

Welcome

Welcome to the April edition of the URC Eastern Synod newsletter. If you have any items you would like to be shared in future editions, please get in touch.

David Coaker, Eastern Synod Clerk

01223 632999

clerk@urceastern.org.uk

Synod Meetings

Future Synod Meeting dates for your diaries: Castle Hill in Ipswich on 14th October 2023
Downing Place URC, Cambridge on 9th March 2024
Witham URC on 12th Oct 2024.

Save the Date - Big Day Out: Saturday 8th June 2024 - Save the Date

Eco Church awards

Well done to the following three churches in the synod who have recently achieved bronze eco church awards:

Castle Hill URC, Ipswich achieved their award by forming a green group in the church, working with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to rewild their grounds, installed LED bulbs, regularly updating their congregation on green issues through an eco newsletter and working with the other churches in the pastorate. To celebrate the award the church held a special climate service and enjoyed a specially decorated cake! They are now looking towards silver which could include installing solar panels on the hall roof.



Bramerton Road Community Church, Hockley installed a bug hotel in their garden and have a recycling station for spent ink cartridges and batteries and celebrated the award with a special climate service.

Ipswich Road URC, Norwich have installed solar panels, LED lighting, double glazing, insulated walls, created a wildlife garden which includes homemade URC branded birdboxes and holding regular climate Sunday services. Ipswich Road is now working towards a silver award.



Hopefully we will shortly be able to give an update on our efforts to be awarded Eco Synod status!

In the meantime here is a link to a short video published by the denominational Church & Society team, designed to be shared in local churches as part of the bid for 100% participation in Eco Church:

<https://linktr.ee/ecovideo>

Synod Office EV Charger

If you are visiting the Synod office, and you drive an electric vehicle, you can top up your charge. It is available through PodPoint and we'd need to add you to the list of users.



Downing Place Shortlisted

The transformation of Downing Place United Reformed Church in Cambridge, designed by Archangel Architects, has been shortlisted for a prestigious architecture award:

<https://urc.org.uk/cambridge-church-shortlisted-for-prestigious-architecture-award/>

Lundie Memorial Award Winner

Fifteen-year-old Joel Wood, from the United Reformed Church (URC) Eastern Synod, is January's recipient:

<https://urc.org.uk/lundie-memorial-award-winners-january-march-2023/>

CYWC Update Mar 2023

Listen to Paul Robinsons update from Children and Youth work committee:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TN0OF5bG5Q>

Education and Learning Newsletter

Here is the second newsletter focusing on all things Education and Learning and giving you a number of links to follow for more information:

<https://urc-news.org.uk/2JB1-1Y5D8-85E06FBDAB70951D50NN4D46E76E010322E1DF/cr.aspx>

Castle Camps URC

After much discussion and prayer and after thoroughly exploring various possibilities for a continuing URC presence in the village, Castle Camps URC has made the difficult decision to close. There will be a final service of thanksgiving for 167 years of mission and ministry in the village on May 7th at 6pm. If the church has been a part of your Christian journey or if you just want to come and mark this sad occasion with us, you are very welcome to join us.

To give us an idea of numbers, please email our Church Secretary, Sara CastleCampsURC@outlook.com to tell us who and how many are coming in your group.

Every Blessing, Rev'd Phil Nevard

Press Statement from Churches Together in England

Presidents of Churches Together in England have issued a statement encouraging Christians to join in daily prayers for the King and the nation. They said: "The forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III is a moment of great importance and joy for this nation. As Presidents of CTE, we invite Christians from all traditions to join together in a period of daily prayer, for both the King and the nation, from Easter Day through to 6 May.

We welcome the publication by the Church of England of the book of Daily Prayers for the Coronation of King Charles III which can be used as a guide to reflection. The Coronation will be a time to celebrate community, faith and service – values that are reflected in these prayers."

The Daily Prayers

The book of prayers, produced by the Church of England combines themed daily readings and shares features of the Coronation Ceremony, exploring the Christian symbolism behind it. The readings also reflect the value that King Charles III places on charitable work, environmentalism, volunteering and community life. The Daily Prayers – a sample of which can be read online [here](#) – are available to order as a booklet from [Church House Publishing](#).

They will also be available free via email and audio via the [Church of England website](#) and social media.

Holiday Forum 2023

Saturday 19 – Friday 25 August at The Hayes, Swanwick

Holiday Forum is an annual event, described as a heady holiday mix of faith, fun and fellowship. This year's Forum takes place at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire from Saturday 19 – Friday 25 August, with opportunities to book to attend in person, or to share in parts of the programme virtually. Inclusion Through Invitation is this year's theme, led by Michael Harvey, the founder of Back to Church Sunday, the National Week of Invitation, and schools-based organisation God & the Big Bang. Michael will help Holiday Forum in its continuing explorations of how church can become a genuinely welcoming, diverse and anti-racist community. For full details of Holiday Forum 2023, visit:

<http://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk/wpsite>

Joint Public Issues Team

Newsletter 150 March 2023

This month's newsletter shares some signs of hope, as well as inviting you to gather with us to learn new skills to challenge injustice, share your successes and hear how others are working for change.

<https://jointpublicissues-news.org.uk/1MV9-88JZK-412B79827FC04D91MT4M3H5A3FD114FE0DE651/cr.aspx>

Churches' Legislation Advisory Service

Please find the following extracts from a recent circular from Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (CLAS) www.churcheslegislation.org.uk

Benefact Trust: new Building Improvement Grants Programme

The Benefact Trust gives grants to provide essential support to protect and enhance churches and Christian charity buildings, ensuring their continued use, viability, and the safeguarding of their heritage. The programme is open to applications from churches, cathedrals, denominational bodies and Christian charities and will support direct capital costs of:

- essential, one-off repairs or other capital works;
- minor capital works or equipment purchases to meet operational or accessibility requirements;
- conservation or restoration of historic features;
- improvements to indoor or outdoor space for users; and
- energy efficiency/renewable energy measures.

For full details go to the Benefact Trust website: <https://benefacttrust.co.uk/which-grant-is-for-me/building-improvement-grants/>

Grants and adviser support for co-locating a community business in a place of worship

The Benefact Trust has also funded the Plunkett Foundation to enable it to extend its programme of funding until the end of 2023. It offers free business support and grants to help community groups and active Christian places of worship across the UK to explore co-location. They can provide free adviser support on everything from engaging with your community to legal structures.

More information about the grants, together with case-studies, can be found on Plunkett's website: <https://plunkett.co.uk/community-businesses-in-places-of-worship/#advice>

Fuel costs: reliefs for charities: further update

The Charity Commission has updated its Guidance, Manage financial difficulties in your charity arising from cost of living pressures, as follows: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-financial-difficulties-in-your-charity-arising-from-cost-of-living-pressure?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=1fc36de2-b510-4bf1-af41-62f01efe0b62&utm_content=daily

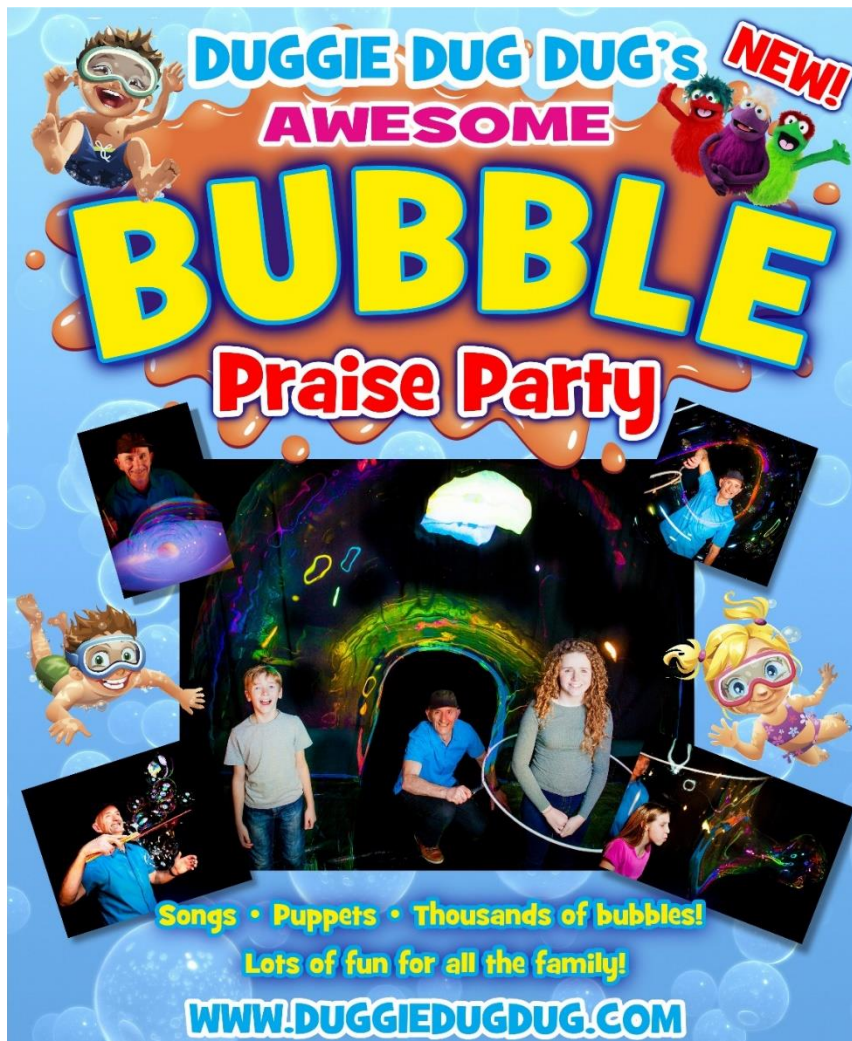
'5. Managing fuel costs: reliefs for charities

The Government put in place automatic energy bill relief for non-domestic customers until 31 March 2024. The levels of support were updated in the Spring budget: see Spring Budget 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk) at 2.19-2.28

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1144441/Web_accessible_Budget_2023.pdf. Further details on how the discounts are calculated and applied can be found in guidance from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (Energy Bill Relief Scheme). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bill-relief-scheme-help-for-businesses-and-other-non-domestic-customers>

Additionally the charity can check whether it is presently paying the correct rate of VAT on the fuel it purchases – see VAT for charities: What qualifies for VAT relief. <https://www.gov.uk/vat-charities/what-qualifies-for-relief> You should contact your supplier if you believe a refund may be appropriate.”

United Reformed Church Eastern Synod Invites you to



**Sunday 4th
June**

3.30pm

**Christ Church,
Braintree**

**7 London Rd,
Braintree**

CM7 2LD

Family Ticket £10

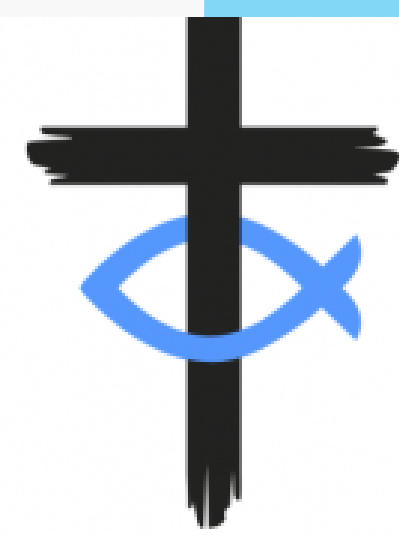
**(2 Adults +
Children)**

Or Children £2.50

For Further Information Please contact Nicola Grieves 07515721172

To book email admin@urceastern.org.uk

National Safeguarding Training 2023



The
United
Reformed
Church

Refugee and Asylum Seekers
May 30th 7pm-9pm

Substance Abuse and the impact on
Safeguarding
June 26th 7pm-8.30pm

Suicide Awareness
September 11th 2pm-3.30pm

Domestic Abuse
September 19th 1.30pm-3.30pm

Modern Day Slavery
September 25 7pm-9pm

Safeguarding for Ministers Supporting Survivors
October 9th 2pm - 4pm

Adult Safeguarding
November 21st 7pm - 9pm

**All training will take place via zoom.
Bookings can be made by emailing
Emma.Pearce@urc.org.uk**