

## North Western Synod Newsletter

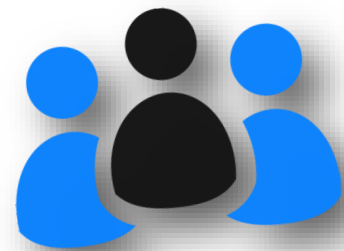


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## Goodbye to Revd Adam Woodhouse



During this last week we said Goodbye to Adam as he leaves our Missional Partnership (Lancashire East) to follow God's call to move to Chesterfield.

Adam has touched very many lives with his ministry, including children and staff at Barrow URC Primary School, Scouts and leaders at Cherry Tree Scouts and all the members and communities of our 9 churches in the Partnership.

We held our Celebration service for Adam's ministry with us, on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept, at Westbury Gardens URC,, when we saw the church full to capacity with representatives of all our communities and groups.

Adam moves to Chesterfield to be with his fiancée Emily and her children and will be working for the Church of England in Sheffield in a youth ministry role.

Whilst we will all be sad to see Adam leave us, we celebrate with him in these next steps of his journey following God's call.

He leaves with our thanks for all his gifts he has shared with us and our blessings for his future.

Revd Mike Aspinall

## While the congregation's away, the mice will play



Knitters and crafters from Providence New Mills (and beyond) have been working tirelessly over the past year to put together a fun and somewhat quirky exhibition for the New Mills Festival.



For the past two weeks "*While the congregation's away, the mice will play*" has been drawing visitors from near and far to see what the knitted and crafted mice have been up to.

The exhibition was made up of a wonderful array of different scenes, from Christmas mice, Suffragette mice, and rainbow mice to none other than the 'S-mice Girls'. Organist, Gordon Stewart was also very surprised to find knitted mice in his shoes!

Pictured are some members and friends with the rainbow mice celebrating the church's recent decision to register to conduct same-sex marriages.

The New Mills Festival culminates with a concert by Gordon Stewart along with cellist Claire Babbington this Sunday 29 September at 3pm at Providence URC. All are very welcome to attend.



# Michael Harvey's Acorn Workshop: 14th September

## Bamford Chapel and Norden URC

Many churches describe themselves as welcoming. However, are we truly invitational? Can others genuinely benefit from our hospitality? True hospitality combines invitation with welcome.

Are we invitational churches? This challenge is presented to us by Michael Harvey, the mastermind behind *Back To Church Sundays*, who will collaborate closely with our Synod over the coming years. Last weekend Michael hosted a workshop at Bamford Chapel and Norden URC exploring this very idea. This workshop was well-attended and inspired us to consider afresh what true hospitality meant. His insights are worthy of our attention.

The idea of inviting someone to church can be intimidating. We may fear rejection, lack confidence, or feel that such an endeavour is too overwhelming. "Leave it to the professionals!" we might think. However, Michael advocates a different approach, encouraging us to extend God's hospitality through prayer and simple engagement.

Michael suggests starting small, beginning with a simple "acorn" prayer: "Gracious God, is there someone you want me to connect with outside the church today? Amen."

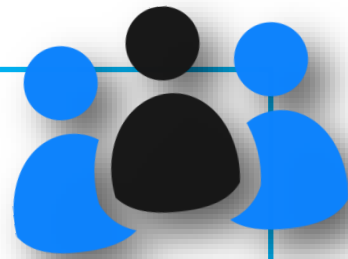
God stirs our hearts. He might bring a particular person to mind. Simultaneously, God is also working in that person's life. The common denominator is that God is doing the heavy lifting behind the scenes. He is just asking us to respond to His Spirit's promptings.

This "acorn" prayer also forms an acronym that underpins this straightforward spiritual practice:

- **Ask** God if there is someone you should connect with today.
- **Call** - a name may come to mind during prayer, or you may meet someone informally throughout the day.
- **Obey** (or respond) - when you meet them, simply ask, "How are you?" and take an interest in their wellbeing.
- **Report** - share your experiences with others to encourage and learn from each other.
- **Notice** God working in each other's lives through this simple approach to everyday mission.

Please be on the lookout for Michael and his "acorn" prayer. You may even wish to try the prayer yourself!

Keep the faith, Daniel Harris



## Save the dates

- Autumn Synod 5th October at Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YW 10.30am.
- Theology Reading Group—beginning on **Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> of October, from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.** by Zoom. (advertised in events section)
- Sacraments Training -1st October (10am to 3pm), North Western Synod (Lunch provided, if attending full session)
- Communion training - 8 January 2025 (7pm by Zoom)
- Sacrament training at Lancashire & Cumbria - 4th March 2025 (Venue TBC)

Dear Prime Minister



Let's End Poverty are launching a new campaign to encourage the new Government to meet with people who are poverty experienced and understand the insights they can bring to inform plans to end poverty in this Country.

Listening and responding to the perspective that people who are poverty experienced is one of the key principles which underpin our strategy of being a Church with People at the Margins. It is an important part of how they are able to live with Dignity, Agency and Power.

As Let's End Poverty say, *"The expertise of people with lived experience of poverty should be integral when new policies are created to tackle poverty."*

*It's not only morally right to value the perspectives of people who truly understand the impact of poverty, but it's the best way to create sustainable change. Policy makers and political leaders need to trust the insights brought by people with lived experiences of poverty to craft solutions that genuinely address the complexities of people's lives. Ignoring these perspectives is not an option if we aim to create meaningful and lasting change."*

We are encouraging all churches to support this campaign which will be launched in "Challenge Poverty Week" which runs from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October by asking members of their congregation to send postcards supporting the campaign.

More information and details of how to order the postcards from Let's End Poverty can be found at [Dear Prime Minister... - Let's End Poverty \(letsendpoverty.co.uk\)](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk)

Many thanks for your support for this campaign

Mike Hart, Transformation Director



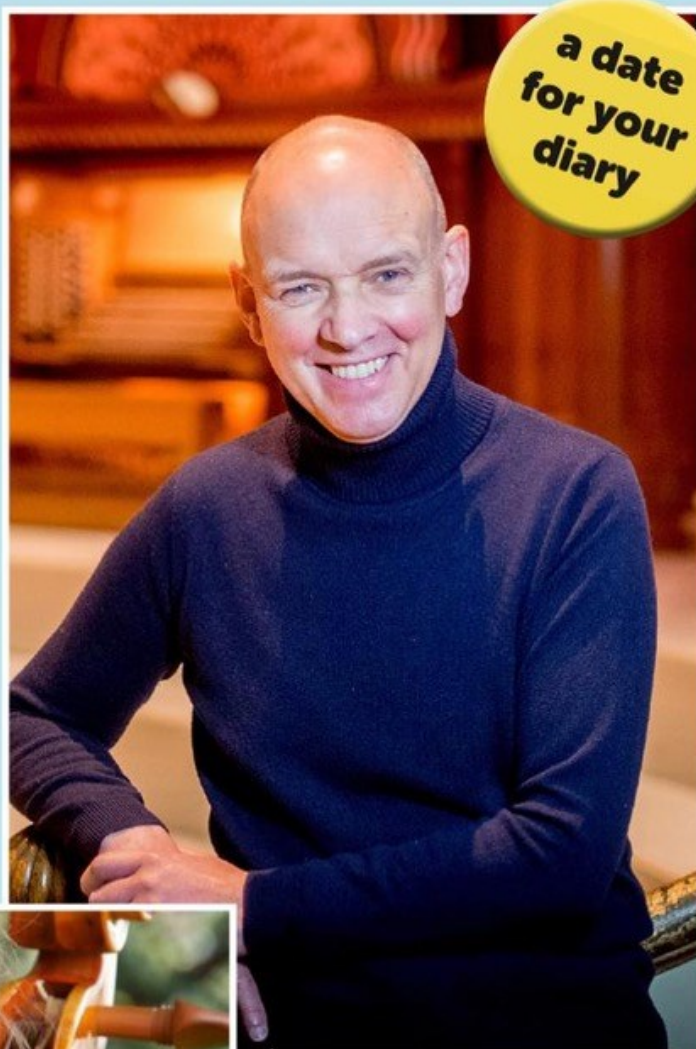
# Providence Church

Mellor Road, New Mills, SK22 4DP

**Sundays at 3**  
*September 29th at 3pm*

*Gordon Stewart  
is joined by cellist  
Claire Babbington*

In a programme ranging from Bach to Morricone and including such favourites as Elgar's Salut d'Amour. Saint-Saens' The Swan and Morricone's Gabriel's Oboe.



a date  
for your  
diary



*Free admission with retiring collection*

[www.providencechurch.co.uk](http://www.providencechurch.co.uk)

Cumbria URC Missional Partnership

**RHEGED**



**Elders' Enrichment Day**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 10-3pm**

**Tea and Coffee from 9.30**

**For all in lay leadership in Cumbria**

**Come and share worship  
and refresh practice**

**focusing on Pastoral Care.**

**Lunch is provided – please tell Claire  
numbers and dietary requirements.**

**Contact Claire MacIntyre 07553 743262  
deputyclerk@nwsynod.org.uk**



## Sacrament training

Sacrament training will be offered to those seeking either (1) communion (morning) or (2) baptism (afternoon) or (3) both (full day). This satisfies the Synod requirement for authorisation and for refreshment of training (every 3-years). Please let us know if you will be staying for lunch. Contact Kerry to book. [office@nwsyod.org.uk](mailto:office@nwsyod.org.uk)



**SACRAMENT  
TRAINING**

**TWO TRAININGS WITH  
ONE CLASS!**

**TRAINING WITH  
REVD ROB HOCH-YIDOKODILTONA**

**LUNCH WILL BE SERVED**

**1ST OCTOBER 10AM - 3PM @ NORTH WESTERN SYNOD OFFICE  
PLEASE CONTACT KERRY TO BOOK [OFFICE@NWSYNOD.ORG.UK](mailto:OFFICE@NWSYNOD.ORG.UK)**

**Spaces are limited - first come first served**

# Save the Date: Theology Reading Group

If you're thirsty for some deep reading in small portions with supportive community, consider joining the new Theology Reading Group which will be meeting on the second Tuesday of every month, beginning on **Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> of October, from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.** by Zoom.

Zoom Meeting: Theology Reading Group

Time: Oct 8, 2024 12:00 PM London

Every month on the Second Tue, until Apr 8, 2025, 7 occurrence(s)

- Oct 8, 2024 12:00 PM
- Nov 12, 2024 12:00 PM
- Dec 10, 2024 12:00 PM
- Jan 14, 2025 12:00 PM
- Feb 11, 2025 12:00 PM
- Mar 11, 2025 12:00 PM
- Apr 8, 2025 12:00 PM

Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 6

DIETRICH  
BONHOEFFER

ETHICS



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87627415144?pwd=fqqIZa8wq7urkRYSGPFIIXrAZhbRxJ.1>

Meeting ID: 876 2741 5144

Passcode: 476014

To start we will be reading, during the session itself (no advance reading required) from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* which can be purchased from Amazon [here](#) at for around £27 in paperback or £24 as Kindle. *Please do get this translation, as we will engage in group reading before sharing our responses, questions, and take-aways from each session.*

This is for anyone who wants to take seriously the reality of Christ and Christ's reconciling work in our world.

We will read aloud as a group and then, share our reactions (as we are willing) to the reading in about 3 minutes or so each, before opening to more general conversation. Interested? Please confirm your planned attendance by emailing me, Rob Hoch-Yidokodiltona at [learningmentor@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:learningmentor@nwsynod.org.uk).

*“Christ did not, like an ethicist, love a theory about the good; he loved real people. Christ was not interested, like a philosopher, in what is “generally valid,” but in that which serves real concrete human beings. Christ was not concerned about whether “the maxim of an action” could become “a principle of universal law,” but whether my action now helps my neighbor to be a human being before God. God did not become an idea, a principle, a program, a universally valid belief, or a law;[102.] God became human.”*

— **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

# Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding is  
Everyone's  
Responsibility

## Face to face Intermediate Safeguarding training

More venues, dates and times will be arranged in the autumn to fit in with the holiday season. Churches will be sent updated reminders of outstanding training.

**1st Oct 2024 12:00 - 15:00 at Chorley URC—CANCELLED**

**19<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024 10:00 - 13:00 at Short Street**

**30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024 11:00 – 14:00 at The Dandelion**



For more information about training records for your church please contact [admin@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:admin@nwsynod.org.uk)

## Online Intermediate Safeguarding Training

**4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024 18:00-20:00**

## Foundation Safeguarding e-Learning

Any person with a role in a URC church that has not completed URC safeguarding training in the last 3 years is required to complete the Foundation e-learning as a minimum, ideally individually, but it can be facilitated in small groups if people do not have access to the internet, a computer/ device or both.

You must have completed Foundation training before you can do Intermediate training. Follow this link: [Foundation Safeguarding Training](#)

## Online Advanced Safeguarding Training

This training is:

Mandatory for people who are leading groups involving adults and/or children in churches.

Recommended for Church Safeguarding Coordinators and all other people in leadership roles.

Although, if you have completed the Intermediate Safeguarding training, you are also welcome to attend.

**8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024 Module 1&2 12.00-15.00**

To register and book a place please contact [admin@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:admin@nwsynod.org.uk)

**URC Denominational (Church House lead) Safeguarding Training for 2024** (*please click on the link for further information*)

[URC Denominational Safeguarding Training 2024 \(urc.org.uk\)](https://www.urc.org.uk)

**Safeguarding Contacts:**

**Yvette Hansbury-Robinson** is the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

**For General safeguarding queries**, relating to safeguarding training and DBS please email the safeguarding team on [admin@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:admin@nwsynod.org.uk)

**For queries relating to safeguarding policy & procedure and safeguarding allegations/ concerns**, please contact Yvette on:

Email: [safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk)

Mobile number: 07827-390299

## Leading Your Church into Growth Conference

The North Western Synod, along with the other four northerly Synods, has 12 places for people in the Synod to attend.

If anyone would like to attend this annual conference of the five northerly Synods please contact Rachel, her email address is below

Any questions please contact Rachel or Revd Richard Bradley  
(Richard.Bradley@nwsynod.org.uk)

the Convenor of the North Western Synod Mission and  
Discipleship Committee and Network



Leading your Church  
into Growth  
Conference

**25-27 November**  
at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

*Talk to your Synod Rep for more information.*

TO BOOK: Use the QR code or email  
[rachel@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:rachel@urcyorkshire.org.uk)

Reformed Church  
Five Northerly  
Synods

# Book Club—Season of Creation

The poster is a light green background with a pink and orange decorative border. At the top left is the logo for The North Western Synod of the United Reformed Church, with the motto 'Tread the earth gently' and logos for 'Commitment for Life', 'aid', 'ECO CHURCH', and 'ETHICAL TRADING'. The central text reads 'SEASON OF CREATION BOOK CLUB' in large green letters. Below this is a quote from Katherine May: 'Join the Northwestern Synod Eco network to reflect together on "Enchantment" by Katherine May Subtitled, "Reawakening wonder in an exhausted age" May asks the question, "Could there be another way to live? One that would allow us to feel less fraught and more connected, more rested and at ease, even as seismic changes unfold on the planet?"'. To the left is the book cover for 'Enchantment' by Katherine May, which is a Sunday Times Bestseller. To the right is a list of meeting dates: Mondays 7pm on zoom, September 16th: Earth, September 23rd: Water, October 7th: Fire, and October 14th: Air. Below the dates are zoom details: Meeting id 818 0673 9995, Passcode 505661. At the bottom right is the 'SEASON OF CREATION' logo featuring a tree. At the bottom center is contact information: Contact liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk for details.

The North Western Synod  
of the United Reformed Church  
Tread the earth gently

Commitment for Life aid ECO CHURCH ETHICAL TRADING

SEASON OF CREATION  
**BOOK CLUB**

Join the Northwestern Synod Eco network to reflect together on "Enchantment" by Katherine May Subtitled, "Reawakening wonder in an exhausted age" May asks the question, "Could there be another way to live? One that would allow us to feel less fraught and more connected, more rested and at ease, even as seismic changes unfold on the planet?"

THE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER  
Katherine May  
A beautifully written manifesto for living and reawakening wonder in an exhausted age  
**ENCHANTMENT**  
Reawakening wonder in an exhausted age  
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANNE MCGEE

Mondays 7pm on zoom.  
September 16th: Earth  
September 23rd: Water  
October 7th: Fire  
October 14th: Air

Zoom details:  
Meeting id 818 0673 9995  
Passcode 505661

**SEASON OF CREATION**

Contact  
liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk for details

Apologies if you tried to join the book club using the pass code on the poster. There was an error. This is now correct.

Here's the zoom link for easy access:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81806739995?pwd=TF1olq0aJG11rb1hHXn7uwUjT8jeC.1>

Meeting id 818 0673 9995. Passcode 50566

Here's a link to where you can buy the book: <https://www.hive.co.uk/Product/Katherine-May/Enchantment--Reawakening-Wonder-in-an-Exhausted-Age/29636743>

Or look for **Enchantment by Katherine May**, published Faber & Faber: ISBN: 9780571378357 in your local bookshop or library. Also available as an audio or ebook from the usual places

Email: [liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk)

Faithtalk



Do you ever wonder how you can be comfortable sharing your faith with others? Are you worried you might be laughed at or dismissed or considered strange? Are you concerned you wouldn't know what to say if someone did want to know more? Join us for the second FaithTalk, a light-hearted conversation exploring how we talk about our faith.

## South Area Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Circle



**WHAT IF GOD WAS ONE OF US?**  
Planning for advent and Christmas.  
NW Synod South Area Preachers' circle.  
Monday 21st October 7pm.  
For all planning or leading worship  
during advent and Christmas.  
Bring ideas and resources to share.

ZOOM MEETING ID : 872 8710 4532  
PASSCODE 811104

contact: [liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk)

The next gathering of the South area preachers' and worship leaders' circle will be focusing on our preparations for advent and Christmas.

Open to anyone who is involved in planning or leading worship during this time.

Here's the link for easy access:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89275458937?pwd=Kf8K3TdujKhPuS5Ab9hPCwrbCHHUQH.1>



# The Joined Up conference 2024

is taking place in York on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

Save <sup>the</sup>  
Date!

Saturday  
**19 October**  
2024

joined up  
CONFERENCE 2024

York

This year's theme: Sharing our Stories

Haxby and Wiggington  
Methodist Church, YO32 2JJ

With

**Matt Woodcock**

[www.mattwoodcock.co.uk](http://www.mattwoodcock.co.uk)



With a full programme of great speakers and workshops, headlined by Matt Woodcock, we will be exploring the theme: Sharing Our Stories.

You're your tickets (£15) here: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/theunitedreformedchurchyorkshireprovincetrustltd/1183268>

# Talking About... Supporting LGBTQIA+ young people

(This is the re-scheduled April session)



**TALKING ABOUT...  
SUPPORTING LGBTQIA+  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

Thursday, October 24th 7-8pm  
book your place at  
[www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout](http://www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout)



We recognise that this is a challenging subject for many in our churches, yet it is an important subject to reflect upon as we seek to be a faith community which offers inclusion to all.

Young people in particular can feel confused and excluded from the church community that may say God loves everyone but then doesn't show God's love to everyone.

In this month's Talking About... session we will be joined by guest speaker Katie Harwood. Katie is a youth worker with the Oasis MediaCity school and community hub and works with a group of LGBTQIA+ young people.

Katie will share insights and thoughts as well as offering practical advice about how we can be genuinely inclusive to all young people.

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

# Youth Assembly 2025

Kings Park Conference Centre, Northampton. 7<sup>TH</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>  
March 2025

Bookings are now being taken for Youth Assembly 2025

North Western Synod will pay the conference cost for any young people young people (year 10 – age 25) who would like to attend.

You can book your place at <https://linktr.ee/URCYouthAssembly>



URC  
**YOUTH ASSEMBLY**  
= 2025 =

All are  
**welcome**

Arrive as strangers, leave as friends

7-9 March 2025  
New venue with twin rooms and menu choices  
Kings Park Conference Centre, Northampton, NN3 6LL

**A fun weekend to have your say, make friends  
and find fellowship**

**Worship** - Bible study, music, prayer spaces,  
late night communion

**Youth Decides** - discussion on issues that matter to us -  
leading to action and engaging the wider church

**Workshops** - grow your skills and thinking  
while exploring the theme

**Entertainment** - campfire, karaoke, sports, games and more

**£120** early bird until 1 December / **£150** from 2 December  
until 2 February 2025

Please talk to your church and synod about help with funding.  
Open to Year 10 / S3 students up to 25 years inclusive.

Book you place today:  
<https://linktr.ee/URCYouthAssembly> or contact [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk)



Here's a taste of Youth Assembly 2024  
Just scan the QR code, or visit:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1npXCWKf00](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1npXCWKf00)



For all young people with a connection to the United Reformed Church including:



## KNOW AND GROW - Makaton course for churches



As part of our drive to help churches become increasingly accessible and welcoming to all, URC Training is delighted to be able to offer subsidised access to the new KNOW AND GROW training, a Makaton course which focuses specifically on the signs you might use in worship and church-based groups. Makaton is a system of signing and using symbols to aid spoken and written communication.

Each course comprises two online sessions and you must be able to attend both. Sadly, due to limited spaces, we can offer this only to those associated with a URC church or LEP. The cost is just £18 to cover the printed manual which you will be able to keep.

Sessions are 9.30-12.30 on Friday 20 & 27 September, Saturday 21 & 28 September, Saturday 12 & 19 October

Book your place now on: [Know and Grow Makaton course Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)

## Five Friendly faces



Who are your five friendly faces?



Think of five people who could grow closer to God through your friendship and prayers!

In 2023, Russian amateur astronomer Filipp Romanov achieved a remarkable feat by discovering two new asteroids that eluded professional astronomers. With only 10,000 professional astronomers employed globally, there is significant potential for "citizen scientists" like Romanov to make meaningful contributions. In recognition of his work, the newly discovered asteroids were named in honour of his grandparents.

This phenomenon is not limited to astronomy. As the presence of traditional ministers diminishes with the decline of institutional Christianity, the role of chaplains is becoming increasingly prominent. Prisons, barracks, shopping centres, and schools - chaplains are popping up everywhere! This shift presents opportunities for dedicated amateurs, or "citizen chaplains."

Chaplaincy does not typically require extensive religious training. Rather, it involves the simple yet profound act of accompanying individuals in their life journeys, listening without imposing, and sharing God's love through genuine friendships. Jesus exemplified the essence of chaplaincy in his encounter on the Emmaus Road (Luke 23).

My pet project for this year, titled Five Friendly Faces, seeks to informally recognize and support "citizen chaplains." The process is straightforward: prayerfully identify five individuals you know, commit to praying for them throughout the week, cultivate meaningful relationships, and share God's love through words and actions when the friendship permits. This ministry operates quietly, without badges or certificates, but it is recognized by God and brings profound blessings.

Over the past year, I have been praying for and supporting my own Five Friendly Faces and have been amazed by the results. One friend has made significant strides in their spiritual journey and recently attended an evangelistic event with me. Another has sought prayer for a loved one serving a prison sentence abroad. Additionally, a third friend has uncanny childhood connections with the URC, which feels like a "God-incidence." This practice has significantly enhanced my spiritual confidence.

At the heart of the Five Friendly Faces initiative are prayerful friendships. If you wish to learn more, please reach out [Daniel.harris@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:Daniel.harris@nwsynod.org.uk)

—I would be delighted to pray for you. Should there be sufficient interest, I may consider organizing a workshop for further engagement.

## WANTED

Edgeley Community Church are looking to start a Dementia Café and Chatty Café, however, whilst we have some “institutional” type tables, we could really do with some Café style tables. We don't mind if square or circular, but suitable for say 4-people to sit around comfortably.

If you know of any such tables going free (or for a very low cost) we'd be very happy to acquire them.

Please let me know and we will arrange transport as necessary.

And we'd be very happy to welcome you to come along and have complimentary tea/coffee and toasted teacake and join us for a chat.

[Mike.aspinall@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:Mike.aspinall@nwsynod.org.uk)

Thank you

Mike Aspinall



## 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](mailto:office@nwsynod.org.uk).

This week we invite you to pray for:

- The continued growth of church mission
- For the Churches who are facing difficult decisions about the future of their fellowships and buildings.
- Stephanie Atkins as she is Ordained and Inducted to the Greater Manchester South Missional Partnership

