

NEWS FROM THE NORTH WESTERN SYNOD 8 AUGUST 2018



From now until the beginning of September the newsletter will be sent out on an occasional basis rather than every week.

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1: **Changes in Synod Finance Office**

As a number of you will already know, Tony Rutherford our Synod Finance officer retired at the end of the July after 21 years (to the day) service to Synod and Local Churches. We thank Tony for his service and we will undoubtedly miss his professionalism and knowledge of local churches and the workings of finance in the United Reformed Church. We wish Tony well in his retirement and hope that the weather falls kindly on his various walking expeditions.

Whilst we recruit a permanent replacement for Tony, we have put some temporary arrangements in place. Helen Hogg who is the Finance Officer at Northern Synod is providing some part time cover to maintain our accounts and process expenses and payments. I will pick up any wider queries from local churches. Both of us have access to Tony's old e-mail address, so please continue to use the finance@nwsynod.org.uk address that you have previously used for any general finance matters. We will try to respond as soon as we can but particularly as Helen is only working for us on a part-time basis could you please allow at least ten days for a response to your email. If you are ringing with any questions could you use the main synod number 0161 789 5583 and Kerry or Hazel will pass any messages on.

Mike Hart
Synod Treasurer

2: Vacancy for a Synod Finance Officer – background information

The North Western Synod of the United Reformed Church (“the Synod”) is one of thirteen Synods that make up the United Reformed Church. It has oversight of the local churches and activities of the URC in much of the North West of England, covering parts of Derbyshire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria.

The United Reformed Church (North Western Province) Trust Limited (“the Trust”) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered The Trust is the charity trustee of all the assets of the Synod and of the church buildings and manses held on behalf of the local churches in the Synod and acts as the custodian trustee of all the others assets of the local churches in the Synod.

The Trust’s accounts for the 2017 financial year, which incorporate the costs of the Synod show a turnover for 2017 of £950,000 and Assets of £7.5m.

The Synod Finance Officer is responsible for all aspects of the day to day financial work of the Synod and the Trust. This includes the management of investments held by the Trust and those managed on behalf of local churches. The finance officer is also responsible for providing advice on finance matters to local churches. The Finance Officer is responsible to the Synod Treasurer who is one of the officers of the Synod and a Trustee of the Trust Company. The post is based at the Synod Offices in Eccles and will involve some travel to local churches, to meetings with professional advisers and to meetings with national church officers and other synods.

The closing date is 28 August 2018. Please contact the synod office for person specification and application form. (admin@nwsynod.org.uk or 0161 789 5583)

3: Mark’s gospel: To you with love from the Synod!

The Synod is giving the members of every congregation a copy of Mark’s gospel as part of your journey with Jesus. It has been translated by Lawrence Moore and designed by Mike Walsh. It includes reading notes. This is part of our commitment to missional discipleship: *Walking the Way, living the life of Jesus today*. Our hope is that you will use it in all sorts of different ways in your journey with Jesus. That is, after all, why Mark wrote his gospel: to call people to follow Jesus and to show them what that had meant for the very first disciples. So use it for personal and group study, discussion groups, Elders’ Meetings, Church Meetings and in worship and preaching.

The gospels will be handed out at services at the beginning of September.

The Mission & Discipleship Team has produced worship resources based around Mark 1:1: if you are not on their mailing list, and wish to receive a copy, please contact Lawrence Moore on lawrence.moore@nwsynod.org.uk.

The Mission & Discipleship mentors (Dave, Darren and Daleen) will be distributing the copies of the gospel to churches in their patch during August. If you would like to use that opportunity to arrange to talk through missional discipleship in your own Missional Partnership or church, you can contact them:

dave.fraser@nwsynod.org.uk (South)

darren.holland@nwsynod.org.uk (Central)

daleen.tencate@nwsynod.org.uk (Lancs)

Booklets will be distributed directly to the Cumbria churches. Please can church secretaries contact the office directly (admin@nwsynod.org.uk or 0161 789 5583) indicating how many copies your church needs and they will be sent out to you.

4: Revd Margaret Munford celebrates 40 years since her ordination



The Revd Margaret Munford celebrated forty years since her ordination with a shared lunch at Grange over sands URC. She then shared with the congregation some of her memories and reflections from her years of service. While things had changed she saw a positive future for the church in Grange as the URC and Methodists go through the process of uniting.

5: Revd John Piper – retirement celebration

On Saturday 14th July 150 people gathered to wish Revd John Piper a long and happy retirement. John has been Minister at Shaw and Heyside United Reformed Church on Rochdale Road for 12 years and the members were determined to give him an afternoon to remember,

As well as leading the church John has also served as Treasurer to the NW Synod of the URC and, in retirement, will be serving the national URC as the deputy Treasurer. He also worked with the Oldham Town Centre chaplaincy and the Street Angels. Near the beginning of his ministry in Shaw John, along with Revd David Jones the Methodist Minister, set up the Churches Together Group which is strong and still developing and, through this group, a branch of the Foodbank was opened in Shaw. The latter part of his ministry in Shaw has seen him leading the building of an extension to the church which can be let out to interested groups.

The afternoon of celebration of his ministry began with a short service containing John's favourite Bible readings and hymns as well as 'The Prodigal Son – a pantomime' specially written for the occasion. At the end of the service John was presented with a Robert 'mouseman' Thompson nut bowl and a substantial cheque.

Following the service, the church members provided a superb buffet and there was plenty of time for guests to catch up and share anecdotes about John's ministry.



6: Bramhall URC at Stockport Pride Celebrations

At the end of July, Bramhall URC took a stall in Stockport Market Place to join Stockport Pride celebrations- and had a great day. The atmosphere was friendly, and many people were surprised and really pleased to see a church represented there, they had never seen one before at one of these events. There were some challenging questions - in a positive and inquisitive way – leading to good, in-depth conversations.

The free cupcakes went down very well, and a magnificent rainbow cake baked by Philip was centre of attention. Both proved to be a good basis for starting conversations about faith and church.

The stall was busy all day, and lots of leaflets on Bramhall URC's various activities were given out. Several people tried their hand at knitting.

The youngest member of the team, Rebecca, chatted all day about faith, younger people and changing church in 21st century.

Bramhall URC is proud to be say we are an **Everybody Welcome Church** – particularly because so many people who came to the stand have had bad experiences or just see church as judgemental. Stockport Pride is the annual festival celebrating Stockport's LGBT Community



7: Line Management Training

Are you a volunteer or a staff member line managing people? This course is designed just for you! It gives you the opportunity to learn about the tools and skills required for first Line Management, with sessions exploring the essentials required for line managing people. Training will be delivered by Jane Baird and Helen Bird from URC Church House. Venue: Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Manchester M14 5JP

Session one: 17th September 9.30am to 4.30pm - the basics: managing performance (induction, probation, appraisals); working hours; managing absence: holidays, 'time off in lieu' and sickness.

Session two: 18th September 9.30am to 4.30pm - flexible working, sickness, capability, disciplinary, grievance and equalities.

It is advisable to attend both sessions, but you can attend just one of them. You can attend daily or book Bed and Breakfast at LKH or elsewhere.

Costs: Hire of the room (which will be divided amongst the Synods attending). Bed and breakfast £45 per person per night. Tea/coffee and biscuits £1.65 per person. Lunch £10 per person for a two-course meal plus tea/coffee. Dinner £15 per person.

Places must be booked via Rita Griffiths, Mersey Synod Clerk. synodclerk@urcmerseysynod.org.uk
Tel. 07838 103310 *Please book for the course as soon as possible so that we can gauge the interest.*
Accommodation at Luther King House can be booked via Rita or directly with LKH (0161 224 6404). You are advised to book quickly.