

Paper B1

Faith in Action Report

Faith in Action Committee

Basic information

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Action required	Note, for information
Draft resolution(s)	None

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Overview of the work of the Faith in Action Team and Committee since September 2025
Main points	An introduction to the Team and Committee, updates on the work of Children, Youth and Intergenerational; Communications; Equalities, Diversity and Belonging sub-Committee; Evangelism and Ecumenism; Global and Intercultural Ministries; Global Justice and Interfaith; Lay Learning; Public Issues.
Previous relevant documents	Mission and Discipleship Committee Reports up to General Assembly 2025
Consultation has taken place with...	Faith in Action Team, Committee and sub-committees

Summary of impact

Financial	None beyond current Faith in Action budget
External (eg ecumenical)	Impact of many areas of work focusing on engaging with partners

Following the decisions at General Assembly July 2025 (Papers A1 and A3) the new Faith in Action Committee and the Equalities, Diversity and Belonging sub-committee were formed.

Following a restructure at the Offices of the General Assembly, the Faith in Action Team was created. This brought together the work of both Mission and Discipleship Teams (with Ministries, Safeguarding and the Minister for Digital Worship moving to the Ministries Team, with the Ministries Committee and Safeguarding Committees overseeing this work, under the leadership of the Deputy General Secretary (Ministries)).

Lay learning remains within the remit of the Faith in Action Team. Ordained and Accredited learning sits within Ministries. The two teams liaise closely on their work, through the Ministries and Learning Forum.

The Faith in Action Team

The Faith in Action Team works through the oversight of the Faith in Action Committee, under the guidance of the Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action).

As this was a new team, with hopes for increased collaborative working, in September 2025 the team went on a 24-hour residential to get to know each other better, to hear about each other's areas of work and to create a vision and mission document. (See *Appendix 1*) This document will be reviewed in September 2026, alongside the work introduced in Paper B2 (5 Marks of the Faith in Action Team), if agreed at General Assembly July 2026.

It was anticipated that, bringing the Mission and Discipleship work together, would enable closer working relations and crossover between different staff members and areas of work. The size of change in the work of the two Teams (Mission and Discipleship) and the coming together of them has brought both joys challenges and it has taken time to find patterns of working and collaborating, along with new line management structures.

The embedding of the Communications Team into the Faith in Action team has been a particularly positive outcome of the restructure as it means we are far more intentional in our communication, especially our outward facing communications.

The vision and mission document has shaped our purpose and the newly proposed Five Marks of the Faith in Action Team should help us more effectively focus our work. With fewer staff, we have to discern where we should continue current work, what we need to stop doing, and what to take on as new work. This is still ongoing.

One major change that occurred within the Team, in March 2026, was the resignation of the Head of Children, Youth and Intergenerational Discipleship. We give grateful thanks to Dr Sam Richards and all she did in her role and for the wealth, breadth and depth of resources, ideas and work that she offered, produced and completed for the URC.

We have so much children and youth work that we are proud of; the integration of children, young people and young adults in the life of the URC is better because of her work, especially alongside work of the Children and Youth Development Officers+ Team and the CY Work Team. We were able to recruit for the role, and Dr Jo Griffiths joins us and will be with us at General Assembly July 2026.

The Faith in Action Team has much going on as the ensuing reports in the Paper will show. We look forward to continuing to grow as a team facing the joys and challenges of the next phase, responding to the Church Life Review, and also highlighting ways to turn the language of decline into words, actions and resources of hope, with fresh vision.

Faith in Action Committee

The Committee was formed in the Autumn of 2025 and its first meeting was 14th February 2026. The Convenors of the previous Education and Learning Committee and Children and Youth Work Committee continued on the new Committee until July 2026 to offer some continuity; both felt called to step down from the new Committee. It was thought helpful to have continuity of service and so the Convenor of previous Mission Committee agreed to continue in role until her term of service ended (2028); the new

Ministries Committee Convenor continued in her role until the end of her term (2026), for the same reason.

The Committee is recruiting new members after the first round of recruiting enabled four people to join the three past Convenors. The new Committee make-up will be included in the Committees' list in the Book of Reports following General Assembly July 2026. The make-up of the Committee is: four members with a Mission focus, two members with an Education/Lay Learning Focus, two members with a Children and Youth/intergenerational focus, two Youth Members, along with the Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action). Staff members attend as required.

The meetings are two in-person and one online, and once a year the Committee comes together along with the networks that serve the Faith in Action Team: The Children and Youth Development Officers+ Team, the Mission Enablers' Network, the Training and Development Officers+ Network, in a residential.

The reason for this once-a-year gathering is to enable the voices of local churches to be directly represented in the Committee's meeting and to enable the work of the Committee to be directly shared, via the work of staff in Synod roles, with the local churches.

The Equalities, Diversity and Belonging (EDIB) sub-committee

EDIB sub-Committee was created at General Assembly July 2025, following resolution 5 in Paper A3. The previous Equalities Committee membership has continued in role as the URC agreed to a consultation around Equalities, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in the URC, which is in planning. Jo Clare-Young agreed to continue in the role of temporary Convenor with David Salsbury continuing as Secretary.

Concerns have been expressed about the status of EDIB in the URC and we hope that the findings of the consultation will help us as we think about the future. For now, EDIB Committee remains a sub-Committee of the Faith in Action Committee with a member of the Faith in Action Committee linking with them and attending their meetings, and the Convenor of EDIB invited to the Faith in Action Committee meetings, having had sight of the agenda. A report from the EDIB Committee is contained in this report.

Reports

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND INTERGENERATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

The shape and size of the Children, Youth and Intergenerational (CYI) Team changed in 2025 and now we have the role of Head of Children, Youth and Intergenerational Discipleship- CYID (see above for more detail and changes), Programme Officer for CYID, and Administrator for CYID (and Evangelism and Ecumenism) working with the CYDO+ Team who are based in synods and work with local churches, as well as giving up to 20% of their time to wider URC work.

Heather Wilkinson (Administrator) and Sharon Lloyd (Programme Officer) have overseen the work of CYID from the end of March until GA July 2026. The CYDO+ Team have also stepped up and taken on new work or ensured current work continues and we thank them all for their commitment and support in this time of transition.

Youth Executive has completed its pilot year with three distinct sub-groups (as per Paper B1 GA 2025). Maya Whithall concluded her year as Youth Moderator at Youth Assembly in March 2026 and deep thanks were expressed for all she offered in her time as Youth Mod. Kacie Hodgson has begun her year as Youth Mod and is particularly focused on engaging with churches and young people and focusing on radical inclusivity and social justice. Alex Clements is the Youth Moderator-Elect.

Constant work

- Weekly online Faith Adventures Children Together (FACT) & Faith Adventures Youth Resource (FAYR)
- Supporting URC Youth Executive and Youth Moderators
- CYI communications and updating website
- Padlet Calendar of training and events
- CYDO+ team coordination
- Supporting URC Youth, Youth Moderators and Youth Executive, Youth Synod Reps meetings
- Offering CYID input to other teams, conferences, courses or ecumenical gatherings
- Bi-monthly Newsletter
- Children and Youth Friendly Church scheme
- Lundie Award
- Grants.

Events

- 2026 URC Youth Assembly, 27 Feb – 1 March – around 100 14-25 years olds gathered at Kings Park for an excellent weekend. Find Round Up here for more information:
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/YA-Round-up-2025-web.pdf>
- 2026 URC Youth Leaders Gathering 27 Feb – 1 March – 19 leaders attended weekend conference at Highgate House with input from Ash Barker.
- Are We Ready? 11 March - day conference hosted at Church House under Churches Together in Britain and Ireland umbrella. 14 denominations developing response to the challenge of Quiet Revival to welcome, engage and disciple young people and young adults.
- Intergenerate UKI – Sam Richards hosted webinar on intergenerational small groups.
- 1T4 11-14s event 2-4 May a whole weekend of fun, faith, and friendship for URC Youth at Whitemoor Lakes
- Sharon Lloyd (Programme Officer) representing URC CYW in New Zealand with the Council for World Mission 13 - 27 May.
- European Conference on Christian Education Conference Switzerland 8-12 June attended by Programme Officer and some CYDO+s.

Other work

- Production of Wise Words annual themed resource for 2026 sent in all churches mailing
- New materials to support local churches with child and young person baptism and beyond
- Young Leaders training materials
- CYDO+ allocations for 2026-27
- 'Talking About' monthly sessions, Mental Health First Aid training offered
- Children's Ministry Essentials pilot course, Youthscape Essentials course

- Holiday Club and Advent 2026 overseen by CYDO+ team assisted by CYID team
- *Go with Greta* combined work with CYDO+ team, CYID and Commitment for Life.

Awaiting new post holder

- C&Y Programme Enabling Group (sub-committee of Faith in Action Team) - continued development
- URC Youth task group – draft strategy
- Finalising Memorandum of Understanding between Synods and the wider URC for the 20% allocated work
- Training opportunities for children's, youth, family and intergenerational ministry – develop summary resource for Enquirers and other events
- Preparing churches to welcome and disciple young adults – Quiet Revival
- Develop intergenerational discipleship strategy and resources
- Responding to Church Life Extraordinary GA from CYID perspective - fostering CY focused ministry, lay workers, new communities, resource hub.

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

This past year the United Reformed Church has remained steadfast in its pursuit of justice and peace in the world. *Commitment for Life* (CFL) is a treasured URC programme through which local congregations can enable practical actions for disaster relief, poverty reduction, and empowerment of some of the poorest people in the world.

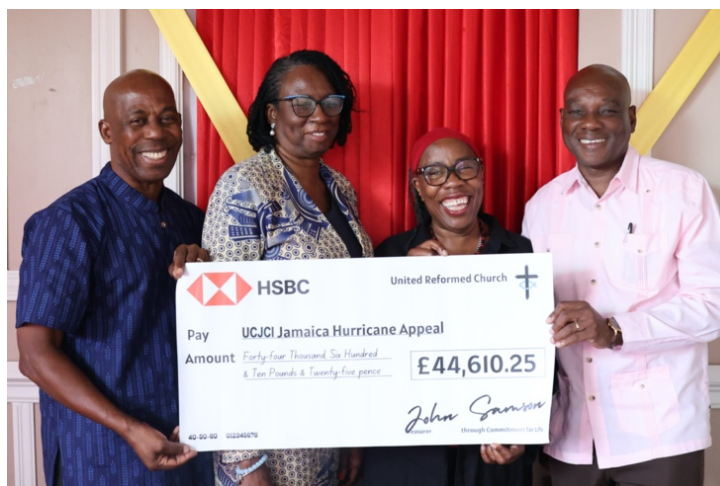
CFL-supporting congregations know that poverty and injustice are ultimately spiritual issues and thus place at the centre of their action intercessory prayer. Many are using the CFL's *Prayer Partners* for inspiration as most of its prayers are written by people at the very coalface of justice. CFL offers a host of useful resources that can be and are 'mined' for educative purposes, storytelling, all-age worship, advocacy, and sharing opportunities.

Together with the Methodist Church in Britain and All We Can, Commitment for Life supported the *Gaza and Lebanon Justice Appeal*. The response was so deeply moving. The United Reformed Church was able to send almost £19,000 of the monies raised to our partners in Lebanon, an incredible effort. This year, congregations were invited to share of their gifts in the *Middle East Solidarity Justice Appeal*, which has supported incredibly brave and innovative partners in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria.

In partnership with *All We Can*, this appeal was relaunched just after Easter 2026 following the intensification of the US and Israel's illegal wars of aggression against Iran, Lebanon, and Palestine. Please continue to support the work of our partners like the *Compassion Protestant Society* in Beirut. CPS is the diaconal wing of our partner church in the region, NESSL (*Near East Synod of Syria and Lebanon*).

See <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/appeals/middleeast>

Congregations have also generously supported the Jamaican hurricane relief efforts. CFL has made important connections with partners in the ongoing drive to make a difference as part of the wider URC commitment to addressing the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade. In this work, the CFL Reference Group and *All We Can* are finding ways to work in collaboration given the alignment of theology, principles, and practice of justice common to both the URC and the Methodist Church in Britain. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Faith in Action Committee.



Commitment for Life thanks all those who supported the appeal for support for our partners in Ukraine, the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia.

CFL continues to host lay-preacher training so that local congregations can benefit from having a *Commitment for Life* service of worship within their preaching calendars.

Finally, we wish to express our deep gratitude to all our congregations. Your support for CFL is a modern retelling of the widow's olive oil jar that God keeps refilling. Donations are, once again, up from the preceding year (up £25,000 to £256,167 excluding emergency appeals). This is a clear sign of the importance that the hope of our faith in Jesus - making a practical difference for the poorest - enlivens and motivates local our wonderful URC congregations and Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

COMMUNICATIONS

Reformed magazine

Following a consultation with its readers, the Senior Leadership Team and with the Faith in Action Committee, *Reform* magazine was renamed *Reformed*, to distance itself from the populist political party, which had caused concern from subscribers and confusion by some members of Reform UK who had subscribed.

The first issue with the new name was published in May 2026. The take up of free sample copies of *Reformed* and new subscriptions has been very encouraging at the time of writing.

Please allow us to send you a free copy, or some free copies for your church or community: www.urch.org.uk/ed

iChurch

iChurch, the URC's website platform for local churches, looks after more than 160 church, Synod and Local Ecumenical Projects websites, and continues to grow.

After many years without any price increases, rising hosting and other costs meant that its annual fee had to increase slightly in 2026 (by £2 to £11.99 per month), but for the

service it delivers, iChurch remains much cheaper than other church website providers, some charging hundreds of pounds more per year for an equivalent service.

With the changes in society and the ever-increasing use of mobile phones, a local church without a website is failing in its mission to invite people to consider coming to church.

Most of the 58 million people who use a smartphone each day spend three hours per day on the internet, and most scan QR codes.

External noticeboards with QR codes lead those scanning them to the church's website, meaning those interested in discipleship, faith, worship and other activities in churches can find out more and make contact.

If your church needs a website, iChurch can help.

We are grateful for Reuben Watt, Daniel Raddings, Jessica Gough, Hannah Fleming-Hill and Dan Morrell for their continued work with iChurch. Visit www.ichurch.website for further details.

URC Bookshop

At the time of writing (end of April 2026) the URC Bookshop had despatched 540 orders with 3,091 products with a value of more than £12,700 from January to April. In 2025, the Bookshop despatched a total of 2,154 orders with 10,665 products with a total of more than £71,000 including sales at Synod events, General Assembly, and other events.

Terms of Reference

At the February meeting of the Assembly Executive, the Terms of Reference for the Faith in Action Committee and Resources Committee were updated to allow for effective governance following the staff restructure in the Offices of General Assembly (Church House) which took place during the summer of 2025.

It was agreed that the Faith in Action Committee would be responsible for the communications strategy and content work, including bookshop items, and the Resources Committee was responsible for the trading aspects of the communications team, namely iChurch, *Reformed* Magazine and the URC Bookshop, handling the commercial and financial aspects of these enterprises.

The Resources Committee continues to oversee the URC website and now has responsibility for managing the URC database.

Community Project Awards

These are being presented at the General Assembly and we are grateful again to Congregational for its generous financial support. You can read all about the winners after the Assembly in *Reformed* magazine and online at www.urch.org.uk/awards.

EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING (EDIB) SUB-COMMITTEE

Last year, we reported to General Assembly as the Equalities Committee, our final report in that form. After General Assembly 2025 the committee transitioned almost

seamlessly to become the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging sub-committee of the Faith in Action Committee, or EDIB for short.

We have adopted new Terms of Reference for the sub-committee which were agreed by Assembly Executive in November and are working on creating role descriptions for members and officers. Meanwhile, most of the membership from the 'old' Equalities Committee has been carried over during this transitional period. We did, however, say goodbye to Judy Rogers and Janet Raven who have stood down from the committee and we thank them for their service. By the time assembly meets the sub-committee will have met three times, always on Zoom.

We have continued to work on developing a resource exploring Trans identities, written by people drawing on their own lived experience and professional expertise and which looks in some detail at theology and scripture, history, biology and pastoral care. A decision was made in the summer of 2025 not to produce this as a paper document but to develop it into a web-based resource using the URC's Learning Hub.

Regrettably, progress has not been as swift as we would have liked due to the availability of time and resources but it is still the sub-committee's intention to make these resources available at a future date.

The EDIB sub-committee has continued to work alongside business committee to improve accessibility at meetings of General Assembly and Assembly Executive. This has included making representation to the venues (in 2025 both The Hayes and Kent's Hill Park) as well as suggesting improvements at the online Assembly Executive meeting in February. We have also engaged with nominations committee as they review the diversity of representation at General Assembly as part of their work on Resolution 7, General Assembly 2025.

Some members of the EDIB sub-committee are working with others to initiate a review of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging across the whole denomination as requested by Resolution 55, General Assembly 2023. This will be reported separately, but suffice to say the outcomes may change significantly the way in which the EDIB sub-committee works within the denomination as we continue to strive for greater equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging within the United Reformed Church as part of our Christian witness to the world.

EVANGELISM AND ECUMENISM

Evangelism

We continue to promote and encourage evangelism in Synods and local churches as part of our mission across the URC, including through the following:

- FaithTalk webinars ('everyday evangelism in the URC') are now quarterly. Recent webinars have been tackling Big Questions from URC Youth, helping us to articulate key areas of our faith and stimulate conversations in our churches. *The planning group: Lindsey Brown, Karen Campbell (Head of GIC), Stuart Radcliffe (Mersey Synod, Discipleship Enabler), Debbie Brown (GEAR), Linda Rayner (NW Synod; former Fx / pioneer lead), Christine Ntim (former Thames North youth representative)*
- In collaboration with URC Children and Youth and the Ugly Duckling charity, coasters were produced encouraging 'pre-evangelism' conversations in our churches. They

were distributed to all churches and Synods in summer 2025, and stories are still emerging of how churches have been putting them to use. As well as three questions on the coasters there is also a QR code taking people to a daily question, helping them to stay up-to-date and reusable. Coasters are still available – please get in touch.

- The Synod Mission Enablers Network meets twice yearly to discuss mission, including evangelism, with recent guests including Dave Mann (Seedbeds / Bonny Downs) and Lydia Neshangwe (President of the All Africa Conference of Churches)
- Thames North / Eastern Synod Spring School workshops: *“How do our churches welcome and disciple those who don’t have a grounding in faith?”*
- Presentations / workshops at the launch of East Midlands Synod evangelism strategy, Talking Faith



TF3: the launch of East Midlands Talking Faith strategy. Faith Talk Easter poster

- A series of Easter-themed FaithTalk posters were distributed in an all-church mailing to be used as conversation-starters; further digital posters are available on the Evangelism webpage
- Presentations of Bible Society and other ‘revival’ research to the Synod Mission Enablers Network and the Synod Moderators’ Meeting; article for *Reform Generation Church* (Issue 1 2026)
- Workshop at Youth Assembly: Wise Words for Sharing Faith
- Presenter and panel member on Missional Discipleship at the Council for World Mission (CWM) School for Transformative Evangelism (Nairobi)



Marking Thursdays in Black at the CWM Conference in Nairobi

- Part of planning group for 2027 CWM / FEx conference on new Christian communities
- Twice-yearly Buildings for Mission Forum webinars have recently tackled sustainability and using the Five Marks. These are supported by the Faith in Action team and Synod property officers and consultants.

Ecumenical Relations

We celebrate many healthy and active ecumenical relationships, and continue to work on those areas which bring challenges, particularly in local ecumenical relationships. Our Synod ecumenical officers work hard on the ground to encourage flourishing and trouble-shoot where necessary.

We have a number of active bilateral dialogue groups:

- Roman Catholic / URC Dialogue Group: a new phase has begun, Being the People of God. The first full meeting of the newly constituted group will meet later this year, chaired by Bishop Paul Hendricks and Revd Dr John Bradbury. Our close partnership led to an invitation to present at the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Coordinators, on the experience of bilateral dialogues, in May.
- Methodist / URC Liaison Group: chaired by Moderator of East Midlands Synod Revd Geoffrey Clarke and Methodist District Chair Revd Dr David Chapman, the group this year has been working on guidelines for services of welcome and induction into LEPs. A report from the group can be found in Paper AB1 (Business Committee Methodist/URC Dialogue)
- A new Church of England / URC Contact Group has been formed, chaired by Bishop Anne Hollinghurst and Revd Steve Faber, Moderator of West Midlands Synod. Initial core meetings have been enthusiastic and productive, and the full group will meet for the first time later this year.



Relaunch of URC / CofE Contact Group

We are also active ecumenical observers on the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) and the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity (CCU), which has among other things led to some practical research into the mission benefits of LEPs. We have contributed to recent interviews with The Times on the use of churches as mosques and with The Church Times on the resilience of LEPs.

Churches Together in England (CTE)

We are actively represented by our Ecumenical Officer in a number of CTE groups:

- Monthly LEP meetings with Anglican, Methodist and Baptist colleagues
- Monthly National Ecumenical Roundtables (quarterly CTBI Roundtable)
- Living With Diversity working group, focused on issues of human sexuality. *This group models working well together with difference, rather than trying to reach any agreement*
- Group for Evangelisation
- Planning and delivery group for the All Ecumenical Representatives annual conference
- Planning and delivery group for the New Ecumenical Officers annual training
- Enabling Group for Member Churches
- Free Churches Group member church meetings

Revd Dr Tessa Henry Robinson is currently serving as the President of the Free Churches Group. In that capacity she attended the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury Revd Sarah Mullally, at which we were also represented by the Moderator to General Assembly Catriona Wheeler.



Ecumenical guests at a service of thanksgiving to mark 80 years of the United Nations, at Methodist Central Hall

Revd James Breslin continues to serve as Chair of Trustees of the Free Churches Group.

Representatives of the URC have attended / will be attending the following partners' events:

- Methodist Conference: Lindsey Sanderson
- Assembly of the Congregational Federation: Kacie Hodgson, Youth Moderator
- Moravian Provincial Synod: Revd Neil Thorogood, Moderator-elect
- Landessynode / Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz :
- Waldensian Synod: Tim Meadows

The Church of Scotland made their annual visit to the Offices of General Assembly in December. We continue to value the close relationship and dialogue.

European ecumenism

The URC will be hosting the biannual *Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz / United Reformed Church* theological consultation in October 2026. The theme is The Prophetic Voice, and will include a visit to the German Church in East London, owned by our Lutheran partners and famously associated with Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Local churches will be hosting guests following the Conference.

The URC is working with the *Protestantse Kirk in Nederland*, the Fresh Expressions movement and CWM on a 2027 global conference on contextual mission.

The Faith in Action Team is grateful for the East Midlands Synod's advocacy for meaningful solidarity with our ecumenical partners in Ukraine. Commitment for Life set up an appeal for the diaconal work of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia following a solidarity visit by the URC Head of World Justice and Inter Faith. Thank you to everyone who supported this.

In May the National Synod of Wales hosted the steering committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The three WCRC member churches in Wales are the URC, Undeb yr Annibynwyr, and the Presbyterian Church of Wales. The steering

group was most grateful for the generous hospitality of the synod. President Jenny Dobers from Sweden highlighted the many gifts offered by the Welsh Reformed churches for the wider European context.

Victoria Turner was elected as a member of the WCRC executive, and Kevin Snyman serves as one of the Vice Presidents for the WCRC Europe steering group.

GLOBAL AND INTERCULTURAL CHURCH

A. Global & Intercultural Church (GIC) Networks

There are three active networks:

1. Black & Ethnic Minority Ministers
2. Cascades of Grace: Black & Ethnic Minority Women
3. Racial Justice Advocates

The networks have each met twice: One separate online gathering plus one overlapping residential, intended to enable joined-up work towards the URC's 'anti-racist Church' commitment.

Emerging issues/points:

- 'Global Majority' affirmed as the preferred inclusive term to enable broad conversation when referring to colleagues collectively.
- Questioning of the URC disciplinary process – is it disproportionately or unfairly meted against Global Majority colleagues?

A desire to:

- Grow and strengthen the Racial Justice Advocates network.
- Broaden the supportive space for Global Majority women – eg via regional gatherings.
- Extend the supportive space beyond Global Majority ministers, eg to include colleagues serving as lay preachers, elders, and in synod roles.
- Revisit the bi-annual Multicultural Celebration to
 - promote inclusivity & celebrate diversity
 - counteract current divisive rhetoric.

B. Legacies of Slavery (LoS)

1. **Local – anti-racism training:** Two sessions took place in December 2025. Professor Anthony Reddie will be asked to deliver the training for all active ministers, plus interim moderators, elders and accredited lay preachers. Planning continues towards cascading the learning into local churches.
2. **Regional – mentoring of young Black men:** The LoS regional sub-group is working with Independent Consultant, Revd Ronald Nathan, to bring the proposed four projects to fruition – one each in northern and southern England, Scotland and Wales. A potential partnership with a London-based charity is being explored. An application has been submitted to the Council for World Mission (CWM) to part fund this work.

'**Standing Together**' (November 2025) – a one-week programme in partnership with Ascension Trust/Synergy Network, exploring creative solutions to serious youth violence. Insight and expertise were brought by two colleagues from Jamaica. Programme participants included church leaders, youth leaders, support agencies, the

police, a funeral director, victims, former perpetrators, and young adults. An exposure visit to Birmingham included the Town Centre Chaplaincy based at Carrs Lane URC, and creative approaches to youth engagement developed at Lodge Rd Community Church. Learning from Standing Together is feeding into the regional proposals.

3. **Global** – the Head of GIC visited Jamaica in February 2026 to progress the partnership with the Churches' Reparations Action Forum (CRAF) – see separate LoS Report. Work is ongoing to bring aspects of CRAF's work under the Commitment for Life umbrella for a set period of time – joining the dots of the URC's LoS & global justice engagement.

C. Jamaica Hurricane Appeal

The Head of GIC delivered a cheque for £44,610 during her February visit to Jamaica. Our partners in the United Church of Jamaica & the Cayman Islands express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to all individuals and churches who contributed.



[URC donates nearly £45,000 to help Jamaica rebuild after Hurricane Melissa](#)

D. Council for World Mission: Partners in Mission (PIM)

In 2025, Ms So Young Jung, sent by the Presbyterian Church of Korea, successfully candidated to train for stipendiary ministry in the URC, bringing her tenure as PIM to a close. Revd Yufen Chen, sent by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, started her third and final term of service in January 2026 after a positive evaluation process.

E. Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF)

TEF gathers partners to stand in solidarity with Taiwan's struggle for self-determination. A global gathering (April 2026) included input from oppressed peoples from various contexts, including Dalits, Latin America and West Papua. Current global tensions elicited the questions – 'Who will be next?' and 'Is it just a matter of time for Taiwan?' The Head of GIC serves on the TEF steering group and was joined in Taiwan by former URC General Assembly Moderator Revd Dr Michael Jagessar.

F. Ecumenical Visitors

We were delighted to host 2 visits from senior representatives from the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), and to facilitate WCRC colleagues preaching in local URC congregations. The guests included Revd Philip Peacock

(General Secretary), Revd Dr Hanns Lessing, and Revd Dr Karen Georgia Thompson (President).



G. URC Participation in CWM Global Initiatives

- **Transformative Masculinity Against Gender Based Violence (Nov 25, Johannesburg):** Revd Stephen Ansa-Addo; Jake Penny (Young Adult)
- **School of Transformative Evangelism (Dec 25, Nairobi):** Lindsey Brown
- **Deconstructing Racism; Reconstructing Justice (Feb 26, Malaysia):** Revd Mark Robinson
- **Church in Action: A Place of Refuge (May 26, Thailand):** Fozia Aftab
- **ReVisioning Education with Children (May 26, New Zealand):** Sharon Lloyd
- **Europe Region Assembly (June 26, Utrecht):** Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson; Karen Campbell; David Jonathan (Johny); Stan Chatikobo (Young Adult); Sheliessa Stewart (Young Adult)
- **CWM Internship:** Philippa Osei (Young Adult) – currently serving in Singapore, with GIC receiving glowing reports of her contribution.

H. Ecumenical Racial Justice Relationships

- **Methodist Church's Reparations Advisory Group** – the Head of GIC contributes insights from the URC's LoS journey.
- **Racial Justice Advocacy Forum** – seeks to speak prophetically on behalf of Global Majority Christians to the government on racial injustice challenges and reparations. The URC is a founding member.

I. **GIC Webpage** – has been vastly improved. Many thanks to Ann-Marie Nye and Neil Hunter: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/global-and-intercultural-church/>

J. **Ongoing** – contributing to URC focus on Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (EDIB)

GLOBAL JUSTICE AND INTERFAITH - report in Interfaith Paper B3

LAY LEARNING

Ministries and Learning Forum

This group, which brings together accredited and ordained learning with lay learning opportunities, is currently focusing on responding to the E and L consultation 2025. The group consists of the 3 Principals from the Resource Centres for Learning- RCLs (Luther King Theological College- formerly Northern College, the Scottish College and

Westminster College), a CYDO+ representative, a TDO+ representative, the DGS (Ministries) and the DGS (Faith in Action). We have discussed developing the idea of Denominationally Developed, Locally Delivered learning and training resources we decided the ones that are most urgent are: Elders, Vocations, Ethos and History.

We are going to be developing the outline of what is required, how best to offer this learning/training, the content, the cost and then go to the Faith in Action Committee with a proposal. It was suggested that we use the URC Learning Hub that we already have and use and consider creating the resources using the Stepwise format eg. Faith Filled Eldership. It builds on what people are already increasingly familiar with. The Forum will also be considering future opportunities for Education for Ministry 1, 2 and 3 as well as other accredited and lay learning (including the History and Ethos of the URC, Safer Sacred Space, refresher courses).

Stepwise

Jenny Mills and Linda Harrison (Stepwise Administrator based at the Scottish College) meet regularly to discuss the ongoing support; making minor edits and sorting link issues; ensuring we have the correct contact details for both group facilitators, synod advocates and participants; trialling the new streams and the new Introduction module. We receive great support from Neil Hunter (Digital Content Manager) with any work on the website or additional support for the URC Learning Hub

Our future plans include updating the format/appearance/ease of access of the Stepwise streams. This will also be a proposal to the Faith in Action Committee about the best way forward on this.

We have begun a social media and publicity push as we find more people are discovering the benefit of exploring Stepwise and it is helping them on their discipleship journey and leading them on to further training or calling to new roles. Some major changes have occurred in the past year: two new streams have been developed and are now available for use.

The streams, Faith Filled Environment and Faith Filled Conversations, build on the strong foundations already established and offer participants more choice, flexibility, and depth in their learning journey and can be accessed at <https://www.urclearninghub.org.uk/>.

The URC Learning Hub hosts a variety of other courses that can be openly accessed: Conversation Starters on Where are the Young People, Disability Awareness for All, Vocation and Call; Exploring Eldership, Safeguarding Foundation Course (with guest access) and the Introduction taster. Stepwise has introduced a one-session "Introduction to Stepwise" taster. This is designed to help participants – individuals or small groups – explore what Stepwise is all about before committing to a full stream. This short, accessible session can be run locally or online.

While Faith-Filled Life remains recommended as a helpful grounding experience, it is now no longer a requirement to complete it before starting any other stream. Participants can freely choose the stream that best fits their context, need, or curiosity after completing the introduction. Finally, all cost implications for Stepwise have been removed, making the resource free. By removing the cost implication and thereby reducing the administration, the programme becomes more inclusive and open to all

who wish to deepen their discipleship, develop faith-based skills, and explore how their learning connects with everyday life.

PUBLIC ISSUES

Since September 2025, the Public Issues work of the Faith in Action Team has been augmented by Offices of General Assembly staff members Ann-Marie Nye, Communications Officer, and Veronica Daniel, Administrator, who both now have a focus on Public Issues as part of their roles. This has helped to extend our reach and capacity in new ways, while we still feel the loss of colleagues who finished in their roles in August 2025.

Roo Stewart maintains a strong connection with the Joint Public Issues Team. He joined the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) Advisory Board on Ethical Issues in early 2026.

Joint Public Issues Team

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) has entered into a new 'resourcing partnership' with the Iona Community. This emerging relationship aims to extend JPIT's ability to produce excellent worship materials connected to our [areas of work](#) while providing the [Iona Community](#) with expert support and resourcing of campaigns in areas of common concern.

The Joint Public Issues Team welcomed Adam Aucock as Advocacy Coordinator in January. He is employed by the Methodist Church.

The URC continues to benefit significantly from its membership of JPIT, enabling the Church to pray, speak out and take action knowledgeably, in unison with larger organisations, on a much wider range of public issues and in more detail than is possible on our own. Highlights in 2025-2026 include:

1. 'For Goodness Sake' JPIT conference in Derby in November, attracting 200 attendees and featuring [Very Revd Sally Foster-Fulton](#) and [Rt Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani](#)
2. New '[Justice Weekly](#)' prayer reel and webpage
3. Online support gatherings for church leaders caught up in anti-migrant protests
4. Analysis and briefings on [the recognition of Palestine](#), [asylum policy](#), the Budget and the [Child Poverty Strategy](#)
5. Almost 200 churches interested in joining the Constituency Action Network, with seven churches already signed-up as members. A [new promotional video is available](#) and churches are encouraged to view it and discuss joining
6. [Prayer and action for Gaza](#)
7. Public letter on [the scapegoating of refugees](#), response to new government [asylum proposals](#) and government consultation on [earned settlement](#)



8. Campaign for [refugee family reunion](#) mobilising over 800 faith leaders and achieved national media coverage
9. Public letters and statements on [Human rights](#) and the [right to protest](#).
10. Climate Coalition lobby week (September), campaign action on [Rosebank](#), a [faith leaders' letter on international transition away from fossil fuels](#).



Public Statements and Responses

[Rosebank/Fossil Fuels](#)

[Scapegoating of Migrants](#)

[Response to Heaton Park Synagogue attack](#)

[Gaza ceasefire](#)

[Protecting Human Rights](#)

[Child poverty strategy](#)

[Refugee family reunion](#)

[Solidarity with Jewish community \(arson attack on ambulances\)](#)

[Response to Derby city centre incident](#)

[Climate Leadership – Letter to Secretary of State for Energy and Net Zero](#)

[Israeli government bombing of Lebanon during apparent ceasefire](#)

[Freedom to protest – Crime and Policing Bill](#)

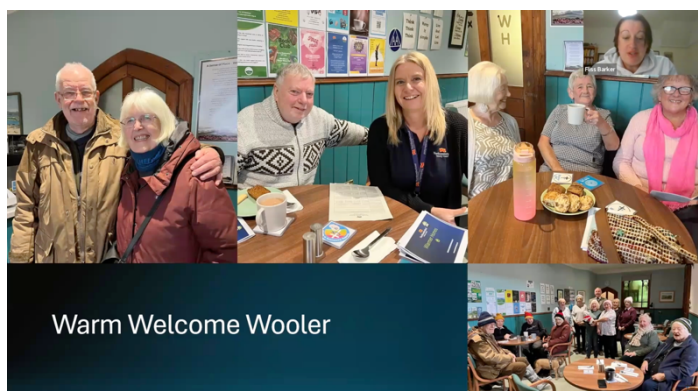
[Wessex Synod welcomes legal notice on St George flag](#)

A Church with People at the Margins

Responding to [General Assembly 2024 Resolutions 52 & 53](#)

In 2026, we are hosting four online webinars on being a Church with People at the Margins. The webinars feature practical, theological and inspirational input, with space for discussion and questions and answers with Mike Hart (Transformation Director, North West Synod), Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) and others with significant experience of being the Church with people at the margins.

A Legacy Fund grant has enabled Mike Hart to extend beyond his synod role to encourage growth in this key area of mission for the whole URC. All are welcome to attend the webinars, to share their own experience and to discover what approaches have been working in a wide range of contexts. More information and resources available at urc.org.uk/margins



The Far Right and Christian Nationalism

Responding to [Assembly Executive February 2026 Resolution 11](#)

URC Public Issues and the Joint Public Issues Team have been [sharing resources](#) and contributing to events including a 'Talking About...' online session for URC children's and

youth workers in May and an upcoming in-person gathering in Manchester on 24 October featuring prominent Christian Nationalism lecturer Revd Dr Helen Paynter. Members of the URC were invited to contribute to “A Million Acts of Hope”, 13-20 May. This was a national initiative comprised of faith groups, charities and civil society organisations to flood our media with the good things that happen daily in the UK to drown out racism and hate and instead promote community cohesion.

Welcome Churches

We held a webinar featuring Welcome Churches in June. This ecumenical Christian charity seeks to link migrants with supportive and welcoming churches in their area. There are currently around a dozen URC congregations that have registered with Welcome Churches. We would like to at least double that this year. It is free to be added to the register, and regular webinars and superb advice are available from the supportive team.

Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory

In March, an ecumenical trip of solidarity and relationship building in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory (IOPT), which was to include Catriona Wheeler, General Assembly Moderator, had to be postponed due to the commencement of US, Israeli and Iranian military activity in the Middle East. We hope to visit as soon as it becomes safe to do so, at the request of Palestinian Christians who seek advocates who can speak out on their behalf.

The Public Issues team is exploring being part of a Just Peace Coalition, with a diverse group of Christian organisations and charities, that will focus on a shared strategy of action and advocacy, equipping local churches and church leaders, and sharing resources centred around the witness of Palestinian Christians.

THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS'+ (TDO) NETWORK

A result of the restructure in the Offices of the General Assembly is that the staff in synods who oversee learning and training and the work they do straddle both Ministries and Faith in Action. Their work supports those who are in accredited and ordained ministries, as well as for lay people.

The TDO+ Network in the past year has continued to meet online regularly and now has a pattern of meetings that means one meeting is just TDO+s, one with the two DGS (Mins and FiA), and the annual gathering alongside the FiA Committee, CYDO+ Team and Mission Enablers Network.

There have been new members of the Network and some have moved on in role. Due to this, and the increasing collaboration between the TDO+s, they are redoing the TDO+ Handbook so they are using the same resources, up to date documents, and work from the same policies (especially in relation to sabbaticals, EM2 and EM3 expectations and grants).

Many of the TDO+s (and some others from synods without such roles) have engaged in the Place for Hope Train the Trainer. This means that they are now ready to begin offering local foundational courses to local churches on topics related to conflict, change, challenging behaviour and living well with difference.

PLACE FOR HOPE

The Place for Hope Partnership continues with a growing number of trained mediators. The ongoing rollout to synods means that, after July, the Synod of Scotland, North Western, Wessex, and Wales Synods will be working under the agreement terms.

Other synods may still access support from Place for Hope, but their cases will be subject to Place for Hope's standard terms and conditions and will depend on the capacity of the Place for Hope team. Furthermore, a team of Trainers from the United Reformed Church have been trained to deliver Place for Hope's foundational course: Growing through Change and Conflict. <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/place-for-hope-partnership/>

Appendix 1



Faith in Action Team Vision Statement

A team that inspires and resources the United Reformed Church

Mission Statement:

Enabling all generations to share the love of God through worship, word and action:

- strengthening communities
- deepening relationships
- transforming the world

Supporting Statements

1. For the internal Faith in Action team

- We will grow as a trusted, agile, and collaborative team that provides clear, relevant, and timely support.
- We will connect churches, synods, and partners to share ideas, successes, and challenges.
- We will develop deliver and signpost opportunities, information, events, and resources that help others flourish.

Key Benefits (two-year outlook):

- **Increased** clarity of our purpose and identity as a team
- **Increased** confidence and capability to serve the whole church
- **Improved** collaboration with other teams within the Offices of the General Assembly and wider partners
- **Decreased** duplication of effort
- **Removed** silos and isolation

2. For those external to the Team

- We will encourage Jesus-shaped discipleship and mission that is practical, informed by theology and connected to contextual issues.
- We will amplify local voices, stories, and successes so people see their faith making a difference.
- We will provide inspiration and tools to act together on justice, peace, anti-racism, and care for creation.
- We will ease the burden of leadership by offering practical tools and peer support.
- We will support connections between local churches, synods, and the wider denomination, encouraging local and regional partnerships
- We will support ecumenical and interfaith connections, locally, nationally and globally
- We will equip churches in order to inspire growth, inclusivity, and community engagement.

Key Benefits (two-year outlook):

- **Increased** confidence and courage to express and live out faith in daily life
- **Increased** engagement with resources, events, and networks

- **Improved** optimism and sense of belonging to a wider, diverse church family
- **Decreased** feelings of isolation and decline
- **Removed** barriers to sharing good news and taking action for justice in communities and in the world
- **Increased** congregation confidence and courage in their purpose
- **Increased** flow of relevant information and inspiration to support local mission and discipleship
- **Improved** relationships and trust between local churches and the wider URC
- **Removed** confusion about available resources and denominational priorities