

Southern Synod News

Welcome to the latest edition of Southern Synod News. This month we have an exciting report from the Ministers Spring School, a report from the Training and Development Officer, as well as a job opportunity within the Synod!

We would love to hear from you! If you have any exciting upcoming events you wish to advertise, or would like to share good news from your local church we would love to include it in the next edition. Please send items for the next issue to Ross (office@urcsouthern.org.uk) by Monday 23rd June 2025.

Latest News



Minister's Spring School 2025!

The annual Spring School was a wonderful gathering of 32 ministers from around the Synod. A few rose early for aerobics and running led by Lesley Charlton, and many stayed up late into the evening for meaningful conversation and healing laughter. Our chaplain, Sue Chapman, led us in creative morning prayer and reflection and the new TDO for Southern, Charisa Hunter-Crump, led us in worship and communion on the final day.

Our guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Susan Durber, a minister in the URC and the World Council of Churches' President from Europe. Her topic was "*Who is Jesus? Bible Study and Reflections in the year of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.*" Through storytelling, art, film, poetry, and prose, she reminded us of the complexity of answering that question, the diversity of approaches that have been taken, and the importance of exploring the question with mind, heart, and spirit, for our own faith journeys, and for the life of our congregations.

(Article by Revd Dr Charisa Hunter-Crump, Pictures by Revd Memona Shahbaz).

Updated Copyright booklet

Church House has updated their copyright booklet which they would like all URC churches to use from now on. It can be found on the URC website: urc.org.uk/your-church/church-guides/getting-to-grips-with-copyright

URC Club House Holiday Resources now available

The URC have launched their Holiday Club Resources page!

"Here you will find free resources that contain suggestions for a holiday club for 5 to 11-year-olds. It also contains appendices for intergenerational, toddlers, 11 to 14s and vintage holiday clubs.

You can download the whole resource theme, individual sections, activity sheets, colouring-in sheets, music sheets and lyrics, and additional drama – build your holiday club your way.

Each holiday we produce a new theme, but the material is not designed to be prescriptive, although you may use it that way if you wish. Feel free to swap and change the ideas included here for ones you think are more suitable for your groups."

For more information and to access the resources, visit urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people/children-youth-work/holiday-club-materials

Changes to CAF Bank!

For all those who use CAF for their banking, please ensure that you take note of any correspondence from them about their changing processes. If you do encounter any problems, please get in contact with Catherine as she has a designated contact at CAF who would appreciate the feedback.

Staffing News in Southern Synod

Thank you to Denise!

The Synod would like to extend our thanks and best wishes to Denise Woodhatch, the Area Administrator for Surrey and Sussex Synod Area, who is retiring from the role. Denise began as Area Administrator in June last year, and in that time she has made a great impact. We are very grateful for all she has done in supporting churches in Surrey and Sussex and hope that the whole Synod will join us in extending our best wishes to Denise for the future.

Field Workers

It is exciting that we now have a full team of Field Workers, with Charisa Hunter-Crump (Training and Development Officer) and Jo Patterson (Mission and Discipleship Officer) joining Cristina Cipriani (Ecumenical Officer) and Tom Hackett (CYDO). We are working together to help you, and your congregation, create communities of faith with all the gifts and tools you might need. If you have a question, we are here to help.

If you are not sure **who** to ask, reach out to any of us and we will make sure you find the right person. If you are not sure **what** to ask, then please just open a conversation with one of us. We'd love to hear your story. If you are not sure **why** to ask, its simple: because we are all in this faith journey together! You are not alone. We are here for you. And if you are not sure **when** or **how** to ask, its easy! Anytime! And our emails are on the website!

We are holding all of you in our prayers and ask you to hold us as we embark on this adventure together.

News from the Training and Development Officer

First, a big thank you to everyone I have met so far in the Southern Synod who have welcomed me so warmly. I am loving being in ministry with all of you! I also want to thank my predecessor, Andy Twilley, for all the good work he did among you for so many years.

I have been meeting with everyone I can to fully understand my role as TDO. Here's a summary for you.

- Support **EM1** students as they move through their four years of college.
- Support newly ordained/commissioned EM2 Ministers and CRCWs in their new ministry settings to reflect on their ministries and advance to EM3 after a period of three years.
- Support EM3 Ministers and CRCWs with their training and development needs, including their annual Continuing Education, their required trainings in Safeguarding and Safer Sacred Spaces, and their pursuit of a sabbatical every ten years.
- Plan and help lead Ministers Spring School with the Spring School Planning Team.
- Support students seeking Assembly Accredited Lay Preaching certification through their application process and two years of college.
- Support AALPs with their training and development needs, including their annual Continuing Education and their required trainings in Safeguarding and Safer Sacred Spaces.
- Offer year-long training for students seeking Locally Recognised Worship Leader certification.
- Offer semi-annual trainings in worship and preaching for all preachers and worship leaders.
- Conduct multiple Elders Trainings throughout the year in a variety of accessible locations, in cooperation with our Training Consultant, Mark Rigby.

- Conduct **Elders Sacraments Trainings** as needed to ensure every congregation has one or two Elders trained and certified to preside at sacraments should no one else be available.
- Conduct trainings for **Interim Moderators and Visionary Companions** as needed.
- Host a **Synod-wide Stepwise Learning Cohort** for those interested in companionship whilst taking that online training.
- **Support congregations** in the Synod and **Area Meetings** by visiting to get to know you and the ministries in which you are involved.
- **Be available to preach** once or twice a month around the Synod.

If you need support with any of the above, please know that I am working through being in touch with you but also feel free to reach out directly to me at any time. tdo@urcsouthern.org.uk

If Facebook is something you use, please keep in touch with my work and travels at **#tdotravelsurcsouthern**

Blessings!

Charisa

Jobs in Southern Synod

Synod Area Administrator - Surrey and Sussex Synod Area

Part time - 15 hours per week. £14 per hour (£10,920 pa).

Southern Synod are looking for an administratively efficient and personable individual to support the Synod Area leaders and the churches, while maintaining a high level of confidentiality. The role is predominantly home-based and the nature of the work will involve a degree of flexibility in time allocation during the week, including occasional evening or weekend work.

Main responsibilities:

1. Administer Area and related meetings:
 - a. Preparing and circulating agendas and taking minutes
 - b. Organising venues
 - c. Completing follow up actions at the direction of the meeting Chair
1. Liaise with churches in maintaining Synod Area databases and records, and promoting communications.
2. Assist and monitor churches in maintaining compliance with statutory and URC expectations.
3. Support administratively other initiatives as agreed with the Synod Area Officers. In all the above, to liaise with other URC staff and ecumenical colleagues where required.

Please email the Moderator's PA at modpa@urcsouthern.org.uk for the job description and application form.

Closing date is noon 23rd June 2025. Interviews will be on 1st July with the appointment to start as soon as possible.

Upcoming Training and Events

Talking about...Clicks & Consequences

Thursday 26th June, 7-8pm

Book now: www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout

Join us for an interactive session designed to help you understand the impact of algorithms, echo-chambers and the risks that they present for children and young people. We will also be reflecting on recent theories and research into the effects of screentime and considering how we make our children and youth spaces a safe space for all.

Whether you're a tech-wizard, or a tech-dinosaur, a super-scroller or a screen-avoider, all who minister with children and young people have a responsibility to learn more about the digital world and culture that exists. Come, listen, learn, discuss and reflect together with your peers.

Pioneering Taster Evening

An Online Taster Evening is taking place on **Thursday 26th June at 6:30pm** for the 2025-26 Newbigin Pioneering Hub, led by Revd Dr Ash Barker.. This is an opportunity for any potential candidates to ask any questions.

The Newbigin Pioneering Hub are aiming to discover, nurture, empower and release a new generation of Pioneers. This will include helping Pioneers connect with new mission contexts, pathways, retreats and coaching. They believe Pioneers can go further into their calling through connection. Therefore, they are forming a 'Community of Pioneers' amongst those who are already Pioneers and all those coming through their 'Certificate in Pioneer Mission.'

This online event will provide an opportunity to connect, find out more and ask questions about the 'Community of Pioneers' and the 'Certificate in Pioneer Mission' programme run by the 'Newbigin Pioneering Hub.'

To apply for this exciting opportunity, visit: seedbeds.org/newbigin-pioneering-hub

"IOPT in Focus"

The Interfaith Enabling Group together with Commitment for Life are hosting a series of online events unpacking the issues of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, continuing with:

18th June - ANTISEMITISM with Nathan Eddy, Co-Director, Council of Christians and Jews

For more information and a link to the webinars please contact

commitmentforlife@urc.org.uk

150th Anniversary of the World Council of Reformed Churches

The World Council of Reformed Churches is celebrating its 150th Anniversary this year and to make this they are hosting a service on July 12 at the American International Church, Tottenham Court Road.

With roots in the 16th-century Reformation, and particularly in the theology of John Calvin, the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) dates its organisational history to London in 1875, and has been unifying churches over the course of its existence. It now represents 100m Christians from 230 + member churches in 109 countries around the world.

Get tickets from

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1257520550819?aff=oddtcreator



Youth Mental Health First Aid

By booking onto the new Youth MHFA course by @MHFAEngland, you will gain:

- ✓ The knowledge, awareness, and skills to spot the signs of a young person experiencing emotional distress or poor mental health
- ✓ The confidence to start a conversation
- ✓ The tools to safeguard and signpost to appropriate support

July 29th/ 30th (in person) 9am to 5pm
Sep 22/ 24th/ 29th/ Oct 1st 9.30am to 1pm
<https://bit.ly/youth-mhfa>



Youth Mental Health First Aid (Online)

MHFA England have just launched a brand-new updated Youth MHFA Course.

Booking for upcoming Youth MHFA courses are now open.

Register at www.bit.ly/youth-mhfa

Spaces are FULLY FUNDED for Southern Synod participants. (Usual cost £325pp)

ADVENT 2025 Resource - a gift for churches to give to families

URC Children's and Youth Work team are producing a beautiful box of postcard sized cards—one for each day in Advent. On alternate days there are things associated with Christmas and characters from the Christmas story with fun facts and activity ideas on the reverse. Designed to be reusable, displayed like bunting or in other ways, the box includes a DIY nativity set.

Pre-order at £4.25-£4.50 per pack (plus P&P) by 1 September to avoid disappointment from the URC bookshop: orders open 19 May <https://urcshop.co.uk>. Contact children.youth@urc.org.uk for a grant towards the cost.



Advent Resources 2025 now available...

It is never too early for Christmas! The URC Advent resources for 2025 are now available for pre-order. This can be done from the URC bookshop. These are a fun pack designed to be a quality missional gift from a church to a family

To pre-order go to urcshop.co.uk/2025-urc-advent-kit-preorder

Walking. Praying. Discovering. Fundraising



Join us on 21 June!!

10-4pm

Churches in South Croydon are open for discovery on a walking route that takes in local attractions and history...

Visit East Croydon URC, St Matthew's C of E, St Paul's URC, St Peter's C of E, St George's Waddon, St Andrew's Croydon, South Croydon United Church

MORE INFO

- 7 mile route (with optional short cuts and bus rides)
- Maps & instructions provided
- Start where you like!
- Refreshments and toilets in all churches
- Learn about Christian Aid's work



Contact Fran Boto, Elder at St. Paul's
URC franboto@aol.com or visit
www.stpaulsurc.org.uk



London
Churches
Refugee
Fund

**SPEAKER
EVENT 2025**

Thursday June 19th @ 6.30pm

The Right Reverend

Rose

Hudson Wilkin

(Bishop of Dover)

**"Community as a
Superpower"**

With speakers from some of the frontline charities
supported by the London Churches Refugee Fund
Email: info@lcrf.org.uk Website: lcrf.org.uk

St Pancras Church
Euston Road NW1 2BA

f&b Meeting & Greeting w Refreshments

Sponsored Walk for Christian Aid

Churches throughout South Croydon will be open for discovery on a sponsored walking route that will be taking place on the 21st June in aid of Christian Aid. For more information about this exciting fundraising opportunity, please contact Fran Boto franboto@aol.com

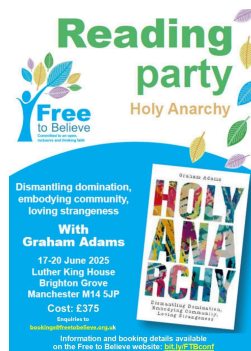
LCRF Speaker Event 2025

The London Churches Refugee Fund are running an inspiring event on Thursday June 19th at St Pancras Church, Euston Road NW1 2BA.

This will be a great opportunity to hear speakers from some of the frontline charities supported by the LCRF on the theme of "Community as

a Superpower." The event will be led by the Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin.

For more information, please visit lcrf.org.uk



Free to Believe Reading Party!

Free to Believe are running a 'Reading Party' of Holy Anarchy with Graham Adams from 17-20th June 2025. For more information, go to freetobelieve.org.uk/conferences



Creative Week is coming!

Running from Tuesday 5th to Saturday 9th August 2025 at Lumen, London (WC1H 9RS), this exciting event is designed for young people aged 11–16 who are in secondary school. Participants can choose from a variety of creative streams—drama, music, creative writing, movement and dance, or stage craft—and spend the week developing their talents in a fun and supportive environment. The week concludes with a special showcase performance on Saturday 9th August at 4 PM, open to all. Don't miss out—register online now at www.bit.ly/cw-registration

Thriving Families - Mission and Ministry with Under 5's

Join us on **Monday 16th June** from 10am-2:15pm for an online event exploring ministry with children under 5 years.

Thriving Families is an ecumenical event arranged by a variety of denominations and organisations. Including representation from: Roots for Churches, United Reformed Church, The Church of England, Quakers in Britain, The Methodist Church and Daniel's Den.

The day is a fantastic opportunity to focus on key aspects of their life and faith. With presentations from a range of skilled practitioners and professionals, it's a great way to grow your knowledge and skills to enhance all you do with this age group and their related adults.

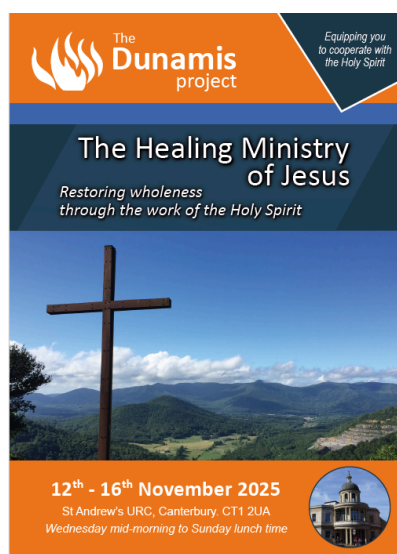
We'll be reflecting on:

The Wonder Years – two brief keynote talks considering how mission and ministry with our youngest children can be embedded in the life of the whole church. Finding ways to be intergenerational community with under 5s at the very heart.

Deep Dives – these short sessions will focus on a range of topics from getting started with under 5s: the basics, spiritual flourishing, developmental milestones, trauma-informed ministry and top tips for adults accompanying children. Participants will be able to join two of these during the event.

Panel Conversation– responding to your questions and space to consider what next.

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/thriving-families-tickets-1348093105769



Dunamis Project - "The Healing Ministry of Jesus"

The Dunamis Project are running the 4th of their 6 part training event which aims to "equip Christians to fulfill the Great Commission and advance the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit."

It will be taking place from the 12th-16th November 2025 at St Andrew's URC, Canterbury, CT1 2UA. To book your place go to www.dunamis.org.uk/events/dunamis-project-canterbury