The United Reformed Church Southern Synod

Southern Synod News

Welcome to Southern Synod News!
We would love to hear from you! If you have any exciting upcoming events, celebrations or good news to share from your local church we would be pleased to include it in the next edition. Please send items for the next issue to Lauren (modpa@urcsouthern.org.uk) by Monday 26th October 2026.

News Changes in Southern Synod Training and Events

Latest News

"Hello! I'm Paul Robinson, and I'm delighted to be beginning my ministry as Moderator of the Southern Synod. Before moving south, I served as minister of the United Church in Rhyl, in North Wales. I'm passionate about preaching and about how God's Word can shape our life together — our worship, our discipleship, our mission and the way we serve our communities. As I've begun getting to know people and places across the Synod, it's been a joy to recognise the fellowship we share in Christ. I look forward to journeying together as we explore the identity, hope and calling we have in him, and how that shapes the Church we are called to be.
I'm really looking forward to getting to know the churches and people of the Southern Synod: hearing your stories, discovering what God is already doing among you, and sharing in the opportunities and challenges ahead.
Away from church life, music is a big part of who I am. I'm a keen choral singer and musician, I enjoy running (sometimes more in theory than in practice!) and I'm a Manchester United supporter, which I realise may not endear me to everybody.
Most of all, I'm looking forward to meeting you. Please do come and say hello when our paths cross, as together we seek to follow Christ and serve God's communities."

Paul's induction will be taking place on 31st October 2026 at 2pm at Chris Church United Reformed Church, Petts Wood. You are very welcome to attend. Please email Lauren to be

Synod Together Papers

Synod Together will taking place at All Saints, Burgess Hill on Saturday 17th October.
Papers are now available for download from the Synod website.

Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers and Church Leadership Programmes Meet at Luther King for a New Year of Study

At the end of September, several of us from Southern Synod went up to Manchester for the beginning of the academic year. TDO Charisa Hunter-Crump is working with Adam Scott, LK President and tutor, to lead the Church Leadership Programme. Four first year students and two second year students started the Accredited Lay Preacher programme for this year. Here's our Southern Synod group, with apologies to the two AALP students missing from the photo.
Revd Dr Charisa Hunter-Crump

Pride Steps

"As I walked with three other URC

added to the list.

colleagues, I was reminded that faith has always been a journey, not a fortress or a finish line. A journey."

Revd Martin Knight has written about his experience walking in the Brighton & Hove Pride Parade alongside Revd Anne Lewitt, Revd Angela Rigby, Revd Cristina Cipriani from Southern Synod.

Read Martin's post

A Message from Jo and Charisa (MDO and TDO)

Dear churches,
It is at times difficult for us to distinguish between our roles as Mission and Discipleship Officer and Training and Deployment Officer! So, we assume you may also not always know which of us to contact! As we've been clarifying our roles together, we'd like to share with you.

As Mission and Discipleship Officer, Jo is responsible for working directly with individual churches or pastorates on specific issues related to your mission (the work you do in and for the world) and discipleship (the ways you are envisioning your ministry together to support your mission). Please contact her to discuss the types of support she can provide. Jo also attends the Area Pastoral Committees so that she is part of the conversations around what is happening in all our churches.

As Training and Development Officer, Charisa is responsible for working across Areas and across the Synod to bring people from different churches together for specific training or development that is needed or required by the URC. This includes Authorized Elder Sacraments, Elders, Stepwise, Safer Sacred Space, Locally Recognised Worship Leader, and Lay Preacher Professional Days. She also works directly with ministers in their various stages of Education for Ministry. Charisa attends the Synod Area Meetings to get to know the Synod's members and ministers better.

Jo and Charisa have also worked together to produce the Monday evening Resource Training for individuals and churches needing resources for their ministries. These include topics such as Pulpit Supply, Compliance, Communication, Vision and Mission and the Mission Fund.

We work closely together and we also work closely with the other two field workers, EO Cristina Cipriani and CYDO Tom Hackett, as we seek to provide for the needs of the Synod.

We hope this helps!
Jo and Charisa

Changes in Southern

Job Advert: Safeguarding Support

37.5 hours per week (full time)
2 years fixed term
£40,000 - £43,000 per annum

Southern Synod are looking for an individual with a background in safeguarding and understanding of working in faith-based organisations to support our Synod Safeguarding Officer. This is an exciting opportunity to help contribute to our growth in delivering a core part of our mission to safeguard children and adults at risk. The role is predominantly home-based, with occasional connection with others at our Synod Office in Croydon. 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:
To support the Synod Safeguarding Officer by embedding good safeguarding practices and providing safeguarding advice and guidance across the synod.
Under the direction of the Synod Safeguarding Officer to ensure that allegations of abuse are appropriately referred to statutory authorities.
To carry out all administration necessary to develop and review safeguarding policies and guidelines.
To maintain effective reporting systems and to collate information for inclusion in reports for the Synod.

For the job description and application pack email:
modpa@urcsouthern.org.uk
Closing date: 30th October 2026
Interviews: 13 or 14 November 2026

New Ministers in Central Sussex United Area

Two new ministers were welcomed to the Central Sussex United Area on 13th September: Revd Jonathan Gaylord newly appointed to Emmanuel Church, Eastbourne and Revd Karl Rutlidge, newly appointed to Burgess Hill Methodist and Haywards Heath Methodist Churches.

Welcome Revd Lynne Le Masonry & Revd Azeem Bakhsh

In September we ordained and inducted two new ministers in Southern Synod. The Revd Azeem Bakhsh was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacraments and inductioned as Minister of the Southwark Group of Churches (Dulwich Grove URC, Camberwell Green URC, Crosssway URC, Copleston Centre and Church) on Saturday 5 September 2026. The Revd Lynne Le Masonry was ordained as Minister of the Word and Sacraments, and inducted into the Church on Hope St on Sunday 20th September.

Upcoming Training and Events

Upcoming Training

OPEN TO ANYONE IN SOUTHERN SYNOD

Please contact the TDO if you have any questions about these trainings.

12th October
Resourcing Congregations
Compliance 1
18:30-20:30

All are welcome!

Co-led on Zoom by MDO Jo Patterson and TDO Charisa Hunter-Crump.

What does scripture say about Stewardship?
What are our legal requirements as churches?
What policies do we need in place?
What do we need to review or do annually?
What are some other good practices?

Please RSVP to your Area Administrator ASAP and before 8th October

Join with this link.

Our next session will be November 9th, *Compliance2*,
going into more depth on certain areas for LEPs and those with Charity Status.

21st October
Safer Sacred Space Refresher
18:30 to 20:30.

If you have not already, please RSVP ASAP to your Area Administrator and before 15th October. Ministers are required to do this refresher course every four years.

Join with this link.

10th November 2026 to 27th April 2027
Stepwise: Faith-Filled Worship
19:00 to 20:30.

Please join us for the next Stepwise Peer Support Group, Faith-Filled Worship.

The group will meet 12 times, on the second, fourth, and fifth Tuesdays.

Please RSVP to your Area Administrator ASAP and before 8th October

For more information, please see the URC website using this link.

FOR ELDERS OF SOUTHERN SYNOD

Area Elders Gatherings

Join other Elders in your Area on a Sunday afternoon from 14:30 to 17:30 to learn and grow together in our role as Elders, covering topics such as governance, worship leadership, mission, spiritual leadership, and pastoral care. If you or your group are unable to attend the training in your own area, you are more than welcome to join one of the other areas.

- CSUA – 22nd of November
- KESSA – TBD after cancellation due to water main break in Tonbridge

We encourage Elderships to travel together to these events. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

Please RSVP as an Eldership, rather than as individuals, to your Area Administrator, indicating the names and emails of those attending from your group.

FOR LAY PREACHERS

24th October
Lay Preacher CPD
Holy and Inclusive Worship
10:30 to 15:30

The Lay Preacher Continuing Professional Development Day
will take place in person at Oxted URC.

Please RSVP to the Lay Preaching Advocate, Deirdre Harrison.

We encourage carpooling wherever possible. Please bring your own packed lunch.
Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

March 2027
Locally Recognised Worship Leader
Synod Trained for Local Ministry

The next LRWL rotation will begin in the Spring, on 20th March 2027.

Applications are due 8 weeks prior to the start, on the 5th of January.
Please contact the Lay Preaching Advocate, Deirdre Harrison.

For more information, please see the Southern Synod website using this link.

Please note that at least two segments of the Stepwise programme are required either before or during the LRWL training.

The United Reformed Church

SPECIAL INVITATION

The West Thamesmead Community Church (URC) of the Southern Synod (URC) is privileged to cordially invite you to the maiden Service of Ordination and Induction of Elders.

Date: Sunday 18th October, 2026
Venue: Heronsgate Primary School, Whinchat Rd, London SE28 0EA
Time: 3:00 pm

Ordinands & Inductees:

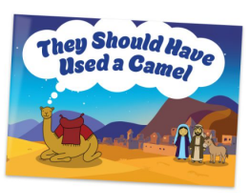
Timothy Jaiyeola Adeboje Folasade Y. Rowland
Ihunanya Peace Efuribe Harriet Abena Sasse Nana Sapomaa Adjei
Paulina Asamoah Grace Olabisi Oguntola

Contact the minister for further information on 0749 776 7731

Know and Grow Makaton Course

Saturday 28th November - 9.30 - 4pm
Kingston United Reformed Church,
Eden Street,
Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 1HZ
Know and Grow is a Makaton workshop to learn Christian Faith signs. You will learn some basic everyday signs, plus a whole repertoire of Faith based signs and symbols.
We will also practise translating prayers, Bible readings and songs.
It is a fun workshop, useful in becoming a more inclusive church and you will be developing a new skill!

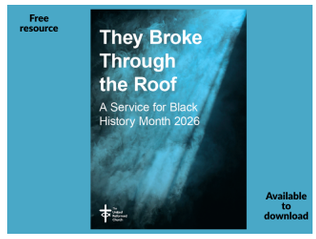
Cost £45 a person which includes a manual, a certificate and the 6 hour workshop.
Please email Steff on steffacts@gmail.com if you are interested.



Advent Kit 2026 - They Should Have Used A Camel

The 2026 advent resource is now available to pre-order via the URC Bookshop. This year's resource will comprise of an Advent calendar and characters to cutout and decorate to create your own nativity scene. There are suggested activities and questions to help explore Jesus' birth and an accompanying humorous story book. Pre-order your copies now via the online URC Bookstore.

Pre-order Advent Kits



Black History Month 2026 celebrates the theme "Honouring Our Communities".
In the spirit of this theme, the Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson — who made history when she was inducted as the first Black woman and only the second Black person to serve as Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly in 2023 — has written a service for churches who would like to hold a Black History Month-themed service in October and beyond.
The resource features hymn suggestions, an all-age activity, scripture readings, and a sermon "They Broke Through the Roof".

Download resource

United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship Visit to Italy May 2027

The **United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship** is organising a visit to the Waldensian Valleys on the Italian/French border, with the possibility of a further few days based in Parma visiting Methodist Churches in Emilia-Romagna. It is possible to participate in either or both of the two parts of the trip. Please visit the synod website for more details on the trips and how to book.

For more information

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southernsynodurc.org.uk/newsletter

Southern Synod URC
Southern Synod Office, East Croydon URC, Addiscombe Grove, CR0 5LP, Croydon

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