

Hannah Holmes

From: East Midlands Synod <trainingpa@urc5.org.uk>
Sent: 19 September 2024 00:54
To: Hannah Holmes
Subject: [Test] News from the East Midlands Synod

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E-LETTER



The
United
Reformed
Church
East Midlands
Synod

19 September 2024 - No.419

In this edition:

- [David Featonby](#) deplores the sin of favouritism
- Register now for our free [Mental Health](#) awareness day
- Opportunities for [Children and Young People](#) and their leaders
- Consider where God might be calling you at the URC [Enquirers' Event](#)

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URC East Midlands Synod Facebook Page

Join us on Facebook for Evening Prayers most nights at 9.30pm

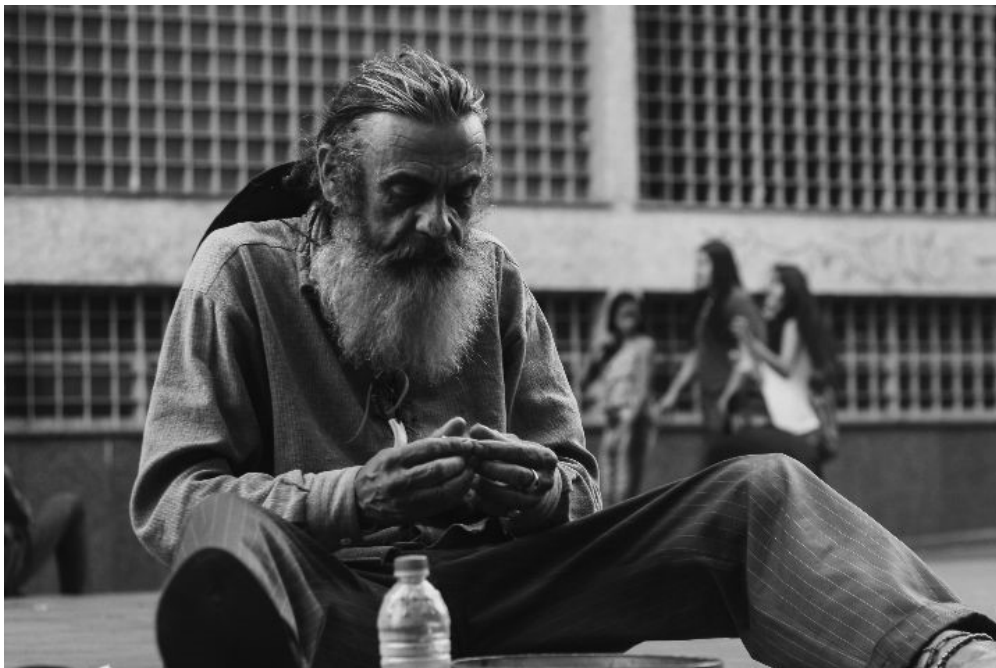
Opening Reflection by The Revd David Featonby Convenor of Lay Ministries

Walking the Walk

'My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favouritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, 'Have a seat here, please', while to

the one who is poor you say, 'Stand there', or, 'Sit at my feet', have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?'(James 2: 1-4)

Some years ago, the URC I then attended had invited a speaker from [Shelter](#) to address the congregation at one of our morning services. The church had been reflecting upon its mission within the local community and one topic that had come up was that of 'Homelessness'. These were the days when the congregation was regularly over 100 and on this beautiful spring morning, as folk arrived for the service, they were rudely confronted by a very scruffy man, dressed in a dirty raincoat sitting in the main entrance. I clearly recall how people were complaining and asking the ushers if they could do something about this guy as he was getting in the way. Eventually the doors were closed, and the service began. After the second hymn, the minister introduced our speaker from 'Shelter'. As the vestry door opened, a smartly dressed man in a suit and tie, and carrying a carrier bag in his right hand, walked to the centre of the raised dais and introduced himself as an executive within the organisation and a member of a United Reformed Church. He then quoted the above verse from the Epistle of James after which he pulled out from the carrier a dirty stained raincoat. There was a literal gasp from the congregation as it dawned upon us that he was the gentleman that folk were having to walk over to enter the church; the same man that created a lot of 'distress' to those 'upright' people who had dutifully come to worship God. To this day I cannot remember one word of his address to us, but it didn't matter, the lesson had been beautifully made to us. 'You can talk the talk, but not walk the walk.'



I believe this is at the heart of James' message and his urging his readers to put faith into action. Many Christians since have struggled with this New Testament book and claimed that it challenges Paul's theology of justification by faith alone. No less a person than the great Reformer **Martin Luther** famously remarked that, in his opinion, the letter of James was an 'Epistle of Straw' and remarked upon the fact that there is very little of Christ within it. If you were to only look at direct mentions of Christ by name, Martin Luther is right: the Book of James doesn't appear to have much to do with Jesus. It only mentions him twice in passing, once in James 1:1 ("a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ") and once in James 2:1 ("believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ"). Despite that, James makes numerous references to Christ's teaching, and there are places where he uses "the Lord" probably referring to Christ. But even without those more overt references, James' epistle reflects the heart of Jesus' teaching about the importance of caring for the poor, even going so far as to suggest that by serving the poor, we are in truth serving God.

Although reference here is to the homeless and the poor, we do well to broaden Jesus' teaching on impartiality to any who feel excluded from society and, of course, from the church. We are living in a period of great societal changes, some positive, but others not so good, markedly seen in the polarisation of people into groups. This movement is driven more and more by political ideologies, with a general drift to far-right policies of nationalism and isolationism. We have experienced some of this over the summer with the various riots that occurred in the guise of demonstrations against immigrants. In the United States the population is virtually split 50/50 between Trumpists and Democrats who have very different ideas about the direction they want to see their country going. The fall out from this polarisation is literally breaking up families, creating extreme conspiracy theories and creating an atmosphere of foreboding and fear, especially for those who are not white and nominally 'Christian'.

Human history has many markers and one of the most obvious is the obsession for uniformity. In other words, the insistence that *our* country, *our* ideologies, *our* religion, *our* race have dominance, sometimes going as far as to claim that it is 'God ordained'.

I believe that our response, as followers of Christ and his teaching, is to provide within our fellowships a place of safety and a place of welcome. We might not always agree with one another, we may even question the other person's life choices, but that does not give us carte blanche to judge, dismiss, ignore or condemn.

When he was a student, the famous Indian leader **Mahatma Gandhi** considered becoming a Christian. He read

the Gospels and was moved by them. It seemed to him that Christianity offered a solution to the caste system that plagued the people of India. One Sunday, he went to a local church. He had decided to see the pastor and ask what it meant to become a Christian. But when he entered the church, which consisted of all white people, the ushers refused to give him a seat. They told him to go and worship with his own people. Gandhi left and never went back. "If Christians have caste differences also," he observed, "I might as well remain a Hindu."

That tragic story illustrates what James was writing against. His focus on the sin of showing favouritism to the rich and despising the poor, can also apply to all types of prejudice, whether based on economic status, race, sexuality or anything else that divides.



To favour some people and to disregard others based on outward factors is a sin that plagued the early church in James' day. It has plagued the church ever since. May it not plague our churches now. Let us not simply 'Talk the Talk' but be prepared to 'Walk the Walk' with our sisters and brothers as together we seek to be truly human just as God intended.

Induction of The Revd Ruth Maxey in Newport Pagnell



The Revd Ruth Maxey (front centre) with participants in the service

The congregations of **Newport Pagnell** United Reformed Church and **Church Without Walls** in Milton Keynes came together on Saturday 14 September to celebrate the Induction of **The Revd Ruth Maxey** as their shared minister. This joyous occasion was hosted by Newport Pagnell URC with a music group drawn from both congregations and East Midlands Synod Moderator **The Revd Geoffrey Clarke** presiding.



The Revd Jane Wade (Deputy Moderator) and **Dr Graham Jennings** (Synod Clerk) led the reading of The Statement Concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church, while **The Revd George Mwaure** (Convenor of the Ordained Ministry and Churches Group) was among those welcoming Ruth. The

sermon was given by **The Revd Matt Trendall**, Ruth's Anglican colleague in the Walton Churches Partnership, Milton Keynes.

We wish Ruth every blessing in this new phase of her ministry in our Synod.



L-R: The Revds Geoffrey Clarke, Ruth Maxey and George Mwaura

Around the East Midlands

Harvest of Hope Hoedown in Matlock



Fundraisers in Matlock are stepping out this weekend with a **Harvest of Hope Hoedown** for a charity appeal to support vulnerable communities around the world.

Organised by Matlock Christian Aid Group, the hoedown takes place at Matlock Methodist & United Reformed Church (DE4 3FJ) this **Saturday, 21 September**, from 4.00-8.00pm, incorporating a Harvest Supper at around 6.00pm.

We love to share the great things happening in East Midlands churches:
please email your news to training@urc.org.uk .

Long Service Celebrated at St Andrew's, Chesterfield



Audrey Turner

Audrey Turner of **St Andrew's URC, Chesterfield** received a URC **Certificate for Long and Devoted Service** at Church Meeting on 8 September. Audrey had served the church over many years as an Elder, Christian Aid Secretary, Commitment for Life Advocate, Gift Aid Secretary, pastoral carer, door steward, reader, tea, coffee and cake maker and until a few years ago Junior Church leader. She is moving to Cumbria to live nearer her daughter. In recognition of her 32 years as a local church Commitment for Life Advocate she was handed a letter from **Revd Dr Kevin Snyman** and **Ms Suzanne Pearson**, the URC [Commitment for Life](#) Officers, thanking her for her long and faithful service. In response, Audrey said how much she had enjoyed helping Commitment for

Life make a difference to the lives of people in our partner country Zimbabwe, and encouraging support for Christian Aid in the church and in the local neighbourhood.

Summer Holiday Club at Marlpool

Ruth Filsak from **Marlpool URC**, shares with us the wonderful time had by all at their Summer Holiday Club:

"Over 50 children attended our Holiday club that ran for two days at the end of August. The club is free, possible due to donations from church members and a grant from the Synod. Our theme was the 'Bee-attitudes' – having a good attitude. When asked for suggestions for having a good attitude, the children often thought of some better words than the adults! 'Bee responsible', 'bee caring' and 'bee encouraging' are just a few.



The children were given breakfast and lunch. They enjoyed a variety of activities – circus skills with a clown; bee crafts; games; acting out a bible story; learning about bees from one of our volunteers who keeps bees and having an ice cream from the ice cream van that came to the church! That is definitely something the children will remember.

Everyone, children and adults alike, had a great two days. We are very grateful that we have lots of volunteers,

including three teenagers, to help the club run smoothly.

We hope that the children will also remember being welcomed and listened to, enjoying sharing time with each other, and most importantly, learning about the love of Jesus. The children and families were invited to come along to church on the following Sunday when the theme was continued in the service."



Lincolnshire Quiet Day



At an uplifting **Quiet Day** offered by the East Midlands Synod on Friday 13 September, the **Revd Jane Weedon** welcomed attenders to the retreat centre she has established at Heckington Fen, Lincolnshire. The theme of the day was **Joy**: Jane provided several ways to meditate on scripture's injunction to live joyfully before allowing ample time for personal reflection and prayer.

"Soaring" is amongst the poems that attender **Sam Goodman** was inspired to write on the day:

**Joy isn't always soaring
Not forever in the heights
Joy explores the earthbound
And in them takes delight**

**Joy is a place of respite
A source of solace in the storm
A comforter at twilight
A hope for those who mourn**

**Joy isn't confined by blessings
It would argue all are blessed
It's in our hearts confessing
When our hearts can find no rest**

**Joy is a state of being
When our being comes alive
It exists where God is seeing
That we relate to God and thrive**

This was the last of our free Synod Quiet Days this year: look out for further opportunities in 2025.

Mental Health Training

**Saturday 9 November 10.00am - 3.30pm
St Andrew's URC, Chesterfield**

East Midlands Synod has joined forces with [Encourage Mental Health Training](#) to offer this introduction to how churches can support those who struggle with their mental health, suitable for everyone - all are welcome! Register for free at bit.ly/urcmentalhealth .



The
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Synod



Mental Health Training

Saturday 9 November 2024

10.00am - 3.30pm

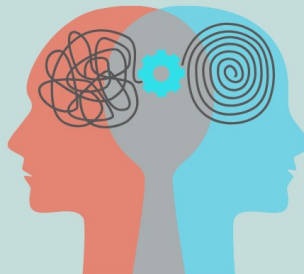
St Andrew's URC, Chesterfield

How can we recognise
when someone is
struggling?

**SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH
THEIR MENTAL HEALTH
IN CHURCH**

What is the best
way to help?

How can our church be
a place where people
feel cared for?



What does the Bible
say about mental
health?

With Dr Cheryl Hawkins from Encourage Mental Health
A workshop focusing on how we can welcome, support and disciple those
who struggle with their mental health in our church and communities

To book your place please visit: <https://bit.ly/urcmentalhealth>
or call Hannah Holmes at the Synod Office: 0115 9609241



[Children's and Youth Leaders' Gathering](#)

Saturday 5 October 2024

Long Eaton URC



This gathering is for All who are involved with leading and helping with Children and Young People's activities within the church.

There will be workshops, time for fellowship, a keynote address from **Dr Sam Richards**, the URC's Head of Children's and Youth Work and much more.

Youth Event Running Alongside Synod

Saturday 12 October 2024

The
United
Reformed
Church
East Midlands
Synod

YOUTH EVENT
ALONGSIDE SYNOD MEETING

**MEET OTHER
YOUNG PEOPLE!**

GAMES **ACTIVITIES** **DISCUSSION**

Saturday 12 September, 10.30am - 4pm
School Year 7 - 21 years

To book email: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk

Synod Children's Day

Wednesday 23 October 10.30am-3.00pm
Abbots Road URC, Leicester

SYNOD
CHILDREN'S DAY

Games
Craft
Stories
Music

WEDNESDAY
23 OCTOBER 2024
10.30am - 3pm

For Primary School Years 1 - 6

Abbots Road URC
Leicester, LE5 1DA

To book visit:
bit.ly/synodchildrensday
Or Call Hannah Holmes at the Synod Office
0115 9609241

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Personal News

It is with great sadness that we bring news of the deaths of the following people. We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved through their lives and ministries.

Here in the **East Midlands Synod**, we are sad to share the news of the death of retired minister, the **Revd Jim Gould**, who died on Friday 6 September, aged 86. Jim was a member at Central Church, Derby.

Jim served at Feltham 1983-88; Twyford & Woodley 1988-92; Crossway 1993-2003; Colindale 2003-11.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all who hold Jim dear.

Faith Talk - Join the Conversation

Thursday 3 October 7.30pm via Zoom



How confident are you about **Faith Talk**? The second in the **URC Mission** team's series of relaxed

conversations about sharing our faith takes place on Zoom on the evening of **Thursday 3 October**. To join in, simply email mission@urc.org.uk to receive the link.

Synod Team on Tour

Come and meet staff and officers at our next stop:

Christ Church URC, Leicester

Monday 28 October 2.00-8.00pm



URC Enquirers' Event

Saturday 5 October
9.30am - 12.30pm on Zoom



Learn what God might be asking of you at the **Ministry Enquirers' Event** taking place on Saturday October from 9.30am-12.30pm on Zoom.

Here you'll be able to think about God's call to **Stepwise, Worship Leading, Lay Preaching, Lay Pioneering, Ministry with Children and Young People, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.**

For joining details, please email the Ministries Team: ministries@urc.org.uk

Faraday Institute Training for Church Leaders

15 October 2024, 20 November 2024, 22 January 2025, 19 February 2025, 11 March 2025

7.30pm - 9pm

Caring for Creation: Leading the Church Forward

Time: 7:30pm - 9pm **faraday.institute/CreationCare**

Venue: Online and Cambridge (in-person sessions)

Cost: £80 for all five sessions

Topic	Speaker	Date
Our Calling	Revd Dr Dave Bookless & Prof. Andrew Gosler	15 th Oct 2024 Online
Big Ideas	Dr Ruth Valerio & Prof. Deepa Senapathi	20 th Nov 2024 Hybrid
All Creation Praises God	Prof. Richard Bauckham & Cara Parrett	22 nd Jan 2025 Hybrid
Grief and Anxiety	Dr Bethany Sollereider & Jasmine Kwong	19 th Feb 2025 Online
Ultimate Hope	Dr Vinoth Ramanchandra & Prof. Darren Evans	11 th Mar 2025 Online



Visit: [Caring for Creation: Leading the Church Forward | Faraday \(cam.ac.uk\)](https://www.faraday.cam.ac.uk) for more information

Saturday 9 November 2024, 9.30am - 4.15pm

Life, Death and Dying

Saturday November 9th 2024
9.30am - 4.15pm
Westminster College, Cambridge and online

Sessions will be led by:

Revd Sharon Connell, palliative care chaplain
Dr Sarah Foot, palliative medicine registrar

This one-day workshop will be an opportunity to develop understanding and think through a Christian response to issues related to the end of life.

Cost: £50 in person, £35 student in person, £25 online

faraday.institute/WestminsterDay



Visit: [Life, Death and Dying | Faraday \(cam.ac.uk\)](http://Life, Death and Dying | Faraday (cam.ac.uk)) for more information

Buildings for Mission Forum Webinar

Tuesday 12 November 11.30 – 1pm



UNITED REFORMED CHURCH BUILDINGS FOR MISSION FORUM WEBINARS

 TRANSFORMING
YOUR CHURCH
BUILDING AND ITS
LAND

a close-up of one URC, a wide view of others

Tuesday 12 November 2024
11.30am – 1pm

Register at mission@urc.org.uk

The next meeting of the URC's [Buildings for Mission Forum](#) is a webinar about Transforming your church building and its land: a close-up of one URC, a wide view of others

We will hear from a URC minister who has worked with her church through a major vision-led redevelopment, and from a Synod Green Advocate on some creative ways in which church land is being used for mission.

To register or to find out more, email mission@urc.org.uk.

Advice From Edwards Insurance Brokers

Synod Property Officer **Geoff Milnes** shares the following advice from Edwards Insurance:



BT Redcare to withdraw its service by August 2025: What does this mean for you?

You may have seen recent reports on the decision BT have made to remove their alarm signalling service **Redcare** from the market, which was due to take effect by 1 August 2025. This means that by the cut-off date next year, anyone who currently uses monitored electronic systems, such as automatic fire and security systems using a BT Redcare signalling product will now need to find an alternative solution.

What exactly are these changes?

BT Openreach, which manages the UK landline telephone network, will be replacing their traditional copper wire system and replacing it with digital technology, utilising fibre optic cables.

In most cases, **Alarm Transmission Systems (ATS)** that connect Intruder and Fire Alarms to Alarm Receiving Centres use a landline as a communication path. This digital switchover means that some signalling systems that rely on the traditional copper wire systems mentioned above may no longer function as reliably, or in many situations, at all.

We recommend you contact your current security systems provider, to see if these changes will impact you and understand their plans to check and upgrade their systems. If it does affect you, now is the time to start looking for any alternative arrangements for your security, ahead of the switch over dates, to ensure adequate security remains in place for your premises.

How can Edwards help?

Intruder alarms are an essential security requirement for an insurance policy, and we want to help make sure you continue to have the correct measures in place. If you are making changes to your security, it is important you let us know so this is reflected in your policy. If you have any questions on what this means for you and your cover, get in touch with Edwards Insurance Brokers on 01564 730 900.

Situation Vacant



Chief Executive Officer Retired Ministers' Housing Society London

12 month Fixed Term, Full time
Circa £74,000 per annum

Can you bring your skilled leadership and extensive housing sector experience to small housing society in the charity sector?

The Retired Minister's Housing Society is a part of the United Reformed Church, which provides housing for Ministers in retirement, suitable for long-term occupation. The RMHS is in a period of change while structures and policies are reviewed, and this role will be pivotal in leading and supporting that change.

You will be educated to degree level or equivalent experience and work in buildings, housing or property management at a senior level. You have knowledge of current legislation and practice of company and charity law. You can think strategically and possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills to lead and motivate a professional team.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly working environment, working from Church House in London and from home.

If you are interested in volunteering for us and can meet the above requirements, please send your application form to:
Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urc.org.uk/jobs

Closing date: 12 noon, Friday 20 September 2024 Interviews: Friday 4 October 2024

Find us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urc5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:

<https://www.urc5.org.uk/>



Our [East Midlands Synod Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/) continues to host the **Evening Prayers** led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and friends every day at 9.30pm. If you are a Facebook user, please consider **Liking** this Page and **Sharing** its posts:

<https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/>

Similarly, the [Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page](#) shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: <https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/>



On our dedicated [YouTube channel](#), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g>

To subscribe to our **Synod Children and Youth Newsletter**, for ideas, resources and news of further events please click here:
<https://bit.ly/CandYNews>

This E-letter is produced on behalf of:
The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.
Telephone: 0115 960 9241

The inclusion of items in this newsletter does not constitute endorsement by the East Midlands Synod. Any views expressed do not represent the views of the East Midlands Synod or any of its officers or staff except where explicitly stated.

CCL1067405
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Homeless photo: Photo by [Matheus Ferrero](#) on [Unsplash](#)
Hands together Photo by [Shane Rounce](#) on [Unsplash](#) **Next edition: 3 October 2024**

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both:
trainingpa@urc5.org.uk and training@urc5.org.uk

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 30 September 2024**

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