



Children's and Youth Work Committee Report



*The good leave an inheritance to their **children's children**... Proverbs 13:22a*

Membership: There have been a few recent changes to the committee. We are pleased to welcome Jacob Bali representing South London, Chris Currie representing Surrey & Sussex & Avril Leyton representing East Kent Synod Areas and there are currently 8 active members. Reuben Watts is still valiantly covering the vacant secretary's post when he is able for which we are very grateful (Tom has been valiantly filling in too!) but if anyone knows somebody in their church that may be willing to take on this role, please let me know. It is good finally to get more involvement from other areas in the Synod.

Recent Events – From CYDO – Tom Hackett:

Mental Health Awareness Day – December 3rd

Synod Mental Health Awareness day held in December was well attended. It was aimed at ministers, CRCWs, local church leaders and employed youth and children's workers. Key note address was delivered by Martin Haywood (Mission Officer).

Participants were signposted to a range of opportunities including:

- Emotional First Aid Webinar from TLG – <https://www.tlg.org.uk/your-church/emotional-first-aid>
- Emotional Roller Coaster Resource from TLG, aimed at those working with 8-14 year olds - <https://www.tlg.org.uk/your-church/emotional-rollercoaster>
- Seminar delivered by Belinda Nielson (Synod Safeguarding Officer) focussing on "Abuse, neglect and mental capacity." (This session took place on 7th Jan 2021)
- Sanctuary Mental Health Course – A series of 4 seminars exploring Mental Health Issues from a Psychological, Sociological and Theological perspective.

Mental Health Awareness Workshop – December

In December I delivered an online workshop for children and youth leaders, focussing on Mental Health Awareness. This was delivered for Caterham URC and was also attended by some participants from other local churches. I will be offering to lead this session at other local churches. It is best suited for groups of up to 15 participants.

Joint Synod Youth Get Together – Sunday 10th Jan

We had a successful online Youth Get Together on Sunday 10th January. This was organised in response to the youth survey sent out last Autumn. The event was open to all young people aged 13-25 from Thames North & Southern Synods. 13 young people attended the event (7 Southern, 6 Thames North). It was encouraging that 6 of the Southern Synod participants were new contacts, who had not previously attended Synod or Assembly Youth Events. We have received positive feedback from participants and another event was held in February. It is hoped that this will become a regular event.

Synod Racial Justice Group

In November I attended a zoom discussion regarding the setup of Synod Racial Justice Group, in order to think about how this group can link into children and youth work within Synod. This was an initial discussion and I am awaiting further information regarding the launch of the group.

Children & Youth Friendly Church Scheme

Renewals have been finalised for Trinity Wimbledon and The Temple URC under the previous "Child Friendly Church Award" scheme. I presented the certificate for Trinity Wimbledon during Nativity service in December. A presentation date for Temple URC needs to be arranged. (Not currently possible due to lockdown.)

The new "Children & Youth Friendly Church" scheme has now launched and was promoted by video at the October Synod Together meeting. I have received 7 initial inquiries about the scheme and have sent out information packs to these churches. I will be following these up to arrange initial discussion meetings via zoom.

Advent Resource and New Lent Resource

The all age advent resource was extremely popular and sold out very quickly. Copies of materials were made available to download online for free, so churches could make up their own additional packs.

A Lent Resource has been produced and is now available via the URC shop:

Walking towards Easter together - URC Lent resource

Lent resource for churches to give to students, seniors, households and families to reduce isolation and offer hope in these challenging times.

https://urcshop.co.uk/index.php?route=product/product&path=33&product_id=390

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URC Youth (re)ASSEMBLED

To provide a way to learn, contribute, as well as equip young people and adults involved with the United Reformed Church (URC) in as many ways as possible, URC Youth is launching Youth re-ASSEMBLED.

Each month throughout the year, URC Youth will focus on a different theme or topic.

These are:

March – Israel and Palestine: The conflict in the Holy Land

April – Vocation: Unearthing your inner superhero

May – Hostile Environments

June – Pride month

July – World Church

August – Community
September – Environment
October – Anti-racism
November – Mental Health
December – Faith, hope and joy

For each theme there will be a range of social media posts, along with [Trialogues](#) (URC Youth's live discussion panel broadcast on YouTube fortnightly), free Zoom events as well as practical ways that people can use to make a difference from the comfort of their own homes.

The programme of events follows on from URC Youth (dis)ASSEMBLED held digitally from 30-31 January after URC Youth made the difficult decision to cancel its Youth Assembly due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Reuben Watt, URC Youth Moderator, said: "One of the most important parts of Youth Assembly is the workshops that take place. This is where we delve deeper into topics that interest and matter to us as URC Youth. As the Assembly was cancelled, we have explored ways in which we can continue to bring young people together despite the lockdowns and restrictions.

"URC Youth (dis)ASSEMBLED turned out great, and we look forward to continuing to bring young people and adults together through URC Youth re-ASSEMBLED. Do keep an eye out on URC Youth's social media channels or speak to your Synod Youth Representative/CYDO+ to find out more.

"We really hope that anyone between the ages of 11 to 25 with links to the URC will be able to engage with this content."

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

2019: 24th March
23rd June

Both via ZOOM

Graham Purdye
March 2021