

## April Synod Minutes available now

The Minutes from the Meeting of Synod held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024 are now available to read on the Synod Website.

Direct pdf link: [S-2024-04-24-Minutes-pdf](#)

## LET'S END POVERTY

### JPIT says

Poverty hurts. It blights the lives of people in the UK and around the world.

But poverty is not inevitable. Choices that are made, and that we make, force people into poverty and trap them there. This means we can make a difference. By using our voices and our votes, by using our heads and our hearts and by deepening our understanding of God's love for all God has made.

With a General Election coming up, we believe that this is the time to speak out as a Church and show our political leaders that another reality can exist where poverty doesn't hold anyone down, and that together we can get there.

North West Synod has made us aware that churches are closing disproportionately in areas of deprivation in the UK and has produced a strategy aiming to help its churches serving the poorest areas.

### What could we do in Wessex?

Roo Stewart, Programme Officer for Church and Society recommends joining **LET'S END POVERTY**

*LET'S END POVERTY is a 'movement' – in the same vein as Make Poverty History and the Jubilee Debt Campaign in previous decades. These movements were successful because of the sheer numbers of diverse organisations and individuals united around a common hope, pressing those in/with power to act. Each movement was limited in scope and time, but they largely achieved their objectives by challenging preconceptions of how economy was ordered. Unfortunately, the time is long overdue to raise this issue with our government again.*

*The 'specific' ask of the scheme is to get people – and especially politicians – talking about tackling (or even eradicating) poverty. There is no magic formula that we are suggesting politicians or society need to adopt to end poverty; rather there needs to be the political will to work towards a society where experiencing poverty is uncommon, where no-one is trapped in poverty and where immediate help is available to avoid or escape falling into poverty.*

*That's it! There is no membership fee or other expectation. **Let's End Poverty** is not affiliated with any political party. This is a movement that means to stand out and to speak up for the end of poverty in the UK.*

**The website of Let's End Poverty is found at <https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/>**

**There are many great ideas helping everyone to get involved and take action!**

Rev Helen Everard, minister of Fleet URC writes:

*During Lent, Fleet URC did a bible study produced by Christian Aid and JPIT called **Act on Poverty**. <https://jpit.uk/act-on-poverty>. This is suitable for all kinds of groups at any time of year. We were inspired as we studied Bible passages and considered the issue of Poverty. We heard voices from people in the UK and in the wider world telling hopeful stories. We learnt about actions **we** might take, called **seeds for change**, and there are many helpful ones from small to large.*

***There is hope and we can make a difference!***

*We now have a banner outside our church!*



## For Churches in Surrey

Beacon Hill URC have recently had a visit from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, having responded to the email below they were sent. They found the visit to be useful. For more information, please contact Corina.

My name is Corina Mayhew and I am a Business Education Officer with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. My role is to give businesses and other non-domestic premises some free advice and guidance around fire safety and compliance with the law and I wondered if this would be of interest to you.

Many businesses are unaware that an important piece of legislation came into force from 1 October last year under Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 which relates to fire safety. This legislation applies to all non-domestic premises (including places of worship) and includes the legal responsibility to have a recorded fire risk assessment. Further details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-legislation-guidance-for-those-with-legal-duties>

For small businesses and less complex premises, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service offer a simple fire safety check through an initiative called "Business Safe and Well Visits". During a visit, we will discuss your answers to eight questions. These questions allow for a discussion about fire safety and if required, where you can seek further help and support in both being compliant with the law and remaining safe from fire. However, these visits are not designed to enforce the law and will not take up much of your time.

If this is something you would like to discuss further, please email me.

Kind regards,

**Corina Mayhew**

**Business Education Officer | Fire Safety | Surrey Fire and Rescue Service |**

Email: [corina.mayhew@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:corina.mayhew@surreycc.gov.uk)

Mob: 07977 782446

## 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 – *May 2024*

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

## Talking About ... Sports Ministry

**Thursday 27 June 2024. 7pm – 8pm.**

Even if you do not consider yourself “sporty” or are uninterested in sport, there are undeniable opportunities to connect with children and young people in your community through sport. Sport is a significant part of many people’s lives and forms part of our social fabric in the UK. This summer of sport will include the Olympics highlighting the anniversary of Eric Liddel’s victory and UEFA Euro’s among the events taking place.

This month’s Talking About... invites you to discover some potential approaches through direct involvement in coaching and indirect through chaplaincy.

**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.

**Bookings:** <https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/event/youth-camp-2024/>

## 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*

**Elemental.** Theme: How do we make an inclusive world.

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.

## IBEX Newsletter Spring 2024

[View Spring 2024 newsletter here](#)

## Education and Learning bi-monthly newsletter

View Issue 9: June 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 164 \(May\) here](#)

JPIT [General Election Special Edition 165](#)

## Churches Together in England Newsletter

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

## Artpeace and Friends newsletter

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

## 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

### 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.

## 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

### July Calendar

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>

### Care for Creation – July Prayer

Loving God

We pray for our General Assembly taking place this month

And for all who attend, vote and take part.

We thank you for the moving of Your Spirit through the meeting

Which has prompted resolutions in support of climate action.

We pray for all our churches and members who are working to make these climate resolutions a reality

And all who seek ways to sustain changes made and to deepen commitment,

For in all these things, we seek to put Your Kingdom first

And to walk your way with Jesus, in the Spirit's power

Amen

### August Calendar

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banbury URC @ The Haven</li> <li>• Hope, Weymouth</li> </ul>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buckland, Portsmouth</li> <li>• Wheatley, Oxford</li> </ul>
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fordingbridge</li> <li>• Marsh Gibbon</li> </ul>



25

- Pear Tree Green, Southampton
- Aston Tirrold

## Care for Creation – August Prayer

Creator God, source of all life

You spoke, and the universe burst into being

Abundant, full of wonder and life,

Everything expressing praise to You, God of wonders!

We add our voices to the praises of the created world.

We pray this month that in our journey alongside you

We may serve you by our prayers for our world, and the challenges we face in the warming climate.

Inspire us by your Holy Spirit

To act faithfully to safeguard Creation in every way we are able,

Not thinking of ourselves

But loving our neighbours in all places

So that in our Synod, as in our local churches, and the whole company of your Church

Your Righteousness, Justice and Peace may flow

In love to all

Amen

Items for the next edition to [office@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:office@urcwessex.org.uk)

by 12noon on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Please submit news items in the form of:

a heading; date and venue details; a brief descriptive sentence and a website link.