

Our Moderator's move and Summer cover arrangements

Our Moderator will be moving manse on 22 July. Given the period of moving house and taking annual leave, Michael will be unavailable from 22 July–30 August inclusive.

During this period the first point of contact for emergencies are:

22 July–12 August – Mary Thomas

13–18 August – Deborah Walker (via the Synod office)

19–30 August – Karen Bell

Michael does not have a landline, and his work mobile number for all phone calls remains 0771 640 9350. Likewise, his work email remains moderator@urcwessex.org.uk.

Formal or official correspondence should continue to be sent to the Synod Office. The manse occupied by the last two Wessex Moderators has been sold as it no longer meets current specifications, and Michael and his family are moving to a manse in Farnham, where his daughter can continue in her school.

URC Finance Department letter to all churches

Ministry And Mission Fund – Annual Letter to Local Churches.

The purpose of the letter is to provide local churches with an annual update on the Ministry and Mission (M&M) Fund, as requested by General Assembly. The letter is aimed mainly at church treasurers and provides some detailed financial information, but is available for all to read at the link below.

[Annual Letter to Local Churches](#)

Disability Awareness Sunday – 22 September 2024

Join the Journey with Jesus for Disability Awareness Week

Disability charity Through the Roof is inviting churches to celebrate Disability Awareness Week by including local disabled people and holding a service on Sunday 22 September 2024, or a day of their choice. A church resource pack is available free on the theme 'Journey with Jesus', featuring Rev Andrew Miles' story of his life-changing accident.

Find out more and get the resource at:

<https://throughtheroof.org/forchurches/disability-awareness-sunday/>

Springs Dance Company – Journey of the Magi

Dates still available to book

Journey of the Magi – a much-loved, family-friendly, festive frolic with a profound message for your church to host. [Flier available here](#)

“Absolutely fabulous show. Wonderful mix of fun, wit, and meaning. It made me laugh and it made me cry all in a couple of minutes. (Hope you'll come back)” Richard, Poynton Methodist Church

Share the joy and wonder of Christmas with your church and local community through this fast-paced, brilliantly witty yet poignant performance. The show offers a contemporary comparison between the journey the wise men took 2000 years ago and our own preparations in the run up to Christmas today. With sparkle, a soundtrack to keep toes tapping and awe-inspiring dance, ***Journey of the Magi*** delights audiences of all ages.

“The show was wonderful and it was such a thrill to have the hall buzzing - everyone was captivated. Inspired visual storytelling” Sue, Central Hall Methodist Church, Walsall

“This event doubled our record church attendance. Our attendees really enjoyed it. Wonderful dance relating complex story concepts.” Revd Brian, St Chad's Church, Coventry

Springs is inviting churches to host a performance of ***Journey of the Magi***, which will be available nationally from 22nd November – 22nd 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 or by calling 07775 628442.

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

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 – Good Practice 6

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

Safeguarding Training – *new dates*

Refresher safeguarding training on zoom.

6.30pm – 8pm on Thursday 12 September and 19 September 2024 on zoom.

Advanced Safeguarding Training on zoom.

Thursdays 17th and 24th October 2024. 6.30pm – 8.30pm.

This course is mandated for those who are Children's and Youth workers and those with a role working with Adults at Risk. Anyone who has completed the foundation & Intermediate safeguarding training is also welcome to attend.

Foundation & Intermediate Safeguarding: training courses.

- Saturday 9 November 2024, at Fleet URC. 10am – 4pm
- Saturday 11 January 2025, at Trinity Totton. 10am – 4pm
- Saturday 25 January 2025, at Trinity Charminster. 10am – 4pm

To book your place please email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk or book via the Synod website, go to Safeguarding page

<https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Safeguarding – *Away Day*

Safeguarding Away Day for Church Safeguarding Coordinators.

Saturday 21 September 2024 at Fleet URC.

Bookings: <https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/event/safeguarding-away-day-for-church-safeguarding-coordinators/>

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.

First Aid training – *watch this space*

Local churches have a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate provision of first aid at all their programmes.

In September we will be launching an updated flowchart to help you consider the appropriate level of training and to show the courses available.

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

Training date

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

We are aware that Elders and Lay Preachers are increasingly being asked to take funerals, and occasionally, Weddings. These are not Sacraments, so in a sense, anyone can take them. This is a day to help you to prepare for these occasions. Come along, share your experiences or lack of them, and receive some useful guidance. The morning session will focus on funerals and the afternoon session on weddings. Please book your place. Email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk

Dates in 2025

Lay Preachers' Gathering – Saturday 29 March 2025 at Sarum College.

Elders' Conference – Saturday 28 June 2025 at Sarum College.

Children's and Youth Events and Training

Talking About ...

On the 4th Thursday of the month. 7pm – 8pm.

Talking About ... is taking a break in July and August. Back again in September.

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 July/August 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.

Safeguarding Quarterly Newsletter – *April 2024*

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

Bi-monthly Newsletter – *July 2024*

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

Education and Learning bi-monthly newsletter

View Issue 9: June 2024 of [Education and Learning bi-monthly newsletter](#)

Joint Public Issues Team

View JPIT newsletter [Edition 167 \(July\) here](#)

IBEX Newsletter Spring 2024

[View Spring 2024 newsletter here](#)

Churches Together in England Newsletter

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

News from around the Synod

2024 Hymn Competition Winner

Congratulations to Colin Thompson, retired minister in Wessex who won the Pratt Green Trust 2024 Hymn Competition in the category of writing an original text to a well-known melody.

Colin wrote a hymn called Creation's Glory Shines to the tune Ich Halte Treulich Still (J. S. Bach).

His words, a recorded version of his hymn and the score can be found at this link: [Creation's Glory Shines](#)

Winchester @50

The United Church Winchester has its 50th Anniversary celebration service on 8th September.

Part of their celebration includes an art exhibition called "Open to All" focusing on the way all are welcome at the Carpenter's table. The paintings are the work of URC Minister Elizabeth Gray King. The exhibition is available to view in the Sanctuary when the church is open for coffee on weekdays 10-12, plus Saturday mornings from Tuesday 23rd July to Sunday 11th August.

Further details of events taking place can be found in the [online Church Magazine "Yours"](#)

Southampton Celebrates Isaac Watts

Below is a link to a short video on YouTube about Isaac Watts who was born in Southampton and wrote many famous hymns including "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past" which chimes out of Southampton's Clock Tower every day.

8 minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ujt4VUYOGnM>

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.

Job Opportunities

Children & Youth Development Officer – West Midlands

The West Midlands Synod is seeking to appoint a **Children and Youth Development Officer** (Ref CYDO)

This is a full-time post for 35 hours per week including evening and weekends on an open-ended contract.

This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

Salary: £40,000 depending on experience and qualifications

This post offers a challenging opportunity for an experienced and professionally qualified Children's and Youth Worker with training (or development) skills. We are looking for an enterprising Christian to serve the churches of the Synod in offering advice and support to those working with children and young people and to build up a Synod Youth Executive.

The Officer appointed will be a member of a professional Assembly team and a large lay Synod team; good team working skills are essential.

If you share our passion for children and young people playing their part in the mission of God, please download the job description, person specification and application form.

[Click to download the Job Description](#)

[Click to download the Person Specification](#)

[Click to download the Application Form](#)

Closing date for applications: noon on Thursday 15 August 2024

Shortlisting: Monday 19 August 2024

Interview date: Monday 2 September 2024

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is an occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian.

We are committed to diversity and equality of opportunity. We especially welcome applications from women and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups who are currently under-represented in this area of work in the Church.

URC Church House - Repairs and Maintenance Coordinator

- Fixed-term contract for 12 months, Full-time (35 hours per week)
- London
- Salary: £36,102 per annum
- Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Friday 2 August 2024
- Interview date: Friday 16 August 2024

Full advert available here: [Repairs and Maintenance Coordinator](#)

Prayer Calendar

August Calendar

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

September Calendar

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Cliff, Bournemouth • Hythe, Cornerstone
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gosport United Reformed Church, St Columba • St Andrew's, Reading
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitterne Park, Southampton • Maidenhead

22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap Street Church • Christ Church, Henley
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad Chalke, Salisbury • Bridport United Church

Care for Creation – September Prayer

Season of Creationtide prayer by Rev David Coleman, chaplain Eco Congregation of Scotland

Sustaining God, Frail Flesh, Wild Wind;

To live and breathe

is to be called to praise you

in many, many, many ways

with many, many, many kin -

-according to their kind:

Our fellow creatures:

Seen and not yet noted;

Heard and not yet hearkened to;

Human, of all nations.

And far more:

Through Christ, who on the Tree

with all of life repurposed death,

Baptise our hearts

in those nourishing springs

of Creation's seasons and cycles,

both of growth and flourishing

and, yes, such decay

as reclaims goodness

rising bread, maturing wine,

and feeding next year's flowers!

bless this Season of Creation.

Heighten our sensitivity

to the disruption

of migration and climate;

to the wasting of habitats

which so many share;

to the famine of diversity.

Preach to us in Earth's prophetic voices;

Speak through your written Word
of those rewards so justly due
when lives are lived
with mindfulness of others:
the richness of the joy
to partner with healing.
And, with love, justice
and the sternest of compassion
You show it can be done.
Help us believe it
so we live!
Amen

**Items for the next edition to office@urcwessex.org.uk
by 12noon on Monday 12th August 2024**

**Please submit news items in the form of:
a heading; date and venue details; a brief descriptive sentence and a website link.**