



The  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

## Children's and Youth Work

The United Reformed Church  
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT



Welcome to the November 2023 update from your support team in Children's and Youth Work for the United Reformed Church.

Dear Friends,

Storms batter the UK, destructive conflicts rage across the world, AI challenges authenticity, the cost of living threatens basic welfare, prejudice infects individuals and institutions, climate catastrophe looms large. The needs around us can seem overwhelming, the days ahead dark.

Yet we are called, together with children and young people, to prepare again for Christ to be born in the midst of our lives and the mess of the world. We welcome Jesus, light of the world. We tell again the Christmas story and find our place within it. We tend smouldering wicks and troubled lives. We light our homes and communities with faith, hope and love.

Keep the faith this Advent, discover new joy this Christmas. Let your light shine through all you do with and for children and young people - it matters.

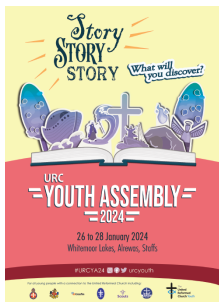
*Sam Roberts*



### LAST FEW DAYS UNTIL THE EARLY BIRD BOOKINGS END FOR YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2024 !

Bookings are still open until 2 January for **YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2024**, so if you are a young person/young adult within the age bracket for this event, or know someone who is, act quickly to take advantage of the early bird booking costs.

Youth Assembly is for Year 10 (England and Wales) and S3 (Scotland) up to 25 years (inclusive). It takes place from **26 to 28 January 2024 at Whitemoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffs**. It is a weekend to have your say, make friends and find fellowship:

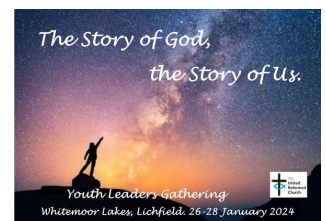


- Youth Decides—discussions on issues that matter to young people, leading to action and engaging the wider church
- Workshops—craft, drama, Bible studies, opportunities to grow your skills and thinking
- Worship—led by Youth Assembly band, prayer room, late night Communion
- Entertainment—campfire, karaoke, games and more

Cost on or before **13 November £124**, Cost from **14 November £154** (please talk to your church or synod about help with funding)

Book your place at [www.linktr.ee/urcyouthassembly2024](http://www.linktr.ee/urcyouthassembly2024) before **2 January 2024** or contact [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) for a booking form.

**LEADERS' GATHERING:** Alongside Youth Assembly, by popular demand, we will be running the **Youth Leaders Gathering**. For all those who work with young people in URC settings, this will be a chance to meet with others to be encouraged, challenged, inspired and equipped through a mixture of input, worship, space to relax, prayer and social time. Contact [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) for more details or book now on <https://linktr.ee/urcyouthleadersgathering>



### GOD IN THE ORDINARY—ADVENT RESOURCE

The God in the Ordinary Advent Resource has now completely sold out—this year we used a pre-ordering system to make this fairer. If your church bought these packs as a gift for families (or even if you didn't!), see our website <https://bit.ly/URC-Advent-23> for ways to develop the theme in your church services,

and visit [https://bit.ly/FACT\\_resource](https://bit.ly/FACT_resource) for the December issues of Faith Adventures: Children Together to see how these also tie in to the theme.

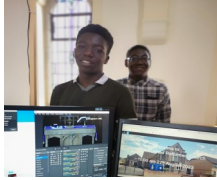
Also on our Pinterest board you will find suggestions for creating a Christmas Nativity Set at home from everyday materials. <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/URCCYWD/>



## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS MAKING THE HEADLINES IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

8-year-old Matilda Willis of West Midlands Synod has been proactive in suggesting all-age activities to the leader of her Messy Church. She is spending the money from her Lundie Award on bird feeders for the church grounds and small Christmas gifts for all the other children at Messy Church.

Brothers Tawonga (age 20) and Malumbo (age 16) Mtika of Southern Synod received the Lundie Memorial Award for October for applying their tech skills to regularly supporting worship in their church. They control the sound and projection system and facilitate the livestreaming of the service.



Reports are still coming in from the churches who received small grants to support their holiday clubs this year. The team love seeing all the photos and hearing about the fun the children and team members had, whether using one of our three URC resources or choosing a different theme. One such example was Westfield URC who spent a week preparing to put on a performance about Joseph. For the show itself, a team of six children handled all the tech with minimal input from the adults.



Do you know anyone 25 or under who is playing their part in the mission of God and deserves recognition?

**Why not nominate them for the Lundie Memorial Award?**

Find out more about the Lundie Memorial Award and Children and Youth Friendly Church scheme on <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/family-friendly-church/>

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK

### NEW IN : GO WITH GRETA / #CONNECT 2 ZIMBABWE

The annual resource from URC Commitment for Life and URC Children's and Youth Work is now available and has been sent out to all Commitment for Life churches and Pilots companies as well as being available online.

It is a two part magazine containing sessions for 5-11s and 11-14s about Zimbabwe, one of the regions supported by Commitment for Life in partnership with Christian Aid. It also includes ideas for an intergenerational celebration, with recipes, games and activities as well as Bible studies, prayers and action points.



**REGENERATIONAL** is launched on 15 November! This exciting international collaborative project which provides four outlines of intergenerational worship designed to introduce and promote the principles of intergenerational ministry in your church. The free resource can be found online at <https://bit.ly/Regenerational> and those preferring a printed copy can order on a print-on-demand basis from [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) at £10 per copy including P&P.

**WHERE ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE?** If your church is asking this question, there is now a set of resources from the URC and Quakers to help you. This new conversation starter is now available on the E&L Learning Hub. Course: Conversation Starters ([urclearninghub.org.uk](http://urclearninghub.org.uk)). It is accompanied by a set of cards which are being provided free to CYDO+s to use with churches, and could be used as part of the Children and Youth Friendly Church process to aid thinking about engagement with 11 to 18s.

Also on the learning hub you will find a conversation starter on the theme of **Vocation and Call**.

Join online for an introduction to these conversation starters:

Where are the Young People: Thursday 7 December 7pm <https://bit.ly/CS-young-people>

Vocation and Call: Thursday 30 November 7pm <https://bit.ly/CS-Vocation-And-Call>



**SPARKS AND STORIES** is the new holiday club materials from URC Children's and Youth Work. Tying in with the annual CYW theme of Story, Story, Story, the 2024 holiday club invites you to gather round the campfire, marshmallows on sticks and hot chocolate in hand, and share in the greatest story of all. As usual, the resource is supported with appendices helping you adapt the material for younger children, young people, intergenerational groups and vintage holiday club. Available online from the end of January. Once again, grants of £50 or £100 will be available to support you if you choose to run a holiday club in 2024.



## URC CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK ONLINE

Facebook [https://bit.ly/URC CYW FACEBOOK](https://bit.ly/URC_CYW_FACEBOOK)

Website [https://bit.ly/CYW RESOURCES](https://bit.ly/CYW_RESOURCES)

YouTube <https://bit.ly/URCCYW-youtube>

Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/URCCYWD/>

Join the Facebook community for Faith Adventures on [https://bit.ly/FACT\\_FB](https://bit.ly/FACT_FB) to share ideas and hear news of our Faith Adventures resources

## Free and subsidised training and opportunities from the URC for the URC

**ONLINE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA®) COURSE** Tom Hackett, CYDO for Southern Synod, and Steven Mitchell, CYDO for Mersey Synod, have scheduled another Online Youth Mental Health First Aid course to take place in December. This training is for people living, working and volunteering with young people age 8-18 and is open to participants associated with local URCs and LEPs linked to the URC. Please do not register for this event if you do not meet this criteria. Spaces are offered at a subsidised rate of £29.50 per person. Participants must attend all four sessions.

Develop the skills and confidence to spot the signs of mental health issues in a young person, offer first aid and guide them towards the support they need.

Session 1: Monday 4 December - 18:30 - 21:30

Session 2: Wednesday 6 December - 18:30 - 21:30

Session 3: Monday 11 December - 18:30 - 21:30

Session 4: Wednesday 13 December - 18:30 - 21:30



Register at: [www.bit.ly/mhfa-dec23](http://www.bit.ly/mhfa-dec23)

## FAITH ADVENTURES: YOUTH RESOURCE

Following the success of our latest resource, Faith Adventures: Children Together, and responding to feedback from those groups catering for a mixed age range, we are proud to launch Faith Adventures: Youth Resource, a supplementary resource to be used to extend the Faith Adventures materials for the 11-14 age range.

There will be a walk-through session to talk you through this new resource and enable you to see how you might use it, either in a mixed age group or a youth setting, or to enable a young person to explore the Bible passage independently. Book on Eventbrite for or Monday 20 November 6-7pm. <https://bit.ly/FAYR20Nov>.



### TALKING ABOUT ....

This monthly online gathering, run by our team of children's and youth work professionals around the synods, continues on 23 November 2023 when the theme will be Lego Church, followed by Youth Participation on 25 January 2024. Sign up now on Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talking-about-tickets-531991911127>

## AN INTRODUCTION TO WIDGIT

Widgit is a word processing program which enables you to use symbols with text to make written

communication more accessible and inclusive. From door signs to notices to service sheets to letters, Widgit can make the written word clearer with contextual cues. Join us online on Monday 13 November at 7pm to find out more. [https://bit.ly/Widgit\\_intro](https://bit.ly/Widgit_intro)



The Church House Children's and Youth Work team will once again be on the URC stand at the Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) which this year is being held at Cranmore Park, Birmingham, on 8-9 November 2023. You can get free tickets for this event using the voucher code REFORM.

Sam and Lorraine will also be talking about running a holiday club (Wednesday 11.30am) and 'Where are the Young People' (Thursday 3.30pm) in Talk Area 2. Do come along and say hello.

## Resources and events offered by other providers

**The Joined Up Conference** will take place in Sheffield on **2 March 2024**, for all those involved in children's, families, youth and schools ministry. A day of keynote talks, worship and workshops on a variety of subjects to choose from. <https://joinedupconference.com.wordpress.com/>

From 2 to 4 February 2024 the **Hand in Hand** children's ministry conference from Kingsway CLC Trust will be taking place in Eastbourne. Book by the end of December to benefit from an early bird discount. Refresh offers a weekend of keynote sessions, exhibition and seminars with chance to network with other children's and family ministry practitioners. <https://www.handinhandconference.com/>



### ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SCHOOLS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK ...

A webinar with Bev Smith, Youth for Christ, and Sarah Lane Cawte, Free Churches Group

**TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER, 7 - 8.30 P.M.**

Book your free tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/all-you-wanted-to-know-about-schools-but-were-afraid-to-ask-tickets-733418714117?aff=oddtcreator>

About the webinar

Do you want to find out about what goes on in schools? Do you want to know more about the opportunities and challenges for pupils and staff? In this webinar, we'll explore the reality of life in schools today and look at opportunities for local churches to build supportive relationships with schools in their community.



### SCHOOLS ENGAGEMENT WEBINAR

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/all-you-wanted-to-know-about-schools-but-were-afraid-to-ask-tickets-733418714117> Tuesday 14 November 7-8.30 pm

### ONLINE WEBINARS FROM HOPE UK

Register here for any or all of a series of webinars aimed at youth leaders and parents from Hope UK <https://hopeuk.org/events/>

- 14 November 11.30-12.30 Your Youth Group and Drugs
- 5 December 11.30-12.30 Healthy Relationship
- 16 January 11.30-12.30 Confidence and Self Esteem
- 25 January 7.30-8.30 pm Vaping, what parents need to know

### RECRUITING, MANAGING AND RETAINING GOOD

#### VOLUNTEERS WEBINAR

Wednesday 22 November 2023 10am online event  
Hosted by the Church Urban Fund and part of a series linked to the five Growing Good themes. <https://cuf.org.uk/events>

### LOOKING AHEAD - for your diaries or your prayers

8-9 November 2023	Christian Resources Exhibition, Cranmore Park, Solihull
13 November 2023	7.00pm An Introduction to Widgit
15 November 2023	Launch of Regenerational
20 November 2023	6.00-7.00pm Walk Through of Faith Adventures: Youth Resource
23 November 2023	7.00pm Talking About..... Lego Church
30 November 2023	7.30pm Conversation Starters: Vocation and Call
7 December 2023	7.30pm Conversation Starters: Where are the Young People
25 January 2024	7.00pm Talking About..... Youth Participation
26-28 January 2024	Youth Assembly 2024—Story, Story, Story and Youth Leaders' Gathering

Next Bi-Monthly Update : early January 2024

**Please note: If you no longer wish to subscribe to the bimonthly newsletter from URC Children's and Youth Work, please email [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) to request that your name is removed from our mailing list.**

You can **contact us** by email on [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) or phone on 020 7916 8683. Our website is <https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people>, Facebook [bit.ly/URC\\_CYW\\_FACEBOOK](https://bit.ly/URC_CYW_FACEBOOK) or you can use good old snail mail.

**AND FINALLY** If you have received this as a paper copy or by a friend forwarding it to you and you would like to be added to our mailing list, please do sign up here: [bit.ly/URCCYWbimonthly](https://bit.ly/URCCYWbimonthly) Our Data privacy note is here: <https://urc.org.uk/privacy-policy/>