

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 you're 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](#)

that circumstances and tensions 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

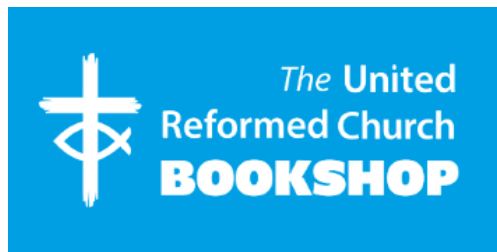


Faith Adventures: Youth Resource is a free, weekly resource from the URC to support volunteers to plan and deliver engaging Bible-based sessions for youths aged 11-14. Session outlines provide a range of ways to explore and express faith together through Bible readings, challenges, prayers, activities,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

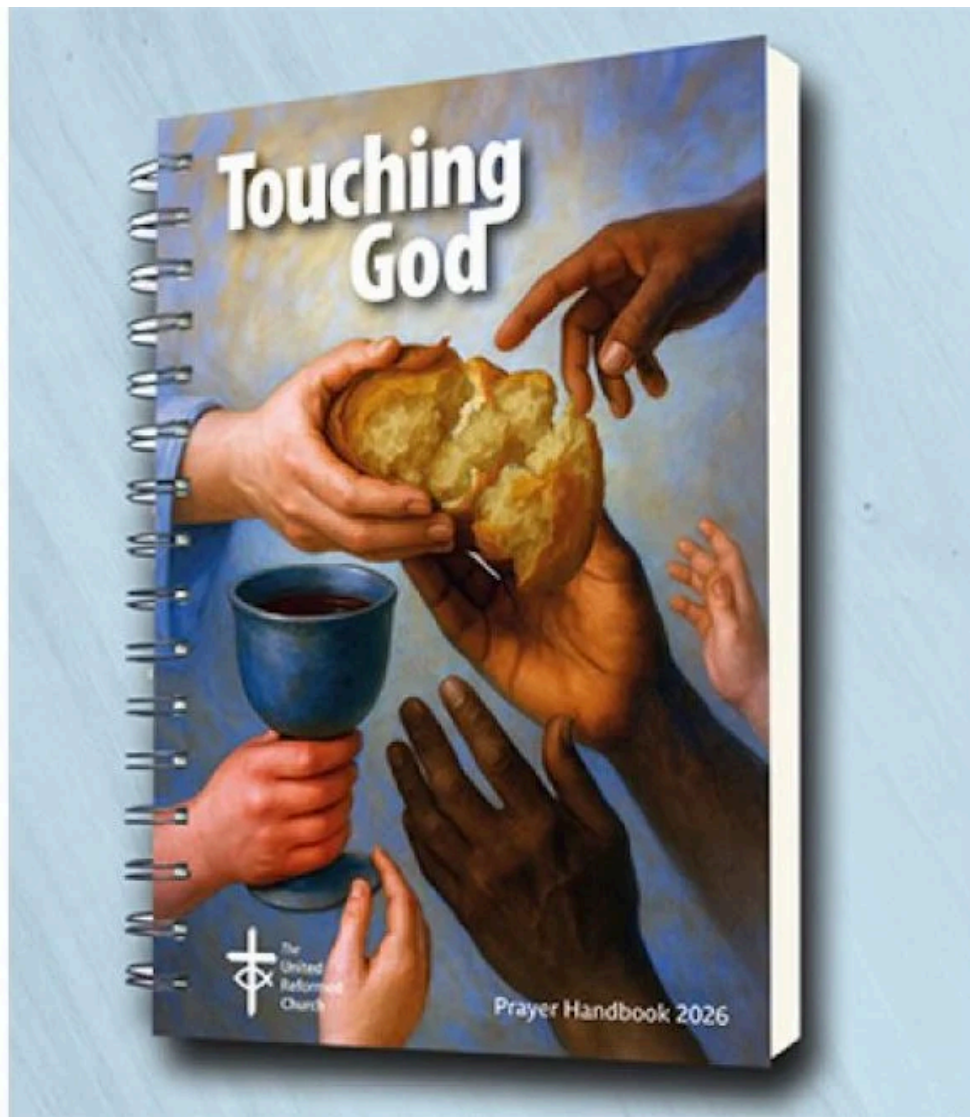
This month in *Reform* magazine

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.](#)





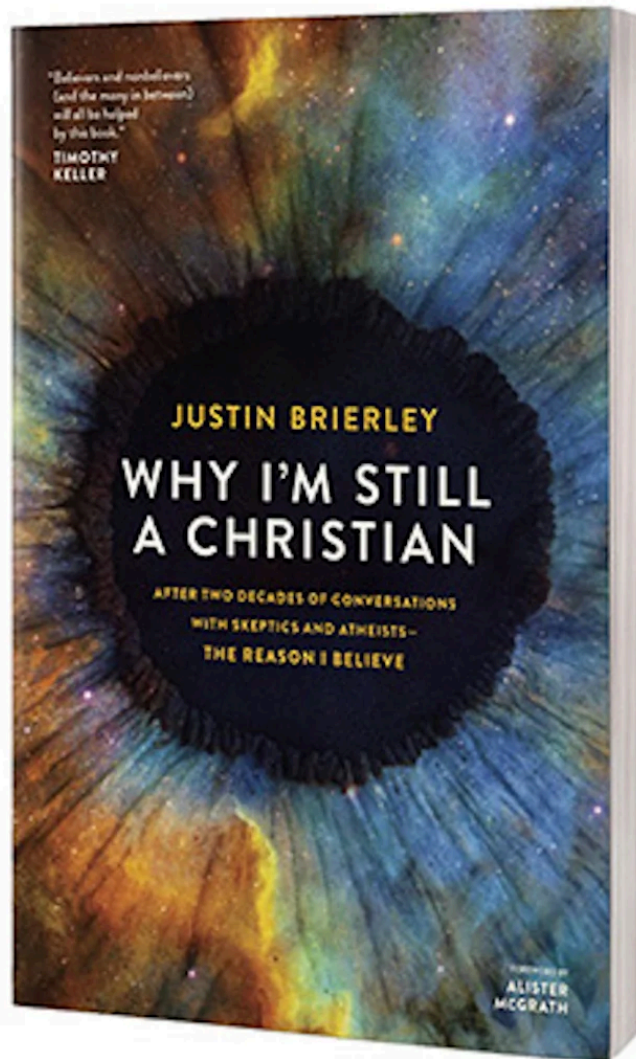
Please order online using the URC Bookshop's easy-to-use website www.urcshop.co.uk or by calling 020 7916 8629.



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



Redland Park URC recently marked a double celebration honouring Vivienne and David Hayden for their many years of dedicated financial stewardship. Vivienne's birthday was also marked. The couple have supported generations of treasurers and David also served at Synod level and as treasurer for 20 years. Their combined contribution spans more than 100 years.

Thames North



Twenty-two children and youths enjoyed Grange Park URC's fourth summer holiday club in August. Special thanks went out to the club's leaders and helpers who were mainly teenagers and young

adults volunteering for the whole week. A spokesperson for the church said the they all "showed fantastic leadership skills, that we will continue to develop".

What's On

Lay Preachers and Worship Leader's conference

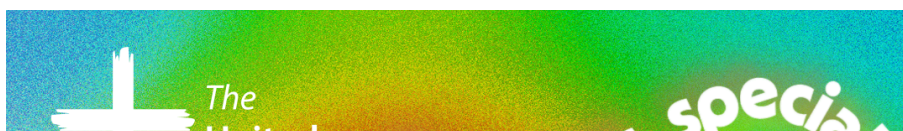
Bookings will soon close for the 2025 Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Conference, taking place from 5pm from 25-27 September at Westminster College in Cambridge. This year's theme is "Preaching and worshipping with wisdom - Lectionary Year A" and aims to equip attendees to preach wisely, faithfully, and respectfully, with particular attention to combatting Christian anti-Judaism in preaching and worship. Highlights include practical strategies for wise and faithful preaching, approaches to Old Testament, Gospel, and Epistle passages with integrity, worship, liturgy, prayer, and sermon development, and the excellent hospitality and the beauty of Cambridge. [Learn more about pricing information and details of how to book.](#)

Free ticket to CRE



Get your free ticket and visit the URC at Stand G2 at the Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) 2025 taking place 15-16 October at Sandown Park. To get your free ticket to CRE, see bit.ly/URCcreOct25.

FaithTalk at Christmas





How do we as individuals and our churches make the most of opportunities to talk about our faith during Advent and Christmas? If you would like to find out and share ideas and experiences, and learn about helpful resources, join the FaithTalk Christmas special webinar taking place on 23 September at 7pm for a relaxed conversation. [Email the Mission team to register.](#)

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.](#)

Pray and share with GEAR

GEAR Zoom - Prayer and Share is a time of prayer for the URC. The group usually meets on the first Thursday of each month from 8-9pm - but is now moving to the last Thursday. Therefore, the gathering next meets on 28 August at 8pm with a focus on the URC's commitment to evangelism and the upcoming extraordinary General Assembly in November and decisions about the Church Life Review. All are welcome. [Join the event here.](#)

20-40s gathering

Aged between 20 and 40? Then you're invited to the URC's second 20's–40's gathering. Taking place on 13 December from 9am-6pm at Westminster College in Cambridge. The free event offers a day of faith, friendship, food and fresh perspectives. The programme includes fresh insights on Paul in the Bible study, reflect on what it means to be part of the URC, social time to connect with friends old and new, and worship to close the day. Why not make a weekend of it? Arrive on 12 December

for free accommodation at the college, with an optional evening meal at 6pm. [Book here.](#)

Children's ministry training

The URC's Children's Youth and Development Officers team will be running free, monthly, online children's ministry training from 10am-12pm starting in October, date to be confirmed. Children's Ministry Essentials is a 10-module programme for anyone working with children in URC churches. Topics include child development and spirituality, pastoral care, leadership, teamwork, and the role of play—helping you grow in understanding, confidence, and skills. Want a sneak piece of what's on offer? [Watch this trailer.](#) For more information and to register, please [email Children's and Youth.](#)

Recruitment

URC vacancies and beyond

Head of Ministries' Learning and Development

Location: London

Term: Full time, seven-year termed appointment

Salary: URC Minister's stipend

Closing date for applications: 7 September

Mission Practitioner (Children's Work)

Location: URC Eastern Synod

Term: Full time – 35 hours per week (flexible, including some evenings and weekends)

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

Closing date for applications: 17 September

Member of the Faith in Action Committee

The URC is seeking members for its new Faith in Action Committee with a focus on Mission or Children and Youth/Intergenerational or Lay learning/Education and Learning. The roles are voluntary. Full details and terms of reference can be found on the URC Jobs page.

Member of Ministries Committee

Does developing the strategy and supporting the work of the Ministries Committee excite you? Then this could be an opportunity for you!

The Ministries Committee is looking for two lay members to be part of its new committee agreed at General Assembly 2025.

Synod Property Officer

Location: URC West Midlands Trust

Term: 21 hours per week

Salary: £29,316 (£48,860 full time equivalent)

Closing date for applications: 8 September

Inclusive Church Mission Researcher

Location: Loughborough URC

Term: Part-time, fixed-term nine months (or less), 15 hours per week

Salary: £7,500

Closing date for applications: 10 September



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