

## Wessex Synod Big Day Out – Thank You

Thank you to everyone who attended the Big Day Out at Hollycombe on 4<sup>th</sup> May and making it such a fabulous day.

A short video of some of the day is available at this [YouTube link](#).

For those who made banners for the day, we have held on to them and will be displaying them to the October Synod in Winchester. Your Synod Rep is then welcome to take them home with them at the end of Synod.

[View the Church Banners here](#)

## Glasses found at Big Day Out



Did you, or someone you know, misplace these glasses at the Big Day Out.

If so, please contact Deborah on [office@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:office@urcwessex.org.uk) to arrange collection/return.

## Jamaican government Minister accepts URC's apology for its role in transatlantic slavery

A Jamaican government Minister has accepted the United Reformed Church's apology for its role in the transatlantic slave trade.

The Hon. Olivia Grange, Jamaica's Minister for Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, encouraged other UK churches, along with the UK government, to also apologise.

Members of the United Reformed Church travelled to Jamaica earlier this month as part of an ecumenical pilgrimage to learn about the legacies of slavery.

**The full article can be read here:** [URC Apology](#)

## Congratulations

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May, Councillor Revd Julian Macro was elected to be the Town Mayor of Verwood for the coming year, 2024/25.

Wessex Synod sends its congratulations to Julian.

## Holiday Forum – Bursary Fund Donations

We need your help

As you may know, our Bursary Fund helps support people to come to Holiday Forum. It's a wonderful resource that we're incredibly proud of and which has helped a lot of people.

This year, we are seeing extremely high demands on this fund. We want to continue to be able to make Forum available to anyone who would like to come.

We can only do this through the wonderful generosity of those are able to donate to the fund.

If you have already donated, thank you deeply for your generosity.

If you haven't, we would welcome donations from anyone who can spare some extra cash or loose change so that more people can enjoy what Forum offers.

You can donate directly to our account using these details:

URC Holiday Forum

Sort code: 20 73 53

Account number: 80462926

\*please use the reference 'Donation'\*

We still have some in-person places left for [Holiday Forum 2024](#) - 18<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> August - book now to avoid disappointment!

As usual, we'll also be streaming lots of the week via Zoom for those wishing to join online.

Thank you in advance,

Holiday Forum Steering Group

## Holistic Mission in the URC

In the latter part of April, Daily Devotions was dedicated to the theme of evangelism. They were written by Eddie Boon, Thames North's Discipleship Enabler. We are thankful for these thought-provoking and accessible reflections, which you may find to be a useful resource for your churches. These Devotions have been put into booklet form which can be printed off locally and used to encourage people to think more about evangelism. Andy Braunston ([andy.braunston@urc.org.uk](mailto:andy.braunston@urc.org.uk)) can provide booklets for the 5 Marks of Mission series and would be interested to know if anyone would value either of these series to be reworked into small group studies for local church use.

From 29<sup>th</sup> April a 5-week series began on the 5 Marks of Mission, as reenvisioned by Graham Adams in his book *Holy Anarchy*. You can find the first in the series here: <https://devotions.urc.org.uk/todays-daily-devotion/>.

From Andy Braunston's introduction to the series: *"Over the next five weeks a diverse group of ministers and thinkers will look at these five marks of mission and write about them from their own contexts - which range far and wide in our global and ecumenical interconnectedness. Graham will write the first reflection for each*

*week and then five others will continue to reflect on that mark with their own unique theological, cultural and mission perspectives.” We do hope you find them stimulating.*

## Sea Sunday 2024

The Sailors’ Society has launched its 2024 Sea Sunday resources for churches – available to download at <https://www.sailors-society.org/seasunday>.

Sea Sunday is set aside in the Church calendar as a time for congregations to remember seafarers in prayer and to give thanks for their crucial work. Whilst the day is officially marked on the second Sunday in July, i.e. 14 July, churches can celebrate any time in the year that suits their church programme.

The 2024 Sea Sunday theme is 'Calming the storm', vitally important in a year where the Red Sea crisis is putting seafarers directly in the path of missiles and piracy attacks. But while the storms seafarers face can be global like the Red Sea crisis, the war in Ukraine, tsunamis, hurricanes and even piracy, they can also be individual like anxiety, loneliness, financial worries, fatigue and even the simple stress of being separated from family can be the cause of mental and physical health issues.

Please visit their website for further information.

## Springs Dance Company

Springs Dance Company is inviting churches to book now to host a performance of [\*\*A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance\*\*](#). This piece was created after the pandemic, and offers an opportunity to reflect on grief, human connection and joy. This uplifting show is available from September to October 2024.

Further information can be found on the website page:

<https://springsdancecompany.org.uk/productions/a-time-to-mourn-a-time-to-dance/>, by emailing [helen@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:helen@springsdancecompany.org.uk) or by calling 07775 628442.

[\*\*Journey of the Magi\*\*](#) is the much-loved, family-friendly, festive frolic, made to bring laughter and cheer in the run up to Christmas. Now booking from 22<sup>nd</sup> November to 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

Further information can be found on the Springs Dance Company website page: <https://springsdancecompany.org.uk/productions/journey-of-the-magi/>, by emailing [touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk) or by calling 07775 628442.

## Job Opportunity

The Convenor of Governors role at Westminster College is being advertised on the URC jobs page (under volunteer positions):

<https://urc.org.uk/jobs/>

## Upcoming Synod events

Bookings for all events and training courses to

Ruth Heine at the Synod Office

Email: [bookings@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:bookings@urcwessex.org.uk)

Tel: 023 8067 4513

### 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.

- **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 – *Away Day*

Safeguarding Away Day for Church Safeguarding Coordinators.

**Saturday 21 September 2024** at Fleet URC.

#### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk)

Mary Thomas – [dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk)

## Dates in 2024

**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 ... Uniformed Organisations

**Thursday 23 May 2024. 7pm – 8pm.**

For many years, the bedrock of youth work in the local church has been uniformed organisations.

Leadership has often been drawn from local church members who grew up in the uniformed organisations themselves. Over the years they have adapted as the world, and church, has changed.

Are they still relevant for our mission to young people today? How can we better support their mission to young people?

Join us to talk through these, and other questions.

**Book your free ticket** – [www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout](http://www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout) and encourage others from your church to book as well!

## 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 – 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 May’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](mailto: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](#)

### NEW: Church & Community Engagement Newsletter

View the first edition of this newsletter [May 2024 edition](#)

### Joint Public Issues Team

View JPIT newsletter [Edition 163 \(April\) 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>

## Artpeace and Friends newsletter

Latest newsletter available here: [Artpeace and Friends](#)

## News from our Churches

### Gosport URC – Bubble Fun!

Duggie Dug Dug does it again!!

8am on a cold but bright Friday morning, members of Gosport URC Children and Families work, team, arrived at one of our local junior schools to help prepare for something the school community had never before experienced; Duggie Dug Dug's Crazy Science Praise Party.

Doug, supported by Jon, a professional actor, wowed the children by presenting his Crazy Science at 2 extended assemblies, one for the children in years 5 and 6, the other for the younger children, those in years 3 and 4.

The children and their teachers were treated to Doug's unique array of crazy science and easy chat about our amazing Creator God. While learning about types of energy and sublimation they learnt how Jesus wants us to bubble out with love for one another, just as his life bubbled out with love for others and were fascinated by examples of chemical reactions which were used to illustrate how God can take something small, like a simple act of kindness and produce amazing results.

The children and staff were fully engaged with all that Doug was doing and loved the mix of WOW moments, science, humour, and opportunities to interact through action songs and involvement.

The crazy science event, funded by Gosport URC St Columba, as part of our children and families work, was followed by a Bubble Praise party at the church, the following day. The church was at full capacity with over 200 people from the church and surrounding community attending.

It was great to see families from many local churches coming together as well as members of our regular church groups and others from the school community. The sense of fun was tangible as people of all ages queued to be put in a bubble, and hearing the Gospel explained in simple terms led to others responding to an invitation to find out more about becoming a follower of Jesus.

### 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

### Free to Believe Conference Theme: Coming to our Senses

#### **4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 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](#)

## Prayer Calendar

### June

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valley Park, St Francis, Chandler's Ford</li> <li>• Fleet</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collinwood Road</li> <li>• Richmond Hill St Andrew's</li> <li>• Warsash</li> </ul>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elstead</li> <li>• Christ Church, Windsor</li> <li>• Avenue St Andrew's, Southampton</li> </ul>



23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radipole, Weymouth</li> <li>• Church on the Heath, Elvetham Heath</li> <li>• Marston, Oxford</li> </ul>
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parkstone, Poole</li> <li>• Trinity Church Totton</li> <li>• Christ Church Chineham</li> </ul>
<b>July</b>	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hungerford</li> <li>• Mere</li> <li>• Bishop's Waltham United Free Church</li> </ul>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lymington</li> <li>• St Paul's, Bracknell</li> </ul>
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park, Reading</li> <li>• Fovant</li> </ul>
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twyford (Bucks)</li> <li>• Iford, Bournemouth</li> </ul>
<p align="center"> <b>Items for the next edition to <a href="mailto:office@urcwessex.org.uk">office@urcwessex.org.uk</a></b>  <b>by 12noon on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024</b>  <b>Please submit news items in the form of:</b>  <b>a heading; date and venue details; a brief descriptive sentence and a website link.</b> </p>	