

*Note: Items headed in grey have appeared in the newsletter previously*

## Congratulations

Congratulations and good wishes to Clare Downing and Peter Pay as they take up the role of Moderators of General Assembly; please remember Clare and Peter in your prayers.

## Synod Pastoral Committee (South East)

Alan Jones has stepped down as Convener of the SPC(SE). Thank you to him for all the hard work that he has done in this role. Revd Ruth Dillon (SPC(North East) Convener) will be temporary convener until a new convener is appointed. If you need to make contact with the SPC(SE) then please do so via the Synod Office.

## Coronavirus: URC guidance around face coverings

The URC's guidance can be viewed at the following link: <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3535-coronavirus-urc-guidance-around-face-coverings>

## URC Information Guides

The URC have produced a number of new guides to help churches in the current climate. All the latest guides can be found at the following link: <https://urc.org.uk/information-guides.html>.

## URC holds its first digital General Assembly and Mission Council

For the first time in its history, the United Reformed Church (URC) live-streamed its General Assembly – the URC's main decision-making body – on YouTube on 11 July. The main business of this Assembly was worship and the inductions of Assembly-appointed officers. Namely, the Revd Dr John Bradbury as URC General Secretary, and the Revd Clare Downing and Peter Pay as Moderators of the General Assembly. The event included contributions from ecumenical partners, including Hannah Brock Womack who was prevented from taking up her Fourth Presidency with Churches Together England due to being in a same-sex marriage, and the Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, former President of the Methodist Conference. The URC also held a digital version of Mission Council – the executive body of General Assembly – on 10 July. Items discussed included: the URC's safeguarding strategy 2020-2025, pastoral supervision following the outcomes of the Past Case Review Learning Report, and the future of Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today, the URC's focus of lifelong missional discipleship. A round up of General Assembly can be found [here](#), and a round up of Mission Council [here](#).

## October meeting of Wessex Synod

It has been decided by the Synod Executive that Synod on 10<sup>th</sup> October will be a virtual meeting – details to follow.

## September Area Gatherings go online

We plan to hold the September Area Gatherings on the dates we have set, but they will all be Zoom meetings.

The gatherings will be an opportunity to share the experiences of lockdown and the various ways we have been supporting our people and worshipping together while physical meetings have not been possible.

In particular, let's share the things we have learnt and the different ways of being church that we will take with us into God's future.

Area	Date	Venue
South West	Monday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Online
North West	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Online
South East	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Online
North East	Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Online

## News Update

News Update is seeking anything of interest for the denomination as a whole from across the country – and the nations.

Any news/photos/event information for the next edition should be sent to:

[ann-marie.abbasah@urc.org.uk](mailto:ann-marie.abbasah@urc.org.uk)

You can subscribe to News Update via the link on the URC website.

[View the July/August News Update here](#)

## Reform

The digital version of Reform Magazine is available for free for as long as lockdown continues and is available here: <https://www.reform-magazine.co.uk/2020/03/read-reform-for-free/>

## *A reminder to: Save the Date – Synod Big Day Out 2021*

URC Wessex Synod - Big Day Out

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Time: 11am till 5pm

Venue: Hollycombe Steam Fair and Museum near Liss

(Wessex Synod will have sole use of the whole site)

Theme: Heroes and Villains

More details to follow.

## Upcoming Synod events

Bookings for all events and training courses to

Ruth Heine at the Synod Office

Email: [bookings@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:bookings@urcwessex.org.uk)

Tel: 023 8067 4513

## Development and Support

### Lay Presidency at the Sacraments training

**Lay Presidency at the Sacraments training, Thursday 30 July 2020, 7pm - 9pm** via Zoom. Please book a place if you need to do this training.

### A Taste of Stepwise – short film

Here is the link to a short 5 minute film introducing Stepwise, '[A Taste of Stepwise](#)'. Further information about Stepwise on the [Synod website, Stepwise page](#).

### Stepwise goes online!

An online group for the Stepwise Faith Filled Life Stream will be starting in September. There is one place available in the group. If you are interested, please let me know as soon as possible and complete the [participant form](#).

## Children's and Youth Events and Training

### Mental Health First Aid training – *update*

Mental Health First Aid **Awareness training**. This is a four-hour course online via Zoom. The next date for training is on Friday 11 September, 9am – 1pm. Places are limited, please contact me to reserve your place.

An online replacement for the **2-day certificated course** is now available across four afternoon sessions with some self-study in between. If you are interested in becoming a **Mental Health First Aider**, please let me know and I will give you further details of dates and times. The next course starts in September but you will need to register your place by the end of August. Wessex Synod covers the cost for participants from URCs and LEPs in Wessex Synod.

### Safeguarding Training – *online success!*

The first online safeguarding training course, held across 3 sessions, has been a success. There will be further online courses. If you are interested in attending safeguarding training, please contact me so that I can let you know the next online training dates.

### Bible Chatmats resource

A brilliant FREE resource from the Diocese of Bath and Wells. **Bible Chatmats** help families or small groups to engage with Bible passages using doodling and conversation. New ones are added weekly. Free to download, check them out here <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/youth-children/resources/bible-chat-mat/>

Here is an example – [Jesus the Miracle Maker](#).

## Children's Day – *update*

**Saturday 12 September 2020.** Please continue to save the date! We are looking to offer this day in some format (possibly online) and will keep in touch regarding the details once we know more about restrictions in September.

## Synod Youth Weekend – *change of date to November*

Unfortunately, the date in May had to be cancelled but we are pleased to announce that the weekend has been re-scheduled for **14-15 November 2020**. At Park Place Pastoral Centre, Wickham, near Fareham, PO17 5HA. For ages 14 - 25 years. A chance to have your say, have fun, learn basic sign language and explore spirituality and prayer.

## Children's & Youth resources – *on the synod website*

Take a look at the Children's & Youth [resources page](#) on the Synod website!

Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

Updates from Children's & Youth desk at Church House

## Triologue – *new weekly online YouTube broadcast for 16 to 25 year olds*

**Every Thursday at 7pm.** URC Youth offer a weekly online live YouTube broadcast called 'Triologue'. Aimed at 16 to 25 year olds, each session explores a theme alongside a Bible passage, providing a spring board for further discussion and reflection. 3 Panellists, 3 Questions, 3 Values. Further information and the link to join the discussions <https://urc.org.uk/events-and-opportunities>

## Does your church have a good news story?

If your church has something it would like to share with people via the Synod Website page "[Stories from our Churches](#)", please send the article to the [Synod Office](#) and we will publish it on that page.

*NB If using photographs please ensure you have signed permission from those people featured for it to be published on the Synod Website (not just for your own personal church's use) and supply this at the same time as submitting the article.*

New Stories are added as when they are received, so do keep an eye on the page regularly.

## Prayer Calendar

The Synod Prayer Calendar is available on the Synod Website and also each month in this newsletter.

Please note that it is updated from time to time, for example when a church closes it will be removed from the list.

Please refer to the website/enewsletter before printing weekly prayer sheets to ensure the most up to date information. Thank you.

August	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford: Summertown</li> <li>• Verwood</li> <li>• Weybridge</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading: Park</li> <li>• Isle of Wight: Ryde</li> </ul>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parkstone</li> <li>• Guildford: Westborough Church</li> <li>• Portsmouth: Buckland</li> </ul>
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tadley</li> <li>• Weymouth: Radipole</li> </ul>
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marlow</li> <li>• Christchurch: Burton Green</li> <li>• Southampton: Bitterne</li> </ul>
September	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salisbury: Broad Chalke</li> <li>• Southampton: Isaac Watts Memorial Church</li> </ul>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadstone</li> <li>• Romsey: Abbey URC</li> </ul>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andover</li> <li>• Trinity Church, Totton</li> </ul>
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wareham</li> <li>• The Spire Church, Farnham</li> </ul>
<p>Items for the next edition to <a href="mailto:enews@urcwessex.org.uk">enews@urcwessex.org.uk</a>  by 12noon on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020  Please submit news items in the form of:  a heading; date and venue details; a brief descriptive sentence and a website link.</p>	