

**News Update**

**September 2024**



Keeping you informed with the latest news and events from around the URC.

## Award-winning URC member "skates" to Paris for Paralympics



Isaac Harvey MBE and Wheels and Wheelchairs, of which he is President, has completed an epic adventure skating from Brighton to Paris for the opening of the Paralympic Games. Isaac and four other wheelchair users, along with 35 skaters and eight volunteers, set off on the trek on 24 August, and arrived on 28 August in time for the opening of the games. "We did it," said Isaac. "Our 121-mile journey from Brighton to Paris with Wheels and Wheelchairs was a huge success. I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who made this possible." [Learn more about Isaac's skate to Paris.](#)

## CWM missionaries celebrated



The Council for World Mission (CWM) London office hosted 26 visitors for its annual missionary gathering on in August. Participants included former missionaries, church leaders, and representatives from the CWM Europe region, former and current Partners-In-Mission (PIM), and CWM staff members. The gathering provided an opportunity to remember and commemorate former missionaries and partners and the work they have done. [Image: CWM.](#)

## Toolkit launched to tackle misogyny



The World Council of Churches and the World Association for Christian Communication has [launched a new toolkit](#) and social media monitoring initiative to address tech-facilitated gender-based violence. The toolkit enables community groups to monitor social media for misogyny and micro-aggressions which increasingly fuel online and offline violence, particularly targeting women in the public sphere. [Learn more about the toolkit.](#)

## General Secretary completes role as President of CPCE at its 9th Assembly



The Revd Dr John Bradbury joined 250 participants from 96 churches in Romania for the 9th General Assembly of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE). For the past six years, John has served as one of its three presidents. His term concluded at the Assembly themed "In the light of Christ – called to hope", which took place in Sibiu from 27 August to 2 September. The meeting focused on topics including migration from the perspective of the countries from which people emigrate, how churches are dealing with the war in Ukraine, interreligious dialogue in times of conflict in the Middle East, and democracy and churches. Of the meeting, John said: "As a small church on a geographical Island, it is easy for the URC to feel somewhat small and isolated at times. Membership of the CPCE bring us into direct, close relationship with our whole family of churches that emerged from the time of the Reformation." [Learn more about the business](#)

[discussed and decisions made](#) at the CPCE General Assembly. You can also [watch John's sermon to the CPCE on the URC YouTube channel](#).

## Season of Creation resources



URC Special Category Minister the Revd David Coleman, Chaplain with EcoCongregation Scotland, has curated an online resource to support congregations in celebrating the annual Season of Creation, 1 September to 4 October. With lectionary notes, prayers, poems, and location videos, there is a variety of writers and media for you to use in whatever way is most encouraging for your own church and community. Please [email David with any questions](#).

## Hold a Faith Wills service



The URC has joined a pioneering initiative called Faith Will to encourage people to talk about leaving gifts in their Wills to Christian Aid or their church. Following a presentation at General Assembly 2024, Synods are encouraged to show the Faith Wills video at their October meetings and encourage ministers and lay preachers to include a Faith Wills slot in upcoming services. [Visit the Faith Wills website for free resources and films](#).

## New network for intergenerational church launches

A new network for those in the UK engaged in intergenerational church has launched. Intergenerate UK supports the development of intergenerational ministry across churches through advocacy, facilitating contemporary theological reflection, developing and evaluating resources and much more. It's first webinar is planned for 8 October from 7.30-9pm which will explore the theme of music in intergenerational church with special guests Stephen Fischbacher (Fischy Music) and Sam Hargreaves (Engage Worship). [Book your place on the webinar through Eventbrite.](#)

### Free trees for schools and communities

The Woodland Trust is giving away hundreds of thousands of trees to schools and communities for free to help the UK reach its 2050 carbon net-zero target. Tree packs available are hedge, copse, wild harvest, year-round colour, working wood, wild wood, wildlife, and urban trees. [Learn more about the free tree giveaway.](#)

### Small group resources on public issues

Looking for a short course for the autumn to do individually or as a group? Want something that challenges and inspires you as you learn? The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) has a host of resources for small groups, including Just Economics, Act on Poverty, How Does Change Happen? and more. If you'd like to know more about or use any of these resources, [please email JPIT.](#)

### Download or print News Update

A downloadable version of News Update, formatted for print, and for churches to copy and paste into church newsletters or magazines will be available within a week of this edition being published. [Download your printable version of News Update.](#)

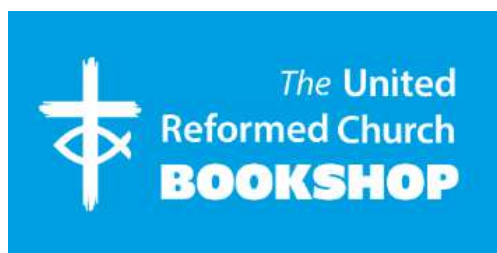
### Share your good news

If you have a good news story that can inspire, raise hope or show God's work in action then please let URC Communications know. We would love to help share your news across the denomination and in local news outlets. [Email the URC Comms Team](#) or call 07976 753 950.

### This month in *Reform* magazine

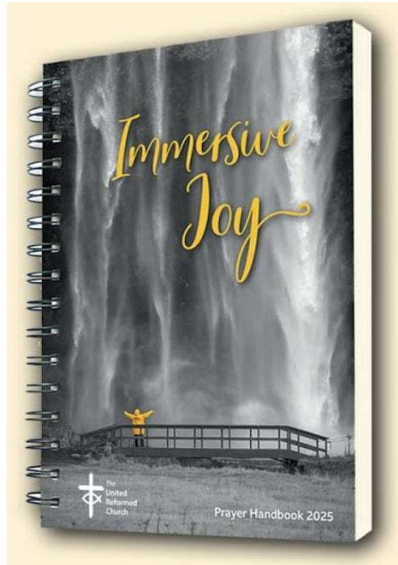


Re-imagine, remake and relaunch are the big words for September's new-look *Reform*. In what is the largest edition ever produced, the magazine features an in-depth, ten-page look at the "massive reassessment" the URC is undertaking of how it organises itself, including its finances. General Secretary John Bradbury imagines a podcast from 2030 to reveal a thriving Church, and there are detailed updates on the URC's radical Church Life Review. Also in the September issue, three church leaders share game-changing ways they've been exploring to support mission where they are, John Ellis reflects on the pitfalls of wealth for the Church, and Laurence Wareing discovers the gift of food and community at an award-winning food hub in Enfield. A life-changing accident is at the heart of our Soul Stories this month, and Old Testament scholar Meg Warner joins Abram on a journey where more is at stake than first appears. Elsewhere, Queen Katherine Parr gets fiery, Hugh Bonneville is silenced, and columnist Paul Kerensa wonders where Richard Osman has gone. All this and more in the September *Reform*, published in the September issue. [Subscribe to Reform](#) digitally or in print. For any queries, please [email the Reform team](#).



Please order online using the URC Bookshop's easy-to-use website [www.urcshop.co.uk](http://www.urcshop.co.uk) or by calling 020 7916 8629.

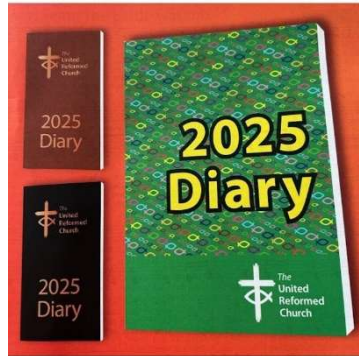




**New! [Immersive Joy – The 2025 URC Prayer Handbook](#)** is divided into two sections. The first section follows the calendar year, with a prayer for each Sunday based on one or more of the lectionary readings, and prayers for other special days. For the second section, we invited people to interpret the idea of being ‘immersed in joy’ in whatever way resonated with them. We have subdivided this section into prayers that could be used in public worship and those which seem more suited to personal devotion. £6.49 for A5 and £11.99 for A4 + p&p.



**[Pack of 25 x A6 prayer request](#)** cards with a verse from Philippians 4 on its cover, an area to write the request and for (optional) contact details. Ideal to leave on chairs or pews, or to give to people as they arrive for worship of events at the church. £2.99 +p&p.



[The 2025 Brown or Black Pocket Diary](#) or the A5 Green Diary includes calendars to 2027, year planners to 2027, notable dates for the URC and the wider Church, metric measures, Lectionary readings, Assembly officers and URC staff, useful addresses, Assembly committee details, and more. £9-£11 +p&p.

## Synod news

### South Western



The Revd David Downing will be inducted as Moderator of South Western Synod at a service in Taunton on 5 October. David said: "It is a privilege to be called to share in the ministry of the South Western Synod. I have gained so much from the life of the URC and this call is very exciting."

### Thames North



William Eneso, a pastorally-gifted 11-year-old from Thames North Synod, has been named July's Lundie Memorial Award. William was nominated for his caring attitude towards a family



experiencing a bereavement and for holding a powerful discussion about Jesus at Sunday school. [Learn more about William, and how to nominate a young person in your synod.](#)

## East Midlands



Congratulations to the Revd Dr Simon Cross who was ordained and inducted to the Hull URC Team Churches. The Moderator of Yorkshire Synod, the Revd Jamie Kissack, led the service at St Ninian's and St Andrew's URC. At Simon's invitation, the Revd Geoffrey Clarke, Moderator of East Midlands Synod, preached the sermon.

## North Western



To begin the Season of Creation on 1 September, a group from the Greater Manchester South Missional Partnership held a “Prayers in the Park” in Manchester's picturesque Fog Lane Park, the parts of which provided cause for reflection.

## What's On

### Northern College event



Northern College's Envisioning Worship Conference takes place from 8-9 March 2025. Themed "God the Child", the conference is for anyone interested in how worship can influence the life and mission of the church and will explore the idea of God as Child, in a range of ways, drawing on the specialisms of different people to open up the question and its possibilities. The conference can be attended residentially at £200 or non-residentially at £120. [Find full information and book your space](#). The book is also available to buy from the URC Bookshop. [Order your copy here](#).

## Learn how to talk about faith



Do you ever wonder how you can be comfortable sharing your faith with others? Are you worried you might be laughed at or dismissed or considered strange? Are you concerned you wouldn't know what to say if someone did want to know more? Join the Mission Team for the second FaithTalk, a light-hearted conversation exploring how we talk about our faith on 3 October at 7.30pm. [Email the Mission Team](#) to register and to find out more.

## Free tickets to the Christian Resources Exhibition

Get your free ticket and visit the URC at Stand P10 at the Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) 2024 taking place 9-10 October at the Marshall Arena in Milton Keynes. Dr Sam Richards, Head of Childrens and Youth Work will be speaking at the exhibition on the 9th from 12.30-1pm in Talks 3, first floor balcony. [Learn more about Sam's talk "Safe as houses? Church youth work in your home"](#). [Get your free ticket to CRE](#).

## Iona Community lecture



Join the Iona Community on 25 October from 7.30–9pm for its annual lecture, this year themed 'Turning the tables'. The theme will explore how we can all play a part in building an economy that enables the flourishing of all life. The event will be both in person in Edinburgh and livestreamed, with a donation of £10 for those attending on site and a suggested donation of £5 for those viewing the lecture online. [Learn more about the lecture and register.](#)

## Help your church to grow



Leading Your Church into Growth is an insightful and valuable resource that aims to encourage and equip churches to grow both numerically and spiritually. It's 2024 conference "Leading your Evangelism into Growth" takes place from 25-27 September. Places are filling up fast.

