosque with whom our Church is twinned as part of a pilot mosque-twinning project. The generosity of spirit was definitely in abundance as we all packed the bags together. The hampers were delivered the same day and it was lovely to see Aslam from the mosque turn up to help with the deliveries in the middle of his taxi rounds.



Knitting project: Revidge Fold URC

Many years ago there was one of Revidge Fold congregation members who made up squares into blankets and then sent them off to a Charity. They would be displayed in Church some Sunday's. The lady, Molly Airey, who inspired me to knit squares, was a legend and dearly loved by many.

Originally in March I had the thought that our Congregation and guests of Lunch Club, Tuesday @ 2 groups would possibly find knitting blankets for others something they could do during lockdown. Firstly to keep themselves occupied and secondly that they would feel useful knitting for others. Knitters have come and gone, moving onto other tasks but at least 12 people have clicked their knitting needles. At present we have 7 people still knitting them. My 'Slogan' has been - a square a day keeps the boredom away.

A lady in our Congregation is a member of the Inner Wheel (the female counterpart of the Rotary). I knew that the group have an International Outreach and in the past made blankets to send abroad. So, I asked her if there was anyone who could make the knitted squares into blankets then pass them on for us. Well kindly they have done this and when the latest squares are complete we will have donated 4 blankets to Charity. Two ladies who are still knitting are in their late 80's in fact one may have gone 90 this year. They are constantly requesting more wool. Every little helps doesn't it. Anne Dolphin



Knitting Project: Trinity Great Harwood (LEP)

The knitters of Trinity URC Methodist Church along with the WI of Great Harwood, are joining in with the Cumbrian Way Homeless Scarf Challenge. The aim is that through the whole of 2021 enough scarves can be knitted or crocheted that would cover the length of the Cumbrian Way, approx 75 miles, and it's estimated this will take something like 73,000 scarves. When completed the scarves can be given to the homeless in our own area and a photo sent to the organizers in Cumbria so that each one can be added to the total. The WI know of 28 homeless men and women living in Blackburn or Accrington. Scarves should be in double knitting wool and about 6ins wide and 60 ins long and can be any colour or design although it's suggested that darker colours are better. Further information can be found on the Cumbrian Way Homeless Scarf Challenge Facebook page. Margaret Dugdale


Christmas in Bolton and Salford

Many of the churches were involved in the Bolton Churches' Christmas Initiative displaying banners and sending cards saying:



Most were also involved in providing Christmas Dinner on Jesus, and in packing and distributing the many boxes and bags that went to giving over 5000 folk a bumper Christmas meal and many other tasty treats including 2565 selection boxes for the children!

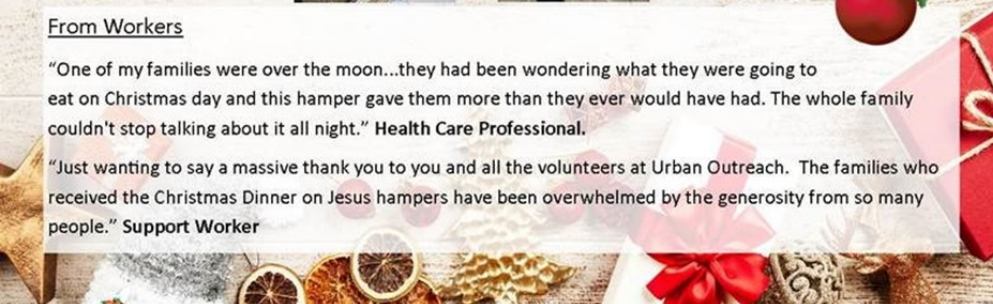
Over **60** churches, schools, organisations and community groups donated either money or items for the hampers (that isn't including a huge number of individuals who also donated—so many it is hard to keep track). This was the most generosity we have ever seen for the project and included many groups smashing their targets (some by over 1000 of what they expected) and all of our costs covered!



From Workers

"One of my families were over the moon...they had been wondering what they were going to eat on Christmas day and this hamper gave them more than they ever would have had. The whole family couldn't stop talking about it all night." **Health Care Professional.**

"Just wanting to say a massive thank you to you and all the volunteers at Urban Outreach. The families who received the Christmas Dinner on Jesus hampers have been overwhelmed by the generosity from so many people." **Support Worker**



Christchurch hung angels in bags with a Christmas message on their railings and invited folk to take one. Over three hundred vanished as soon as they were put up – including one personal delivery to a family without a car, living too far away to pick one up.



They also put up posters showing what Christmas meant to them.



Patricroft and Worsley Road in Salford invited folk to tie ribbons to their railings in memory of someone. When these are taken down, they will be put together in displays in their memorial gardens.



All in all the churches did have a very different Christmas, but the message still went out not least over zoom where **Rosehill** used the URC's Advent boxes to give the junior church members (and their parents) a taste of God's messengers, using extra craft packages that had been delivered as well as the Advent boxes.

