

North Western Synod Newsletter



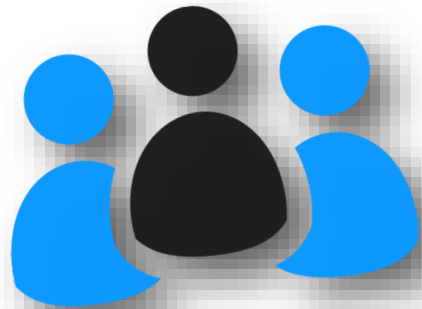
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Announcing!!

New Synod Help Desk

Number

 **08000 903 903**

We're pleased to announce we now
have a new **FREE PHONE** number

We have also launched a new help desk
email address:

 **helpdesk@nwsynod.org.uk**



Willow Wood Hospice Festival of Music Event at Albion Church

The Willow Wood Hospice Festival of Music event took place at Albion Church on Sunday 1st December 2024. The church was nearly full and a lot of money was raised for the local hospice. A really good community event.

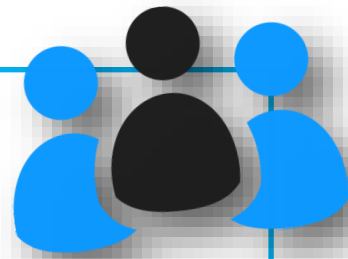
David Hey—Albion Church Secretary



Festival of Nativity Cribs at Forton URC

Thanks to all who visited our Festival of Nativity Cribs last weekend.
Over 100 on display and a great way to celebrate the beginning of Advent.





Save the Dates

- Theology Reading Group—next session online—10th December 2025 at 12pm

PLEASE NOTE:

Lancashire and Cumbria Sacrament training will now be on different dates and venues

- Communion Training — 8th January 2025 at 7pm—by Zoom
- Sacrament Training Lancashire Area — 4th March 2025 at 2pm—Venue TBC
- Sacrament Training Cumbria Area—1st April 2025—10am to 2pm—Windermere Carver
- Acorn Roadshows in your area:
 - 18th January 2025— 10am to 1pm — Central / South Area
Oasis Hub, Media City
 - 25th January 2025 — Lancashire Area — details to be confirmed
- Stepwise 2025 — 20th January 2025 at 7pm—by Zoom—'Beginning Stepwise'
— 3rd February 2025—by Zoom—'Continuing Your Stepwise Journey'
- Sabbatical Reflection 'Where words fail, music speaks' - 28th January 2025 at 12-2pm—
NW Synod Office
- Youthscape Essentials (Online) - 10 monthly sessions commencing 25th February
2025—7pm to 9pm
- Spring Ministers Away Day—1st March 2025
Venue—The Storey, 2 Meeting House Lane, Town Centre, Lancaster, LA1 1TH
- Youth Assembly 2025 — 7th-9th March 2025—Kings Park Conf Centre, Northants
- URC Youth Leaders Gathering—7th to 9th March 2025—Highgate House, Northants
- 1T4 at Whitemoor Lakes in Staffordshire—2nd-4th May 2025

Lancashire Carers Sing Christmas!

For more information, to download a hymn sheet or register a venue click [here](#)



It's beginning to look a lot like....

Lancashire Carers Sing Christmas!
Wednesday 18th December Midday



Live from the Studios of BBC Radio Lancashire Blackburn



Calling all Carers at Christmas

A special broadcast sharing
the stories of those who offer
care for others at Christmas



With the combined Lancashire Bands of
The Salvation Army, the Blackburn People's Choir
and special guests



Join the service live at midday or
Hold your own local event at
a time or venue of your choice with
BBC Sounds



Download the carol sheet
Register a venue at:

<https://www.ctlancashire.org.uk/lancashire-carers-sing-christmas-2024/>



United Christian Singers performing at Trinity Audenshaw Church

From Lesley Rolls—Member at Trinity Audenshaw

'The United Christian Singers, a mixed voice choir rehearse at Trinity Church, Audenshaw. Some of our members sing with them (me included), we give free concerts during Advent and around Easter, at many Churches in the Manchester area.

We are performing 'Little Lion, Little Lamb' on 14th December 2024 at 3pm at Trinity.

For more information please click [here](#).

Blue Christmas Event at re:new—Barrow in Furness

re:new

In the community, By the community, For the community

Blue Christmas

The grief and pain of life do not have to be forgotten at Christmas, but can sit alongside the hope and light at the heart of the Christmas message

Monday 16th December

Come and help us to decorate our tree by creating your own heart.

You're Invited to join us at 12pm or 5pm to share in a short time of reflection.



The Methodist Church



Altrincham URC — Knitted Bible Exhibition

Joseph and his brothers



The Knitted Bible Exhibition

**at Altrincham United Reformed Church
(corner of Cecil Road and Ashley Road),**

Hale. WA15 9NT

Sponsored by Churches Together in Hale

**36 Bible scenes complete with an explanation
of each story. Every day 1pm to 3pm from
Saturday 4th January to Friday 10th January 2025**



Healing the paralysed man



Palm Sunday

Free of charge. Refreshments provided.

(Small donation for refreshments appreciated)

**All ages welcome including parties from
churches**

For further information or to book larger parties please contact:

Sue Jesson jessonsusan@gmail.com 07973 391154 or

the Church Office office@altrinchamurc.org.uk 0161 929 9747

LGBTQIA+ Friendly Worship at Kendal URC




opentable.lgbt


Kendal
United Reformed Church

**LGBTQIA+ friendly
Christian Worship**
106 Highgate Kendal
Sun 15th Dec 2024

6.15pm soup and bread
7pm for worship

a journey from
Advent
to
Christmas

with guest Clare Downing Moderator URC NW Synod

Sacrament Training Dates

To book a place please contact Kerry office@nwsynod.org.uk



SACRAMENT TRAINING DATES

Communion training 8th January @7pm (online)

Sacrament training (Baptism & Communion)
4th March 2025 10am - 2pm (venue tbc)
Lanscashire Area

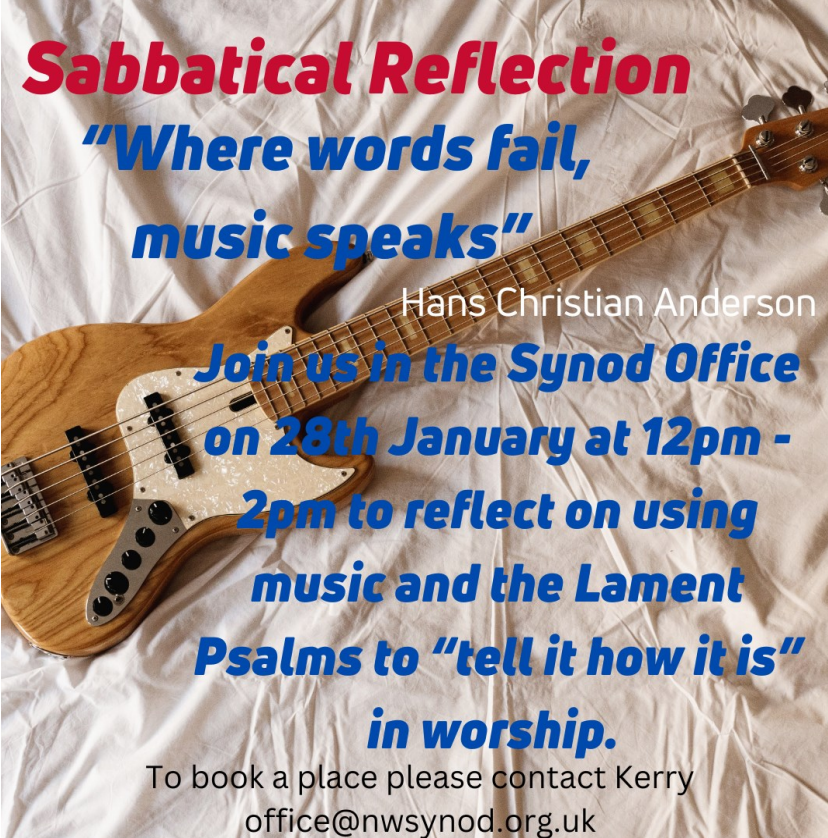
Sacrament training (Baptism & Communion)
1st April 10am - 2pm Carver Uniting Church

TRAINING WITH
REVD ROB HOCH YIDOKODILTONA

PLEASE CONTACT KERRY TO BOOK OFFICE@NWSYNOD.ORG.UK
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

Sabbatical Reflection

To book a place please contact Kerry at office@nwsynod.org.uk



Sabbatical Reflection
**"Where words fail,
music speaks"**
Hans Christian Anderson
**Join us in the Synod Office
on 28th January at 12pm -
2pm to reflect on using
music and the Lament
Psalms to "tell it how it is"
in worship.**
To book a place please contact Kerry
office@nwsynod.org.uk

**Following 10 years in ministry,
Ruth Watson took her Sabbatical
and spent April-June 2024
exploring the Lament Psalms and
the use of music in worship**

**Come along and find
out more as we reflect
on what that means for
us today**



CENTRAL / SOUTH AREA ACORN ROADSHOW: UPDATE 18th JANUARY 2025



The image shows a promotional poster for the Acorn Roadshow on the left and a photograph of Michael Harvey on the right. The poster is white with blue text and features the Acorn logo (a blue square with three acorns) in the top left. The text on the poster includes: 'INVITATIONAL CHURCH WITH MICHAEL HARVEY', 'Acorn' in a large blue script font, 'ACORN ROADSHOW' in bold blue capital letters, '18 JANUARY 2025', 'OASIS HUB, MEDIACITY, KING WILLIAM STREET, SALFORD QUAYS, M50 3UQ', '10 AM - 1 PM', 'BRING YOUR OWN PACKED LUNCH. REFRESHMENT WILL BE PROVIDED ON ARRIVAL', and a small logo for 'The North Western Synod of the United Reformed Church' at the bottom left. The photograph shows Michael Harvey, a middle-aged man with glasses on his head, wearing a blue and white striped polo shirt and a yellow lanyard, sitting at a wooden podium with a microphone.

Michael Harvey will be running an Acorn Roadshow on **18th January, 2025, 10am - 3pm at the Oasis Hub, MediaCity, King William Street, Salford Quays, M50 2UQ.**

The theme will be: **Creating a culture of invitation.** It builds on the sessions offered already (An Introduction to Acorn and Acorn as a Spiritual Practice for Pastoral Care), but you don't need to have done these to attend.

We will be engaging with our URC culture, asking how we can move from being a welcoming church only to being welcoming and invitational. We'll look at the barriers to being invitational and simple-but-profound steps to overcoming hesitation and reluctance, among other things.

How about putting together a group from your church to do a "pilot study"? You can support and encourage one another and Michael will work personally with the group.

Please register attendance with Kerry at office@nwsynod.org.uk by **13th January 2025**

Lawrence Heath-Moore — Central Area Mission Mentor

Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility

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 module as a minimum, ideally individually. However 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 complete **Intermediate** Training.

Follow this link for the **Foundation** e-learning module: [Foundation Safeguarding Training](#)

Intermediate and Advanced Safeguarding Training

New dates for online and face to face sessions to be confirmed for 2025.

Advanced Safeguarding 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. In addition, anyone who has completed the **Intermediate** Safeguarding Training is also very welcome to attend.

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 —Synod Safeguarding Officer— safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk

General Safeguarding Queries — relating to safeguarding training and/or DBS, please email the Safeguarding Team on helpdesk@nwsynod.org.uk

A Guide to Coping with Christmas

We hope that you, your family and contacts might find this guide useful at Christmas—please click [here](#) to view

It is a time of year that can sometimes be very difficult for many people.

From Yvette Hansbury – Robinson (Safeguarding Officer)

Email: safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk

Theology Reading Group

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

Zoom Meeting: Theology Reading Group

Every month on the Second Tues, until 8th April 2025

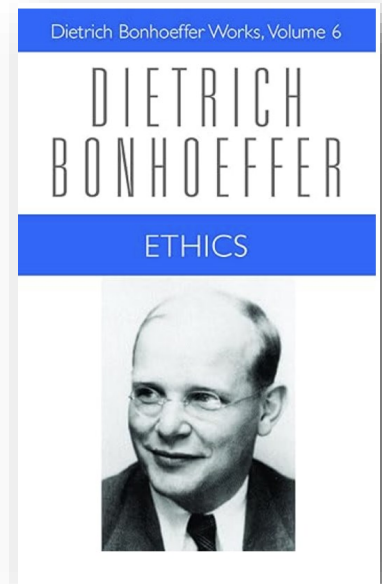
- Dec 10, 2024 12:00 PM
- Jan 14, 2025 12:00 PM
- Feb 11, 2025 12:00 PM
- Mar 11, 2025 12:00 PM
- Apr 8, 2025 12:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87627415144?
pwd=fqqjZa8wq7urkRYSgPFiIXrAZhbRxJ.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87627415144?pwd=fqqjZa8wq7urkRYSgPFiIXrAZhbRxJ.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](#) 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-Yidokodilona at learningmentor@nwsynod.org.uk

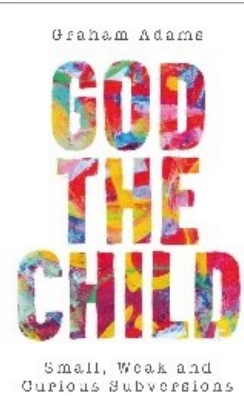
"Christ did not, like an ethicist, love a theory about the good; he loved real people. Christ was not interested, like a philosopher, in what is "generally valid," but in that which serves real concrete human beings. Christ was not concerned about whether "the maxim of an action" could become "a principle 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**

Envisioning Worship Conference



Envisioning Worship Conference for everyone interested in how worship affects mission



Theme: What if *God is Child?*

Dates: 11am on 8th March – 3.30pm on 9th March 2025

Venue: Luther King Centre, Manchester

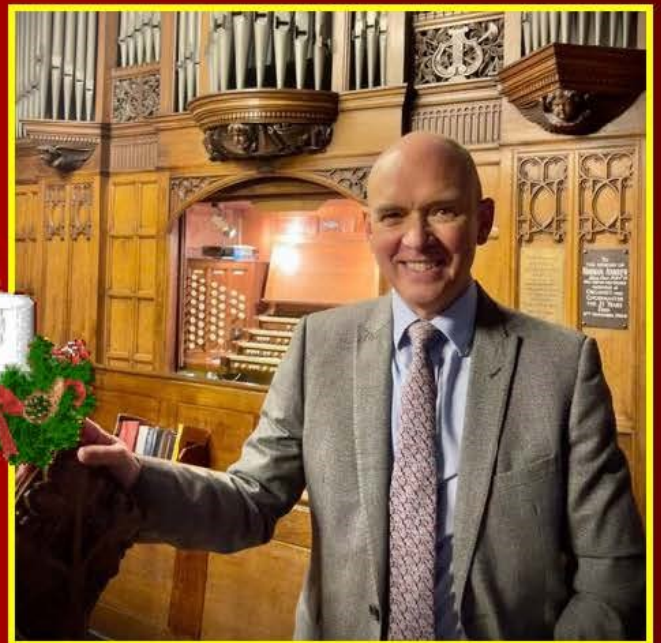
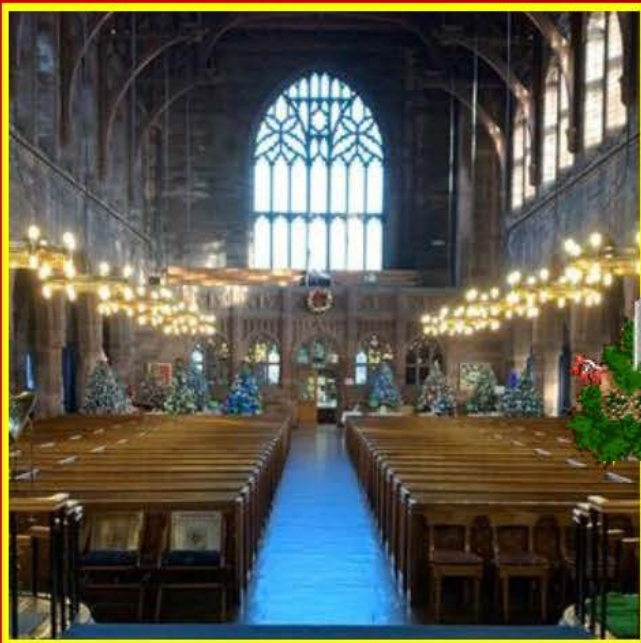
Costs: Residential : £200
Non-residential : £120

Who is it for? Anyone intrigued by the idea of the childlikeness of God – in the midst of the smallest experiences; apparently weak but disruptive; curious, playful and imaginative; raging and dancing – and what this might mean for worship and mission. Anyone drawn to Bible explorations, creative workshops and more – and who is interested in imagining things differently.

For more information and to register, visit –
<https://northerncollege.co.uk/ewc-march-2025/>

Christmas at Albion with

GORDON ★
STEWART



*Presenting a programme of Christmas Music in the tree dressed atmosphere of Albion Church playing the famous **LEWIS ORGAN***

*Come along and join us for this Special Christmas Concert on Monday 16th December 2024 at 1-00pm
Admission **FREE** - With retiring collection*

*Albion United Reformed Church,
Stamford Street,
Ashton-u-Lyne OL6 6QQ*

www.albionurc.org.uk - www.gordonstewart.org



Worsley Road URC — Christmas Events



Come and join us this festive season at
Worsley Road United Reformed Church!



Service dates

Sunday 1st December

Advent Service



Sunday 8th December

Toy Service



Donations to St Paul's Church, Salford gratefully received!



Sunday 15th December

Food Bank Sunday



Festive donations to Salford Food Bank appreciated!



Sunday 22nd December

Nativity at 10:45am



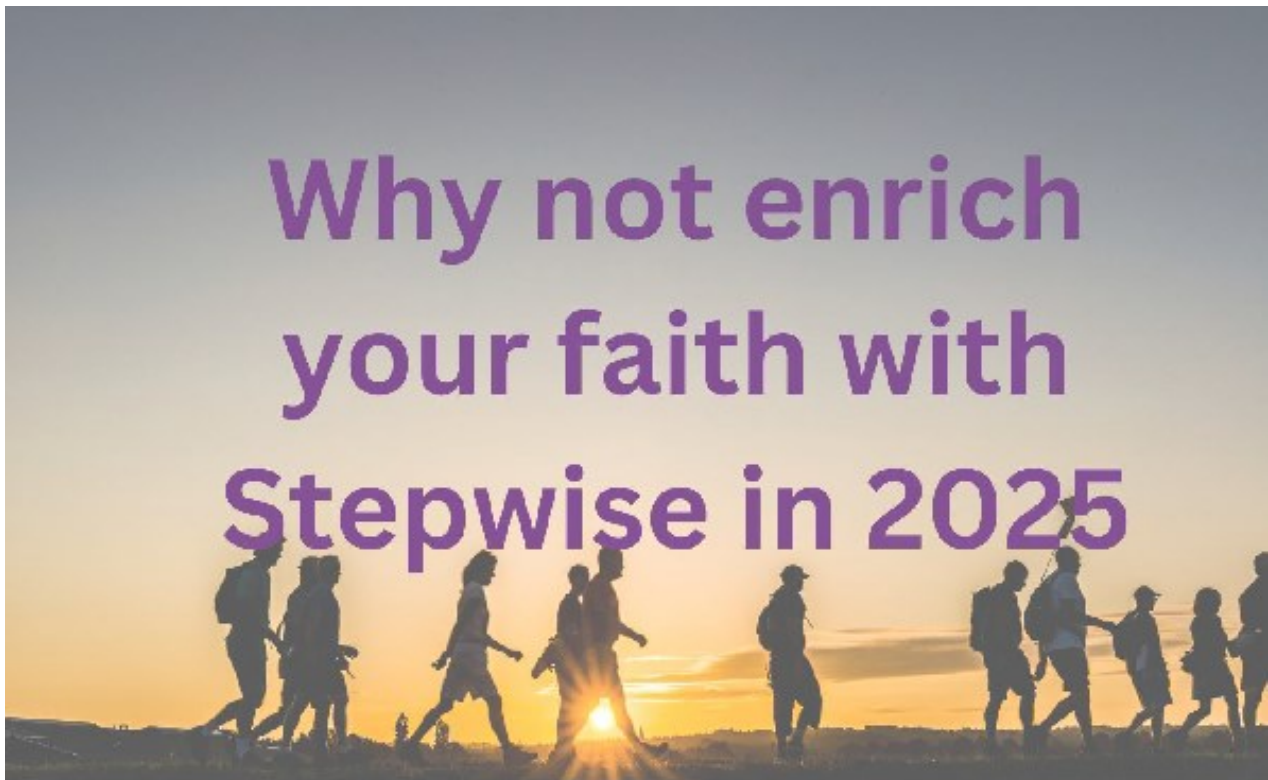
Evening Carol Service 6:30pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Please come and join the festive celebrations throughout December!
Why not bring a friend along to share the festive fun?



What is on Offer with Stepwise in 2025

Contact liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk for more information and the Zoom link



Come to an introductory session on zoom to find out more.

- **Monday 20th January 7pm. Beginning Stepwise:** An introduction to Stepwise and to Faith filled life. For those new to Stepwise.
- **Monday 3rd February: Continuing your stepwise journey:** For those who have already done a stepwise course. A chance to catch up with other participants, find out about the different Stepwise streams and explore your next steps.

Contact liz.delafield@nwsynod.org.uk for more information and the zoom link.

Stepwise

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

Youth Assembly 2025

Book your place at www.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



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



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



Youthscape Essentials

Running 10 monthly online sessions from Tues 25th Feb to Mon 24th Nov 2025, 7pm to 9pm

For further information please contact cydo@urcmerseysynod.org.uk

To book a place please see below



You are invited to Youthscape Essentials, all round training for every volunteer youth leader.

We are going to learn and pray in a community with a shared heart and hope for young people and for God.

Each of the 10 sessions includes:

- 1 insight into youth culture to explore
- 1 practical skill to try out together
- 1 area of Christian character to reflect on

We always start with the voice of a young person through a special recorded video, and we close by being sent out in hopeful prayer.

Whether you have been involved in youth ministry for years or you are thinking of getting involved, Youthscape Essentials is the place for you.

Running online, monthly, from Tuesday 25th February to Monday 24th November 7pm to 9pm.
For a list of dates please contact cydo@urcmerseysynod.org.uk.
To book go to <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/yse/register> or use the QR code and enter course code **1245085**.



Youthscape Essentials is an innovative course for volunteers and paid youth leaders that increases your skills and understanding about working alongside young people today. Whether you're running a community project, a church youth group, or occasionally helping out on a Sunday morning, the course is designed with you in mind! It's not about the numbers of young people attending, it's about putting God at the centre of your youth ministry.

It's 10 sessions covering 30 topics. The topics are divided into Insights into Young People, Skills for Youth Work and Developing Character. You'll listen to young people, learn from professionals, participate in practical exercises and take time to deepen your own faith. It makes no assumptions about your experience, age or background. It's accessible to those starting out as volunteers, but deep enough to stretch those who have been working alongside young people for longer.

Join with participants from the 5 northerly synods as we reflect and learn together through 2025. Each session is standalone, but we would like you to join in with as many sessions as you can. For more information on the course, click [here](#) and to book your place click [here](#) and enter the course code **1245085**

URC Youth Leaders' Gathering: 7-9th March 2025

THE CONFERENCE

URC YOUTH LEADERS

£150PP
ALL
MEALS
INC.

Gathering for a time of learning together, supporting one another and sharing ideas.

07 - 09 MARCH 2025

HIGHGATE HOUSE
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
ARRIVALS FOR SUPPER AT 7PM



KEYNOTE:
**ALI
CAMPBELL**



to book follow the link: linktr.ee/urcyouthleadersgathering

URC YOUTH LEADERS' GATHERING 2025: Gathering for a time of learning together, supporting one another and sharing ideas. Taking place from **7th to 9th March 2025** at Highgate House, Northamptonshire, this is an opportunity for Youth Leaders to gather together during the Youth Assembly weekend at an all-inclusive cost of £150.

The Synod Children's and Youth Work Committee will pay the conference cost for any youth leader from NW who wishes to attend.

For more information and to book a place, visit www.linktr.ee/urcyouthleadersgathering

Holiday Club Material 2025: The Clubhouse

The next Holiday Club from the URC Children's and Youth Work team will be released by the end of January 2025 on www.bit.ly/URC-holidayclub

Based on the 'All Are Welcome' theme, it will explore five New Testament stories through song and story, craft and discussion, eating, praying and playing together.

As always, it will include appendices to help you adapt the materials for under fives, 11 to 14s, vintage holiday clubs or for an intergenerational event.

Grants for holiday clubs available: www.urchurch.org.uk/grants-funding-opportunities

Christians on Ageing

'Christians on Ageing' is an organisation providing a Christian voice for older people.

Their website explains *'We work for a society in which older people are heard, supported and valued. Our activities aim to:*

- *collaborate with Christian and other agencies with similar visions*
- *inform and facilitate debate on issues of concern for older people*
- *celebrate the gifts and potential of later life*
- *influence policy-makers, service providers, paid carers and practitioners*

We deliver these activities through conferences, publications, commentaries and informational resources, focusing on faith, spirituality and flourishing in later life.

If you would like to find out more, please click [here](#), or for their latest Newsletter, please click [here](#)

Free to a Good Home!

Cheadle Hulme have a surfeit of Woods Beryl ware cups and saucers which are rarely used and they would like them to go to a good home.

Please email swannlanesecretary@gmail.com



Renewal of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme is up for renewal in March 2025.

If not renewed, it will not be possible to reclaim the VAT on works to listed church buildings, which will have a massive negative financial impact on our listed buildings. The Catholic Bishops' Conference in England and Wales have set up an e-campaign so that people can easily send a letter to their local MPs and/or the Minister Lisa Nandy from the Department for Culture Media and Sport.

The link <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/listed-places-of-worship-grant-scheme/> asks you to fill in your details, and this then takes you to the pre-written text of a letter, which you are free to use or edit before sending.

For some ecumenical partners the difference this grant scheme makes is immense. Whilst we may not have a large number of listed buildings within the Synod, the ability to reclaim VAT on building works is really valuable, so please consider supporting this campaign.

URC Church and Community Engagement Newsletter

Please click [here](#) to access the 2nd edition of the URC Church & Community Engagement Newsletter. It is full of information, articles and resources to enable you and your church to be even more engaged within your local neighbourhood and community as an expression of God's love and mission.

Please circulate it around your networks, pass it on to your colleagues and friends, and encourage them to subscribe to receive the next edition, due in June 2025.

Albion Community Church Project Worker and Hub Manager

Job Title:	Albion Community Church Project Worker and Hub Manager
Hours:	24 hours per week including some evenings & some weekends
Location:	Albion United Reformed Church, Stamford Street East, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 6QQ
Salary:	£17,300 (based on FTE £27,000)
Reporting to:	The Line Manager, Albion United Reformed Church Management Committee
Responsible for:	Reception, community engagement, volunteer team, building management

For more information about the above position, including a detailed Job Description and Person Specification, please email David Hey — davidhey@live.co.uk

North West Area of the Congregational Federation—Youth and Children's Worker

The North West Area of the Congregational Federation is looking to appoint a committed Christian and church member with energy and enthusiasm to support churches in nurturing children and young people in their faith journey. The successful applicant will share ideas, resources and training opportunities to enhance and develop relationships within the church setting.

This is a 15-20 hours a week post (negotiable) that can be worked flexibly. The post holder will be accountable to the Congregational Federation North-West Area Churches through the executive committee.

For further information contact The Area Secretary –Rev Kathy Shaw 32 Leng Road, Newton Heath, Manchester, M40. Tel. 07900886829 email: nwarea.secretary@outlook.com

Closing dates for applications will be the end of January 2025

Please share the information within your church and encourage anyone interested to be in touch.

Blessings

Kathy Shaw, Area Secretary

For Your Prayers

In each newsletter we would like to share people's 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:

- The continued growth of church mission
- For the Churches who are facing difficult decisions about the future of their fellowships and buildings

