

Synod Big Day Out 2024 – bookings now open!



[Click here to buy your tickets](#)

The Wessex Synod
Big Day Out '24

at:
**Hollycombe Steam in the
Country**

on:
**Saturday 4 May 2024
10am – 5pm**

- More steam rides open this year.
- Additional programme activities provided by Wessex Synod

All are welcome from:

- **Wessex Synod Churches**
- **Church user groups and community groups with links to URCs and LEPs in Wessex Synod**

2022 ticket prices held:

£8 per adult, £5 per child - for up to 10 rides on the attractions

New this year: **tickets for unlimited rides on the attractions:**

Adult £10.50 Child £7.50

A free ticket can be booked for an accompanying carer.

- More food options available this year including Hollycombe's fabulous new café will be open this time.
- You are welcome to bring your own picnic.

[More information on what will be available on the day available here](#)

Come and enjoy a day of fellowship, fun and worship

Synod Meeting – 24th April on zoom

The Synod Papers can be found on the [Synod Website](#)

New URC Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)

We are delighted to let you know that Jenny Mills has been appointed as Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) with effect from Adrian Bulley's retirement in August.

Jenny will lay down her Education and Learning responsibilities, essentially from General Assembly, and will be picking up the reins in late August.

FaithTalk: everyday evangelism in the URC

How do we talk about and share our faith as individuals and as churches?

This webinar is the first in a series as the Church seeks to develop a more holistic vision of mission.

Join us for a relaxed 90 minutes at **7.30pm on Wednesday 1 May**.

For more information or to **register for the webinar** please contact:

mission@urc.org.uk

Free to Believe Conference Theme: Coming to our Senses

4th – 6th September 2024 – The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

In the miracle and mystery of birth, we are reminded of some fundamental truths. We are first of all created, and when we forget that we undermine our very existence. We are co-created, a species among species, with a responsibility to respect other forms, for we are interdependent, and they are also part of the divine creation. We are embodied, whole persons, and the human body is to be cherished, not starved, beaten, and killed, because it is holy. We are located, we have a time and a place, we are part of a history and geography in which God acts through us. We are co-creators—we can create nothing out of nothing, but only in relationship and exchange with the earth, with other people, with God, who is always drawing us on to regeneration, to bringing forth God's life.

The failure to acknowledge our creatureliness has been a big problem for human beings – and an ever bigger one for the other life forms we share the earth with. Our tendency to assume that the universe is at our disposal has made us careless to the point of extreme culpability. Perhaps that's because there's so much of it; so many people being born, living, dying, in their billions now, across the world. So many species, animals, plants, so much inconvenient life; getting in the way of other people's ambitions, greed, beliefs.

But this is not a biblical perspective, or indeed a truly religious one. Nor is it ultimately a healthy one for anybody or anything. Ultimately, we are all inconvenient, useless. Life is not a possession to be accumulated, but a gift to be appreciated and cherished. The value of life is intrinsic, in the living of it. What does it really mean to us to be embodied, to be creature? Perhaps to answer this, we need to come back to our senses.

[Booking form available here](#)

Torch Trust (the Christian sight loss charity)

Sight Loss Friendly Church (SLFC) is an exciting initiative to help churches become accessible for people with sight loss.

They are providing some free sessions on Zoom for churches to find out more about SLFC.

Introduction to SLFC - Thursday 9th May at 2pm (45 minutes)

Registration Link - https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrd-CqpjsqGd0mlgz3tulkQAHmsgq_vBDU

This session covers a brief overview of what it means to be a sight loss friendly church. There is an interactive element in the form of an informal quiz, personal stories and videos about sight loss and an overview of our services. Come along if you're thinking of signing up your church or if you'd like to refresh old knowledge.

SLFC Q&A - Monday 3rd June at 2pm (1 hour)

Registration Link- https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlIce2srzIsGtwxyB-sNnmX_qgmDGzAzVaL

Meet the expert panel from Torch Trust and ask questions around welcoming and including blind and partially sighted people in all aspects of your church. No question is too embarrassing, everyone is at different stages in their sight loss friendly journey. As well as asking the experts, churches with experience of inclusion are also welcome to chip in with hints and tips on how they have overcome any challenges.

Further information can be found at: www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk

Upcoming Synod events

Bookings for all events and training courses to

Ruth Heine at the Synod Office

Email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk

Tel: 023 8067 4513

Job Opportunity

High Cross Church Camberley are recruiting for an "Operations Coordinator and Administrator to join their team.

Are you a dynamic individual that likes a challenge?

Are you organised with great computer skills?

Are you good with customers and can you think on your feet?

For an application pack, email urcminister@highcross.org.uk

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Training – Flowchart

The flowchart gives an overview of the various safeguarding training courses on offer and has a table which shows the mandatory level of safeguarding training for various roles within the URC. The [flowchart](#) is on the Synod website.

Safeguarding Quarterly Newsletter – April 2024

Read the latest [newsletter](#) from the Safeguarding Team at Church House.

Safeguarding Training – Refresher course

A Refresher safeguarding training course is now available for people who completed the Foundation and Intermediate level training 3 to 4 years ago. The Refresher course works best as in-the-room training. If your church would like to host a Refresher course, please contact your CYDO to discuss dates.

Safeguarding Training – dates in 2024

- **Refresher safeguarding training in the room.**
Saturday 27 April 2024 at Gosport URC. 10am – 1pm.
 - **Refresher safeguarding training on zoom.**
6.30pm – 8pm on Thursday 12 September and 19 September 2024.
- If your church would like to host safeguarding training, please contact your CYDO to talk about dates.

Safeguarding – Good Practice 6

GP6 is now available. Church House has sent out hard copies to Church Safeguarding Coordinators. **GP6 is available online** [here](#).

National Safeguarding Training courses – various topics

Specialist Safeguarding training in 2024 organised by Church House. Please see the [poster](#) for the full list of dates and topics.

To book, please email: Emma.Pearce@urc.org.uk

Training Webinars. [Elders as Trustees](#). This is available online for you to access in your own time.

Mental Health First Aid training – with Peter Larkum

Become a certified Mental Health First Aider. Two-day courses in-person or online equivalent which includes four live zoom sessions with the trainer.

Become a certified Youth Mental Health First Aider. This two-day in-person course or online equivalent qualifies you as a MHFA with a specific focus on how that relates to younger people.

Training dates and further information for all courses with trainer Peter Larkum can be found [here](#).

Wessex Synod will cover the cost of the MHFAider training courses.

Please register via Wessex Synod, not direct, and preferably no later than 10 days before the start of the training course.

Email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk to receive the link to register on the course.

Development and Support

Bookings for all events and training courses to
Ruth Heine at the Synod Office

Email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk Tel: 023 8067 4513

From your DSOs

Development and Support Officers Mary and Ray continue to support churches, elderships and ministers, individually and through their work with the pastoral committees.

If you or your church feels that the DSOs can be of assistance, please do be in touch with them.

Ray Stanyon – dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk

Mary Thomas – dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk

Dates in 2024

Listening Skills day – North, Sat 27 April, Collinwood Rd URC, 10.30 - 3.30pm

Church Treasurers' networking zoom, Sat 11 May, 10am – 11.30am

Listening Skills day – South, Sat 18 May, Avenue St Andrew's URC, 10.30–3.30

Elders' Conference, Saturday 22 June 2024 at Sarum College.

Funerals and Weddings training – Saturday 27 July 2024 at Fleet URC.

Children's and Youth Events and Training

Bi-monthly Newsletter – March 2024

[Bi-monthly Newsletter – March 2024](#) from the Children's and Youth Team at Church House.

Talking About ... Supporting LGBTQIA+ young people

Thursday 25 April 2024. 7pm – 8pm.

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. (Revelation 4.11)

All too often, churches seem happy to 'other' people who aren't like them. This is as true of people of other faiths or colours – but also true of people who might look exactly the same as us, created in the image of God, but whose sexuality is different.

Young people in particular can feel confused and condemned by a church community that says God loves everyone – but then don't show God's love to them.

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.

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

Book your free ticket – www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout and encourage others from your church to book as well!

Children's Camp – *bookings now closed*

28 – 31 May 2024 at Oakwood Activity Centre. For children in school years 4 – 7, (ages 7 – 12). Early bird bookings before 28 April 2024 – cost £70 per child.

[Further information](#) on the Synod Website.

Youth Camp – *bookings now open*

12 – 14 July 2024 at Gordon Brown Outdoor Centre. For young people in school years 7 – 13 (ages 11 – 17). [Joint Brochure](#) with further information.

Children and youth Work webinar

For those working with children and young people.

Understanding behaviour and additional needs webinar. Available on YouTube [here](#).

Family Film Night – *new resource – Wreck It Ralph*

Wreck It Ralph – Be You, in your game!

These exciting resources are designed for families to have fun and explore big questions together, all based around a family friendly film. Each film night has a main theme and follows the same pattern. Watch the film together, have fun doing the activities and then explore using the wondering questions. For families who want to link to the Bible, there are 'going deeper' wondering questions to use. This resource can also be used in Sunday Schools, messy church, bible study groups and school assemblies. **Why not consider hosting a family film night and inviting your community to come along?**

Free to download from the [Synod website](#).

Other News

URC News Update

[View April's News Update here](#)

News Update is seeking anything of interest for the denomination as a whole from across the country – and the nations.

Any news/photos/event information for the next edition should be sent to:

ann-marie.nye@urc.org.uk

You can subscribe to News Update via the link on the URC website.

Education and Learning bi-monthly newsletter

View Issue 7: February 2024 of [Education and Learning bi-monthly newsletter](#)

Joint Public Issues Team

View JPIT newsletter [Edition 162 \(March\) here](#)

Churches Together in England Newsletter

Latest newsletter available here: <https://cte.org.uk/enews/>

Christians on Ageing Lent Newsletter

Latest newsletter available here: <https://mailchi.mp/cc4ab4227f64/light-after-lent?e=21751e24c6>

News from our Churches

Does your church have a good news story?

If your church has something it would like to share with people via the Synod Website page "[Stories from our Churches](#)", please send the article to the [Synod Office](#) and we will publish it on that page.

NB If using photographs please ensure you have signed permission from those people featured for it to be published on the Synod Website (not just for your own personal church's use) and supply this at the same time as submitting the article.

New Stories are added as when they are received, so do keep an eye on the page regularly.

Reminders

Moderator's photo/drawing request

Our incoming Moderator, Michael Hopkins, would like to have a small range of notelets/greetings cards printed with images reflecting Wessex.

Everyone in the Synod is invited to send in photos or artwork that they think is suitable, and as many as possible will be used. Michael is not particularly looking for photos or drawings of church buildings, but anything that conveys an idea of Wessex.

Some parameters:

- You can interpret Wessex however that speaks to you.
- Everything submitted must be original, and by submitting you grant permission to the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church to use any material submitted for stationery and/or publicity in perpetuity.
- No photos of identifiable people please, to avoid safeguarding or data privacy difficulties. Unidentifiable people in the background are fine.
- Everything must be electronic, so if you draw, paint, etc. please scan it and send in an electronic file.
- Please use wetransfer.com or equivalent for large file sizes.

Send to: office@urcwessex.org.uk

Deadline: Monday 13 May

Line Management Training dates for 2024

The URC have now released the Line Management training dates for 2024. The sessions will be online on Zoom from 10am to 11:15am.

You can find the training dates and topics here: <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/guidance-support-for-churches-synods/employment-guidance/training-events-and-courses/>

'Living stones for a living church: buildings for the ministry of Mission' webinar

The URC Buildings Forum Webinar: 'Living stones for a living church: buildings for the ministry of Mission'

Part 1 21 May 7.30pm

Part 2 04 June 7.30pm

This is an open invitation to attend the URC Church Buildings Forum webinar on Zoom on 21 May 2024 7.30-9pm. Following the launch of these webinars just over three years ago, The Revd Dr John P. Bradbury will return as the keynote speaker to address how we may best use our building and assets for mission and ministry, particularly within the context of the Church Life Review and its outworking. As always with the webinars, you will have the opportunity for conversation in breakout rooms and, importantly, it will also be a listening exercise to hear the questions that you have, the challenges that churches face, and positive ideas, examples and news to be shared.

A complementary and more pragmatically focussed Part Two will take place on 4 June 2024 7.30-9pm. There will be a presentation of North Western Synod's strategy '*A Church with People at the Margins: A Strategy for Mission and Ministry*' and examples of a number of local churches already on that journey, in order to stimulate debate and encourage other synods and local churches.

Coming along to one of the webinars will be more useful than not coming to either, but we do hope that you will be able to attend both.

To register for either or both seminars please email mission@urc.org.uk.

Volunteer with the URC at The Greenbelt Festival 2024!

22 – 25 August 2024 at Boughton House, near Kettering

The theme for this year's festival is: **Dream On**. If you would like to know more about this theme and why it has been chosen, you can read a blog by Paul Northup's, Greenbelt's Creative Director, [here](#).

yoURCafe venue team

As well as being an exciting opportunity to be part of the URC team in the yoURCafe venue, now in its third year, offering food saved from landfill, crafts, talks, music and more, you will also get to enjoy the myriad activities the festival has to offer.

You will receive a complimentary weekend pass, food vouchers and a car or caravan pass as a thank you.

For more information on how to become a volunteer, what is involved, and how to apply, visit <https://urc.org.uk/greenbelt/>

Closing date for applications: **20 April 2024.**

Youth Engagement team

Are you aged 18+?

Do you enjoy supporting 12–17 year-olds?

Have experience, gifts, skills to share?

Then volunteer on the URC Youth Engagement team.

The opportunity comes with festival benefits, training and support.

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

Through the Roof: ‘Understanding autistic meltdowns and shutdowns’ video

Triona Brading, an autistic Christian who is a Roofbreaker disability champion with Through the Roof, has teamed up with the charity again for a second video:

‘Understanding autistic meltdowns and shutdowns at <https://youtu.be/aDD8-exFb-S>.

Triona shares “helpful starting points for discussions with the autistic people in your church” to create awareness and begin dialogue, so autistic people can feel at home.

The new video explains the difference between two different responses an autistic person may have to feeling overwhelmed: an outward response (a meltdown) and an inward response (a shutdown).

It gives useful tips on how to prepare in advance for meltdowns and shutdowns, talking to autistic individuals before anything happens about what support or help they may want. It also covers what you could do if a meltdown or shutdown emotional response is already happening.

Prayer Calendar

May

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• St Martin's West Moors• Petersfield and Liss
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tilehurst, Reading• Immanuel Southbourne, Bournemouth• Braishfield, Romsey
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woking• Bitterne, Southampton
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Godalming United Church• Cumnor, Oxford• Skinner Street, Poole

June	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valley Park, St Francis, Chandler's Ford • Fleet
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collinwood Road • Richmond Hill St Andrew's • Warsash
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elstead • Christ Church, Windsor • Avenue St Andrew's, Southampton
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radipole, Weymouth • Church on the Heath, Elvetham Heath • Marston, Oxford
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkstone, Poole • Trinity Church Totton • Christ Church Chineham
<p align="center"> Items for the next edition to office@urcwessex.org.uk by 12noon on Monday 13th May 2024 Please submit news items in the form of: a heading; date and venue details; a brief descriptive sentence and a website link. </p>	