

News Update

October 2025



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

Churches welcome Palestinian state recognition



The URC joined with the Methodist Church in Great Britain in welcoming the significant shift in British foreign policy after the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, announced on 21 September the UK's recognition of a Palestinian state. In a joint statement released, the Churches said the move steps "away from using recognition as leverage in negotiations, and instead affirming the Palestinians' inherent right to self-determination and equal participation in peace talks" and that the decision, in line with Canada, Australia and Portugal, "increases international pressure on Israel over its occupation policies and the ongoing crisis in Gaza, which many experts now describe as genocide". [Read the statement in full.](#)

CTE Presidents speak out on far-right using religious symbols



The Presidents of Churches Together in England, including the Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, a former Moderator of the URC General Assembly, have expressed "deep concern" about the misuse of the symbols and words of the Christian faith following the "unite the kingdom" rally which took place in central London on 13 September, organised by far-right activist Tommy Robinson. The Presidents said: "The Cross and the Gospel of Christ must never be co-opted to support the messages that breed hostility towards others." [Read the statement in full.](#)

URC minister hosts JPIT podcast



URC minister Revd Stephen Ansa-Addo is the new host of *Politics in the Pulpit*, a weekly source of inspiration for preaching and leading worship, based around the Lectionary and responding to public issues facing congregations and the world today. [Listen or watch *Politics in the Pulpit*.](#)

Warm Welcome 2025-2026 launch



The URC is a partner of Warm Welcome and encourages churches to consider if they could run a "warm welcome" space over the colder months. For a unique chance to learn about how Warm Welcome equips spaces to support communities through winter, join the online launch of the Warm Welcome 2025-2026 campaign, taking place from 7-8pm on 21 October. [Learn more](#).

Church House restructure takes shape

United Reformed Church House has completed an extensive review of staffing, designed to better serve the wider Church. The process has resulted in a new structure and roles, which came into being in September. The new structure has three departments. The Administration and Resources Department, led by the Chief Operating Officer, Victoria James, includes teams for database and website, Compliance and Services, People and Benefits, and



Finance. The department is overseen by the Resources Committee. The Ministries Department includes the Safeguarding Team and is overseen by the Ministries Committee. The department is led by the Revd Nicola Furley-Smith, who was welcomed as a Deputy General Secretary at July's General Assembly. The third department, Faith in Action, is led by Deputy General Secretary the Revd Jenny Mills. It includes Communications; Children, Youth, Intergenerational Discipleship, Evangelism and Ecumenism; Global and Intercultural Church and Public Issues; World Justice and Outreach. Reflecting on the work achieved so far, Victoria James said: "We are grateful for the grace, courage and patience staff have shown throughout this process." She said she hoped the new structure will help Church House staff better serve the needs of local churches.

Place for Hope appoints new director



Place for Hope (P4H), the mediation and reconciliation charity, has appointed a new director. Georgia Boon, formerly the Church Commissioners' Director for Planning and Engagement and Reparatory Justice Programme Director, joins with more than 20 years' senior leadership experience across the charitable and faith sectors. Following the Assembly Executive resolution in February 2024, the five-year Living Reconciliation Partnership between Place for Hope and the URC moved forward at July's General Assembly where the practitioners' team officially launched. The URC played a key role in Georgia's journey to faith; she attended Sunday

school at her grandparents' church from an early age and is now an occasional pianist at her local URC in Stroud. Additional changes also include the Revd Adrian Bulley, former Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), joining the board alongside the Revd Fiona Bennett, a former General Assembly Moderator, as P4H focuses on the next five years.

CWM inducts four new member churches

The Council for World Mission (CWM) has inducted four new churches into its membership. Leaders from the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, the Presbyterian Church of Mauritius, and the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, and the Cook Islands Christian Church gathered at



CWM's Singapore office for a three-day induction programme last month. The programme introduced them to CWM's history, policies, programmes, finances, and communications. [Learn more about the new member churches](#). Image: CWM.

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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.

Hope Together Director shares about remarkable family heritage on podcast

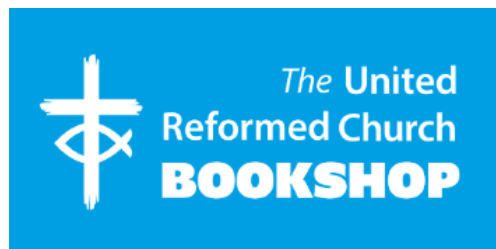


Hope Together's Executive Director Rachel Jordan-Wolf has recently been sharing about her interesting family heritage rooted in the Welsh Revival, her own journey of faith and incredible stories of everyday evangelism on the *Inspired....* podcast. From encounters on the streets to conversations on park benches, Rachel reminds us that the harvest is still plentiful and all God asks is our availability. Hope Together, of which the URC is a partner, is a catalyst bringing churches together to transform communities in villages, towns and cities. [Listen to Rachel's episode](#).

This month in *Reform* magazine



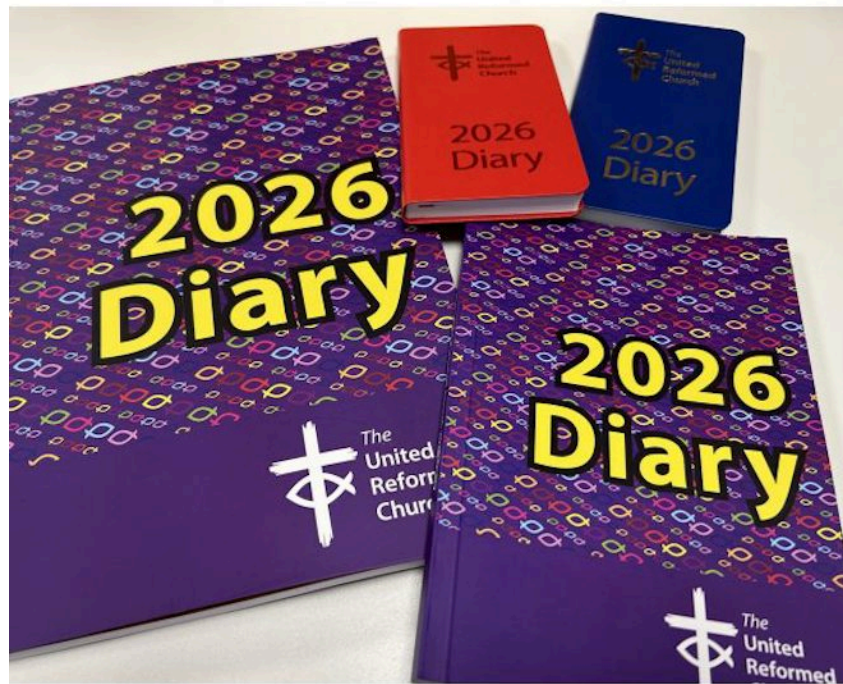
How to speak about faith? It's a question considered by several of the contributors to the latest edition of *Reform* magazine. Michael Harvey, founder of Back to Church Sunday, thinks it's simpler than we think. He has developed a method he calls ACORN, which is currently being trialled in the URC's North-Western Synod. URC General Secretary John Bradbury believes the URC needs to re-think its approach to evangelism – and hopes the Church Life Review will help support that change. [Learn more about what's inside of Issue 6 of Reform magazine and details of how to subscribe.](#)



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



New [the 2026 URC Calendar](#), themed "I am the vine, you are the branches", features dozens of superb images of the people, churches and gardens of URCs and LEPs, based on the metaphor Jesus used in John 15, I am the vine, you are the branches. £3 +p&p.



The 2026 URC Diaries – pocket (red or blue), A4 and A5 (purple) includes calendars to 2028, year planners to 2028, notable dates for the URC and the wider Church, metric measures, Lectionary readings, and much more. £9–£16.99 +p&p.



Pack of 10 Shelter Christmas cards – Joyful Dove. A set of 10 x 14cm x 14cm charity Christmas cards in aid of Shelter and Shelter Scotland, with a Dove design with gold foiling. Boxed with envelopes, printed on FSC card. The card includes the message 'Season's Greetings' and has details about the charity on the reverse. While stocks last. £3.99 +p&p. A range of Christmas cards from Shelter are on offer. [View the range.](#)



Pack of 10 Marie Curie Christmas cards – Following Yonder Star. A set of 10 x 14cm x 14cm charity Christmas cards in aid of the Marie Curie end of life charity, with a Nativity design, with gold foiling. Boxed with envelopes, printed on FSC card. The card contains the message 'Wishing you Peace and Joy this Christmas' and has details about the charity on the reverse. While stocks last. £4.99 +p&p. A range of Christmas cards from Marie Curie are on offer. [View the range.](#)

Synod news

National Synod of Scotland



Students and staff at the Scottish College marked the start of a new academic year by travelling to the Alpine Valleys of north of Italy, the heart of the Waldensian story. Ministerial student Ann Sinclair said: "This trip was far more than I had thought possible and in so many ways, something I can dip into in my thoughts and bring memories back. It was absolutely wonderful." [Learn more about the trip.](#)

Eastern



Wattisfield URC held a morning of 'singing and sandwiches' during the summer, bringing together friends, church and community. Those present enjoyed learning the song *Love Shine a Light* by Katrina and the Waves, which won the 1997 Eurovision Song Contest. The event was enjoyed so much that it is hoped it becomes a regular fixture in the church calendar.

East Midlands



Christ Church URC, Leicester, held its annual holiday club themed Eco Champions in August. Children explored air, water and land through crafts, games and eco-friendly activities —building bird boxes, planting a rowan tree, litter-picking and creating a bug hotel. The church hopes families will return for Messy Church and continue caring for creation.

Mersey





Three members of Mersey Synod, Pat Cansfield and Gail Rose, pictured, and Helen Bennett, have recently completed training to become Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers. As they step into this new chapter of ministry, the trio reflect on the inspiration behind their call, the challenges and joys of training, and what they hope to bring to the churches they serve. [Read their reflection.](#)

What's On

Children's ministry

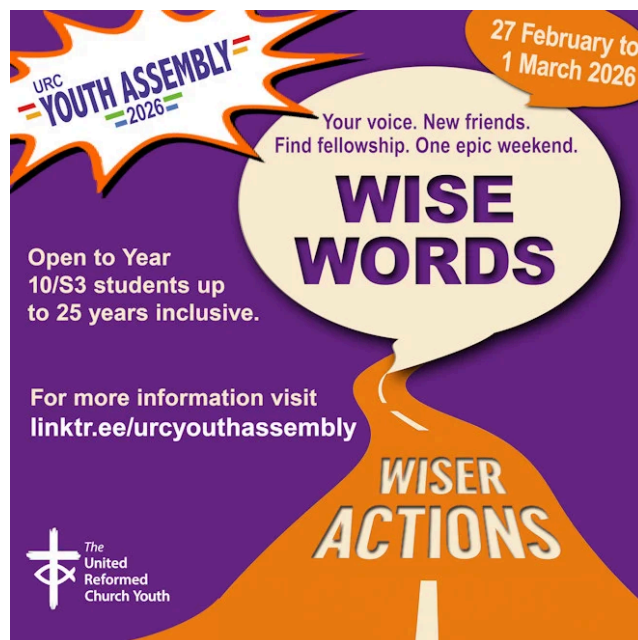
Dates are available for free Children's Ministry Essentials. The 10 modules will take place through online sessions from 10am–12pm on the following dates: 8 November and 13 December. And for 2026 on 10 January, 14 February, 11 April, 9 May, 13 June, 11 September and 3 October. Children's Ministry Essentials is designed to deepen your understanding, increase your confidence and develop your skills. [Watch this video trailer to learn more](#), or email [the Children, Youth and Intergenerational Discipleship team](#).

JPIT conference 2025

JPIT's annual conference is an opportunity for Christians longing for justice to gather together. This year's conference is themed "For Goodness Sake!" and takes place on 8 November in Derby. Keynote speakers are the Right Revd Dr Sally Foster-Fulton and the Right Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani. The programme includes listening spaces, panels and workshops. More than 100 people have already signed up. Tickets cost £15 and are free for under-25s and those on low incomes. [Book your ticket to the JPIT conference](#).

Early bird discounts for Youth Assembly 2026

Bookings are now open for URC Youth Assembly 2026 themed "Wise Words – Wiser Action". The Assembly, taking place 27 February–1 March 2026 at Kings Park Conference Centre in Northampton, offers a weekend full of worship, workshops, entertainment and time to breathe. An early bird discount for places is available at £125 until 7 December. After which, places cost £155 until 25 January 2026. Youth Assembly is for all young people – from Year 10 (England and Wales)/S3 (Scotland) up to and including 25 – associated with the URC in any way. Please approach your church and Synod for help with funding. For a taste of Youth Assembly, [watch this video of Youth Assembly 2025](#). For more information, [email the Children's, Youth and Intergenerational Discipleship team](#), or [register for Youth Assembly 2026](#).



Safeguarding Symposium

The URC 2025 Safeguarding Symposium takes place 15 October from 1.30-3.45pm on Zoom. Sharon Barr, Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer, will lead the symposium, and the Revd Roger Jones, Convenor of the Safeguarding Committee will give a reflection. Carrie Kunda, Training and

Development Coordinator, will present the new safeguarding training matrix, and Dr Kerry Baker, Policy Development Coordinator, will provide key DBS/PVG updates. [Book your free ticket.](#)

Explore brain development

Talking About... Brain Development on 28 October takes place 7-8pm online and is hosted by the URC's Children's and Youth Development Officers and includes presentations, discussion and a chance for Q&A. Talking About... is a series of online gatherings to build networks and find out more about issues that concern those who work with children and young people. [Sign up now on Eventbrite.](#)

Palestine in crisis

The URC with Sabeel-Kairos UK invites you to meet Revd Ashraf Tannous, Pastor of the Lutheran Churches in Bethlehem and Beit Sahour, and Sahar Francis, a renowned human rights lawyer, on 15 October from 7-8.30pm. The event takes place at Luther King House in Manchester and online. To rsvp and to receive the Zoom link, please [email the Commitment for Life team.](#)

Recruitment

Jobs and volunteer opportunities

Digital Content Assistant

Based: London (Hybrid) / Home-based

Contract: Permanent, part-time, 21 hours pw

Salary: £21,397 pa

Closing date for applications: 13 October

Finance Operations Manager

Based: London

Contract: Permanent, Part-time, 21-28 hours pw

Salary: £50,000 pa (FTE)

Closing date for applications: 17 October

Member of Children's and Youth Programme Enabling Group Volunteer

Two Children's Advocates are being sought to join the Children's and Youth Programme Enabling Group on a volunteer basis. Role description and person specification are available. Please share expressions of interest to children.youth@urc.org.uk by 20 October 2025.

Regional Children's Work Specialist

Based: URC Eastern Synod

Contract: Full time, 35 hours pw (flexible, including some evenings and weekends)

Salary: £38,000 – £43,000 pa depending on experience

Closing date for applications: 17 November

Faith in Action Committee Members

Do you have a heart for discipleship and mission? Do you want to make a difference in the life of the wider URC and beyond? We are looking for new Committee members – this is your opportunity!

Represent the URC on the Milton Mount Foundation Board

Are you passionate about education and the life of the Church? The Milton Mount Foundation is seeking a URC member to join its Board of Trustees and help guide its mission of educational support.



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