



# Southern Synod News

Welcome to the latest edition of Southern Synod News. This month we have some items available throughout the Synod that might be of interest to your churches, as well as some exciting volunteer opportunities within the denomination.

We would love to hear from you! If you have any exciting upcoming events you wish to advertise, or would like to share good news from your local church we would love to include it in the next edition. Please send items for the next issue to Ross ([office@urcsouthern.org.uk](mailto:office@urcsouthern.org.uk)) by Monday 29th September 2025.

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## Latest News

### **Good luck to Southern Synod's Students**

The Synod wants to wish our prospective students, So Young Jung, Gail Marshall-Jones and Zeerak Shahbaz the best of luck as they all begin their ministerial training from this September. This is an incredibly meaningful opportunity for all three of them, and we hope you will join us in keeping them in your thoughts and prayers as they begin this challenging but exciting new journey.

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## Staplehurst's 200th Anniversary Celebrations

On the 16th August, Staplehurst URC celebrated the 200th Anniversary of worshipping at their current site. The occasion was celebrated by 48 visitors from the local community who heard a fascinating talk about the history of Staplehurst URC. Some highlights from the talk included hearing how Revd John Wesley preached there multiple times as well as The Congregational Sunday School at the Church leading the way in educating the children of Staplehurst. Indeed, John Wesley is quoted as writing in his diary; *"I rode to Staplehurst, where Mr Chapman, who loves all who love Christ, received us gladly; at six the congregation gathered from many miles round, seemed just ripe for the Gospel, so that – contrary to my usual custom in a new place – I spoke merely of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."* This was a great celebration, accompanied by a display of the history of the Church. It was enjoyed by all who attended.

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## ACAT Conference 2025 – Supporting Church Treasurers and Trustees

Taking place on **Saturday, 1st November** in **Manchester (and online)**, the ACAT Annual Conference is a one-day event focused on **church finance, governance, and giving**.

Keynote speaker: **Bishop Mark (Bishop of Middleton)**

Topics include: Gift Aid, SORP updates, CIOs, tax issues, and more

 **Tickets: £20** (includes lunch & materials)

 <https://www.acat.uk.com/product/acat-conference-2025/>

## Strategic Mission Fund Panel new deadline!

The next deadline for the Strategic Mission Fund Panel is now **5pm** on **Wednesday 3rd September**. Please send your applications to the Synod's Mission Officer, Jo Patterson ([mdo@urcsouthern.org.uk](mailto:mdo@urcsouthern.org.uk)), by the deadline. For more information, or to access the application form, please click the link below.

The Mission Panel can consider applications of under £20,000 in between meetings by email so if it is a smaller application, please don't wait!

If you are considering harvest, advent, or Christmas events for small amounts, we are happy to give money for a few hundred pounds, so get in touch if this applies to your church.

[southernsynodurc.org.uk/mission-resources](http://southernsynodurc.org.uk/mission-resources)

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## Items available from Pagham United Reformed Church

Sadly Pagham URC is closing on 30<sup>th</sup> November this year and they have an inventory of goods which they wish to dispose of for a donation of your choice which will be donated to local charities.

The goods include;

- Furniture
- Electrical equipment
- Fire safety and first aid equipment
- Books and music
- Table wear and kitchen equipment
- Communion plate and other metal items
- Sundries

They are holding an open session on **Wednesday 17th September** from **14:00** to **16:00** when you can come and view what is on offer. Some things may be taken on the day, but others they will need until November so can't be collected until later. You will be responsible for transporting anything you would like.

If you would like a copy of the full inventory before coming to look please e-mail their Church Secretary, Penny Thomas at [penny\\_t@talktalk.net](mailto:penny_t@talktalk.net) or click the link below.

## **Closed Churches: Item's Available**

The Synod have various items from closed churches that might be of interest to you and your local URC. These are available for **collection only**, but if you are interested, please contact Mark Price-Haworth

([prop.admin@urcsouthern.org.uk](mailto:prop.admin@urcsouthern.org.uk)) for more information/pictures.

### Eltham

A few dozen dark blue and grey/black plastic chairs.

### Lewisham

There are approx. 40 dark blue plastic chairs and 10 2ftx2ft tables. The Sanctuary has approx. 50 chairs.

### Epsom

Stackable, wooden children's chairs x 16

Sanctuary chairs x 8

Stackable sanctuary chairs x 26

Dexion, 6-shelf units, various widths x10

NIV Bibles x 26

## **Rejoice and Sing Hymn Books**

The Synod Office has also inherited some copies of Rejoice and Sing from our closed churches. They are largely the standard print edition, however, there a few melody editions too. If these are of interest to you, please contact Ross on

([office@urcsouthern.org.uk](mailto:office@urcsouthern.org.uk)).

# Opportunities throughout the URC

## Job Opportunities:

### Surrey and Sussex Area Administrator

Southern Synod are looking for an administratively efficient and personable individual to support the Synod Area leaders and the churches, while maintaining a high level of confidentiality. The role is predominantly home-based and the nature of the work will involve a degree of flexibility in time allocation during the week, including occasional evening or weekend work.

## Main responsibilities:

1. Administer Area and related meetings
2. Liaise with churches in maintaining Synod Area databases and records, and promoting communications.
3. Assist and monitor churches in maintaining compliance with statutory and URC expectations.
4. Support administratively other initiatives as agreed with the Synod Area Officers. In all the above, to liaise with other URC staff and ecumenical colleagues where required.

Please email [modpa@urcsouthern.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcsouthern.org.uk) for further details and an application form.

Closing date: 19th September

## Volunteer Opportunities: Join our Team

Do you have a passion for discerning what God is saying about Call and vocation? Then this could be an opportunity for you!

The Ministries Committee is looking for a Convener for the Assessment Board to replace its current convener who will complete their term at the July 2026 General Assembly. The convenor will need to have a working knowledge of the formal ministries of the United Reformed Church, and of the training programmes for the formation of Ministers of the Word and Sacraments (MWS) and Church Related Community Work (CRCW). Training will be provided, particularly in a period of 'shadowing' the current convener in the run-up to July 2026.

The Assessment Board plays a vital role in the discernment, assessment and selection of students for training for MWS and CRCW. Its assessors are drawn from ministers and lay members of the URC.

If you feel you have the gifts and graces to serve in this way, and are interested in making an application or nomination, please email [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk) for an application form.

Closing date: 8th September

## Volunteer Opportunities: Ministries Committee Convenor

Does developing the strategy and supporting the work of the Ministries Committee excite you? Then this could be an opportunity for you!

The Ministries Committee is looking for a Convenor to replace its current convenor who will complete their term at the July 2026 General Assembly. The convenor will need to have a working knowledge of the formal ministries of the United Reformed Church and support of their training programmes.

The ministries committee carries the General Assembly responsibility and care for the formally accredited ministries of the United Reformed Church namely the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Work, Assembly Accredited Lay Preaching, Locally Recognised Worship Leading, Assembly Accredited Pioneering both lay and special category.

This responsibility includes all lifelong learning for these accredited ministries including funding and other educational elements.

If you feel you have the gifts and graces to serve in this way, and are interested in making an application or nomination, please email [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk) for an application form.

Closing date: 8th September

## Volunteer Opportunities: Join Ministries Committee

Does developing the strategy and supporting the work of the Ministries Committee excite you? Then this could be an opportunity for you!

The Ministries Committee is looking for two lay members to be part of its new committee agreed at General Assembly 2025. Member will need to have a working knowledge of the formal ministries of the United Reformed Church and support of their training programmes.

The Ministries Committee carries the General Assembly responsibility and care for the formally accredited ministries of the United Reformed Church namely the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Work, Assembly Accredited Lay Preaching, Locally Recognised Worship Leading, Assembly Accredited Pioneering both lay and special category.

This responsibility includes all lifelong learning for these accredited ministries including funding and other educational elements.

We are looking for lay members with expertise in education particularly adult, higher, or theological education who can bring a critical and constructive voice to group discussions.

If you feel you have the gifts and graces to serve in this way, and are interested in making an application or nomination, please email [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk) for an application form.

Closing date: 8th September



# Upcoming Training and Events



## Upcoming Training Opportunity – FULLY FUNDED Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

### September Online Morning Course – Sessions run 09:30-13:00

Session 1 - Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September

Session 2 - Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September

Session 3 – Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September

Session 4 – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October

(Participants must attend all 4 sessions in full.)

Register at [www.bit.ly/youth-mhfa](https://www.bit.ly/youth-mhfa)

MHFA England has recently launched a **brand-new, updated Youth MHFA Course**, designed to equip you with the knowledge and skills to:

- Recognize the signs of emotional distress or poor mental health in young people.
- Gain confidence in starting supportive conversations.
- Understand how to safeguard and signpost to appropriate support.

This is a fantastic opportunity to enhance your awareness and skills—**and for Southern Synod participants spaces are FULLY FUNDED** (usual cost £325 per person)!

The course is aimed at anyone who engages with young people aged 8-18, and the skills learnt are transferable to other age groups. This fully updated course is also suitable for those who have previously completed the Youth MHFA course and are looking to refresh their knowledge.

Please share this opportunity with others linked to your local church community. Don't miss out—secure your place today!

Register now: [www.bit.ly/youth-mhfa](https://www.bit.ly/youth-mhfa)

## **Advent Resources 2025 now available...**

It is never too early for Christmas!  
The URC Advent resources for 2025 are now available for pre-order. This can be done from the URC bookshop. These are a fun pack designed to be a quality missional gift from a church to a family

To pre-order go to:  
[urcshop.co.uk/2025-urc-advent-kit-preorder](http://urcshop.co.uk/2025-urc-advent-kit-preorder)

## **Lay Preacher's Training Day**

A Lay Preachers Training Day is taking place at Oxted URC on **Saturday 11th October 2025**. Please arrive at **10am** for a **10:30am** start.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet with your fellow lay preachers to exchange ideas and support one another.

The Synod's Training and Development Officer, Revd Dr Charisa Hunter-Crump will also be available at the event to help support you.

To book your place, please email Deirdre Harrison at [deidreharrison@btinternet.com](mailto:deidreharrison@btinternet.com)



## **FaithTalk: Everyday Evangelism in the URC**

FaithTalk at Christmas – Thinking Ahead! - Tuesday 23 September 7pm.  
How do we make the most of wonderful opportunities to talk about our faith during Advent and Christmas... how can we talk about our faith personally at this time, and how can our church talk?  
Join us online for a relaxed conversation to share ideas and experiences and find out about helpful resources.  
Register for the link at [mission@urc.org.uk](mailto:mission@urc.org.uk)



**Ministry Enquirers**  
Learn what God might be asking of you

**4 October**  
**9.30am-12.30pm**  
on Zoom

Join us in thinking about God's call to: **Stepwise, Worship Leading, Lay Preaching, Lay Pioneering, Ministry with children and young people, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.**

Email us for joining details:  
[ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk)

## URC Ministry Enquirer's Conference

The URC Ministries department are running a fascinating enquirers conference on Zoom on **4th October** from **9:30-12:30**. This is a great opportunity for all those feeling called to ministry to learn more.

For more details please email [ministries@urc.org.uk](mailto:ministries@urc.org.uk) or click the link below.

The **Dunamis** project  
Equipping you to cooperate with the Holy Spirit

**The Healing Ministry of Jesus**  
*Restoring wholeness through the work of the Holy Spirit*

**12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> November 2025**  
St Andrew's URC, Canterbury, CT1 2UA  
Wednesday mid-morning to Sunday lunch time

**The Healing Ministry of Jesus**

Jesus Christ brought wholeness to many people and in a variety of ways - a tangible expression of God's love and power.

Healing was a feature of the early church's life and can be for us, too, because the same Holy Spirit is still at work today. Yet many Christians today have little first-hand experience of how to participate in healing through cooperating with the Holy Spirit.

This conference will give you biblical foundations and practical instruction to help you learn how to participate in Jesus' healing ministry.

At this event the Holy Spirit often leads us into emotional and physical healing, and this hands-on experience of healing ministry becomes the context in which the teaching takes place.

Topics include:

- Biblical foundations for healing ministry
- How the Holy Spirit continues Jesus' healing work
- Spiritual, inner and relational healing
- Jesus' ministry of physical healing

Join us for this life-changing event, and discover how much more God can do in and through you!

**What's involved?**

- Corporate worship and prayer, responsive to the activity of the Holy Spirit
- Systematic teaching, rooted in scripture and grounded in the realities of life
- Intentional transition from teaching to practice, helping participants learn through personal experience
- Debriefing, to deepen understanding and insights, and to model accountability

**Booking your place**  
Full details and booking form online:  
[www.dunamis.org.uk/canterbury](http://www.dunamis.org.uk/canterbury)  
For enquiries about this event please contact Val Cannon:  
E: [val@dunamis.org.uk](mailto:val@dunamis.org.uk)

## Dunamis Project - "The Healing Ministry of Jesus"

The Dunamis Project are running the 4th of their 6 part training event which aims to "equip Christians to fulfill the Great Commission and advance the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit."

It will be taking place from the 12th-16th November 2025 at St Andrew's URC, Canterbury, CT1 2UA. To book your place please visit [www.dunamis.org.uk/events/dunamis-project-canterbury](http://www.dunamis.org.uk/events/dunamis-project-canterbury)

## **URC Safeguarding Training**

The URC Safeguarding Team are running a series of short, online, safeguarding sessions that might be of interest to you. The following events are taking place;

**9th September 7:30pm: Refugees and Asylum seekers**

**10th September 1:00pm: DDC Verifier and Safer Recruitment (DBS in England & Wales)**

**22nd September 1:00pm: Adult Safeguarding**

**9th October 1:30pm: Spiritual Abuse**

**17th November 1:00pm: Online Safety**

**20th November 7:00pm: DDC Verifier and Safer Recruitment (DBS in England & Wales).**

To book your place on one of these courses, please email

[emma.pearce@urc.org.uk](mailto:emma.pearce@urc.org.uk)

## **URC Safeguarding Symposium**

The United Reformed Church Safeguarding Symposium is taking place on Zoom on Wednesday 15th October from 1:30pm-3:45pm. A schedule for the event can be found below.

1:30-1:45 - Welcome from Sharon Barr (Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer) and reflection from Revd Roger Jones.

1:45-2:30 - Presentation of the new Safeguarding training matrix from Carrie Kunda, and key DBS/PVG updates from Dr Kerry Baker.

2:30-2:45 - Break  
2:45-3:30 - Domestic Abuse in Churches hosted by Bekah Legg, CEO of Restored UK.

3:30-3:45 - Round Up and Thank You's

Tickets can be found at  
<http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/urc-safeguarding-symposium-2025-tickets-1437228040759>

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## **Ripple Effect - Twin Your Garden Today!**

The Ripple Effect is an important charity that empowers families in rural Africa who are struggling to grow enough to eat due to the declining climate with them experiencing longer periods of drought and unpredictable rainfall. By 'twinning your garden' with Ripple Effect, your £60 donation could help a family living in rural Africa with three years' training in sustainable organic farming. Families are supported with starting small kitchen gardens so they can grow enough to eat and set up small businesses so their children can go to school. For more information, or to Start a Ripple by twinning your garden, please visit [rippleeffect.org](http://rippleeffect.org)

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## **Messy Fun Day – An Intergenerational Celebration**

**A free day of worship, creativity, and community for all ages – join us in London this September 27<sup>th</sup>.**

We're delighted to invite you to **Messy Fun Day** – a joyful, intergenerational event taking place on **Saturday 27 September 2025** at **Lumen, London (WC1H 9RS)** from **10:30am to 4:00pm**.

This relaxed and welcoming day will include:

- Worship
- Creative activities
- Prayer spaces
- A bring-your-own picnic lunch
- Refreshments provided throughout the day

Whether you're coming with family, friends, or on your own, all are welcome to take part in this free event hosted by **Southern and Thames North Synods**.

**Register now:** [bit.ly/messy-fun-day](http://bit.ly/messy-fun-day)

We look forward to seeing you there!

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