

Wise Words Wise Actions

Weekend highlights

Two members of Youth Assembly recall what meant most to them at this year's event.

Youth Assembly this year was a joyful and energising experience. It was my first time leading a small group session, and although I expected it to be challenging, I thoroughly enjoyed the conversations and the openness of the group.



One highlight for me was a workshop on worship, where we discussed how the Holy Spirit can lead us in many ways. Often, young people assume that only modern styles of worship are Spirit-led, but hearing perspectives from different traditions – including silence in Quaker worship – was eye-opening. I was reminded that the Spirit moves in diverse ways. Learning from one another across traditions can deepen our faith and community. *(Alvin Mark)*

Youth Assembly was a very reflective and refreshing experience. I felt a warming love from many participants at Youth Assembly, which filled me with so much hope and joy as we shared stories and wise words with each other.



One of my highlights was the Prayer Run. Alex Clements mapped out the route, and I did the scripture devotion, on Hebrews 12:1. The turnout was impressive – and it suited perfectly with the idea of "clouds of witnesses" from the scripture. Everyone's panting and red faces was a testimony to their perseverance during the run.

However, where I encountered God most was in the Saturday night worship. The songs went deep into my soul as the Holy Spirit flooded the space, with Emma's words of encouragement and Zeerak's engaging sermon about chasing wisdom and not running too far from it. *(Christine Ntim)*

Focusing youth energy

From a wide range of issues and concerns discussed by members of Youth Assembly (see page 4), the Executive was asked to focus on three for 2026-27:

1. Social injustices for young people
2. International partnerships and collaboration with Christian youth
3. Environmental issues



Doing it differently

URC Youth Assembly adopted the principles of the review of Youth Assembly structures undertaken in 2024-25. These aim to enable wider representation of URC Youth across Youth Exec roles; reduce workload and time commitment for Youth Exec members; and reduce workload for Youth Moderator and Moderator Elect.

Youth Assembly instructed URC Youth Exec to work within these principles. It also allowed the Youth Moderator and Officers to decide how to run the three groups from year to year.



"We can ensure our community is defined by real empathy"



Voting for change

New Moderator Kacie Hodgson shares her vision for the year

I am so excited to begin my role as Moderator, and to get started on the work that will shape URC Youth in the months ahead.

During this year, I want to focus on our pastoral work within Youth Assembly. My hope is to ensure that the Assembly is a space where every young person feels genuinely seen, held, and supported. I want to foster an environment where it is safe to be vulnerable and where spiritual and mental wellbeing are at the forefront of our time together. By deepening how we look after one another, we can ensure that no one is alone and that our community is defined by empathy.

I am also looking forward to expanding our horizons through our ecumenical relations. We are one part of a much larger, diverse body of Christ, and there is so much we can learn from other denominations. By building bridges, we don't just share resources; we gain new perspectives on faith and mission. I am eager to see how we can work in unity for the common good, proving that our differences are a source of strength rather than a barrier to our witness in the world.

Above all, everything I do this year is underpinned by a deep-rooted passion for radical inclusivity and social justice. They are the values I am placing at the forefront of every conversation and decision. Our faith calls us to be agents of change, and I am looking forward to leading the charge in raising awareness of the injustices that affect our world today. We must turn our awareness into action, ensuring that our words of welcome are always matched by our deeds.

I am incredibly excited to see what amazing work the rest of the Youth Executive will achieve this year. While my term is only a year, I hope that the seeds we sow today in pastoral care, unity, and justice will continue to grow long after.

Gendered Language in the Basis of Union

Youth Assembly asked the General Assembly Business Committee to consider reviewing the use of gendered language in the URC's Basis of Union, in consultation with other communities and sub-committees, including Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB), as well as Youth Executive 'at such time as the Basis of Union and structuring are next reviewed'.

Place of URC Youth

Responding to the Church Life Review, and recent changes in URC committee and financial structures, Youth Assembly requested General Assembly to form a task group to explore the identity, role and future development of URC Youth within the URC and report their findings to Youth Assembly and General Assembly 2027. It also required URC Youth Executive to form an interim task group to establish a suggested remit and membership of the group, and to bring this to General Assembly 2026.

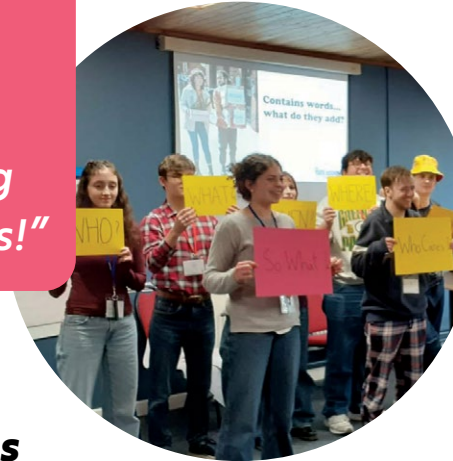
Young carer awareness

URC Youth Assembly encouraged synods and local churches to become more young carer aware, and requested the Faith in Action committee to discuss appropriate strategies to support synods and local churches in actioning this.





“What a fun, energetic, compassionate, inclusive, thoughtful, committed, justice-seeking, Jesus-loving bunch. Light in the darkness!”



Outgoing Moderator Maya Withall reflected on her journey to this point

I was 14 when I joined Youth Executive, not really understanding what it was and never having attended Youth Assembly. After six years I am truly blessed and grateful to have been a part of such an amazing group. My time as Mod has challenged me, it has definitely been stressful, but most of all it has been overwhelmingly rewarding.

In my time on Youth Exec, we have redefined the purpose of Youth Executive, and we are no longer a group solely focused on Youth Assembly but rather on our work in synods and the wider URC. I have seen the passion that this group of people has and their commitment to their roles. They inspire me to be better in my own work.

I was 11 when I joined the URC from a non-Christian background. I had started going to Pilots at my local URC in Gosport, Hampshire. Who knew then that I would now be saying goodbye not just to my time as Mod, but also the five years on Exec before that. I have developed skills I never thought I had, never believing I would be capable of leading Youth Executive, and even doubting myself throughout my time in that role.

I thank God, who has been with me throughout my journey and will remain with me as I go onwards; who led me to the URC where I found community, discipleship and friendship, and the community they have provided me within the URC.



First impressions

Joshua Bass, from Milton Keynes, was a new member of Youth Assembly. Lindsey Brown is the URC's Head of Ecumenical Relations and Evangelism. What were their takeaways from their first time at the event?



Joshua

“Because I came of age, I thought it was an opportunity and I wanted to face it head on, so this is why I came. I didn't have anyone from my church that came, so this has all been about making new friends, and doing new activities that I haven't done before. I enjoyed the ceilidh and campfire. I'm more hands-on with religion, but I am a follower of Jesus Christ, and I pray to him and try to put his practices into my day-to-day life. I would like to come again.”

Lindsey

“This was my first experience of Youth Assembly, and I was struck by the commitment and passion of those present: they had an absolute whale of a time, they got on with business efficiently and creatively and with mutual care and respect, and they explored issues with open minds and hearts and real courage.

“I was particularly impressed by their enthusiasm for evangelism, for articulating how they felt about their faith and for asking challenging questions about it, and for their interest in engaging with Christians of other traditions, both in the UK and abroad. I am full of optimism and excitement about the future of the URC.”



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URC Youth Executive 2026

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Sam is inspired by URC Youth



This was Dr Sam Richards' ninth Youth Assembly. As she moves on from her role as Head of Children, Youth and Intergenerational, she expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to work with URC Youth.

"It has been my absolute privilege to work with, and support, URC Youth Executive and Youth Assembly over the past eight and a half years. I continue to be absolutely inspired by your passion, your faith and your prophetic insight that the world isn't yet good enough, that the kingdom hasn't yet come, and there's lots still to work on – and your willingness to roll up your sleeves and get on with it."

What is important to us?

Youth Assembly's 2026-27 work priorities (see page 1) were drawn from ten themes, all identified as issues of concern.

- **Inclusivity**
- **Environmental issues**
- **Social injustices for young people**
- **Tackling silent discrimination**
- **International partnerships and collaborations with Christian youth**
- **Equal opportunities and empowerment in education**
- **Abolishing religious stereotypes**
- **Youth support – involvement 18-29 (post-26)**
- **Community responsibility for all society**
- **Unseen deprivation**

Become a YA planner

Would you like to help plan Youth Assembly? What would your ideal Assembly look like? Join the YA Planning Group for a one or two-year term and have your say. Download the Expression of Interest Form and apply.



Contact us

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See you next year!

**Youth Assembly 2027
26-28 February
Northampton**

Peacemakers