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## News from the NW Synod 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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**1: New Website and Photos of our congregations** As you know we have been working on putting together a new website for the Synod which would be useful to people outside the church to understand us a little better and to be a resource for our churches. We have some photos still to put up (and could do with many more!) but wanted to send you the link to solicit feedback.

If you go to <http://newweb.nwsynod.org.uk/> you can have a look. Please note once we are happy with the website we will use our normal address for it so you don't need to advertise this address.

Please give any feedback to Andy Braunston via [clerk@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:clerk@nwsynod.org.uk)

We need high quality photographs – in digital format – of our congregations for our new Synod website. The website will be less cluttered than our current one, easier to navigate and have photos of our congregations so we can visually see our Synod in all its diversity. Please email a picture of your congregation to Andy Braunston via [clerk@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:clerk@nwsynod.org.uk).

**2: Can your Church offer help to refugees fleeing Syria** If your church wishes to offer practical help to refugees fleeing Syria you may wish to make a donation to Church House (made payable to the URC Trust) in order to support the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon in providing schooling for Syrian refugee children living in camps in Lebanon.

**3: Synod Resource for Advent and Christmas** Advent and Christmas are busy times for everyone – with all the preparations, visiting family, and extra services which mark that time of the year it can be very hard to get space to think and reflect on the season. In order to help create some space for reflection we have prepared a devotion for every day of Advent and Christmas. Each devotion will be emailed to those who sign up for them and consist of a hymn or song, a Biblical reading and a reflection. There will be a link so you can listen to the hymn or song on Youtube and the lyrics will be printed too. This series of 39 devotions will start on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November – the first Sunday of Advent – and continue until Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany.

They reflect a range of hymns and songs – familiar and unfamiliar and will help to give space to reflect and pray as we journey through this season together.

If you wish to receive them please sign up here <http://eepurl.com/bCEnFb>

**4: Advent Devotional** Sing a new song! Psalm 98, from which these words are taken, speaks of the whole earth greeting the promised Messiah. During Advent, God's people are called to learn new songs and to hear old songs in new ways, both as faithful individuals and as faith communities. The songs of scripture serve as texts for this year's Advent devotional. Each day, readers are invited to read a short passage of scripture, and to reflect on that passage using a brief meditation written by a member of The Young Clergy Women Project, an ecumenical organization supporting female clergy under the age of 40. The authors of this devotional represent a wide array of experiences, denominations, and geographical locations. People of all ages and denominations will be drawn deeper into the Advent season and prepare themselves for the coming of Christ.

It is available for pre-order on amazon costing £2.08 via <http://tinyurl.com/p6tdt6t> or via searching for the book on the amazon website. Unfortunately the Chalice website cannot handle international orders so the easiest way to get hold of the book here is via amazon.

Revd Sarah Moore

**5: Chaplain Opportunity with Oasis Hub Oldham** Full time (52 weeks/year), 2 year Fixed Term Contract, Salary: £29,442 per annum

Are you motivated, dynamic, resilient, visionary, pastoral and willing to get fully involved in the life of the community you are working in?

Oasis is looking to appoint a Chaplain at Oasis Hub Oldham. We looking to recruit a dynamic leader with clarity of vision and a passion for making a difference in our community.

Oasis Hub Oldham encompasses Oasis Academy Oldham, a well-established Oasis secondary school, and the nearby Oasis Academy Limeside, an outstanding local primary school. The job will, therefore involve working across both academy's students, staff and community groups.

This fixed term role is an exciting opportunity for the successful candidate to:

- develop, lead and grow an Oasis Church, chaplaincy/ministry team and volunteers that delivers a range of services such as pastoral care, family support, work with young people, mentoring and community activities.
- develop and build Christ-centred communities and grow the many contacts and opportunities within the Oasis Hub setting.
- provide spiritual guidance and support to staff and students at the Oasis Academies and across the activities of the wider Oasis Hub
- be the tangible portrayal of the Oasis ethos – modelling, teaching and representing our Oasis ethos values of inclusion, equality, relationships, hope and perseverance.

Oasis is committed to making a difference to the lives of the communities it works in, and as such you must show a willingness to demonstrate commitment to the values and behaviours which flow from the Oasis ethos. There is an occupational requirement for applicants to actively embrace the Christian ethos and values of Oasis.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff to share this commitment and to undergo appropriate checks, including enhanced DBS checks.

To find out more about Oasis, the work we do and the role, please go to our website [www.oasisuk.org](http://www.oasisuk.org) . To request a job information pack, including an application form please email [recruitment@oasisuk.org](mailto:recruitment@oasisuk.org) or call 020 7921 4259. Please indicate where you saw this vacancy.

**Previous applicants for this post need not apply.**

**Closing date for applications is: 9am Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.**

**Interviews will be held on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015.**

Applicants are encouraged, if possible, to make arrangements through the Academies to visit the hub prior to the interview

**6: Moderator's snapshots** Last week I attended the introductory meeting for the Passion for Bolton taking place next Easter Saturday (26<sup>th</sup> March) at 12 noon on the steps of Bolton town hall. About 90 people gathered for this launch meeting to sign up to contribute their talents to putting on this Passion play. It was an exciting meeting with the producer Geoff (photo on right) outlining what is involved in staging this event using 150+ actors, as well as a whole host of skills being needed for make-up, scenery, prayer ministry, sound systems (that's our own Revd Mark Bates on the left in the photo) etc. The last time this was staged 6 years ago it attracted between 3 – 4,000 people. It is a marvellous witness to the Christian message of Easter presented in a powerful way, and testimony to what is possible when Christians from across all traditions work together. Please pray for all involved and the massive amount of work and practice that needs to happen before March next year.



**7: Revd Stanley Hodges** We have been informed that the Revd Stanley Hodges died this morning. Stanley was 97 years of age and he leaves a widow, Edna.

Tewkesbury 1942-46; Melbourn, Cambs 1946-59; Wickford 1959-83; Broadway, Worcs 1984-88.

Please remember Edna and her family in your prayers.

**8: Macclesfield & Bollington – Celebratory Weekend**



**Macclesfield & Bollington  
United Reformed Church**  
*"The Church at Park Green & Shrigley Court"*

Please join us to celebrate the opening  
of our newly refurbished Townley Street Halls

**to be opened by David Briggs MBE**  
HM Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire

on

**Saturday 5th December 2015 at 3.00pm**

Please gather in the church building at  
Park Green, Macclesfield. SK11 7NA

Light refreshments will be served

Minister: Revd. Marion Tugwood  
email: [maztugwood@gmail.com](mailto:maztugwood@gmail.com)  
Telephone : 01625 613029

**9: Safeguarding Sessions** Leo Roberts (Children and Youth Development Officer) has arranged a number of workshops for churches to familiarise themselves with the new safeguarding material published by the United Reformed Church. There is still space for more! **If your church would like to host a session**, please contact [leo.roberts@ntlworld.com](mailto:leo.roberts@ntlworld.com)  
The sessions last approximately 2.5 hours.

More workshops will be announced as venues offer themselves.

Area	Date	Time	Venue	
Lancashire	21/11/15	2pm	Burnley & Nelson URC	
South	23/11/15	7:30pm	St Peter's Church	
Lancashire	24/11/15	7:30pm	Elswick URC	
Central	26/11/15	7:15pm	Charlestown URC	
Lancashire	1/12/15	7:15pm	Bolton-le-Sands URC	
Central	3/12/15	2pm	Radcliffe URC	<b>FULL</b>
Central	3/12/15	7pm	Radcliffe URC	
Central	21/01/2016	7:15pm	Hurst Nook URC	

**It is important that you book in to a session** so that Leo can ensure he has enough resources for each session. Please email him (using the email address above).

**10: St Margaret's Church – An advent Vigil for refugees**

St Margaret's Church,  
Westminster Abbey



Tuesday 8th December 2015  
20,000 welcomes: an Advent Vigil for Refugees

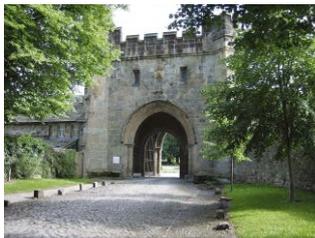
10.00 am to 4.30 pm  
arranged by the Churches' Refugee Network  
a network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.  
ALL WELCOME - for all or part of the time.  
Speakers, silence, meditation, discussion,  
and engagement.

**11: NWSynod – Retreat Group / Emmaus Road Prayer Community** The Emmaus Road Prayer Community (ERPC) is a group of likeminded people who have committed to meet regularly together and to make prayer the main focus for all that we do.

We have a 'core group' which meets regularly consisting of (Richard Davis) the Retreat Group Coordinator, John Piper (Central area) Martin Smith (Southern area) Lena Talbot and Michelle Jarmany (Lancashire area.)

We are always open to new people wishing to join our community and while currently we meet at a convent in Eccles we are hoping to expand so that there will be several ERPCs within the Synod. We commit to pray for each other, to attend 4 quarterly meetings each year. (Our next one is this Saturday – details below.) The first meeting of 2016 is our annual covenant service where we renew our commitment to one another.

We also commit to an annual retreat. This year our retreat was held at Whalley Abbey and was facilitated by Reverend Dr. Jan Berry. We began with tea and biscuits at 4.00 pm on Friday afternoon and departed after a wonderful lunch on Sunday. Our Retreat was entitled "On the Threshold" and Jan gently led us through the various thresholds of our lives. Thinking about where we had come from, where we are at the moment and into the future. We were delighted that Rev Richard Church and his wife Sheila were able to join us. Richard sent us this photo and his thoughts – this will also be in the next URC Newsletter.



Whalley Abbey was the venue for the annual retreat of the Emmaus Road Prayer Community. Taking place over the weekend of 16 – 18 October, the community which originated in the North Western Synod is hoping to grow into other parts of the country. This retreat was led by Rev Dr Jan Berry on a theme of Thresholds, participants felt refreshed and challenged by the weekend.

The Community taking as its inspiration Luke 24. 13 – 31 has identified four movements which it tries to practice in its common life: Stop, Look, Listen and Walk. Whalley Abbey was the venue for the annual retreat of the Emmaus Road Prayer Community.

Barrie & Mim Ryder wrote:

What a wonderful weekend! Barrie & I had no idea of what would take place over the weekend. We wouldn't have missed it for the world. So inspiring, Jan was great. Our welcome was so warm, no one knew us and we certainly didn't know anyone attending. That made no difference we were received like long standing friends. Thank you to everyone there for being so warm, friendly, entertaining and sincere. Whalley Abbey is a beautiful place, to have the privilege to stay was a wonderful experience. Hoping that we can share with you all again in 2016.

Love and blessings, Mim & Barrie Ryder

Minshull URC Crewe Cheshire. Merseyside Synod

**ALL OUR WELCOME TO ATTEND THE EVENTS BELOW**

**NWSynod – Retreat Group / Emmaus Road Prayer Community**

**Quarterly Meeting – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015**

10.00 am till 12.30 – followed by a bring and share lunch

at:

St Joseph's Convent, Greenleach Lane, Worsley, M28 2TS  
(01617 941062)

John Piper will facilitate the day, which will include an update from the ERPC Core Group meetings.

Richard Davis will lead worship, which will include time to reflect on and pray about the atrocities in Paris.

Martin Smith has produced a paper about being Missional on our 'Charism' which is Stop, Look, Listen and Walk.

There will be discussion about future dates and events.

**Emmaus Road Prayer Community Retreat 2016**

This will be held at The Windermere Centre

Arrivals for 4.00 pm tea and biscuits on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October

Depart after lunch Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October

More details to follow

**Future dates to look out for:**

**Ministers Winters School - Friday 29<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2016 at Windermere Centre**

**Ministers Summer School - Monday 13<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June at Windermere Centre**