



Sharing the Vision

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year
January 2021



News from the Wessex Synod

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

Guidance on closing church buildings for public worship

The Synod Moderators issued their latest guidance in response to the national lockdown on 5th January. This has been sent to all ministers and church secretaries but is available to be read here:

[Guidance from the Synod Moderators on closing church buildings for public worship](#)

February 2021 Area Gatherings

These will be taking place online again and will use the same zoom link each evening. You are welcome to attend any or all of them.

6.30pm for a 6.45pm start - finishing by 8pm.

Join Zoom Meeting with link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86716262994?pwd=LzVsZVFRY0ZMYTIPVHp4WUIhNVNUQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 1626 2994

Passcode: 866343

| Date | Topic |
|--------------------------|---|
| Monday 22 nd | Church Secretaries Surgery (Clare Downing and Karen Bell) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are you coping during this increasing technological age.• Where can you go for advice.• The role of Church Secretary |
| Tuesday 23 rd | 'Buildings and the Use of them' Surgery (Property Offices & DSO's) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What questions do you have about your building, what can the church do, who can you talk to, where do you get help.• Share ideas of how you have used your building during Covid, and what your mission might need going forward. |

February 2021 Area Gatherings continued..

| Date | Topic |
|----------------------------|--|
| Wednesday 24 th | 'Youth and Child Friendly Church' (CYDO's) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Come and hear about the new Scheme from our two CYDO's.• A chance to ask questions and talk to each other about how this would work in your church |
| Thursday 25 th | Misconception of Mental Health (Revd Maria Hooper - Synod Health and Healing Link) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can you keep yourself well at this time.• Dealing with grief in all its forms both for yourself and those you support. |

Enquirers' Event - What is God asking of YOU?

Ministry Enquirers' Event to help you think about God's call to Worship Leading, Lay Preaching, Ministry with children and young people, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.

Saturday 27th February 2021 - 10am – 3pm online

Register with ministries@urc.org.uk to receive Zoom details

Christians on Ageing

Conference Calls are open to anyone interested in the topic for the month. We use Zoom as the means of bringing everyone together for discussion. There have been eight sessions so far, starting last spring and summer, as a way of sharing ideas and good practice when it is not possible to meet in person. Full details of the subjects covered and the results of each discussion can be found on their website: <https://christiansonageing.org.uk/conference-call>

> **Tuesday 19 January - 2pm**

How churches can help older people struggling through the 2021 national lockdowns

> **Tuesday 16 February - 10.30 am**

Connecting people with dementia with nature and the arts

> **Tuesday 16 March - 10.30 am**

Are we dispirited? Older Christians and mental health at the start of 2021.

> **Tuesday 20 April - 10.30 am**

Valuing the narratives of older people.

Further details available here: [Conference Calls Winter and Spring 2021](#)

WEBINAR - GOOD GOVERNANCE IN CHURCHES: EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHARITY COMMISSION

This webinar, delivered by the Charity Commission's Faith Outreach team, provides an overview of the Commission's expectations as regulator, including: - Trustee duties & risk management - Financial management and reporting in a faith charity context - Sending money internationally - Safeguarding in places of worship.

The webinar is suitable for trustees and managers of church charities, particularly those with limited experience of their role and charity law. The same webinar will be run twice at the following times:

- Saturday 23rd January 2021 09.30 – 10.30am
- Wednesday 3rd February 2021 11am – 12pm

To book your place you must register to attend by clicking on the link below: <https://bookwhen.com/cte-cytun> (Please click on the event on the date you wish to attend. You will receive confirmation of your booking via e-mail.)

Sight Loss Friendly Church

Torch Trust, the Christian sight loss charity, are holding free 30-minute Taster sessions about becoming a Sight Loss Friendly Church (SLFC).

- Thursday 21st January 2pm
- Tuesday 26th January 2pm
- Tuesday 23rd February 7pm
- Wednesday 24th February 2pm
- Thursday 18th March 2pm
- Tuesday 23rd March 2pm.

These interactive Zoom sessions offering an opportunity to hear about all the benefits of this free resource, as well as a chance to meet the SLFC team and ask questions. Visit sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk or email slfc@torchtrust.org for more information & to book your place.

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.nye@urc.org.uk

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

[View the December/January News Update here](#)

Joint Public Issues Team

View the [December newsletter here](#)

HOPE Together – News Update January 2021

[Hope Together: Latest News available now](#)

The Passion stories by LAMPS Collective – Lent course 2021

"I will speak using stories: I will tell secret things from long ago" Psalm 78:2

Six vividly compelling stories, performed direct to camera, recall the first Easter from the perspectives of Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and a young centurion called Marcus. Accompanying devotional material offers reflections, questions to ponder and a related prayer.

Ideal for small groups as well as individuals, or inclusion within services, the LAMPS Lent course is free to churches and individuals, with the option of donating to their work if you choose to use the material.

To access all the resources (including samples) please go to [LAMPS website](#)

Congregational Memorial Hall Trust and Congregational Library

The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust manages the Congregational Library which houses the historical and some current archives of those churches which were part of the Congregational Church prior to 1972. The trustees are appointed by the URC, the Congregational Federation and the Evangelical Federation of Congregational Churches. Each year surplus income from the Trust is distributed as grants to these church bodies. In 2019 this was £148,500

Annual Congregational Library Lecture - 28 January 2021 at 5.30pm

Professor Jane Shaw, Principal of Harris Manchester College and Professor of the History of Religion at the University of Oxford will speak on the subject, Nonconformists and the Modern Revival of Mysticism. The early twentieth century saw a revival of interest in mysticism, and an accompanying growth in retreats and prayer groups. While Anglicans and Roman Catholics initially sparked the revival, nonconformists – especially women – contributed to it in significant ways. Some wrote influential books, others edited modern editions of the medieval mystics, yet others helped lead retreats and prayer meetings, and a handful engaged in a rigorous form of the mystic and ascetic life themselves. In addition, many nonconformists were shaped by this renewal of mysticism (notably the leading Congregationalist of the day, R. J. Campbell), and made it a part of their theology and daily life. This lecture will consider the impact of nonconformists on the revival of mysticism, and the impact of the revival on key nonconformists. The lecture will be delivered via Zoom and is free of charge. To obtain the Zoom link and password please contact the Secretary of the Friends of the Congregational Library, Patricia Judd at admin@pondsquarechapel.org.uk

New Congregational Memorial Hall Trust and Congregational Library website

The trustees of the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust and Library have asked us to publicise their new website which can be accessed at www.conglib.ac.uk. The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust was founded in 1872 to create a

memorial to those Christian ministers who were forced out of their positions in the Church of England following the Act of Uniformity in 1662. The fund established by the Trust was used to create the Congregational Library and encourage and assist Biblical studies. Since 1872 the Library has occupied a number of sites in London and is now lodged with Dr Williams's Library in Gordon Square, London, who manage the Congregational Library collections on behalf of the Trust. The United Reformed Church, the Congregational Federation and the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, all of which grew out of Congregationalism, each have an interest in the Trust and have a right to appoint its trustees. Among the collections held by the Congregational Library are the archives of the Congregational Union/Congregational Church, 1831-1972, and some of its successors, 1972 onwards: namely the United Reformed Church, and the Unaffiliated Congregational Churches Charities. The Congregational Library holds over 50,000 books, pamphlets and periodicals concerned with Congregationalism, Puritanism and Dissent in general.

September 2020 Area Gathering video

The Synod Mission Development Group were delighted to arrange a series of four talks on "being church in New ways" in place of the regular area gatherings in September 2020.

If any wish to view the ten minute video by Revd Nick Stanyon, West Midlands Synod Evangelist, it can be found via the following link

<https://youtu.be/4jrj2mtfCFQ>

Nick has given permission for this to be used in any way desired by individuals and church groups.

The link is also on our Synod Website on the [mission and outreach](#) page.

Safeguarding Newsletter December 2020

From the Safeguarding Team at Church House and your Synod Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding Newsletter December 2020 - [Online version](#)

Safeguarding Newsletter December 2020 - [Print version](#)

The December safeguarding newsletter (both versions) has been uploaded to the Synod website on the [Safeguarding page](#).

URC Safeguarding Symposium and 5 year strategic plan

On 9 October 2020, the safeguarding team at the United Reformed Church (URC) launched the safeguarding strategic plan of the Church (2020-2025) at an online symposium. You can watch a video of the launch and download the presentations from the URC website <https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding-symposium>
Here is the link to download a copy of the 5 year [safeguarding strategic plan](#).

New Safeguarding posters

Two new posters to support local churches in their safeguarding are available to download for free. These use symbols as well as text to enable children and also young people and adults with additional needs, limited literacy, or for whom English is not their first language, to access information about how to get help. Download the posters, '[Accessible CY and adult safeguarding coordinators](#)' and '[Accessible joint safeguarding coordinator](#)' for free.

Change of Date – Synod Big Day Out will now be in 2022

URC Wessex Synod - Big Day Out

Date: 7th May 2022

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

Tel: 023 8067 4513

Development and Support

From your DSOs

Development and Support Officers Mary and Ray continue to support churches, elderships and ministers, individually and through their work with the pastoral committees.

If you or your church feels that they can be if assistance please do be in touch with them.

Ray Stanyon – dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk

Mary Thomas – dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk

Discipleship Development Fund

Grants of up to £200 per person are available! To encourage individuals to engage with a journey of deepening personal discipleship. Individuals can apply for help with the cost of attending approved discipleship courses, activities or retreats offered by others, or a congregation can apply for help with the cost of buying in a speaker or other resources. Please contact your DSO to discuss your discipleship development in advance of an application to this fund.

[Discipleship Development Fund flier.](#)

Children's and Youth Events and Training

Wessex Synod Children's and Youth Programme 2021

Check out the exciting list of opportunities for children and young people. Mark the dates in your diary and watch this space for further information. [Programme 2021](#).

Youth (*dis*)Assembled 2021 for 14 – 25 year olds

Another wonderful opportunity for young people!

The URC's Children's and Youth Work team has organised two, free, live online events for all young people aged 14 to 25 that have a connection to the Church. Fun with 'Folk On' on **30 January 2021 from 8-9.30pm**, and a worship service on **31 January 2021 from 8-8.45pm**.

[Registration and further information](#) about Youth (*dis*)Assembled 2021.

Bookings close on 27 January 2021.

Children's Day 2021 – *save the date!*

Forest Church Children's Day on Saturday 24 April 2021 – venue to be confirmed.

We will be inviting children between 7 and 13 years to come to an exciting Heroes and Villains Children's day. It will be held predominantly outdoors in Forest Church Style, in small groups, so our hope is that it can take place even in the current climate.

Watch this space for further details and opportunities to book your places.

Wessex Summer Camps – *save the date*

16 – 18 July 2021 at Oakwood Activity Centre, Wokingham.

'Heroes and Villains' theme. For ages 8-11 years and 11-17 years.

A time for young people to have fun with others through a varied programme of activities, discussion and worship.

Safeguarding Training – *next online course*

The basic safeguarding training course is delivered online across 3 sessions. Participants must attend each of the 3 sessions to complete the training and gain a certificate. On **Saturday mornings, 9.30am – 11am, on Zoom.**

23rd January 2021, 30th January and 6th February 2021.

There are few places left for workers with Children & Youth and workers with Adults at Risk. Please book your place asap.

The next online safeguarding training course will be after Easter 2021.

Mental Health First Aid training dates

Mental Health First Aid Training courses. Wessex Synod covers the cost for members of URCs and LEPs in Wessex Synod.

- **Awareness course.** This course is delivered online via Zoom, 9am – 1pm. **Wednesday 27 January 2021**, (book by 18 January 2021).
- **Become a certified Mental Health First Aider.** These courses are delivered online across four sessions with some self-learning exercises to complete in preparation for each of the live Zoom sessions with the trainer. Course dates;
 1. Certified **Mental Health First Aider** on Tuesday and Friday mornings 9am to 12 noon, from 23rd February – 5th March 2021. (Book by 15 February 2021).
 2. Certified **Youth Mental Health First Aider** on Tuesday and Friday afternoons 1pm to 4pm, 23rd February – 5th March 2021. (Book by 15 February 2021).
 3. Certified **Mental Health First Aider** on Monday and Thursday mornings 9am to 12 noon, 22nd March to 1st April 2021. (Book by 15 March 2021).

Booking for the above is essential. Please email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk

- **Mentality.** These courses are delivered online as a one hour video. The cost is £15 + VAT (£18). Wessex Synod does not cover the cost of mentality at work courses.
 1. **Mentality at Work** can be accessed here www.mentality.work
This course gives anyone the need-to-know essentials to spot the signs of poor mental health and take action.
 2. **Mentality for Students** can be accessed here www.mentality.work
This course is aimed at University Students who would like to gain a base knowledge training so they can better support their friends, housemates and themselves. A one minute preview can be viewed at [Mentality for Students | Peter Larkum](#). Wessex Synod will cover the cost for University Students from member churches in Wessex Synod, even if they are studying out of the Synod area. Contact bookings@urcwessex.org.uk to start the registration process.

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 & 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!

[Bi-monthly Update - January](#) from Children's & Youth desk at Church House

Triologue – online YouTube broadcast for 16 to 25 year olds

Fortnightly on Thursdays at 7pm. URC Youth offer a fortnightly 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 Panelists, 3 Questions, 3 Values. All past episodes are available on YouTube for viewing at any time, plus all episodes (Sept onwards) are now available as podcasts.

Follow the URC Youth Triologue Facebook page to engage and receive up to date information - <https://www.facebook.com/urcYouthTriologue/>

URC Website for information - <https://urc.org.uk/events-and-opportunities>

URC Children & Youth YouTube channel (Triologue link) – <http://bit.ly/urctriologue>

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.

February

| | |
|----|--|
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woodley: Christ Church• Longham |
| 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oxford: Cumnor• Bordon• Chandler's Ford: St Francis, Valley Park |

| | |
|--|---|
| 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banbury: St Francis • Beacon Hill, Hindhead • Isle of Wight: Shanklin |
| 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford: Wheatley • United Church Dorchester |
| March | |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of Synod • Twyford (Bucks) • Cheap Street, Sherborne |
| 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jersey • Woodley Airfield Church • Portsmouth: Drayton United Church |
| 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christchurch, Thame • Southampton: Hedge End |
| 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford: St Columba's • Guildford: St Peter's |
| <p>Items for the next edition to enews@urcwessex.org.uk by 12noon on Monday 8th February 2021 Please submit news items in the form of: a heading; date and venue details; a brief descriptive sentence and a website link.</p> | |