



14th February 2025

North Western Synod Newsletter

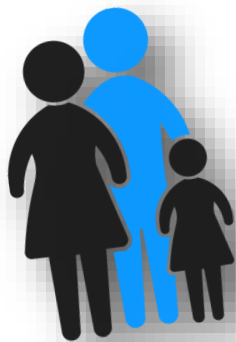
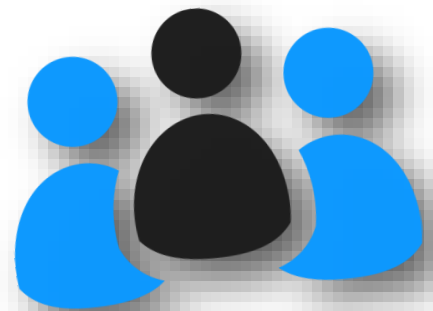


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Retirement of Rev'd Alison Termie

By Rev'd Jonnie Hill - URC Minister, East Cheshire & Derbyshire Borders Missional Partnership

Over the weekend of 25th–26th January, the East Cheshire & Derbyshire Borders Missional Partnership gathered to celebrate Revd Alison Termie's ministry and mark her well-earned retirement.

Originally from just outside Glasgow, Alison's journey has taken her from zoology and parasitology (yes, worms!) to teaching, theological study, and, eventually, to ordained ministry. After many years as a URC member and elder in Leicester, Alison candidated for ministry in 2000, training part-time before being ordained in 2005 serving initially in the Spen Valley Pastorate in West Yorkshire. In 2014, Alison accepted a call to the Goyt and Etherow Pastorate (latterly East Cheshire & Derbyshire Borders), where she has spent the last ten years offering wisdom, care, and encouragement to churches and individuals alike.

The farewell weekend was a joyful celebration, filled with warmth, laughter, and deep gratitude for Alison's ministry. On Saturday evening, over 100 people gathered at Hatherlow & George Lane URC for a retirement party filled with food, fellowship, and fun. As it was Burns Night, the evening wouldn't have been complete without the traditional Addressing of the Haggis, adding a fitting nod to Alison's Scottish heritage. A highlight of the evening was the ceilidh, led by the fantastic band *Frisky Pigeon*.



The following day, 120 people came together at Short Street URC for a final service of thanksgiving and celebration. The service included uplifting sung worship, and a beautiful rendition of *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* by John Rutter, performed by a singing group drawn from across the partnership. Synod Moderator, Revd Clare Downing led a poignant leave-taking liturgy, which included a symbolic handing back of keys, while offering words that captured the mix of emotions felt by both the congregation and Alison herself, particularly as she preached her final sermon.

A memorable moment came during an interactive 'retirement bucket list' activity led by Revd Jonnie Hill, when the congregation was invited to suggest ideas for how Alison might spend her newfound free time. The room was filled with laughter as people pondered their suggestions! But the real surprise came when it was revealed that Alison had already begun her retirement adventures in an unexpected way—by going indoor skydiving, setting the tone for a retirement that promises to be anything but ordinary.

The service concluded with the presentation of a cheque from all the churches in the partnership, followed - of course - by tea and cake. Thanks also to Elizabeth Hall, Margaret Dexter-Brown and Liz Delafield for their part in Alison's final service.

Alison, we wish you a retirement filled with joy, adventure, and, perhaps, even more skydiving!



Dandelion Community Vision Day - 6th February 2025

I was invited to attend the Dandelion Community Vision Day by the Revd Kate Gray, Minister of the Manchester & Salford Urban Partnership and Liz Delafield, the South Area Mission Mentor. I didn't know what to expect to find from attending!

When I arrived shortly before 10am I received a warm welcome and there was a palpable buzz in the air, people came up to me and introduced themselves and told me of their involvement at the Dandelion Community and what it meant to them.

But what is the Dandelion Community? It is a Church and Community Together, open to all – old or young, rich or poor, single, together or not quite sure! Doubters or believers! Just some of the words used to describe this thriving Community.



There are some fifty-plus organisations involved in the Dandelion Community, some large, such as The University of Manchester, The Trussell Trust, and some very small local groups. Throughout the day we heard from various members of the organisations and their role in the Dandelion Community, 'Women of Wythenshawe Network', 'Focus & Fly' a woman's photography group, 'Dandelion Savers'. These smaller groups are community-led initiatives. A representative from Manchester University also spoke about the work that they are involved with in the Community.

Woodhouse Park Family Centre, which was started over thirty years ago and leases space to the rear of the Dandelion property, continues to provide a much needed service in the area. I met the sister of the lady who along with one of our retired Ministers, the Revd Bob Day, started this project all those years ago, which is still thriving today, although struggling financially.

Mike Hart spoke in the afternoon about the hopes for the future of the Dandelion Community and its aim in becoming a 'CIO' - Charitable Incorporated Organisation - and the challenges this might bring.

I met so many interesting people - there were people from other churches who had heard about 'The Vision Day' and wanted to see if there was something they could take away and use in their own 'small, elderly' congregations.



In conclusion I would like to share a few of the comments from the users of some of the Groups:

'I feel safe & secure coming here', 'this place is just the best place to be', 'it is not just a community, it is an extended family', 'I feel welcomed and valued' and finally 'more space needed please!'

Hilary J Grierson

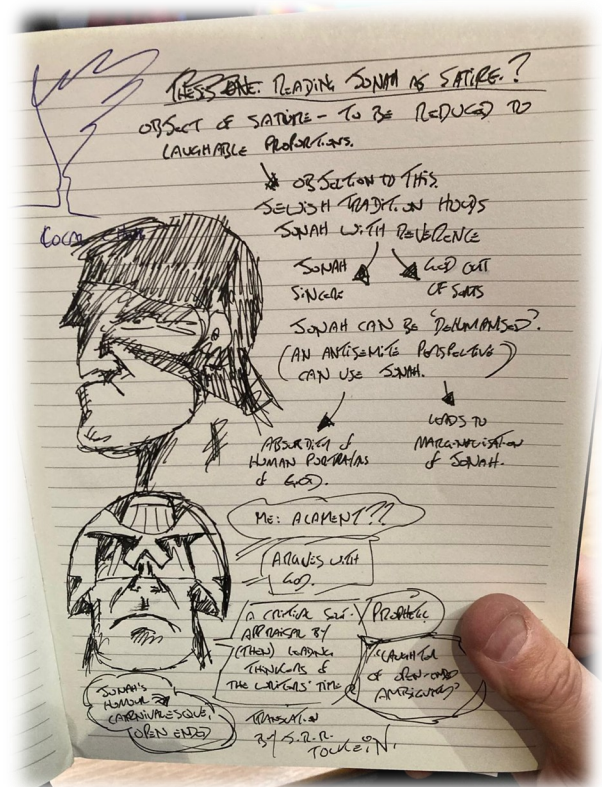
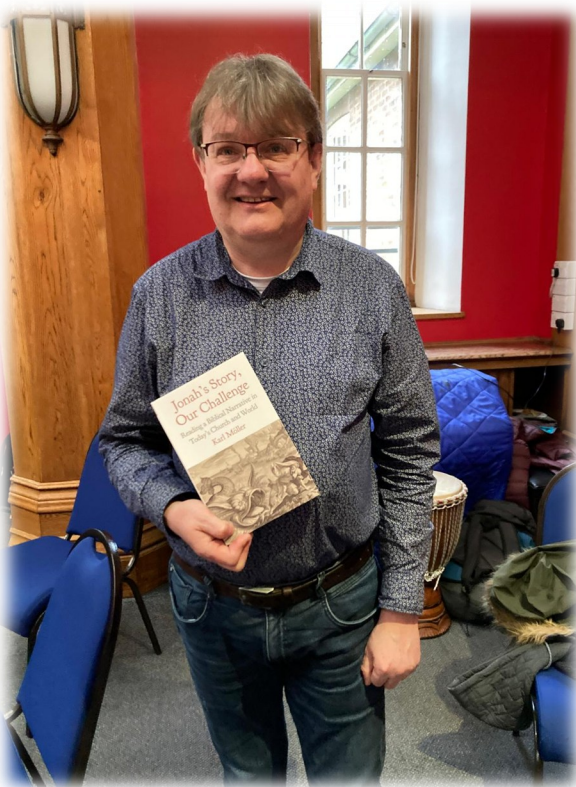
Convenor – South Area Pastoral Committee

Church Leaders' Enrichment Day: 8th February 2025

About 50 elders, lay leaders and Ministers from around the Northwestern Synod, South and Central areas gathered at Luther King House in Manchester to explore what it means for them to be in a church at the crossroads. This was the first of our two enrichment days entitled "Conversations at the Crossroads" (The second, for the Lancashire and Cumbria areas, will be on 10th May at The Storey, Lancaster).

The title comes from the Theos report into the URC. They told us that the URC is a church at the crossroads. 50 years after its founding, the world and church are very different places from 1972 and we're at a place where we have to decide which road to take for the next leg of our journey - hence "Conversations at the Crossroads".

After an opening worship in which rucksacks were unpacked and direction sought, we were led in a study of the book of Jonah from Karl Möller, author of *Jonah's Story, Our Challenge: Reading a Biblical Narrative in Today's Church and World*. He led us in an in-depth exploration of Jonah, exploring how it speaks to us today- including some of the humour in the book. Many participants reported that this offered them an interesting and insightful way of approaching the Bible and much food for thought.



There was also food for our bodies thanks to the wonderful catering team at Luther King House.

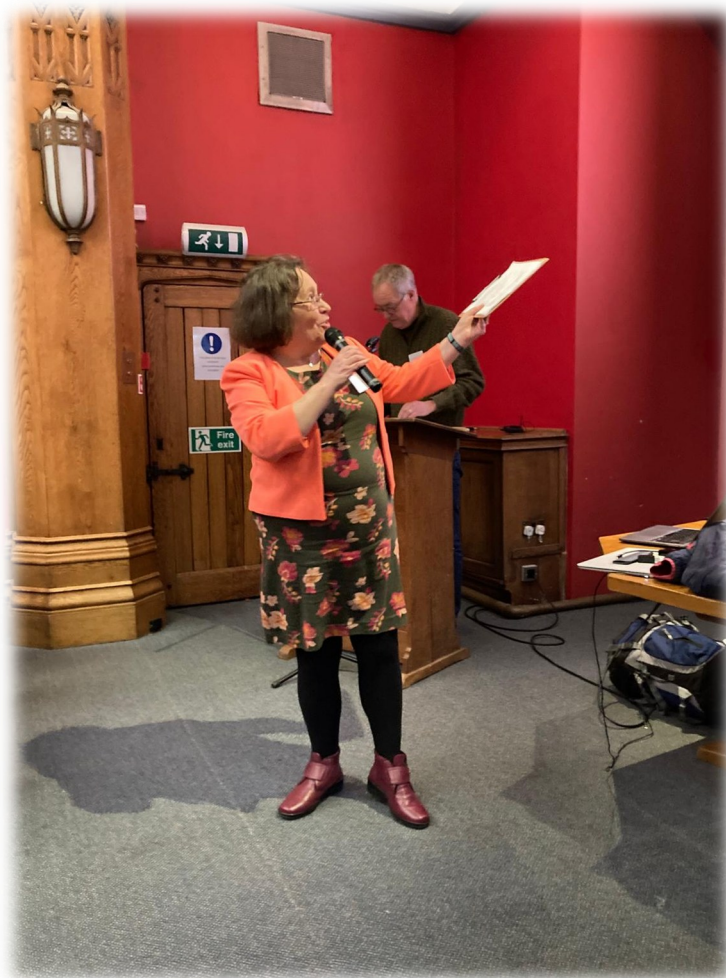
Our afternoon sessions explored the questions:

- What words can we best use to describe what church can be as we move on our journey from the crossroads?
- What words or ideas about church do you want to get rid of - consign to room 101?
- What now for lay leadership in the United Reformed Church?
- What will our churches look like in 2035?

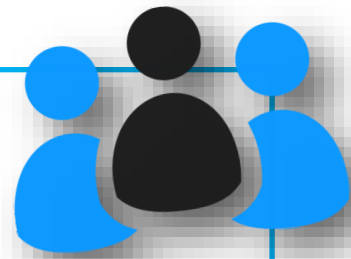
Participants reported that the day was thought-provoking and enjoyable, as well as a valuable opportunity to meet with other church leaders.

The Mission and Disciple Mentors are happy to hold further conversations with you about these questions, so why not invite us to share a “Conversations at the Crossroads Local” at your church?

If you are in Lancashire or Cumbria please book for your day on 10th May (see poster further on in the Newsletter for more details)



Save the Dates



- 'Confronting Christian Zionism' Webinar—19th Feb 2025 —2pm via Zoom
- Revidge Fold Centenary Weekend—22nd and 23rd Feb 2025
- Living with the Sermon—Book Launch—25th Feb 2025—7.00pm—Luther King House
- Youthscape Essentials - starts 25th Feb 2025 for 10 months at 7pm to 9pm—Online
- Ministers Away Day—1st March 2025—The Storey, 2 Meeting House Lane, Town Centre, Lancaster, LA1 1TH
- Sacrament Training - Communion—5th Mar 2025 - 7pm-9pm - Online
- Youth Assembly 2025 — 7th-9th March 2025—Kings Park Conf Centre, Northants
- URC Youth Leaders Gathering—7th to 9th March 2025—Highgate House, Northants
- Sacrament Training—Baptism—1st Apr 2025— 7pm to 9pm—Online
- 1T4 at Whitemoor Lakes in Staffordshire—2nd-4th May 2025
- Conversations at the Crossroads—Lancs + Cumbria Area—10th May 2025—10am to 3pm—The Storey, 2 Meeting House Lane, Town Centre, Lancaster, LA1 1TH

Confronting Christian Zionism

A yourchurch/Commitment for Life Webinar

As part of its commitment and ministry to the wider church, **yourchurch** has teamed up with Commitment for Life to put on a series of webinars on issues around the Gaza crisis.

The first of these is "Confronting Christian Zionism" and will be presented by Revd Dr Philip Woods, a former Secretary for Belonging to the World Church and now with the Presbyterian Church in the USA.

Christian Zionism is a political and religious movement that supports the Jewish people's right to return to Israel. It is based on the belief that the Jewish people are descendants of the Israelites in the Bible and therefore have a divine right to the land. They also believe that the founding of Israel in 1948 was in accordance with biblical prophecy and that the return of the Jews to Israel is a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

You are asked to send an email to [Commitment for Life](mailto:commitmentforlife@urc.org.uk) for the Zoom link. This is to prevent, as far as possible, people who want to disrupt and sabotage the webinar.

IOPT IN FOCUS THE URC ONLINE SERIES



SAVE THE DATE!

19TH FEB '25

2PM GMT



SESSION 1 OF 4

CONFRONTING CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

WITH

PHILIP WOODS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
USA

UNPACKING THE ISSUES

ISRAEL & THE OCCUPIED
PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

FOR ZOOM LINK

COMMITMENTFORLIFE@URC.ORG.UK

Revidge Fold URC Centenary Weekend and Final Service

100 years of Christian witness draws to an end

Please RSVP to Maurice & Elizabeth Bradley as soon as possible on Tel: 01254 665 541 for catering purposes.



Centenary Celebration Exhibition

Saturday 22nd February 2025

10am – 2pm with light refreshments

Centenary Celebration and Final Service

Sunday 23rd February 2025

2.30pm followed by a buffet

Revidge Fold United Reformed Church, formerly Four Lane Ends, will be celebrating their Centenary (1925-2025) of Christian Witness to the community of Shear Brow and surrounding area. However, the occasion will be tinged with sadness as they will be holding a final service as they have merged with Trinity United Reformed Church, Brownhill - to be known as North Blackburn United Reformed Church, Brownhill. Their building will be closing but they will continue to worship and be a 'Christian Witness for many more years to come in the Brownhill area'. As part of the celebration weekend there will be an exhibition of the history of the church on Saturday 22nd February 10.00am – 2.00pm with the final service being held on Sunday 23rd February at 2.30pm, followed by a buffet.

If people are planning to come to the service it would be appreciated if they could let Maurice and Elizabeth Bradley know on Tel: 01254 665 541 for catering purposes as soon as possible.

Here is the Zoom link if you wish to join us via Zoom. The Zoom waiting room will open at 2.00pm and close when the service starts.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3827781186?>

[pwd=7PIMEducng3_OjdLG4rSbWjDKFzKwDnA&omn=87578171544](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3827781186?pwd=7PIMEducng3_OjdLG4rSbWjDKFzKwDnA&omn=87578171544)

Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility

Safeguarding Annual Return:

A gentle reminder that the deadline for the Annual Safeguarding Return is **11.59pm on Friday 28th February**. If you need any assistance with completion, please contact Joanne Hever. Thank you in advance for your help.

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 need to have completed **Foundation Training** before completing **Intermediate Training**.

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

Online Intermediate Training

Wednesday 19th March 2025 - 12.30pm - 2.30pm

To book please contact Joanne Hever at helpdesk@nwsynod.org.uk. If any churches would be interested in hosting a face to face training session please get in touch.

Advanced Safeguarding Training

New dates for online training 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 very welcome to attend.

Church House Additional Training

Please click on the following link - [National-safeguarding-2025-002.pdf](#) for Church House ADDITIONAL training for anyone who is interested.

Also please click on the following link for the latest quarterly Newsletter from the URC Safeguarding Team which contains useful information - <https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-newsletter/>

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



Sacrament Training Dates

Note: These training sessions will now be held online.

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



SACRAMENT TRAINING DATES

Communion Training 5th March
7pm - 9pm ONLINE MEETING

Baptism 1st April 7pm - 9pm
ONLINE MEETING

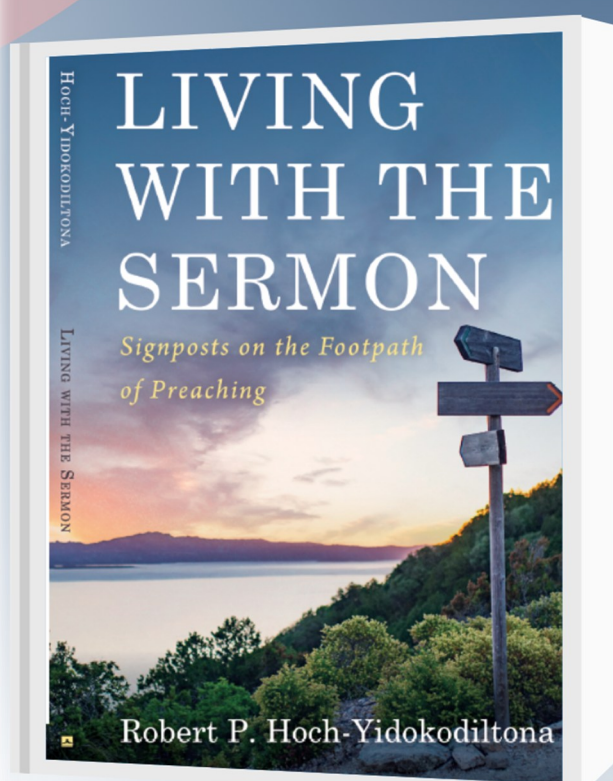
TRAINING WITH
REVD ROB HOCH-YIDOKODILTONA

PLEASE CONTACT KERRY TO BOOK OFFICE@NWSYNOD.ORG.UK

Living with the Sermon—Book Launch

BOOK LAUNCH

Please join Rob Hoch-Yidokodiltona and the LKC community on Tuesday the 25th February as we explore together the footpath of preaching. We will gather in the chapel at 7pm and the programme will start at 7:30pm



In Rob's newly published Living with the Sermon, we will find a friendly companion to the preaching life.

There is, according to Rob a "wink and peek" to the preaching life, some playful mischief, some mystery--and yet, in a practical spirit, down-to-earth signposts to help along the way.

"A book with real heart, bringing the reader on an intellectual and spiritual journey towards becoming a more skillful and thoughtful preacher"

Adam J. Scott, Principal,
Northern College, Manchester

Rob is associate tutor for Northern College's lay preacher programme and training and learning mentor for North Western Synod of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom.



Churches Together in Lancashire

Some dates to save:

- **The AGM of Churches Together in Lancashire with guest speaker Dr Marwan Darweish**

This will take place by Zoom on **Thursday 27th February at 7.30pm**. During a short act of prayer and reflection the new Chair of Churches Together in Lancashire will be commissioned. The Revd Dr Peter Colwell is the Deputy General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, born, raised and lives in Lancashire! After a short business meeting there will be guest speaker - Dr Marwan Darweish Associate Professor in Peace Studies at Coventry University.

Dr. Marwan joined the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University in 2009. He is former Course Director of the MA in Peace and Conflict Studies and Director of Post Graduate Certificate Course in Conflict Resolution Skill from 2010-2016.

His current research focuses on cultural heritage peace processes, conflict transformation and nonviolence resistance. Dr. Darweish carries extensive experience across the Middle East region and has a special interest in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. He worked for over 30 years for social political change in Palestine and Israel. He recently led a team of researchers to implement a research project on the nonviolent movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the role of Israeli and international peace and solidarity movement, funded by the EU. He has considerable international experience in leading training courses in conflict transformation and peacebuilding, and in undertaking consultancies for several international and local organisations in the Middle East and Africa. His is the co-author of (2015) *Popular Protest in Palestine: The History and Uncertain Future of Unarmed Resistance*, London, Pluto Press.

The presentation will take the form of a conversation with the Chair of Churches Together in Lancashire whose Doctoral thesis is also on the Palestinian situation.

The Zoom link and papers will be sent out in the next couple of weeks. Please email antonmuller@ctlancashire.org.uk for more information.

- **1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea event 12th -14th September Blackburn Cathedral.**

This will take place over three days beginning on the evening of Friday 12th September with inter-denominational theological discussion on the background and emergence of the Nicene Creed. This Council of Nicaea in 325 is hailed as the first “ecumenical council” which was an attempt to bring an end to the disunity and disagreements that were harming the early church. Although not in the form that came about in 325 the Nicene Creed remains fundamental to the basis of the Christian Faith. There remain differences over versions of the Creed, specifically over the “Filioque Clause”.

https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Filioque_clause

In this recreation of the debate Church Historians will come together from across the denominations to discuss these tenets of the Christian Faith. We are delighted especially to have Professor Rachel Muers from the University of Edinburgh and the first woman to hold the historic Chair of Divinity.

<https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/persons/rachel-muers>

The Friday evening “Theology Slam” will be a ticket event (£15) with wine and refreshments. Places will be limited.

On Saturday 13th September there will be a series of workshops through the morning culminating in an ecumenical gathering for worship together using one of the World Council of Churches inclusive services.

On Sunday 14th September we are planning a themed Eucharist with an ecumenical sermon given by a church leader from a non-Anglican denomination.

Please email antonmuller@ctlancashire.org.uk for more information.

Church and Community Resources

Forthcoming Church Urban Fund Webinars

Growing Your Church – Connecting Social Action, Discipleship, and Growth

Thurs, 27th Feb 2025 - 10 - 11 am

Find out how you can grow your church and community by connecting the dots between social action, discipleship, and growth, using our free **Growing Good** toolkit.

Why should you attend?

- *Practical advice* on growing your church and tackling volunteering challenges
- *Inspiring content* for reflection and prayer

Expert speakers and interactive Q&A sessions

Don't miss out - **register now** for this or any CUF webinars: <https://cuf.org.uk/events>

Transforming Lives for Good

Transforming Lives for Good have an event in Manchester creating a space for churches across the Northwest to learn about the opportunities to partner with TLG to bring hope and a future to those in their community. This is a brilliant opportunity to be equipped and resourced. More information on how to book is available through the link below. The event is free of charge and includes lunch.

[\[TLG North West Partnership Forum Tickets, Wed 19 Mar 2025 at 10:00 | Eventbrite\]](#)

Churchworks

Last week, Churchworks in conjunction with Theos published a research report entitled *Creating a Neighbourhood Healthcare Service*. The report explores the benefits to both Churches (and others in the Faith Sector) and Health colleagues in a closer partnership at a local level.

The report, and perhaps more helpfully, a short guide for faith leaders can be downloaded from the Churchworks website [Wellbeing | ChurchWorks](#)

Mike Hart

Transformation Director

Minister's Away Day—1st March 2025

Please contact Claire Macintyre at deputyclerk@nwsynod.org.uk to book your place

MINISTERS AWAY DAY

1st March 2025

10AM TO 3:30PM

THE STOREY

MEETING HOUSE LANE, LANCASTER, LA1 1TH

The day will include Autism Awareness Training with Claire Williams; Lecturer in Practical Theology at Regents Theological College, as well as a visit to Lancaster Castle

To book your place please email Claire Macintyre at deputyclerk@nwsynod.org.uk

Theology Reading Group

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

Zoom Meeting: Theology Reading Group

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

- Mar 11, 2025 12:00 PM
- Apr 8, 2025 12:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87627415144?
pwd=fqqjZa8wg7urkRYSGPFIIXrAZhbRxJ.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87627415144?pwd=fqqjZa8wg7urkRYSGPFIIXrAZhbRxJ.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.

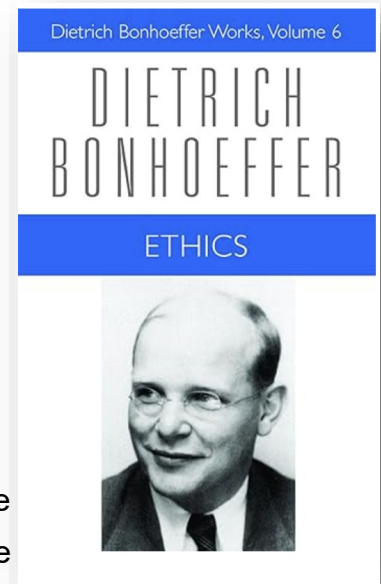
We will read aloud as a group and then, share our reactions (as we are willing) to the reading in about 3 minutes or so each, before opening to more general conversation.

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**



Providence Talks

Mellor Road, New Mills, SK22 4DP

Wednesday March 12

LEV EAKINS

**The Gospel of Mark:
Earlier than we thought**

**Lev Eakins argues that
the gospel of Mark should be
dated closer to the 40s than the 70s AD.
If true, this has some exciting
implications!**

*Talks start at 7.30 and are followed by a chance
to meet the speaker over light refreshments*

FREE ADMISSION

www.providencechurch.co.uk

Message from Christian Charity TLG

Hello!

My name is Tom and I work for the Christian charity [TLG](#)

We have an event coming up in Manchester where we are creating a space for churches across the Northwest to learn about the opportunities to partner with TLG to bring hope and a future to those in their community. This is a brilliant opportunity to be equipped and resourced. More information on how to book is available through the link below. The event is free of charge and includes lunch.

To book click the link:

[TLG North West Partnership Forum Tickets, Wed 19 Mar 2025 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)

We would love to see as many churches represented as possible! Places are limited but **please could you share with others you feel would be interested?** This could be church leaders, youth and children's workers or anyone else in church with a passion for supporting their community! Let me know if you have any questions at all. Thanks!

God bless

Tom Kirkby

Church Relationships Manager

Tel: 07706 344 718

Odd Arts: Here and Now Radicalisation

To book a place please contact Kerry at Office@nwsynod.org.uk by 13th March, also letting us know of any dietary requirements. Please click the [link](#) here for more information.



A W A Y D A Y W I T H

Odd Arts: Here and Now Radicalisation

Invitation open to Ministers and Lay Leaders



**Venue: The Village Hotel, Captain Clarke Road Hyde
Cheshire SK14 4QG**

When: Thursday, 20 March 2025.

Start time: 10 a.m with Odd Arts programme to begin at 10:30am.
Lunch will be served and this will be followed with a debriefing session
(led by Revd Dr Rob Hoch-Yidokodiltona)
finish time: 2 pm.

Limited places (26) first come, first served.

To book a place please contact Kerry Office@nwsynod.org.uk by 13h March also letting us know of any dietary requirements.

Odd Arts: Here and Now Radaclalisation

Chorley URC - Ladies Pop-up Shop + Fun Fashion Show

For tickets and more information please contact Pat - 07989 876 623 - www.chorleyurc.com



Ladies Pop-up Shop & Fun Fashion Show!

**SHOP YOUR FAVOURITE HIGH STREET BRANDS
AT UP TO 70% OFF!**

Colours.
[FUN]DRAISING
FASHION SHOWS



Friday 21st March 2025
Chorley United Reformed Church
In aid of The Hollinshead Centre

Chorley United Reformed Church, Hollinshead Street, Chorley, PR7 1EP

Doors open 6.30pm, show starts 7pm

Tickets: £5

Tickets to be purchased in advance

Refreshments available

Raffle: FABULOUS prizes to be won at the show!

For tickets and more information please contact:

Pat - 07989876623 - www.chorleyurc.com



The Peake Lecture 2025 - "SACRIFICE AND SALVATION: READING HEBREWS TODAY"

Our speakers will show how the Letter to the Hebrews remains relevant and address some burning questions about it today.

LOVEDAY AND PHILIP ALEXANDER "SACRIFICE AND SALVATION: READING HEBREWS TODAY"

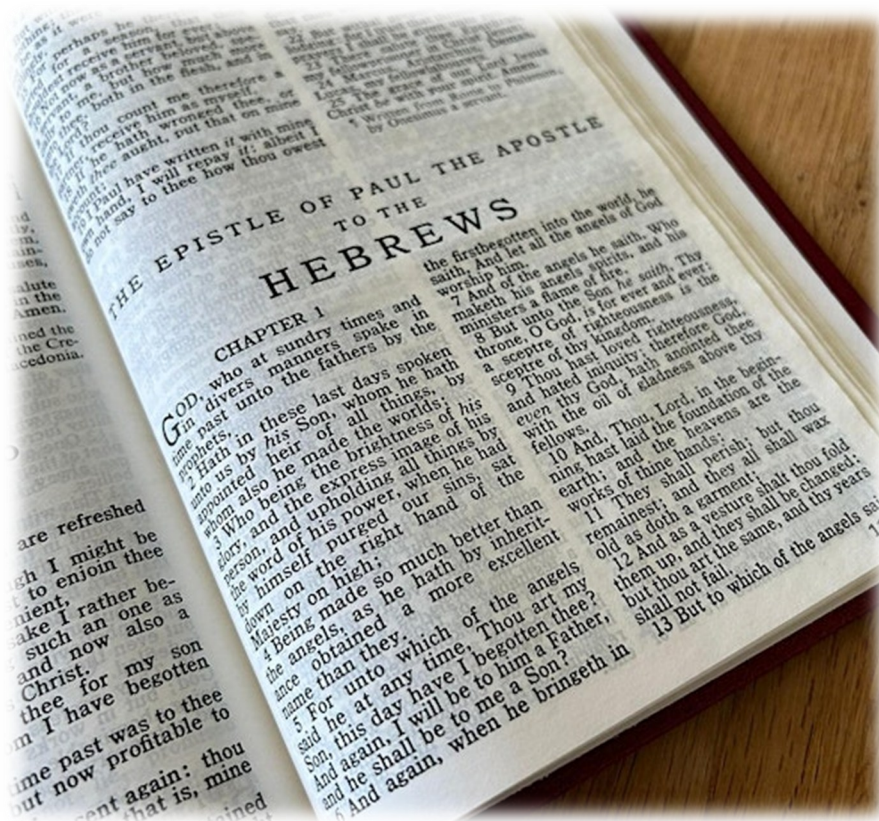
The Letter to the Hebrews is one of the most important books in the New Testament, one which has had a profound influence on Christian thought and worship. Yet it is largely ignored in the Church today. People find it hard to understand in our modern world. Its worldview seems utterly alien. Our speakers will show how its message remains relevant, and addresses some of the burning questions of our day.

Saturday, March 22 · 9:30am - 4pm

Nazarene Theological College

Dene Road Didsbury M20 2GU

To register a free place - click [here](#)



Conversations at the Crossroads - Elders Enrichment Day Lancaster - 10th May 2025

Please book your place with Kerry at office@nwsynod.org.uk as soon as possible.



**10th May 2025 10am-3pm
The Storey, Lancaster LA1 1TH
Lancashire and Cumbria area.**

Lunch provided.

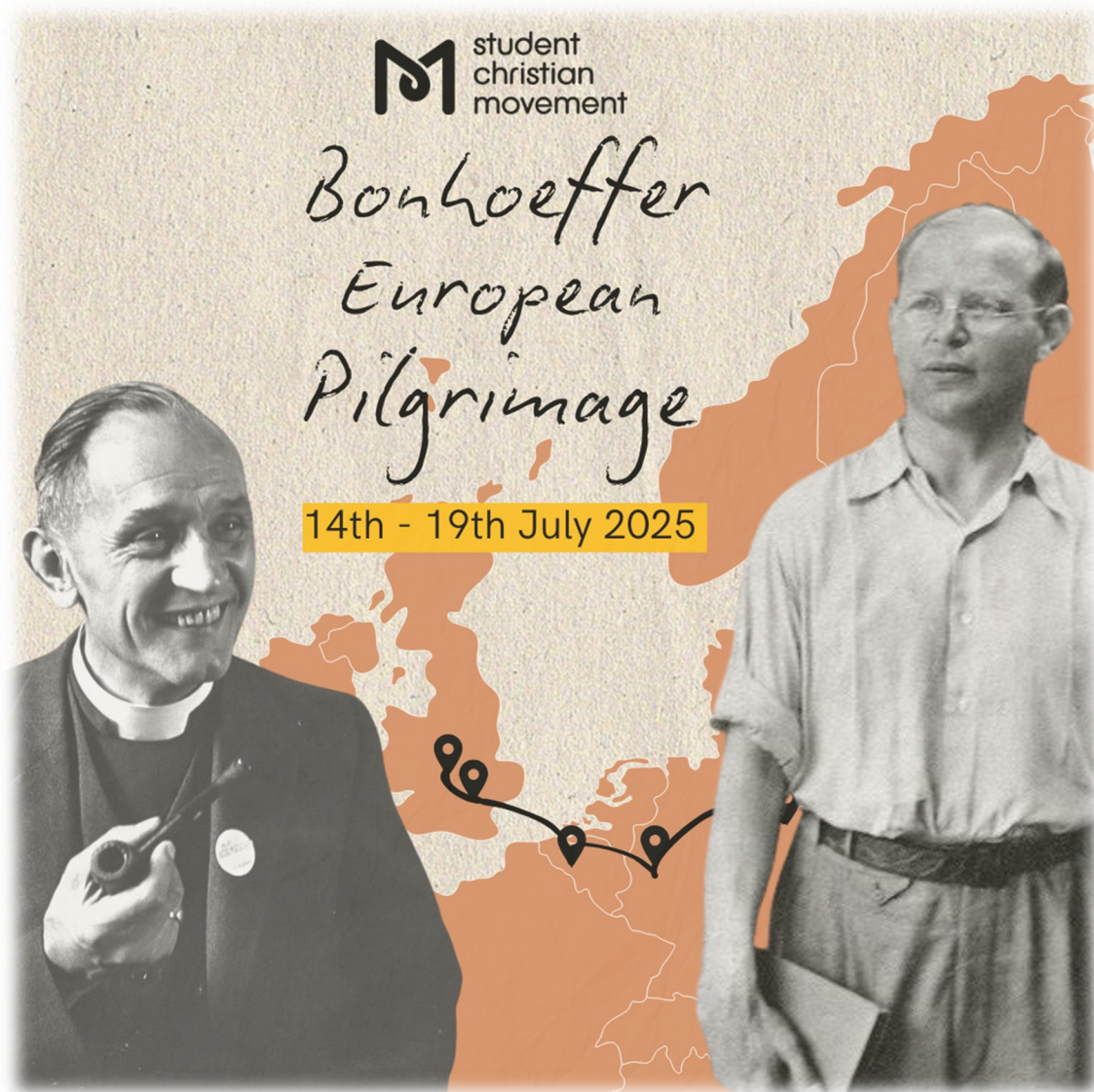
**Book your place with Kerry as soon as possible.
office@nwsynod.org.uk**

Bonhoeffer European Pilgrimage 2025

The Student Christian Movement has had a long association with the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and this trip will enable members to immerse themselves in his theology by seeing the places and people who influenced him and who went on to live out his kind of courageous discipleship in the city where he lived.

In the 20th century, Berlin saw the rise of Nazism, the devastation of war, and the segregation of their country and city by competing world powers, manifested in a wall which divided communities and families by force. In Berlin we find a story which resonates with every place experiencing conflict and we will also hear of Christians past and present who inspire with their approach to faith.

For more information and to register click [Bonhoeffer European Pilgrimage 2025 | Student Christian Movement](#)



Greenbelt Festival - 21-24 Aug 2025 - Boughton House nr Kettering

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

To find out more about Greenbelt's theme for this year click [Hope in the Making - Greenbelt](#)

If you would be interested in volunteering to join the team at Greenbelt, please see below and visit urc.org.uk/greenbelt/volunteer-registration for more information.

The closing date for volunteer applications is 24 April 2025.

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



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

Volunteer with us

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

As well as delicious food, our venue offers talks, crafts, music and more.

As a thank you for being with us, you will receive:

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

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



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

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

Greenbelt Festival - 21-24 Aug 2025 - Boughton House nr Kettering

If you would be interested in joining the Youth venue team at Greenbelt, please see below or contact the Children and Youth Work Team at children.youth@urc.org for more information.

The closing date for volunteer applications is 24 April 2025.



Contact
children.youth@urc.org.uk
for more information

Artistry • Activism • Belief **Thu 21 – Sun 24 August 2025** **Boughton House, nr Kettering**

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



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 or click [here](#).

To book your place click [here](#) and enter the course code **1245085**

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**.

Grandparenting Toolkit

A purple rectangular graphic with a large black cross in the center. Six circular icons with yellow borders are arranged around the cross. The icons depict: 1) A family of four (grandparents and two children) with balloons. 2) A group of children playing on a playground slide. 3) A woman sitting on a stool talking to two children. 4) A woman in a red apron and a man in a blue apron preparing food. 5) An older man sitting on a bench talking to a young girl. 6) An older man and woman walking together on a path.

GrandFaith

Being a grandparent can be a wonderful and joyful part of life. Sharing your faith with your grandchildren can be a part of this but it can be challenging.

Come and join us on this four week course, where we offer you tools and skills to equip you to share your faith with your grandchildren.

This **free** course runs for four weeks -

- Wednesday, 26th February 7pm - 9pm
- Wednesday, 5th March 7pm - 9pm
- Wednesday, 12th March 7pm - 9pm
- Wednesday, 19th March 7pm - 9pm

No need to book. Use the meeting link below or use the QR code.

<https://bit.ly/GrandparentsToolkit>



Sometimes it can seem as though our churches are full of Grandparents – but not so many grandchildren!

These 4 sessions are for all grandparents, nanas and granddads (or those who hope to be in the future!) who would like to explore how they can be involved in their grandchildren's faith journey.


To book a place, go to <https://shorturl.at/nkiOQ>

Talking About ... Holiday Clubs




Register now at www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout to receive the Zoom link and secure your spot.

Talking About... Holiday Clubs

Thursday, February 27th 7-8pm



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

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

Book your place at www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout

Special Guest Speaker: Lorraine Webb

Lorraine is the Programme Officer of the URC's Children and Youth Work Team and is an expert in children's educational programs. She will share valuable insights and practical tips to elevate your holiday club experience. **She will also explain how your church can apply for a grant towards the costs of running your holiday club!**

Topics to be Covered:

- Creative ways to utilise the URC's holiday club material for 2025
- Engaging activities for children
- Tips for maximizing participation and enjoyment

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your holiday club!

The material can be viewed (and downloaded) at [Holiday Club Materials - United Reformed Church](#) - We look forward to seeing you there!

Youth Assembly 2025

Book your place at www.linktr.ee/URCYouthAssembly

There is still time for young people at your church to book their place at Youth Assembly.

This year both the dates and the venue have changed. We are now meeting at Kings Park Conference Centre in Northampton (a coach will be arranged from Northampton train station to the venue) and we are meeting 7-9 March 2025.

The synod will pay the conference cost for any young people who may wish to come along and join other young people (year 10 and above) from all across the denomination.

Of course, they won't come if they don't know about it – so please share the information with them, and encourage them to book. Further details, and online bookings can be found 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

Here's a taste of Youth Assembly 2024
Just scan the QR code, or visit:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1npXCWKIO0

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



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

Synod Children's Day

To book places please email cydo@nwsynod.org.uk by Friday 7th March 2025

Bring A Child To Synod Day!

Saturday, March 15th - 10am - 3:30pm



You're coming anyway, right? So why not bring one, or two, or ALL, the children you have contact with at your church for a day of craft, games and worship?

They will be looked after, and entertained, by a team from the Synod's Children and Youth Committee.

To ensure we get the right catering and resources, please book places by emailing cydo@nwsynod.org.uk by Friday, March 7th.

A request for help with degree studies

Rev Ruth Watson has asked if we can help. Her son is studying for a Psychology degree at Edge Hill University and for his dissertation he is looking at how substance abusers are portrayed/viewed in society, with a focus on young people or those of faith. In order to support his study we are offering an opportunity for anyone who wants to, to complete a questionnaire. The aim is to capture the opinions of those in church who are over 18 from a wider area than just Ormskirk.

If you would like to help, or can think of anyone in your church who may like to assist with this study, please pass on the following link -

https://edgehillpsychology.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aUU8BuAd8OoEcfA

Or the poster containing the QR code is below:



An examination of how substance users are perceived.

Research Information:

Investigating the different factors on the perception of substance users

This project will be focusing on what factors can influence how substance users are perceived

Participant Information:

Participants are asked to complete an online questionnaire.

The study should take around 15 minutes to complete

You must be 18 or over

This study is for a dissertation for a psychology degree

If you have any questions contact
25263137@edgehill.ac.uk

Online Courses for Free!

Please see links below for details of three online courses which are being offered **FOR FREE** by 'wefindanylearner.com'. They may be of interest to a variety of people in your church.

You need to meet a few criteria - be at least 19 years old (by August 31st 2024), residing in England and not currently enrolled in an apprenticeship program.

To sign up please visit www.wefindanylearner.com/book-online/ or by contacting the team on

Tel: 01226 958 888.

- [Counselling Skills Level 2 | We Find Any Learner](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid Level 2 | We Find Any Learner](#)
- [Understanding Autism Level 2 | We Find Any Learner](#)

Albion Community Church Project Worker + 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)

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

United Reformed Church – Mersey Synod

Advertisement: Property Officer

The Mersey Synod of the United Reformed Church (URC) which is a charitable organisation, wishes to recruit a Property Officer, who will work alongside the 72 United Reformed Churches in the Merseyside Region, and have oversight of the properties owned by the Mersey Synod Trust. These are currently served by 16 Ministers; 16 Manses are occupied, and 4 Manses are let (plus two vacant).

A small team of full-time and part-time employees and volunteers, led by the Synod Moderator, manages and administers the Property, Finances, Training, Youth Work, Communications and other activities of the Synod from an office adjacent to the United Reformed Church in Wavertree, Liverpool.

The overall purpose of the Property Manager is to work with the various Synod Officers and Committees and with local churches to ensure that all church buildings and manses are maintained to a standard appropriate to their purpose within the limitations of time and cost.

Good interpersonal and organisational skills will be required. Discretion and confidentiality is important, as is an awareness of and willingness to work with the aims, objectives, culture, challenges and Christian ethos of the United Reformed Church.

The requirement is for someone to work 20 hours a week, to work flexibly Monday - Friday, with occasional weekend and evening working. You will be required to attend the bi-annual meetings of the Synod, which are on Saturdays in March and October. You will also occasionally represent Synod at national meetings in London, and elsewhere when required.

The annual salary will be in the region of £31,500 to £38,500 (FTE) dependent upon experience and qualifications.

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 26th March at Synod Office at 1 Fingall Road, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 9JE.

Please visit the Synod Website for the Application pack: <https://www.urcmerseysynod.org.uk/>

Applicants should email their Application form to Denise Harman at adminofficer@urcmerseysynod.org.uk by no later than midnight Thursday 13th March.

CV's will not be accepted.

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

