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Subject: URC News Update Sept 2025
Date: 29 August 2025 at 17:02
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News Update September 2025



Keeping you informed with the latest news from
around the URC.

Hope thrives at the 2025 Greenbelt festival





The URC partnered with food poverty charity Trussell (who shares its offices in London) at the Greenbelt Festival, at Boughton House, Kettering, over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Greenbelt is a culturally and politically engaged festival with a committed Christian faith and worldview. The venue included talks, worship and debates alongside yoURCafe, serving food rescued from going to landfill by the brilliant team at Refuse, Chester le Street, and at Lodge Road Community Church, Birmingham and lots of teas, coffees and cakes. The three-day festival included a communion service attended by thousands which reminded us that hope is something we need to keep choosing and practising, and to celebrate the strength of Jesus' resurrection and the power of God's promises. Look at photos from the event taken by Kevin Snyman, Chris Andrews and others, [on the URC's Flickr account](#).

JPIT 2025 conference





Are you a justice seeker or just plain tired? Are you a petition signer or an action taker? Are you a self-professed politics geek or a church member searching for a way to make your voice count? If so, come along to the Joint Public Issues Team's 2025 conference "For Goodness Sake!" taking place 8 November, 10am-4.30pm at Reach Conference Centre Derby. [Tickets cost up to £15. Book here.](#)

Revd Peter Cruchley, 1966-2025



With a heavy heart, the URC shares news of the death of the Revd Dr Peter Cruchley, who died on 15 August having been diagnosed with cancer in January. Peter was a URC minister who served local congregations in Wales before joining the Council for World Mission in 2016, serving as Mission Secretary for Mission Development (2016-2022). And in 2022, Peter joined the World Council of Churches as Director of the Commission for World Mission & Evangelism. [Learn more about Peter.](#)

Image: WCC/Ivars Kupcis.

Make your voice heard during the Climate Coalition's Lobby Week



In July, more than 5,000 people gathered at in Westminster to call for a healthier, fairer, safer future for people, climate and nature. This autumn, the mass lobby goes local with the Climate Coalition's Lobby Week, taking place 13-20 September. Supported by the Joint Public Issues Team and the Constituency Action Network, the Lobby Week is a nationwide push to meet your local MP to have a conversation about what matters to you and call for the leadership we need.

You don't need to have joined the coalition in Westminster to take part. You can join the movement now and start by emailing your MP, logging it onto the Climate Coalition's map. [Learn how to get involved.](#)

Free conversation starter coasters

To enable better and deeper conversations about faith with each other and those in our wider community, the Children's and Youth work team have worked with the Ugly Duckling Charity to create "conversation starter" coasters. The team have sent every local URC a free sample pack of ten and would love to hear how you use them. There are four questions to get people chatting on the coaster, and a QR code linking to a new question every day. Please send photos and feedback by [email to the Children and Youth Work team](#). More coasters can be ordered in bulk from Synod offices.



Films to aid IOPT conversations



Christian Aid has worked with church leaders and campaigners to produce a series of resources to help tackle the long-standing and "too difficult" issues around Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. The three short films bring together the voices of UK Christians, and Palestinians in a way which helps churches start their own conversations and inspires them to act for a just peace. [Learn more about the resources.](#)

Palestine and Israel





The third week of September, 21-28, is the annual World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (WWPPI). This week is a time for people of faith to join in worship and prayer in support of an end to the occupation of Palestine. WWPPI calls on its participants to work for an end to the occupation, so that Palestinians and Israelis can finally live in peace. [Learn more](#).

Revd Philip Brooks retires

Colleagues and ecumenical friends gathered at Lumen, next door to Church House to give thanks to Revd Philip Brooks for his service. The Deputy General Secretary (Mission) was appointed to the role in 2022 on a two-year contract, having previously served at Church House as Secretary for Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations. He retired on 14 August.

Season of Creation resources

EcoCongregation Scotland has freely made available Season of Creation (1 September - 4 October) resources that includes five weeks of notes, prayers, and a location video to support worship services. This year's Season of Creation theme focuses on Isaiah 32:14-18 where the prophet Isaiah pictured

the desolated Creation without peace because of the lack of justice and the broken relationship between God and humankind. [Access EcoCongregation resources.](#) [Learn more about the Season of Creation.](#)

URC Youth members enjoy French camping trip

Three URC Youth members – Korede Kassim (Wales), Laurel Marsh (East Midlands) and Elliot Winterbottom (West Midlands) – joined more than 700



young people at Le Grand Kiff, a youth camp run by the United Protestant Church of France. Alongside friends from Normandy, they spent four days worshipping, debating, playing games and exploring the theme “Respire, Espere” (Breathe, Hope) with young people from across Europe and beyond. Highlights included a radio interview, leading an open-mic with Shine Jesus Shine, dancing to live Christian rap, and making the most of both sunshine and their URC waterproofs. “It was overwhelming, fun, and sleepless,” they said, “but unforgettable. The theme song is still stuck in our heads!”

Download or print News Update

A downloadable version of News Update, formatted for print, and for churches to copy and paste into church newsletters or magazines will be available within a week of this edition being published. [Download your printable version of News Update.](#)

Share your good news

If you have a good news story that can inspire, raise hope or show God's work in action then please let URC Communications know. We would love to help share your news across the denomination and in local news outlets. [Email the URC Comms Team](#) or call 07976 753 950.

Faith Adventures: youth resource



Faith Adventures: Youth Resource is a free, weekly resource from the URC to support volunteers to plan and deliver engaging Bible-based sessions for youths aged 11-14. Session outlines provide a range of ways to explore and express faith together through Bible readings, challenges,

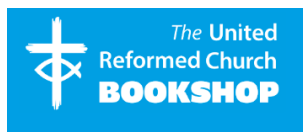
prayers, activities, and discussing together, enabling youths to nurture their faith in daily life. Designed for very small groups or even individual young people, the materials run in parallel with Faith Adventures for Children Together for ages 0-11. [Learn more about material.](#)

This month in *Reform* magazine

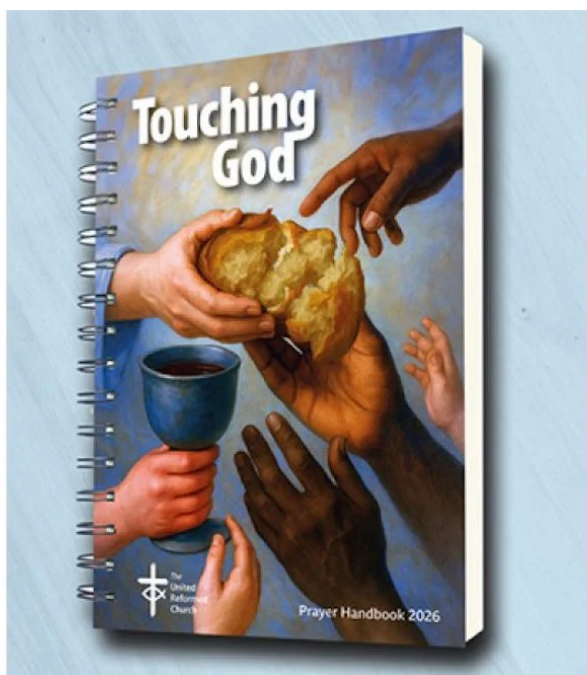
Reform is a fresh and challenging magazine exploring theology, ethics, personal spirituality and Christian perspectives on social and current affairs.

The magazine is for thinking people who enjoy reading about Christian ideas from a range of viewpoints. It features writing from journalists, academics, politicians, campaigners, scientists and religious leaders. As well as high-profile interviews, in-depth features and book, music and film reviews, *Reform* carries letters and regular, light-hearted columns. The digital edition costs £18, the printed and posted edition costs £29.50 and for both it's £35.50. For postage to Europe the cost is £49, and for the rest of the world the cost is £65. [Subscribe to Reform.](#)





Please order online using the URC Bookshop's easy-to-use website www.urcshop.co.uk or by calling 020 7916 8629.

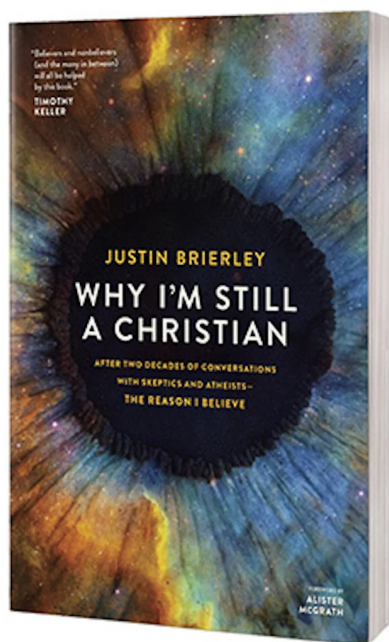


Touching God – The 2026 URC Prayer Handbook is the first from new editors Susan Durber and Jonnie Hill. It comes in A5 and A4 Lectern editions. The prayers in this 2026 edition come from many diverse writers, both from within and beyond the URC.

All of them are shaped by scripture; the lectionary-based prayers in the first part, but no less the prayers for worship together and private devotion in the second part. £6.99 – £14.99 + p&p.



2026 URC Pocket Diaries, available in blue or red, includes the following: calendars to 2028, year planners to 2028, notable dates for the URC and the wider Church, metric measures, Lectionary readings, Assembly officers and URC staff, useful addresses, Assembly committee details, and more. £9 +p&p. A5 and A4 versions also available.



In *Why I'm Still a Christian*, Justin Brierley engages with the most unlikely of conversation partners – from Richard Dawkins to Philip Pullman – on the subject of faith. You'll understand why Justin, after hearing the strongest objections to the Christian faith and religion, is still a Christian. For him, God makes sense of human existence, the inherent value of human life, and our ultimate purpose on earth. £12.99 +p&p.





Christmas baking tray and mould - a silicone mould from Flying Tiger Copenhagen in a Christmas tree shape with a snowflake, tree, gingerbread person, stocking, present and Father Christmas shapes. Ideal for making Christmas cakes, or using the mould for Messy Church activities, sand art, Play-Doh, papier mache, lollipops, frozen shapes or festive ice cubes, festive bread rolls or other craft or cooking activities. £5.99 +p&p.

Synod news

National Synod of Scotland





Peedie Kirk URC proudly supported the 20th International Island Games – the largest multi-sport event in Europe in July. More than 2,000 athletes and 900 volunteers, bringing energy, community spirit, and celebration to the Orkney islands. The church served as a home base for the bowling competitors and helped provide a dedicated chaplaincy service.

Mersey



West Kirby URC recently swapped its usual Sunday service for a morning dedicated to community care.

After a warm welcome and opening song, the congregation took part in a range of hands-on activities — from gardening and litter picking, to visiting care homes, prayer walking, and creating encouraging cards for local school staff. The projects were open to all ages, with both indoor and outdoor options available.

South Western

