

Safeguarding Committee – Voluntary Independent Member

About You...

We are seeking applications for an independent member of the URC's Safeguarding Committee.

You will have a current or recent working knowledge of safeguarding with children and/or adults at risk and be willing to gain an understanding of contextualised safeguarding within the faith setting.

As a committee member you will be instrumental in overseeing the implementation of the URC's safeguarding policies and the strategic management of safeguarding across the denomination.

Terms of Reference are downloadable [here](#) and please see the [job description and person specification](#).

Interested?

If you want to find out more please contact:

Roger Jones – Safeguarding Committee Convenor rjones@urcsouthern.org.uk

Or

Sharon Barr – Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Committee Secretary sharon.barr@urc.org.uk / 07776 178 246

To apply please send a CV by email to safeguarding@urc.org.uk

Closing date for applications: noon Friday 11 October

Applications will be screened by the Committee Convenor and Secretary. Shortlisted applicants will be asked to attend a short meeting with them. Safer recruitment for all volunteers will be carried out for the successful applicant.

Faith Talk

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 us for the second FaithTalk, a light-hearted conversation exploring how we talk about our faith.

Thursday 3 October at 7.30pm

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

Disability Awareness Week launches on Sunday 15 September

Don't miss Revd Helen Cameron, President of the Methodist Conference, Moderator of the Free Churches Group, and President of Churches Together in England, preaching to launch Disability Awareness Week: 15-22 Sept '24, calling for justice, equality and access.

Watch the Disability Awareness Week launch service, available after 3pm on 15 Sept at <https://valeofstour.org.uk/daw2024>

Join the journey! – mark Disability Awareness Week in your church or ministry

Hold a Disability Awareness Sunday service on 22 September or a day of your choice.

Free resources are at: <https://throughtheroof.org/forchurches/disability-awareness-sunday/>

What happens in Disability Awareness Week (15-22 September)?

Let's all take action! All churches are invited to reach out and meet with disabled people in their community in Disability Awareness Week. This could be through organised church events or through individuals inviting a disabled person they know to meet for a coffee.

UCB radio and Through the Roof (TTR) are making sure disabled Christians' voices are heard. On UCB1's Talking Point programme, 9am–1pm from 16-20 Sept, each day, one disabled person will share about their lived experience of disability in church and society.

TTR will also be sharing videos, tips and insights each day during the week about the ABC of church disability inclusion on social media @TTRChangesLives. Please 'like' and share!

Contact: annette@throughtheroof.org and janet@throughtheroof.org

Visit: www.throughtheroof.org for more information. Tel (main office): 01372 749955

Online version link: [News release: launch of Disability Awareness Week 2024 - Through the Roof](#)

Torch Trust – Sight Loss Friendly Church

SLFC Q&A

Thursday 17th October at 2pm (1 hour)

Registration Link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlsf--rj4vGtTk5i0r7IGmO3RRuNhtJ6mJ>

Meet our expert panel from Torch Trust and ask your questions around welcoming and including blind and partially sighted people in all aspects of your church. No question is too trivial or inappropriate, we're all at different stages in our sight loss friendly journey. As well as asking our experts, churches with experience of inclusion are also welcome to chip in with hints and tips on how they have overcome any challenges.

Additional date for Introduction to SLFC

Thursday 14th November at 2pm (45 minutes)

Registration Link

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlIcEqpqT8vHdbre1Ekzi5oMpsYOxGg5HQr>

Sight Loss Sunday - Sunday 13th October

This October we invite you to mark Sight Loss Sunday at your church. Sight Loss Sunday is an opportunity for churches across the UK to put on a sight loss accessible service and to become more aware of ways that services can be adapted to be more sight loss friendly.

This year Sight Loss Sunday will be taking place on the 13th October. This year's theme is Walking by Faith. We hope that churches around the UK will join us in celebrating the gifts of people who are blind or partially sighted, and recognising that they have vital roles to play in communities and congregations. With your support, we can reach more churches than ever before with our resources, supporting churches to become more sight loss friendly.

Resources

This year we have released a third set of resources to help your church mark Sight Loss Sunday. We have added these new resources to our website and as with previous years, you may pick and choose the ones which feel relevant to you and your church. The resources include suggested songs, Bible readings, sermon notes and some additional resources. The previous years' resources are still available to be used, so you also have the option to mix and match, and use elements from any of them. You are welcome to use as many as you would like and we hope you also take some of these ideas into your future services. You can access our resources here: torchtrust.org/SLSunday We hope you'll find the resources inspirational and if you mark Sight Loss Sunday, we'd love to hear from you.

Gospel Voices – St Martin's West Moors

'Gospel Voices' (formerly known as St Martin's Community Gospel Choir) based in West Moors, Dorset is a small choir whose mission is to bring the joy of gospel music to churches and communities in and around East Dorset/West Hampshire. They are available to sing at other churches (unfortunately, not Sunday mornings as the choir is made up of members from a selection of different churches which worship at that time.)

In recent times they have led musical worship at a number of churches, sung for a church wedding ceremony and presented programmes of 'Songs of Praise and Joy'.

If you would like 'Gospel Voices' to sing at your church or outreach events, please contact Choir Manager, Christopher Legrand at stm.gospelchoir@urc-eastdorset.org.uk or phone 07771 617363

Download: [Gospel Voices early autumn concert flier](#)

Available: Rejoice and Sing and Common Ground in Braille

The Haven, Banbury are offering the following Braille books:

Rejoice and Sing (8 books), and
Common Ground (2 books).

Braille requires more page space than type, hence there being so many books for each edition.

If you are interested in these books, please contact Fiona Gow on gowfio3@gmail.com

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

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Training – *Flowchart*

The flowchart gives an overview of the various safeguarding training courses on offer and has a table which shows the mandatory level of safeguarding training for various roles within the URC. The [flowchart](#) is on the Synod website.

Safeguarding – *Away Day – change of date*

Saturday 15 March 2025 at Fleet URC and on zoom. 10.30am – 3.30pm.

Safeguarding Away Day for Church Safeguarding Coordinators.

Bookings: <https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/event/safeguarding-away-day-for-church-safeguarding-coordinators/>

Synod Safeguarding Reference Group – *volunteer opportunity*

The Synod Safeguarding Reference group meets for 2 hours, 4 times a year via Zoom with the purpose of supporting the synod to fulfil its responsibilities of protecting children and adults at risk in the local churches and at Synod activities.

We are looking for a volunteer to join the group from a local church within the synod. If you are a church safeguarding coordinator or deputy, ideally with experience of safeguarding from outside the church environment, then we would welcome a conversation with you, to explain more about the role and move forward with appointing the right person. If this is something that interests you,

then please email our Synod Safeguarding Officer on safeguarding@urcwessex.org.uk

Safeguarding Quarterly Newsletter – July 2024

Read the latest [newsletter](#) from the Safeguarding Team at Church House.

Safeguarding Training – Advanced Safeguarding

Advanced Safeguarding Training on zoom.

The October course is full. Next dates are in January 2025.

Tuesdays 14 & 21 January 2025. 6.30pm – 8.30pm.

This course is mandated for those in the following roles:

Youth and Children Workers including volunteer leaders, and Adult Workers including volunteer leaders.

Anyone who has completed the Foundation & Intermediate safeguarding training is also welcome to attend (numbers permitting). Priority will be given to those in the mandated roles.

Safeguarding Training – Foundation & Intermediate course

Foundation & Intermediate Safeguarding: training courses.

- Saturday 9 November 2024, at Fleet URC. 10am – 4pm
- Saturday 11 January 2025, at Trinity Church, Totton. 10am – 4pm
- Saturday 25 January 2025, at Trinity URC, Charminster. 10am – 4pm

To book your place please email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk or book via the Synod website, go to Safeguarding page <https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/safeguarding/>

National Safeguarding Training courses – various topics

Specialist Safeguarding training in 2024 organised by Church House. Please see the [poster](#) for the full list of dates and topics.

To book, please email: Emma.Pearce@urc.org.uk

Training Webinars. [Elders as Trustees](#). This is available online for you to access in your own time.

Safeguarding – Good Practice 6

GP6 is now available. Church House has sent out hard copies to Church Safeguarding Coordinators. **GP6 is available online** [here](#).

First Aid training – coming soon

Local churches have a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate provision of first aid at all their programmes.

Coming soon - updated information about first aid courses funded by Wessex synod, including a flowchart to help you consider the appropriate level of training for your church activities.

Mental Health First Aid training – with Peter Larkum

Become a certified Mental Health First Aider. Two-day courses in-person or online equivalent which includes four live zoom sessions with the trainer.

Become a certified Youth Mental Health First Aider. This two-day in-person course or online equivalent qualifies you as a MHFA with a specific focus on how that relates to younger people.

Wessex Synod will cover the cost of the MHFAider training course, (2-day course or online equivalent).

Training dates and further information for with trainer Peter Larkum can be found [here](#).

Please register via Wessex Synod, not direct, and preferably no later than 10 days before the start of the training course.

Email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk to receive the link to register on the course.

Development and Support

Bookings for all events and training courses to
Ruth Heine at the Synod Office

Email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk Tel: 023 8067 4513

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 the DSOs can be of assistance, please do be in touch with them.

Ray Stanyon – dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk

Mary Thomas – dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk

Dates in 2025

Church Secretaries' Networking Zoom – Saturday 18 January 2025.

Lay Preachers' Gathering – Saturday 29 March 2025 at Sarum College.

Church Treasurers' Networking Zoom – Saturday 17 May 2025.

Elders' Conference – Saturday 28 June 2025 at Sarum College.

Children's and Youth Events and Training

Children's Workers Conference, 1 - 3 November 2024

The URC are holding their first ever Conference for those involved in children's ministry in the church, whether you are the co-ordinator or a volunteer on a rota, this conference is for you.

The [programme](#) looks fabulous and engaging with a balance of input and retreat.

It's also taking place in Wessex Synod in Oxford, so you can come as a residential guest or a day visitor. [Booking form](#). **Bookings close on 30 September 2024.**

We also offer [training grants](#) that would fund a place at the conference.

Talking About ... *Disability*

On 26 September 2024. 7pm – 8pm.

We want to try and make sure that everything we offer as a church, from Sunday worship to groups and clubs, is accessible to everyone, of all ages and abilities.

What are the practical steps we can take to enable this?

What are the pitfalls we should try and avoid?

Join us online on September 26th (7-8pm) as we explore these questions with members of the Roofbreaker team from www.throughtheroof.org

Get your free ticket at www.bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout

URC Youth Assembly 2025

URC Youth Assembly, 7 – 9 March 2025.

Details on the [poster](#). Early bird booking price, book before 1st December 2024.

Children and youth Work webinar

For those working with children and young people.

Understanding behaviour and additional needs webinar. Available on YouTube [here](#).

Family Film Night – *new resource*

Elemental. Theme: How do we make an inclusive world.

These exciting resources are designed for families to have fun and explore big questions together, all based around a family friendly film. Each film night has a main theme and follows the same pattern. Watch the film together, have fun doing the activities and then explore using the wondering questions. For families who want to link to the Bible, there are 'going deeper' wondering questions to use. This resource can also be used in Sunday Schools, messy

church, bible study groups and school assemblies. **Why not consider hosting a family film night and inviting your community to come along?**

Free to download from the [Synod website](#).

Other News

URC News Update

[View July/August News Update here](#)

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.

Children's and Youth Bi-monthly Newsletter – September 2024

[Bi-monthly Newsletter – September 2024](#) from the Children's and Youth Team at Church House.

Education and Learning bi-monthly newsletter

View Issue 9: August 2024 of [Education and Learning bi-monthly newsletter](#)

Joint Public Issues Team

View JPIT newsletter [Edition 168 \(August\) here](#)

Churches Together in England Newsletter

Latest newsletter available here: <https://cte.org.uk/enews/>

News from around the Synod

Woking URC achieves Gold Eco Church Award milestone

Working United Reformed Church (URC) has become the 51st Gold Eco Church in England and Wales.

The award was given by the Christian conservation charity A Rocha UK, and reflects Woking URC's commitment to walk in step with nature and put creation care at the heart of what they do.

With more than 3,500 Eco Churches gaining an award at one of the three levels, Gold, Silver and Bronze, the Gold award is itself a prestigious and impressive achievement.

Read the full story here: [Woking URC achieves Gold Eco Church Award milestone](#)

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.

REMINDERS

URC Finance Department letter to all churches

Ministry And Mission Fund – Annual Letter to Local Churches.

The purpose of the letter is to provide local churches with an annual update on the Ministry and Mission (M&M) Fund, as requested by General Assembly. The letter is aimed mainly at church treasurers and provides some detailed financial information, but is available for all to read at the link below.

[Annual Letter to Local Churches](#)

Prayer Calendar

October Calendar

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anniversary of the Formation of the URC• Burton Green
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting of Synod• The United Church Winchester
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broadstone• Faringdon United Church
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salisbury• Bournemouth International Church

Care for Creation – October Prayer

Creator God

We praise you for the abundance of your harvest;
The colourful berries and glossy nuts which adorn the trees and bushes,
The ripe vegetables in all their wonderful variety,
The fungi growing deep in the woods.

We thank you for the autumn colours which blaze with your glory,
Gladdening our hearts, even though the days grow shorter.

We thank you too for the resilience of the world you have created
Where even fruits that fall to the ground contain seeds for new growth.

Help us to take inspiration from the world around us.
 To care for the ground and living things which give us life.
 To do what we can, even though it seems a little;
 For in your eyes, nothing is disregarded
 And love surrounds the smallest as well as the greatest
 Warm our hearts with hope, by your spirit which brings fire as well as peace
 And so fill us with love for this world, that we overflow with care for all.
 Amen

November Calendar

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tadley • St Francis, Banbury
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blandford Forum • Trinity, Abingdon
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grange, Reading • Somerford, High Cross Church
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bell Street United Church Shaftesbury • Caversham Park, Reading

Items for the next edition to office@urcwessex.org.uk
 by 12noon on Monday 14th October 2024

Please submit news items in the form of:
 a heading; date and venue details; a brief descriptive sentence and a website link.