

**Hannah Holmes**

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**From:** East Midlands Synod <trainingpa@urc5.org.uk>  
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**18 April 2024 - No. 410**

## In this edition:

- [Geoff Milnes](#) asks where God is in times of trouble
- Last call to explore your service at our [Enquirers' Event](#) (Sat 27 Apr)
- Announcing this year's [Sacraments Support Day](#)
- New events from [Free to Believe](#) and the [Faraday Institute](#)

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## Opening Reflection by Geoff Milnes

### Synod Property Officer

Life is a struggle sometimes, isn't it? We struggle with all the things that have to be done when there doesn't seem to be enough time in each day to do them all. We struggle with balancing budgets at home – the 'eat or heat' problems that some have. We struggle with our health, the effort we put into living day to day with our infirmities. We struggle with our mental difficulties and battle with many other ailments that seem to plague us.



Sometimes we struggle with our faith.

Where is God when I can't get life in order so that I can do what is needed to be done? Where is God when I am weak and have no energy? Where is God when I am sick, injured, or hurting inside? Why can't I find Him when my faith is weak and uncertain?

The disciples must have had similar feelings, certainly about their faith, when the man they thought to be their Saviour, the one who would save them and lead them into the future, was taken from them and nailed to a cross and left hanging there until He was dead. Not only that, but his body had disappeared from the tomb in which it had been placed.

There they were, sitting in an upstairs room, wondering what they were to do, when suddenly, as if from nowhere, Jesus appeared to them. So, He hadn't left them after all!!! There he was, standing in front of them as if nothing had happened. Yet the holes in his hands and side were evidence that He had been on that cross, that He had endured death. But His presence in that room showed the disciples that He hadn't left them, He hadn't deserted them, indeed the opposite was true – He had shown them that His power over death meant that He would never leave them, and that there was no need for anyone to think that He ever would.

Yet Thomas didn't believe what the disciples revealed to him. He wanted to see for himself that Jesus was alive, to put his hands in to the holes in his flesh. Only then would he believe. Jesus appeared to the disciples again and this time Thomas was present and put his hands into Jesus' wounds. Then it dawned on Thomas that Jesus would never leave, would be with them always.

The two disciples on the Emmaus Road were equally distraught at what had happened to Jesus and were so wrapped up in their dismay that they failed to recognise Jesus as He walked beside them. Only when they were offered bread and wine did the realisation dawn on them that they were in the presence of the Saviour, and they ran back to tell the others that they had seen Jesus.

Even Jesus thought that God had left Him. His words on the Cross – ‘My God, My God why have you forsaken me’ – are an echo of how the disciples felt after His death. Yet even in that darkest of hours God had not forsaken Jesus, for He was with Him through death and into the glorious, resurrected life that came afterwards.

God is with us always and understands and feels our struggles. Even Jesus was so moved by the death of Lazarus that, as we read in John’s Gospel – Jesus wept. God has empathy with all our struggles and understands them, even if we don’t know ourselves what causes them or what the solutions are. Just as Jesus hadn’t deserted the disciples, so He hasn’t deserted us in our time of struggle or uncertainty, and He never will. The very last words of Matthew’s Gospel affirm that for all of us - ‘I am with you always, to the end of the age’.



Whatever your struggles, hold fast to that promise of Jesus for He knows you, understands you, has empathy for you and will save you!!!! Even if you lose sight of Him, remember that He hasn’t lost sight of you.

## Around the East Midlands

### Induction of the Revd Dr Bachelard Kaze Yemtsa

On Saturday 13 April, the **Riverside Church, Sleaford** hosted the joyous occasion of the Induction of the **Revd Dr Bachelard Kaze Yemtsa** as Minister of the Mid Lincolnshire Area Pastorate and Family and Children's Outreach Worker. The new Area, whose formation was recognised during the same service, comprises the Riverside Church and **Boston United Reformed Church**.



(L-R Revd Dr Peter Stevenson, Revd Clare Davison, Hazel Bond, Revd Dr Bachelard Kaze Yemtsa, Dr Brian Coaker, Revd Jane Wade, Dr Graham Jennings)

Deputy Synod Moderator the **Revd Jane Wade** presided and Bachelard was presented by the **Revd Dr Peter Stevenson**, concluding his service as Interim Moderator. Peter also preached the sermon, on John 15:1-17, which was read by the **Revd Clare Davison**. Representing the Call group, **Dr Brian Coaker** of Riverside Church gave the narrative of the call while **Hazel Bond** of Boston URC led prayers of praise,

confession and forgiveness. The Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order of the URC was read by Synod Clerk **Dr Graham Jennings** with TDO **Derek Graham** and prayers of intercession were offered by the **Revd Helen Jesze** of Eastwood URC. The service was followed by food and fellowship in **The Source**, Riverside's community café.

We all join in praying that Bachelard will enjoy a blessed and fruitful ministry in Mid Lincolnshire.

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## Easter Celebrations Across the East Midlands

### Boulevard URC



Members and friends came together at **Boulevard URC**, Nottingham to celebrate Easter decorating the empty cross and bringing colour to the worship.

## Holymoorside URC



Members and friend at **Holymoorside URC** with their Easter Cross.

## Christchurch, Leicester



At the start of Lent, **Christ Church**, Leicester made its Christmas tree trunk into a cross, as a reminder of the inextricable link between Christmas and Easter. Then each Sunday in Lent one symbol of Christ's passion was hung on or placed beside the cross, with bread and wine added at the Maundy Thursday Communion service (the first the church has had). Strangely, the wooden chalice used for that service leaked slightly, and has wine ever looked more like blood than when it 'bled' from the chalice?

The symbols were gradually removed during Christ Church's very popular Good Friday presentation... but were replaced by fresh spring flowers brought by the congregation on Easter morning, and the cross was then moved outdoors for passers-by to see.

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## **Organ Recital at Hinckley United Reformed Church**

**Saturday 18 May 3.00pm**

You are warmly invited to an organ recital to be given by **David Saint**, Director of Music at St Chad's RC Cathedral, Birmingham (& former Principal of Birmingham Conservatoire) at 3.00pm on Saturday 18 May. The recital will be given on the historic 1867 Holdich pipe organ.

Admission: £5.00. Under-18s and students: free.

Hinckley URC is located at The Borough, Hinckley LE10 1NL.

## **Synod Team on Tour**

**Next Stop: [Abington Avenue URC, Northampton](#)**

**Tuesday 30 April 2.00-5.00pm and 6.30-8.00pm**

Pop along and chat with Synod staff team and officers over a decent cuppa is on **Tuesday 30 April**, when we visit the town of Northampton as guests of **Abington Avenue URC**. There will be both afternoon and



early evening sessions, concluding is a short time of prayer and worship. If you're anywhere near Northampton, please do come and say hello.



**Coming Soon!**

**Lincolnshire: St Columba's - Thursday 20 June**

**Leicestershire date to be announced soon.**

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Would you like one of the Synod staff to come and help for a day this summer? During the holiday period, instead of a single "Synod Team on Tour", each member of staff is offering a day to come and assist the first church to bid - with your Holiday Club, Food Bank or any other project taking part in August.

To request a helper for the day from the Synod Team, please email **Tom Donoghue**, Mission Development Officer: [mission@urc5.org.uk](mailto:mission@urc5.org.uk) .

## Enquirers' Event - Last Call

**Saturday 27 April 10.00am-12.00 noon** via Zoom

Could you be our next Lay Preacher? Elder? Pioneer? Find out about all these vocations and more, with no obligation, as **East Midlands Synod** holds this year's **Enquirers' Event** online on **Saturday 27 April**. To receive the Zoom link, simply email: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) .



*Is God Calling You?*

# Synod Enquirers' Event

**Do you feel God is calling you to serve in some way, but you are not sure what? Or how?**

**Then here is an opportunity to hear people share stories and answer questions about a whole range of vocations in the United Reformed Church.**

CRCW

**Join us  
on  
Zoom**

Pioneer

## *Saturday 27 April*

**10 am - 12 Noon**

Email: [trainiingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainiingpa@urc5.org.uk) to book your place

Elder

Lay  
Preacher

Children & Youth  
Leader

Minister

Chaplain

Sacraments Support Day



This year's **Sacraments Support Day** for lay people authorised or nominated to preside at Holy Communion and Baptism in local churches will be held at **Mackworth URC**, Derby, on **Saturday 2 November**. Training and discussion will be led by the **Revd David Featonby**, Convenor of the Lay Ministries Group.

Authorised Elders and Lay Preachers in the East Midlands Synod are asked to refresh their training for presidency at the Sacraments every five years. Secretaries will be approached in due course to verify whether their churches require Authorised Elders in order to maintain access to the Lord's Table in the year ahead.

All those whose refresher is due are asked to reserve this date in their diaries and are invited to attend for the afternoon, from 1.30-4.00pm. Anyone newly nominated to preside will additionally be asked to attend for an introductory session in the morning (10.30am-12.30pm).

## Personal News

**It is with great sadness that we bring news of the deaths of the following people. We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved through their lives and ministries.**

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**The National Synod of Wales** brings us the news of the death of retired minister, the **Revd Ivor Rees**, who passed away on the morning of Monday 1 April at the age of 92.

Ivor served the Union of Welsh Independents until 1967; and then Clapham 1967-73; Ewell 1973-79; Manselton, Swansea 1979-86; and Bamford 1986-96 before retiring to Swansea.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all who hold Ivor dear.

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Here in the **East Midlands Synod** we are deeply sorry to hear of the death of **Malcolm Littlefair** on Easter Sunday, 31 March. Malcolm was Trust Treasurer and Director for East Midlands Synod between June 1997 and December 2010. Malcolm also served on the URC Trust National Investment Committee.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all who hold Malcolm dear.

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## Synod Picnic in the Park - Postponed

We regretfully inform you that due to unforeseen circumstances the Synod Picnic has been postponed. Look out for details of a Synod Picnic in 2025! We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.



## Free to Believe Conference 2024

Wednesday 4 - Friday 6 September 2024



### Coming to our Senses

'The Word made flesh is here made word again' (Edwin Muir, The Incarnate One).

This year's **Free to Believe** conference focuses on embodiment, a continuing challenge for churches, and worldwide.

#### Speakers:

- **Kathy Galloway**, Former Leader of the Iona Community, and former Head of Christian Aid Scotland.
- **Victoria Turner**, Editor of 'Young, Woke and Christian'

#### Worship Leaders:

- **Fiona Bennett**, Minister of Augustine URC, Edinburgh
- **Kathy Galloway**

For more information or to book visit: [Conferences \(freetobelieve.org.uk\)](https://www.freetobelieve.org.uk/conferences)

# The Faraday Institute



## **The Art and Science of Human Health and Spirituality – The Faraday Institute Summer Course 2024**

**Monday 1 July – Friday 5 July**

**Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge and Online**

Science touches every aspect of life – from how it begins and how it ends, to how it is lived in between. The same, of course, is true of religion. Looking the other way, every aspect of life touches science – from politics and power, to understanding the roots of creativity and communication. And the same, of course, is true of religion. This one-week course considers this rich interplay: how science, religion, medicine, and the arts mutually inform, illuminate, and enrich one another.

The course draws together expert speakers from across diverse disciplines to address these topics, though it does not assume that attendees have any formal training in any or all of the topics covered. Many of the speakers have a personal religious – often Christian – faith, though the talks are intended for those of any faith or none.

For more information or to book visit: [faraday.institute/summercourse2024](https://faraday.institute/summercourse2024)

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### **Art, Spirituality and Healing Course**

**Friday 10 May - Saturday 11 May**

**Westminster College Studio, Cambridge**



Discover the deep connection between spirituality, art, and well-being in this stimulating journey through the visual arts. Join speaker [Dr Pavlína Kašparová](#) OP to explore how Christian spirituality and art can be gateways to healing, restoration, and self-discovery. This course is all about understanding how artists and scholars have used their practice to find this connection and then following their examples to harness the healing power of art. Uncover their insights together in this hands-on course and see how art can be a transformative force in our lives.

Cost: **£149** for two days (priority), **£89** for one day

Participants number: **12**

For more information or to book visit: [faraday.institute/artcourse](https://faraday.institute/artcourse)

## [Job Opportunities](#)



## Casework Supervisor (Safeguarding)

Home Based

Permanent contract, 18 hours per week

Salary: £54,000 (FTE)

### Are you ready to help support our Safeguarding Officers with case management and improve our Safeguarding practices?

In response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and the United Reformed Church's Past Case Review (PCR), we have identified the need for consistency and accountability in the work the safeguarding teams undertake across the denomination and at Synod level. This new role will offer support and advice to the Synod Safeguarding Officers (SSO), ensuring compliance and best practice across the denomination in its casework.

You are qualified to degree level in relevant fields or have relevant professional experience. You have experience in working with legislation and policies for safeguarding children and adults. You have excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to develop, sustain and network relationships whilst able to analyse complex situations and advise appropriately.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment: working from home, with occasional travel to Church House and Synods when required.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form (noting that we do not accept CVs):

Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT  
020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urc.org.uk/vacancies

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Friday 19 April 2024 Interview date: Thursday 2 May 2024

*This post requires a satisfactory enhanced certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.*

## Find us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urc5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:

<https://www.urc5.org.uk/>



Our [East Midlands Synod Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/) continues to host the **Evening Prayers** led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and friends every day at 9.30pm. If you are a Facebook user, please consider **Liking** this Page and **Sharing** its posts:  
<https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/>

Similarly, the [Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/) shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: <https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/>



On our dedicated [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g>

To subscribe to our **Synod Children and Youth Newsletter**, for ideas, resources and news of further events please click here:

<https://bit.ly/CandYNews>

This E-letter is produced on behalf of:

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Footprint in sand -Photo by [Christopher Sardegna](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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***Next edition: Thursday 2 May 2024***

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both:

[trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) and [training@urc5.org.uk](mailto:training@urc5.org.uk)

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 29 April 2024**

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