



The North Western Synod
of the **United Reformed Church**

North Western Synod Newsletter

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Safeguarding training dates February to April 2022

Foundation (formerly Basic) and Intermediate Safeguarding Training will continue to be delivered on zoom, but these arrangements will be reviewed in April 2022 dependent on the Covid situation and guidelines.

The URC Training Framework determines what level of training is mandatory for each role in the church, see the attached Framework link for guidance [Safeguarding Training Framework](#)

Foundation (formerly Basic) Safeguarding training

The 2-hour online training session is for **ALL volunteers and paid workers, including Ministers and elders** 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.

If you haven't already attended, please register your interest with the Synod Safeguarding Adviser, by emailing Julie Rafferty on: safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk

| Session no | Date | Day | Time |
|------------|------------|----------|------------------|
| 2 | 03/03/2022 | Thursday | 10.30am -12.30pm |
| 3 | 05/04/2022 | Tuesday | 7-9pm |

Intermediate training

The 2.5-hour online training sessions are again for **ALL volunteers and paid workers, including Ministers and elders** who **have completed** either the recent URC Basic Safeguarding training and/ or the URC Intermediate Safeguarding training (delivered in 2018 and 2019 by myself)

Again, 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 |
|------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | 15/02/2022 | Tuesday | 6.30-9pm |
| 2 | 28/02/2022 | Monday | 6.30-9pm |
| 3 | 15/03/2022 | Tuesday | 6.30-9pm |
| 4 | 21/03/2022 | Monday | 6.30-9pm |
| 5 | 20/04/2022 | Wednesday | 10am – 12.30pm |
| | | | |

Talking about...

(Re)Starting From Scratch

24th February 2022 7-8pm

It is now nearly two years since the country experienced its first lockdown. Churches valiantly tried to maintain contact with their young people but face-to-face meetings and events had to stop.

Youth Work is now firmly back on the agenda - but, for many churches, it seems as though we are having to start all over again from the beginning.

In this session, we will hear from 2 youth work practitioners about what it might mean to (re)start from scratch - and how we can be more effective.

**Get your free ticket from
<https://bit.ly/3FnfZQn>**



CTRL+ALT+DEL. That's what you press on a computer using Microsoft Windows in order to reboot. Of course, experts tell us that before we take such drastic measures, it's wise to save the document on which you're currently working and maybe even back-up your Registry! Sometimes even that doesn't help and you'll need to do a 'clean install'.

For many churches, the COVID-19 pandemic means that restarting work with young people will actually feel a bit like rebooting, or even re-installing - we'll be starting again from scratch. But what steps can we take to ensure that everything goes smoothly?

In this session we will be joined by 2 youth work practitioners who will share their insights and experience.

- John Stephenson is the Youth Work Advisor in the United Reformed Church's Northern Church Synod
- Alex Drew works for Youthscape in the UK and has been very involved in the development of their brand-new programme that gives confidence and skills to volunteers working with young people in churches and community projects: Youthscape Essentials.

There will be the opportunity to ask questions, gain insight and share your own experiences/concerns/joys. The session is free of charge and open to anyone. Please share amongst your volunteers and colleagues.



Messy Easter

**An opportunity to share and discover how you can celebrate
Easter with your Messy Church families
Monday, 28th February at 7:00 - 8:30pm**

All welcome!

Join in at bit.ly/3Gz1Wlh

Get your **FREE** ticket from: <https://bit.ly/3FnfZQn>

Messy Church Gathering – online Zoom session – 28/02 19:00-20:30

Our next 'Northerly Synods Messy Church gathering' is on 28th February and will focus on Easter.

We'll be opening the session with the opportunity for you to share, if you wish, something that went really well (or really badly!) for you at your Advent / Christmas Messy Church. However, there is no obligation on you to share anything and, if you do, please keep it succinct - time is really tight!

These gatherings are open to ALL Messy Church groups so, if you know of one local to you, please feel free to invite them.

The link for the meeting on the 28th (19:30 - 21:00) is available from Leo Roberts at cydo@nwsynod.org.uk (or copy the link from graphic)

Youth and Children's Work Conference – 07/05

NORTHWEST CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK THING...

MAY
7
2022

DO YOU WORK WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR CHURCH?

JOIN OTHERS FROM ACROSS THE NORTHWEST FOR A CONVERSATION ON MINISTRY IN A FAST-CHANGING WORLD

Organised in conjunction with colleagues from Mersey Synod and other denominations in the North West, this conference is for all those who work on behalf of a local church with children and/or young people. The day will include keynote speakers, workshops and worship.

Venue: All Hallows Catholic School, Penwortham

Cost: £10.00 per person

Tickets: [Northwest Childrens & Youth Work Thing! \(07-May-2022\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)

Workshop topics include:

- Identifying and Nurturing Young Leaders
- Growing Faith in Toddler Groups
- Disability and Inclusion
- Exploring Faith With Young People
- Creative Ideas for Prayer and Exploring Faith with Children
- Supporting Faith at Home



The conference will focus on the increasing significance of the 'local' in action for change. During the pandemic, the local has taken on a renewed importance, and the needs, characteristics and opportunities in our communities have been seen in different ways. The local is playing a new role in the political landscape too, with the 'levelling up' agenda and regional and national identities assuming prominence, and grassroots community organising bringing new power to campaigning.

We will begin here, asking how we can listen to our communities and amplify local voices in order to work for change at national and international levels. The conference will seek to equip participants with new tools to use in their own context in order to call for change.

Keynote speakers at the conference will include Emma Revie, CEO of The Trussell Trust, Marsha De Cordova MP and Bishop Mike Royal, incoming General Secretary of Churches Together in England.

The conference will take place both online and in London. In both formats, attendees will have the opportunity to hear from keynote speakers, learn and ask questions in workshops and engage with other participants.

The conference is open to anyone who is inspired about working for change, from those already active to those who don't know where to begin. There will be opportunities to respond creatively, to share in worship and to gather the tools needed to go out in hope.

We hope to make the conference as accessible as possible, which is why we are offering free tickets for those who have low incomes and for anyone aged under 25. These tickets are supported by the opportunity for other attendees to 'donate a ticket' when they purchase their own. Tickets can be booked at bit.ly/JPIT2022

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Simeon Mitchell

Team Leader, Joint Public Issues Team

Secretary for Church and Society, United Reformed Church

020 7916 8633 | 07584 053432 | simeon.mitchell@urc.org.uk | www.urch.org.uk | twitter.com/URCCAS

Lent Series on Zoom

GEAR are hosting a lent series that is open to any individuals and churches who wish to join us. Each week there will be worship, Bible Study, discussion and prayer as we will unpack the aims of GEAR.

Wed 2 March - Growing Close to Jesus, led by Sally Willett
Wed 9 March - Enthusiastic about the Bible, led by Andy Twilley
Wed 16 March - Alive in the power of the Spirit, led by Paul Stokes
Wed 23 March - Reaching out with the good news, led by Ashley Evans

All from 7.30-9pm on Zoom. Contact Matt Stone for the Zoom details:
matt.stone@cantab.net.

The sessions (excluding discussion) will be recorded and made available the next day in case churches wish to use them.



Group *for*
Evangelism
And
Renewal
within the United
Reformed Church

Free to Believe National Conference 14 to 16 July 2022 At High Leigh Conference Centre Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 8SG Keeping Hope Alive Speakers: Fiona Bennett, Karen Campbell, Alex Clare-Young, Helen Garton and Iain McDonald

The **Free to Believe** National Conference will be held at **High Leigh Conference Centre**, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 8SG from **14 to 16 July 2022** (afternoon tea on Thursday to lunch on Saturday) £185 per person (ensuite) - non-refundable deposit £30 (**balance by end May 2020**) **Contact:** Linda Harrison - conferences@freetobelieve.org.uk

Fiona Bennett (she/her) is the minister at Augustine United Church, which aspires to be an inclusive Christian Community in the heart of Edinburgh. She has served as a URC minister in Scotland (previously Scottish Congregational Church) for 25 years in charges in the Methodist Church, Church of Scotland and URC. She is passionate about the transforming good news of Inclusion, which is at the heart of her Christian discipleship.

Karen Campbell is the URC Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries. She is Tottenham-born to Jamaican parents and served as a Church Related Community Worker in Luton. Karen says she lives and breathes family, and thinks by writing poetry.

Alex Clare-Young (they/them or just my name) is a pioneer minister in the United Reformed Church. Alex researches and writes about trans identities, neurodiversity, trauma, and faith, and ministers alongside those on the margins of, or disconnected from, church and society. Alex's first book, *Transgender. Christian. Human.* was published in 2019 and they are currently writing a grounded theology drawing on the experiences and insights of trans and non-binary Christians. To find out more about Alex, visit alexclareyoung.co.uk

Helen Garton currently serves as the minister at St Columba's Oxford and Cumnor URC, having previously been a Methodist presbyteral minister, a fundraiser at Christian Aid, an administrator in the Mission Team at URC Church House and a secretary at the World Congress of Faiths. Helen has a passion for interfaith dialogue, the theology of the Holy Land, justice in the world and the Church and a writer of worship resources.

Iain McDonald (he/him) is a retired minister of the United Reformed Church, having spent eight years at Southernhay Church in Exeter. In the early 1990s, he was co-founder with Revd Janet Webber of the URC Caucus of what was then the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. He has lived with his partner Ken since 1975 and was the first openly gay candidate for ministry in the URC (note: not the first gay candidate!). He is now an itinerant preacher, leading services in Plymouth and Taunton and quite a few places between. He also works with the Devon Faith & Belief Forum, chairs an almshouse charity in Exmouth and organises an annual season of classical music concerts in Seaton in east Devon

Please click here for [Booking Form](#)



NORTHERN COLLEGE

Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Conference

12- 14 May 2022

Possible Patterns of attendance :

Thursday-Friday (with and without B&B)

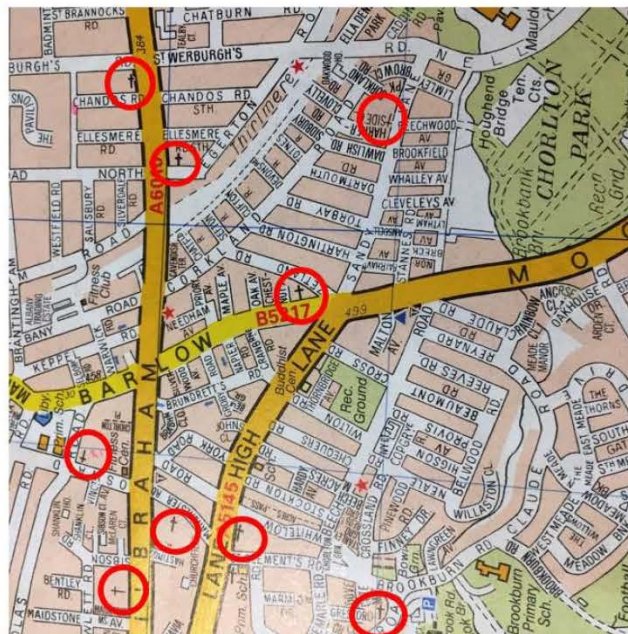
Thursday-Saturday (with and without B&B)

Saturday only

The Church in and of the Community

To include a visit to a local Community Project on the Friday

(transport will be arranged)



Costings and further details: Paul.barret@lutherking.ac.uk

or Phil.mcdermott@lutherking.ac.uk

Attention Ministers/CRCWS (including NSMs) and Lay Preachers (Assembly Accredited and Locally Recognised): Guidance for Claiming Funds from Church House

It is the object of the North Western Synod to support and develop our ministers and lay people as much as we can at this critical time. Whilst there are limits to the funding provided by Church House, we want the most appropriate courses for you all and the cost will not in all cases be a constraint.

However, all training and development need to be agreed with Rob Hoch, Training and Learning Mentor, as part of your individual development plan and the Synod strategic objectives.

*Please note: if a claim is not approved in advance, we can't reclaim monies from the national pot and this reduces the amount we have available within the Synod for other training.

General Process for Claiming Funds

Individuals, including Ministers, CRCWS, NSMs, and Lay Preachers (Assembly Accredited and Locally Recognized) who wish to take advantage of educational opportunities are asked to follow the steps outlined below:

Reach out to Rob Hoch, Training and Learning Mentor (learningmentor@nwsynod.org.uk) to get forms and authorisation for the course.

1. Please have at hand screen shots of course description and a costings page.
2. Please do NOT register and pay for the course before going through the above process. In order for us to make the best use of our limited finances, we need you to seek approval in advance of registration.

Payments to providers will be made in a highly efficient manner, so long as we have the appropriate form, course description and costings, with authorization from the Training and Learning Officer.

Ministers /CRCWS (includes NSMs)

Ministers will need to submit a G-1 form (Rob can send these to you directly). If your proposed course of study goes over more than one year or costs more than the amount you're allowed by Assembly (£350 for EM2 and £700 for EM3) per annum, we'll ask that you do the following for a Roll Over Scheme:

1. Identify the educational program you have in mind. The EM Roll Over Scheme is not a general "savings plan" but a spending plan for specific training and educational programs. Use it or lose it applies here . . . unless you have a clearly articulated and approved programme of study.
2. EM funds can be rolled over (for up to 3 years) so long as you have a specific educational or training event in mind. For example, an EM2 who wanted to take a course or training that cost £800 (£450 more than the amount up for claim per annum), could "borrow" against the next two years to make up the difference.
3. To be enrolled into the Roll Over Scheme, reach out to Rob and he will send you the appropriate forms and assist you with their completion.
4. In the event that Assembly funds do not meet costs in the Roll Over Scheme, the Training and Learning Mentor can authorize additional funds (up to £1000 (inclusive of Assembly amounts and Rollover Scheme) for EM2 and EM3.

If the minister requires additional support beyond this amount, this will require a written request which would go to designated officers in the Synod.

Lay Preachers

Lay Preachers may apply for up to £300 per annum for training (up to 50% of this may be used for books and/or subscriptions). Unspent monies are not transferrable to future years. Travel expenses are not covered. We encourage Lay Preachers to request support for travel expenses from Synod or their local churches. Please use the same process outlined above. Locally Recognized Worship Leaders and Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher will need to use a Lay Preacher A4 Form which, again, Rob will send upon request.

Please do not hesitate to reach out for assistance as you plan for training and learning opportunities.

Best Wishes,

Rob Hoch

Training and Learning Mentor

Alkington & Providence News

At Alkington and Providence in Middleton we are still working despite the pandemic. We have planted a tree to remember the pandemic, a tree for the Queen's Jubilee and one for the 50 years of the URC to be planted in the next couple of weeks. We have also raised enough money to buy a defibrillator which is now prominent outside our church. Our free coffee mornings are going well as are our new prayer group and Bible studies. No pandemic will get us down. With God's help we will survive.



Welcome Churches

I know many of you could not make the meeting with Emma Billington, the new North of England Regional Coordinator for Welcome churches. Fortunately, we recorded the session. Please find the You tube link for the recording in the attachment. Please discuss this very important ministry with your Elders in order to register your Church as a Welcome Church. Emma's details are on the attachment. Please feel free to contact her if you have any questions.

As you all know, following on from the tragic events in Afghanistan and across the world, the Northwest Area received many Asylum seekers and Refugees. Many of our churches already engage with Asylum seekers and Refugees but not many of our churches are registered as a Welcome Church. As followers of Jesus we ought to welcome the stranger and show compassion. A few of us met up with Emma Billington, the North of England Regional Coordinator for Welcome Churches, to learn more and to see how we can register to become a Welcome Church. To find out more, please follow the link:

<https://youtu.be/5V86ybJzQPA>

As you know, refugees and asylum seekers are a very transient people group. Often, through no choice of their own, they are required to move around the UK at short notice. This means that they can arrive in a new place feeling isolated, and being unfamiliar with their new surroundings. When they move they often want to find another church community quickly, who can welcome them and support them.

Welcome Churches is building a [Welcome Network](#) of churches across the UK who are committed to welcoming refugees into their church and community. **It is FREE to join and you can apply online.** The Welcome Network is a simple-to-use web platform and national referral system. This will help refugees, churches and other organisations find the churches around the country who are committed and equipped to welcome refugees. We look forward to profiling your church on the Network too.



[To apply to join the Welcome Network, please fill out our application online form](#)

Burnley & Nelson URC

After over 200 years of ministry, Burnley and Nelson URC are sadly closing following our final service on the 27th March 2022. We have a number of items of large furniture which we would like to offer to other churches who may be able to make use of them. For photos please contact Kerry at the Synod Office office@nwsynod.org.uk For further details please contact the Church Secretary Lynn Lonsdale lynnlons33@talktalk.net

Chapel Street & Hope URC

We have a case of 12 Communion glasses free to a good home.



Urban Expression Vacancy: Operations (Admin & Finance)

We are looking for someone with administration and finance skills to work as part of the operations team. The post is for 1 day per week, but could be for 3 days per month if that is preferable and the duties will be adjusted accordingly.

Please feel free to pass on to anyone you know who may be interested.

The closing date is **28th February 2022**.

Please take a look at the job specification, and if you have any questions do get in touch.

To find out more about Urban Expression please check out our [website](#).

[Application form](#)



For your prayers

In each newsletter we would like to share peoples situations and Churches who you might remember in your prayers. If you have any prayer requests to include in this section please send them to office@nwsynod.org.uk.

This week we invite you to pray for:

- For the congregations of churches which have decided to close, and for all those who are facing difficult decisions about the future of their fellowships and buildings.

