
News from the NW Synod 11th 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

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 .

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 29th November – the first Sunday of Advent – and continue until Wednesday 6th 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: News from Forton URC The little URC at Forton, Lancashire, continues its delightful outreach programme. The November Charity Coffee Morning, held in the Garstang URC Hall, this year raised over £200 for restoration work at the Forton Church and Hall. Forton URC, "the little Church with a big heart in the Community", puts together an amazing raffle and bric-a-brac stall for this annual event. Who but Forton URC would have a prize-winning tromboncino to be won or a miniature Japanese Zen garden to be purchased? Forton URC also has a network of supporters outside the Church who regularly sew, knit and bake for their fund-raising events. The small congregation thanks God for the interest of all the people who allow their Church to continue its worship through their supporting efforts.

6: Refugee Crisis – A night of hope GMCT is proud to be hosting the event 'A Night of Hope.'

The project consists of two phases

First Phase

An original song 'Echoes of Love' is being recorded by Christian artists from across Greater Manchester. The choir is made up of Christians who have the heart to see justice in this crisis, regardless of experience.

Second phase

There will be a live event at the Manchester Cathedral Wednesday 9th December 2015.

- The event will be a gathering of churches from across Greater Manchester
- There will be live music, dance, and presentations by Christian Charities

The aim and objective of the two phases are to:

1. Raise a substantial financial contribution to the charity work, through the sale of the "single" and the tickets sale to the live event.
2. Seek to develop further our united Christian witness.

The Moderator is keen to encourage URC congregations to support this exciting event "A Night of Hope" being hosted in Manchester Cathedral. It is a marvellous way for us to continue to work together as Christians in the Manchester Area, and in view of our resolution at Synod challenging the government to think in fresh ways about the refugee crisis this is a creative way to respond and support the work with refugees through the purchase of tickets to the live event and the CD single.

Greater Manchester Churches Together Presents

A Night of Hope

Standing Against Injustice



Refugee Crisis

Matthew 25: 35

Date: 9th December 2015 7:15pm

Venue: Manchester Cathedral, Victoria Street, Manchester M3 1SX

Tickets: £20 Cons £12 - Tickets purchased in ADVANCE ONLY

For tickets please visit www.gmct.net

The Charity single will be available for purchase

7: Red Nose Day Circa 1987 Revd Dave Harkison was trawling his archives and discovered this photo of our new Moderator back in 1987 (while we were training at Westminster College, Cambridge) when he was captain, #7 in the crew, and coach for the Theological Students Boat Crew. The crew entered the May Bumps on the River Cam with some measure of success on at least one of the days!"



8: URC Member in Immigration Detention Robert Kityo is a young member of the Metropolitan Congregation of Wilbraham St Ninian's URC in Chorlton. He is a gay man from Uganda who is seeking sanctuary in the UK - in Uganda lesbian and gay people can be given a sentence of life imprisonment simply for how they love.

Robert has spent the last two years amassing evidence that he is gay - as the Home Office refused to believe him. His lawyers submitted all this evidence - including a letter from the Anglican Bishop of Manchester who met him at a prayer group for LGBT Christians - to the Home Office who decided, on 8th October, to refuse this claim but only told Robert on 10th November. As they told him they promptly detained him giving no time for his lawyers to seek an order from the courts to require the Home Office to reconsider.

The Home Office now maintain that Robert is gay but believe he could live discretely in Uganda despite the danger that exists there for lesbian and gay people and despite a ruling of the UK Supreme Court saying that the government cannot expect people to live like that.

This is a very worrying time for Robert who spent his first night in detention on Tuesday. He currently being held at Manchester Airport but is likely to be moved in a few days to an Immigration Detention Centre. His legal team are working hard to secure his release.

Please consider doing three things:

- remember Robert in your prayers - he is a faithful member of the Metropolitan Congregation and would value the thoughts and prayers of his fellow URC members;
- send him a text to let him know he's in your thoughts and prayers - it's very lonely in detention and hard to visit - but don't expect a text back as his credit on his phone will be low - his number is 07448 522381
- sign and advertise the petition to the Home Secretary urging her to think again: <https://www.change.org/p/rt-hon-theresa-may-mp-robert-must-stay-a-right-to-be-gay>



Future dates to look out for:

Ministers Winters School - Friday 29th - Sunday 31st Jan 2016 at Windermere Centre

Ministers Summer School - Monday 13th – Thursday 16th June at Windermere Centre