



The North Western Synod
of the **United Reformed Church**

North Western Synod Newsletter

Good News Stories & Events

- ⇒ [Page 1 Fresh Expression Workshop held in Lancashire](#)
- ⇒ [Page 2 Spring Synod 19 March 2022](#)
- ⇒ [Page 3 Safeguarding training dates February to April 2022](#)
- ⇒ [Page 4 Northern College Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders](#)
- ⇒ [Page 5 Children & Youth News...Competition time](#)
- ⇒ [Page 6 Holiday Cub material](#)
- ⇒ [Page 7 Online training opportunities](#)
- ⇒ [Page 8 Talking about...engaging with schools and colleges](#)
- ⇒ [Page 9 Parenting For Faith](#)
- ⇒ [Page 10 North West Children and Youth Work Thing...](#)
- ⇒ [Page 11 Knitted Bible](#)

News

- ⇒ [Page 12 A Plough for Ukraine: Garstang URC](#)
- ⇒ [Page 13 Welcome Churches](#)
- ⇒ [Page 14 Tree planting for the 50th Anniversary of the United Reformed Church](#)
- ⇒ [Page 15 Whitworth Art Gallery Director Alistair Hudson - asked to resign by University because of Forensic Architecture exhibition and support for Palestine](#)
- ⇒ [Page 16 North Western Synod—Deputy Synod Clerk](#)

People & Prayers

- ⇒ [Page 17 Meet...Christopher Whitehead](#)
- ⇒ [Page 18 For your Prayers](#)

Fresh Expression Workshop held in Lancashire

Elders from St Anne's, Marton and Bispham URC met together for a morning of shared experience, lively conversation and learning about new ways of being church. They talked together about connecting with their communities and how to encourage new disciples when people don't 'go to church'. Changing culture in the 21st century means that as churches, we need to look for new ways of sharing our faith and worshipping God, and throughout the URC, there are many examples of these new types of 'church'.

Examples of new expressions of church can be viewed on the URC YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QN0dY3YU5fk&t=11s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yf8ibE4T3W0&t=10s>

We also looked at the new resource (Book) from the FX Group: Godsend by Michael Moynach

Linda Raynar (URC Co-ordinator for FX) and Daleen ten Cate (Mission Mentor for Lancashire)



Spring Synod 19 March 2022

Our Spring Synod Meeting will take place on Saturday 19th March at Oasis MediaCityUK. Please click [here](#) for the Book of Reports. If you would like the Zoom link please contact Kerry at the Synod Office at office@nwsynod.org.uk



The North Western Synod of the **United Reformed Church**



Book of Reports for Synod Meeting on

Saturday 19th March, 10am
Media City Church and Oasis
King William Street
Salford
M50 3UQ

Safeguarding training dates February to April 2022

Foundation (formerly Basic) and Intermediate Safeguarding Training will continue to be delivered on zoom, but these arrangements will be reviewed in April 2022 dependent on the Covid situation and guidelines.

The URC Training Framework determines what level of training is mandatory for each role in the church, see the attached Framework link for guidance [Safeguarding Training Framework](#)

Foundation (formerly Basic) Safeguarding training

The 2-hour online training session is for **ALL volunteers and paid workers, including Ministers and elders** who have **NOT** attended any URC Safeguarding training in the last 3 years.

The sessions are limited to a maximum of 20 people per session. Anyone who registers to attend the training will then be sent the Zoom link for the relevant training session.

If you haven't already attended, please register your interest with the Synod Safeguarding Adviser, by emailing Julie Rafferty on: safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk

Session no	Date	Day	Time
3	05/04/2022	Tuesday	7-9pm

Intermediate training

The 2.5-hour online training sessions are again for **ALL volunteers and paid workers, including Ministers and elders** who **have completed** either the recent URC Basic Safeguarding training and/ or the URC Intermediate Safeguarding training (delivered in 2018 and 2019 by myself)

Again, the sessions are limited to a maximum of 20 people per session. Anyone who registers to attend the training will then be sent the Zoom link for the relevant training session.

Please register for one of the training sessions with the Synod Safeguarding Adviser, by emailing Julie Rafferty on: safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk

Session no	Date	Day	Time
4	21/03/2022	Monday	6.30-9pm
5	20/04/2022	Wednesday	10am – 12.30pm



**NORTHERN
COLLEGE**

Our popular annual Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Conference 2022

“The Church in and of the Community”

Thursday 12 May – Saturday 14 May 2022. (Attendance Thursday-Friday, OR Saturday, OR Thursday-Saturday. Costings on request)

We plan to hold this on site this year, and the programme will include a visit to a community project included in the cost.

Contact rosalind.selby@lutherking.ac.uk

for further details, costings and bookings.

Children and Youth News

Competition time...

The Children and Youth Office are running a 'Design-A-Birthday-Card' competition to coincide with the launch of URC CHILDREN at General Assembly this summer.

WE are inviting designs from anyone in the age group 12 and under for a birthday card which churches and synods can use to send to their children to mark their special day.

Designs should be on A4 and should include a space for the URC Children logo. Designs may be on paper or digital and should be sent to children.youth@urc.org.uk or Children and Youth, United Reformed Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT by **Friday 10 June 2022**. Please also tell us your name and age, your connection with the URC, an email address where you can be contacted, and include a signature from parent or carer.

Competition time

URC Children – Birthday card competition **for 12s and under**

Design a card that a church or synod could send to a child aged 1 to 12 on their birthday. Maximum three entries per child.

Designs should be A4 paper or digital and include a space for the URC Children logo.

Send entries to children.youth@urc.org.uk or Children and Youth, United Reformed Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT by **Friday 10 June 2022**.

Please include name and age, connection with the URC, contact email address, and a signature from parent or carer.



Holiday Club Material

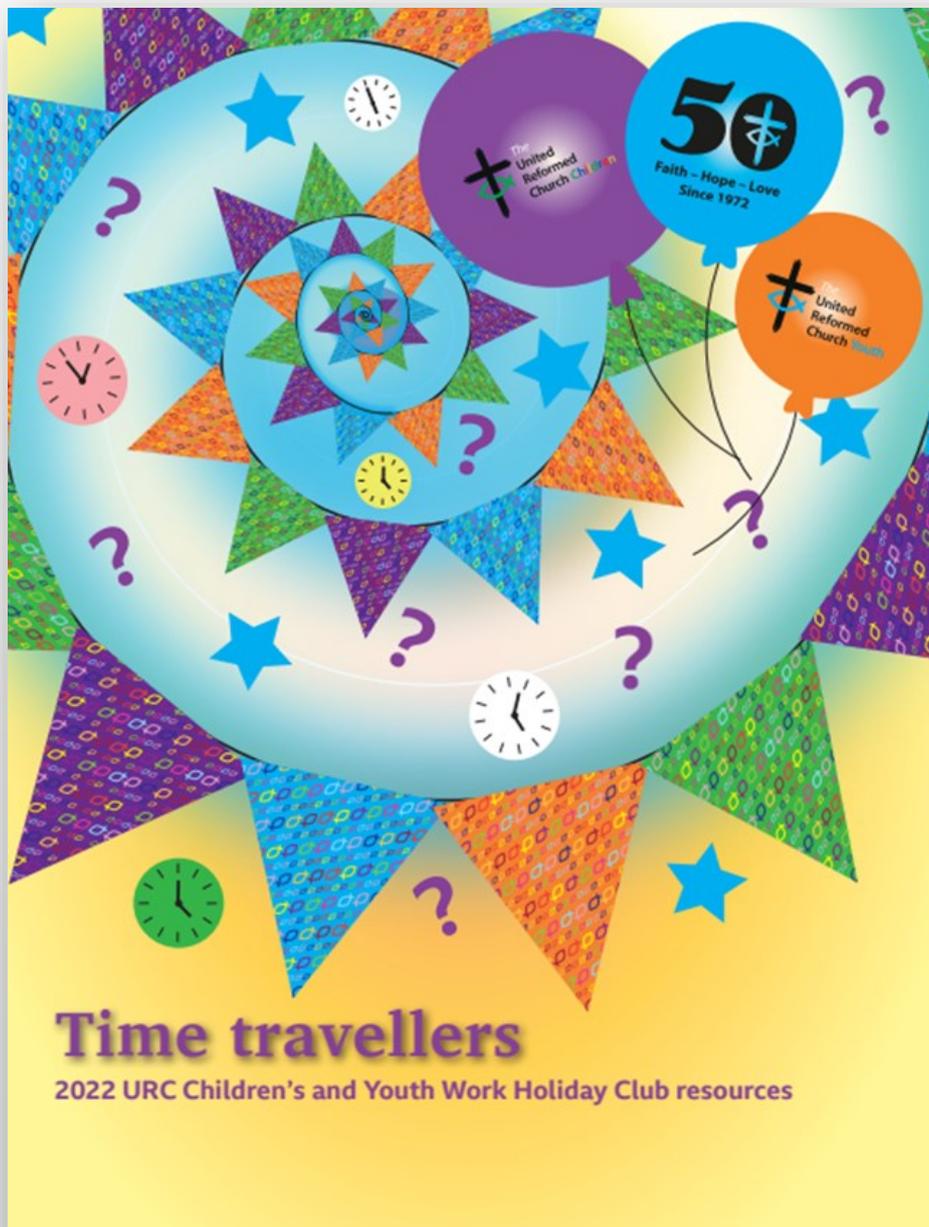
Following the success of Supersleuths, the URC's first ever holiday club materials, we are able to confirm that the team are already rolling up their sleeves and starting to plan the next one.

Entitled "Timetravellers", it will pick up on the theme of Jubilee which is the Children's and Youth Work theme for 2022 and take children and volunteers on a whirlwind journey across the centuries in their time machine.

As previously, it will include filmed dramas, original music, and appendices to enable you to adapt the material for 11 to 14s, vintage holiday clubs or an intergenerational setting.

It could be used for the usual style of holiday club, for a special weekend event, for a children's group from week to week—the possibilities are endless. Make a note to watch out for it appearing on our website in May 2022 to give plenty of time for planning.

Supersleuths will remain there for you to use too. <https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people/children-youth-work/supersleuths/>



Inclusive practice: providing pastoral support for LGBT+ young people

Free online training session led by Frontier Youth Trust

Tuesday 29 March 2022

7:00pm -8:30pm

Discussion topics will include:

- **Creating LGBT+ inclusive environments**
- **Inclusive language and use of pronouns**
- **Pastorally supporting LGBT+ young people**

Register at

www.bit.ly/inclusive-practice



**SOUTHERN
SYNOD**

Children & Youth Work

Talking about... Engaging With Schools and Colleges

24th March 2022 7-8pm

Churches often have links with their local schools, and almost all universities have a chaplaincy or, at least a chaplain - but what opportunities and benefits are offered by connections with Secondary schools and F.E. Colleges? How might we engage with the upper age range of the education sector? Should we?

In this session, we will hear from 2 practitioners who are working with young people in secondary and tertiary education and you will have the chance to hear their insights and share your thoughts, concerns and joys on this aspect of the Church's mission.

**Get your free ticket from
<https://bit.ly/3HPL3cV>**



We'd love to share the good news with children and young people - but there aren't any in my church"

Just as Jesus' ministry happened where people were, we sometimes have to leave the comfort of our own environment to meet and reach people with whom we don't normally have contact.

For children and young people, that can often mean schools and colleges. In this session you will have the opportunity to hear from two youth and community work practitioners with experience of youth work in education settings:

Ruth Watson is a URC Minister. She currently exercises a Special Category Ministry MediaCityUK Church and Community Hub in Salford Quays. This is a partnership between Oasis and the URC. Her role is to build a church community in the Hub serving both the Academy and the local communities of Ordsall/Langworthy estates and MediaCity. Ruth is involved with the Academy through chaplaincy and mentoring and occasional RE lessons; and with the community through PlaySpace; Talk English Café and sometimes with Youth Club and building up Holy Hub a Thursday evening Church Group.

Nigel Roberts is the Further Education Chaplaincy Ambassador in the West Midlands area as part of the work of the West Midlands Churches Further Education Council. Nigel has a wealth knowledge and experience in FE Chaplaincy and a passion to help church communities engage with and support those within the FE community in the West Midlands and beyond. In 2022 Nigel has launched FE Sunday – being held for the first time ever on Sunday 15 May 2022 – as an opportunity to pray for your local colleges and for the Further Education sector, and to consider how your church could love and serve your local college. More details and resources will become available soon...

Book your FREE ticket at <https://bit.ly/3HPL3cV> and share your experiences, joys and frustrations as we talk about engaging with the education sector



parenting for faith®

A course for anyone who longs for children and young people to know God for themselves.

A free 6 week zoom course which will run from 7pm to 8.30pm on the following dates:

25 April 2022
9 May 2022
23 May 2022
6 June 2022
20 June 2022
4 July 2022

To book your place please contact your Synod CYDO+.

Parenting For Faith

Our CYDO, along with the children and youth work colleagues from the other northerly synods, are running a second Parenting For Faith course. Meeting fortnightly, the 6 sessions are aimed at parents, grandparents, carers and those who work with children as part of their church's mission – including parents & toddler groups and Junior Church.

It is, of course, free of charge. To book a place, please email Leo on cydo@nwsynod.org.uk

NORTHWEST CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK THING...

MAY
7
2022

DO YOU WORK WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR CHURCH?

JOIN OTHERS FROM ACROSS THE NORTHWEST FOR A CONVERSATION ON MINISTRY IN A FAST-CHANGING WORLD

Organised in conjunction with colleagues from Mersey Synod and other denominations in the North West, this conference is for all those who work on behalf of a local church with children and/or young people. The day will include keynote speakers, workshops and worship.

Venue: All Hallows Catholic School, Penwortham

Cost: £10.00 per person

Tickets: [Northwest Childrens & Youth Work Thing! \(07-May-2022\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)

Workshop topics include:

- Identifying and Nurturing Young Leaders
- Growing Faith in Toddler Groups
- Disability and Inclusion
- Exploring Faith With Young People
- Creative Ideas for Prayer and Exploring Faith with Children
- Supporting Faith at Home



The Knitted Bible

Come along and browse 33 scenes from the Old and New Testaments in a unique way!

On display at Hurst Nook URC, Nook Lane, Hurst, Ashton Under Lyne, OL6 9HJ

**Friday 25th March
10-12am; 2-4pm; 7-9pm**

**Saturday 26th March
10-12am; 2-4pm**

**Sunday 27th March
1-4pm**



Entry (including refreshments) : £****
Group viewings welcome but please contact 0161 339 2207 or marilyn.piper50@gmail.com to arrange if possible

A Plough for Ukraine: Garstang URC

For most of the last 13 years our churchyard has been home to a visible representation of the words of the prophets Isaiah and Micah:

“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”.

Made by a local blacksmith from a disused farm plough, and incorporating wartime relics and replicas, our Peace Plough, commissioned and donated by one of our former members, stands as a reminder of the Gospel call to be peacemakers.



As the situation in Ukraine unfolds, the witness of that sculpture, now adorned with the blue and yellow of that country, is needed more than ever; for us it reminds us of the need to continue, as individuals and as a church, to give through the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeal to meet the needs of the people of Ukraine wherever they now are. It also helps us focus our prayers that the Gospel call to be peacemakers will be heard, and that justice for Ukraine will be found.

The Elders and Members of Garstang URC

Welcome Churches

As you all know, following on from the tragic events in Afghanistan and more recently in the Ukraine, the Northwest Area received and will receive in the near future, many Asylum seekers and Refugees. Many of our churches already engage with Asylum seekers and Refugees but not many of our churches are registered as a Welcome Church. As followers of Jesus we ought to welcome the stranger and show compassion. A few of us met up with Emma Billington, the North of England Regional Coordinator for Welcome Churches, to learn more and to see how we can register to become a Welcome Church. To find out more, please follow the link:



<https://youtu.be/5V86ybJzQPA>

Refugees and asylum seekers are a very transient people group. Often, through no choice of their own, they are required to move around the UK at short notice. This means that they can arrive in a new place feeling isolated, and being unfamiliar with their new surroundings. When they move they often want to find another church community quickly, who can welcome them and support them.

[To apply to join the Welcome Network, please fill out our online application from at Welcome Churches](#)

Tree planting for the 50th Anniversary of the United Reformed Church

As part of the celebrations of the United Reformed Church 50th Anniversary every Synod was invited to plant at least 50 trees. Many churches already took on this challenge. If your church yard doesn't have enough space for another tree, please offer to plant a tree in your local school, park, woodlands or abroad. Once you planted your tree, please let Kerry (and the Green Apostles) know at the Synod Office (Office@nwsynod.org.uk) or send in photos to the Synod Newsletter in order to spread the good news.

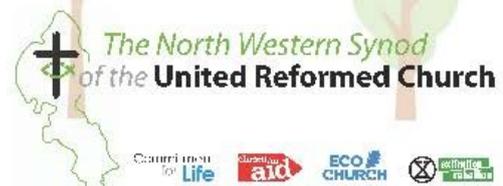
'Eternal God, Your love's
Treemendous
glory!'

Plant a Tree!
to Celebrate **50** Years
of the URC!

What better way to mark the 50th Anniversary of our church than to plant a commemorative tree in your church grounds.

Every Synod is looking to find 50 churches to plant a new tree as part of our celebrations.

Just let us know when you have planted one, maybe send us a picture from the ceremony, and we'll let you all know when 50 have been planted.



Commitment
to Life

United
aid

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CHURCH

United
reformation

Whitworth Art Gallery Director Alistair Hudson - asked to resign by University because of Forensic Architecture exhibition and support for Palestine

If you saw the excellent Forensic Architecture exhibition 'Cloud Studies' at the Whitworth Art Gallery last year (or even if you didn't), we hope you will support this campaign about the University's capitulation to lobbyists for the Israeli state and their attempt to get rid of the Director of the Whitworth Art Gallery, Alistair Hudson.

This is an edited version of a letter from Manchester Palestine Solidarity Campaign about the campaign to support the Director of the Whitworth Art Gallery, Alistair Hudson – who had been asked to resign by the University because of the Forensic Architecture exhibition last year and specifically the statement about Palestine which was withdrawn and then reinstated following a complaint by UK Lawyers for Israel.

The issue is not closed. It would still be helpful if you could write to the President and Vice Chancellor, Nancy Rothwell: president@manchester.ac.uk expressing your concerns, and copy to Lemn Sissay, Chancellor: chancellor@manchester.ac.uk

For more detail about the issue, the Guardian has a considerably better article on the website (Guardian article 1.3.22

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/01/manchester-university-staff-sign-letter-alistair-hudson-whitworth-palestine>) than appeared in the paper version; much more of the staff letter and the artists threatening to withdraw their exhibits from Manchester, as well as the local councillor and, most important, a Palestinian voice.

Click [here](#) for a letter of complaint to the University President and Vice Chancellor, Nancy Rothwell, and what appears to be a standard letter from the University to those who have complained, and a further very clear response which can be used or adapted. Likewise anyone with contacts or knowledge of the artists involved is welcome to reinforce the demands that the University (and especially its woefully inadequate Vice Chancellor Nancy Rothwell) back down at once and end their racism against the Palestinians.

The UCU (lecturers union) were present at the demonstration outside the University on 1st March and we should also be supporting their dispute, locally and nationally. It was great to see the students who are likewise supporting the union and supporting the Palestinians whose cause is experiencing the censorship and worse across a number of universities. And particularly thanks to Jewish Voice for Labour for making clear that they are not represented by the so-called UK Lawyers for Israel, and to the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP) for their support nationally.

We should not let up on this. We must support Alistair Hudson and all the staff at the Whitworth Art Gallery for holding the Forensic Architecture exhibition and we must support the wider campaign to end the anti-Palestinian racism in this and all our universities.

Revd Kate Gray



Deputy Synod Clerk

Fixed term 2 year contract, 37.5 hours per week

Salary : £32,000 per annum

North Western Synod of the United Reformed Church stretches from the Scottish borders through Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and into parts of Cheshire and Derbyshire. The Synod's purpose is to help local churches in their mission to reach out to the people around them with love, truth, justice and peace, to make this world more as God wants it to be.

This role supports the work of the Synod Clerk, and the committees of Synod in developing the smooth, efficient and effective running of its processes; achieving good compliance for its committees and ensuring a good foundation for their work.

You are well organized, confident and experienced in administration, setting up and minuting meetings and in planning and managing projects. You will be experienced in working collaboratively and in taking initiative when and where necessary.

We can offer you a friendly work environment in our Synod office at 20 Sandpiper Quay, Modwen Road, Salford M5 3EZ. If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please contact us for a Job Description and application form (noting that we do not accept CVs): clerk@nwsynod.org.uk or telephone 0161 769 1122.

Closing date for completed application forms: midday on 4th April 2022. Interviews week commencing 25th April 2022

Meet... Christopher Whitehead (Chair elect)



Christopher Whitehead - My life in 260 words.

I was born and schooled in Edinburgh and then attended the Universities of Edinburgh and Cambridge. I was baptised and received into membership of the Church of Scotland, Mayfield Church, Edinburgh on Good Friday, 1966. In sequence, I then worshipped at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge; Broadway Presbyterian Church, New York; Heaton Moor URC., ending up at Bramhall URC in 1978. So I come from the Presbyterian wing of the URC.

At Bramhall, I am a serving elder, co-chair of elders and pulpit supply secretary and have been on management committee, a junior church teacher and church secretary.

Wider afield, I have served the URC as a Governor at Northern College, on the National Assessment Board, as an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher and was Convenor of the Bolton and Salford Missional Partnership Steering Group for three year and the South Area Pastoral Committee for six.

My working life has been in academia as a chemist, moving to the the University of Manchester in 1977 where I worked my way through the ranks ending up as Professor and Head of Department before my retirement in 2014.

Since retirement, I have become a Trustee of the Daphne Jackson Trust, an educational charity which provides support to people who have to take a career break to accommodate an extended period of caring responsibilities or illness.

I was married to Rosemary in 1972 and so, just like the URC, we will celebrate a 50th anniversary later this year! We have two children and four grandchildren. Hobbies include gardening, travel and classical music , especially opera.

For your prayers

In each newsletter we would like to share peoples situations and Churches who you might remember in your prayers. If you have any prayer requests to include in this section please send them to office@nwsynod.org.uk.

This week we invite you to pray for:

- For the congregations of churches which have decided to close, and for all those who are facing difficult decisions about the future of their fellowships and buildings.
- Those preparing and planning for Synod Meeting on 19th March 2022



Outside Chorlton Central Church
BARLOW MOOR ROAD M21 8BF

Tuesday 22 March 6.30–7.30

An opportunity to gather together in silence and with music to hold the people of Ukraine in our thoughts.

If possible bring a candle. If you have a poem, an image, a message or a prayer that you want to leave behind these can be displayed on the railings.

Everyone welcome

Any questions please ring 07473813710

