

Church changes not previously reported to General Assembly

- 1.1 This report notes all churches that have closed – or opened – between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2020 (the cut-off dates that we work to, to prepare the *Book of Reports* for General Assembly).
- 1.2 Below is a simple listing of the closed churches, synod by synod, listed in alphabetical order and with the date of closure. The *Record of Assembly*, will include a section on church ‘obituaries’, and all United Reformed churches that have closed in the qualifying period have been invited to submit a short report on the life of their church, for inclusion in that. We are grateful to the Revd Mark Meatcher for his careful work in compiling this list.

Church closures

Synod 1: Northern Synod

Erskine & St Cuthbert’s, Belford, 31 March 2019
St Andrew’s, Blackhill, 28 July 2019

Synod 2: North Western Synod

Alexandra United Reformed Church, Blackpool, 1 August 2018
Bolton Road United Reformed Church, Darwen, 20 October 2019
Brampton United Reformed Church, 24 November 2019
Christ Church, Broadway, Morecambe 5 July 2018
Cornerstone Community Church, Sedbergh, 6 October 2018
Read United Reformed Church, 2 September 2018
St George’s The Hoskers, Westhoughton, 30 November 2017
St George’s United Reformed Church, Blackpool, 30 November 2018
Union Church, Stockport, 20 October 2019
Urswick United Reformed Church, 13 May 2018

Synod 3: Mersey Synod

Blundellsands United Reformed Church, 13 October 2019

Synod 4: Yorkshire Synod

Clayton West United Reformed Church, 24 March 2019
Little Lane United Reformed Church, Bradford, 31 August 2019

Synod 5: East Midlands Synod

Clifton United Reformed Church, 24 March 2019
Kilby United Reformed Church, 16 June 2019
Langley United Reformed Church, December 2019
Westwood United Reformed Church, 7 October 2018

Synod 6: West Midlands Synod

Gloucester United Reformed Church, 29 July 2018



Synod 7: Eastern Synod

David Livingstone, Harlow, 15 September 2019
Duxford United Reformed Church, 9 June 2019
Little Abington United Reformed Church, 15 September 2019
North Avenue United Reformed Church, Chelmsford, 30 September 2018
Shipdham United Reformed Church, 30 September 2019
Writtle United Reformed Church, 1 June 2019

Synod 8: South Western Synod

Falmouth United Reformed Church, 27 October 2019
Henbury, New Kingsland, 30 April 2019

Synod 9: Wessex Synod

Finchdean United Reformed Church, 12 January 2019
Freemantle United Reformed Church, 8 September 2019
Medstead United Reformed Church, 1 December 2019
Winton United Reformed Church, 11 January 2020

Synod 10: Thames North Synod

Iver, St Andrew's United Reformed Church, 28 April, 2019

Synod 11: Southern Synod

West Langdon, Dover, 1 December 2019
Whitfield United Reformed Church, 16 February 2018

Synod 12: Synod of Wales

Carmarthen Road United Reformed Church, Swansea, 20 January 2019
Christchurch with Caebach United Reformed Church, Llandrindod Wells, 23 June 2019
Christchurch, Fairwater, Cardiff, 29 December 2019
St David's, Bettws, Newport, 2 March 2019
St David's Uniting Church, Pentwyn, Cardiff, 19 October 2019

Synod 13: Synod of Scotland

Beith United Reformed Church, 24 March 2019
Mosspark United Reformed Church, 23 June 2019
Salem Chapel United Reformed Church, Dundee, 24 November 2019

Resolution 10

General Assembly notes the closures, with praise to God for the worship and witness offered by these fellowships across the years.

A new congregation and a new Mission Project – East Midlands Synod

Church Without Walls

- 1.1 In 2013 Walton Churches Partnership, an ecumenical group of three congregations supported by the Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists and URC, appointed a full-time Pioneer to work in the new expansion areas of Broughton and Brooklands in Milton Keynes. The Pioneer (Ruth Maxey) is a URC minister, and over the last six years, she has worked with a 'bottom up' approach, working in partnership with local community groups and statutory bodies to meet the key focus of the post – 'supporting community and growing faith'.
- 1.2 Within the first six months, Ruth gathered a small leadership group around her from 'providential encounters' in the community, and a new congregation, Church without Walls, was born. This new community is formed predominately of people with no church background, and there is a high number of those with disabilities and special needs. CWW has around 50 adults who regularly attend, and approximately 30 children. It has a strong focus on discipleship, with 25 adults committed to regular small groups, and it continues to reach new people.
- 1.3 As a new Christian community, CWW is trying to work out what it means to follow Jesus and reflect God's love in today's context. In some ways, CWW might seem a bit different to 'normal' church, as it has no building and no fixed way of doing things. The community gathers monthly for Quiet Church, Café Church, Dinner Church and Forest Church, and there are no assumptions about what people know or believe about God.
- 1.4 **Church without Walls is a place where the walls between people can begin to come down, where everyone is welcomed and can find space to flourish.**

*The Revd Ruth Maxey
Minister*

Resolution 11

General Assembly celebrates Church Without Walls as a new ecumenical worshipping congregation within Walton Churches Partnership, Milton Keynes, and therefore receives it as a congregation of the United Reformed Church.

New Lubbethorpe Ecumenical Mission Project

- 2.1 New Lubbethorpe is a new housing development on the edge of Leicester. In 2013, Churches Together in Leicestershire (CTiL) formed a partnership with the local council to help build a healthy community. The result was the appointment of a Pioneer Community Worker (PCW), employed by CTiL, when the building work commenced in the autumn of 2016.
- 2.2 Sue Steer was appointed as the PCW, and quickly developed a loving and serving relationship with the growing population. Several groups were formed, relationships quickly grew, and a healthy start was achieved in the development of good community relations. In addition to this work, Sue ensured that individual events were organised to celebrate principal Christian festivals.

- 2.3 The arrival of the 'Hub' building provided a much-needed community gathering space where community activities for all age ranges could take place. This, along with the opening of the school, led to the formation of active partnership leading to many more community activities such as Tea, Toast and Toy sessions run by participation of the residents either helping or leading. The 'Hub' continues to be our base of operations and operates as a 'Welcome and Well-being Centre' and is supported financially by the Land Developer.
- 2.4 Sue has also worked with Christian residents who wish to see a worshipping community grow. This is in its infant stages, and involves those who come along showing the community how much as Christians we care for our neighbours and the environment. Meetings are held on a Sunday afternoon, and usually consists of faith-based talks, prayer and conversations, along with community and environmental action.
- 2.5 The New Lubbesthorpe Project is supported by CTiL in partnership with the Local District Council, Land Developer, the Building Contractors and the residents.
- 2.6 You can read more of Sue's journey at Lubbesthorpe in this article written in July 2019: <https://bit.ly/Lubbesthorpe>

*Sue Steer
New Lubbesthorpe Pioneer Community Worker*

Resolution 12

General Assembly receives the ecumenical New Lubbesthorpe Project as a Mission Project of United Reformed Church.

New Mission Projects – Eastern Synod

- 3.1 Two important pieces of work in this Synod are ready to be commended to Assembly for recognition as Mission Projects of the United Reformed Church. The Synod is presently preparing statements in support of their commendation. In order to expedite process in the coming year, Assembly is invited to resolve as follows:

Resolution 13

General Assembly authorises Mission Council to act on its behalf in considering applications for new Mission Projects at Love's Farm, St Neots, and at North Avenue, Chelmsford, both in Eastern Synod.