

**Hannah Holmes**

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**From:** East Midlands Synod <trainingpa@urc5.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 02 May 2024 10:58  
**To:** Hannah Holmes  
**Subject:** [Test] News from the East Midlands Synod

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2 May 2024 - No. 411

## In this edition:

- [Ben Twelves](#) asks how much a human life is worth
- Register now for our [free Quiet Day](#) in Northants on Tuesday 14 May
- Also this month: our [Community Audit](#) sampler and a special [Pentecost](#) celebration
- Plus: find out about [Pioneering](#), join in national [Prayer events](#) and more

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## Opening Reflection by Ben Twelves

### Synod Safeguarding Officer

#### The Price of Life

*"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

**Matthew 10:29-31**



I'm currently reading **Jenny Kleeman's** captivating new book [The Price of Life](#). In it, she tries to pin down the value that is placed on a human life. Our initial reaction may well be, "You can't put a price on a life!" but politicians, insurance companies and health professionals are constantly making decisions based on such calculations.

If a local council discovered a road safety measure that cost £500 and saved hundreds of lives, it would carry out the measure immediately. If it were to cost billions, and only save one life, they wouldn't do it. Somewhere between the two figures would be a balance point that would be the value which the council placed on a life.

The price varies dramatically depending on the context and Kleeman delves into many different worlds to find the stories and calculations that lie behind the stark numbers which head her chapters: from assassins to philanthropists; the NHS to slave traders; insurance companies to arms manufacturers.

One story in the book that stopped me in my tracks was a conversation between **Will MacAskill** (professor of Philosophy at Oxford) and **Giles Fraser** (Anglican Priest). MacAskill created a form of philanthropy called "Effective Altruism" where charitable donations are focused to "where they can do the most good." This way of giving makes a lot of sense and is the reason why a lot of the world's richest people donate huge amounts of money to causes in Africa such as malaria prevention and deworming programmes (Jeff Bezos - founder of Amazon – donates around \$10 billion a year). Saving a life in Africa costs between £3,000 and

£4,000. The price of life is far less in some parts of the world than others.

Giles asked Will a question: “If a house, containing a child and a Picasso painting, was on fire, and you could only save one, would you save the child or the Picasso?” Will knew that the proceeds of selling the painting would mean that he could save thousands of children and so he, confidently and unapologetically, answered that he would save the Picasso.

Logically, it makes some kind of sense, but it’s a horrible and offensive thought.

“The Price of Life” is not a religious book, but the stories in it constantly cause me to reflect on big questions and, ultimately, to ask what God’s view on all of this is. In Matthew 10, Jesus refers to the way that humans use money to value things. Sparrows are worth an “ha’penny” and humans are worth more than “many sparrows” - which doesn’t really clarify things!

Jesus isn’t trying to help us calculate a number, but shows us that, despite the arbitrary prices that humans may come up with, God values things in a very different way. God values us by loving us, not by calculating a price. The maths of love doesn’t ever quite add up properly.

It makes me think of **Graham Kendrick**’s song “How much do you think you are worth?” If you don’t know it (it was a 70’s classic!) then you can listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/e5rAiVgILUA>

The song reminds us that the value of anything comes down to how much someone is willing to pay. That price is at the heart of our churches and our lives as Christians. God is very clear about what we are worth and about the price that he was willing to pay. It comes down to one verse in John's gospel.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

**John 3:16 (NIV)**

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## Around the East Midlands

### St. Columba's Church Uganda Fundraising Concert



Members and friends of **North Lincolnshire Area** churches gathered at **St.Columba's Church**, Lincoln, on the afternoon of Saturday 20 April. They performed and enjoyed a varied programme of dance, readings of poetry and comic prose, and music on guitar, flute and piano. Light refreshments followed.

£160 was raised at the event. Funds will be used to purchase items for communities in Uganda connected with children sponsored by the church and St. Columba's Church member **Janet Turner**. Janet (pictured 2<sup>nd</sup> right) will visit Uganda in summer.

[This month: Quiet Day in Northamptonshire](#)

**Tuesday 14 May**  
**Yelvertoft Independent Chapel, Northampton**

Our free Quiet Days are designed for elders, members, ministers and friends - anyone who'd like to step away from the busy-ness of church life for a few hours and reconnect with their spirituality in a fresh place. The first of this year's Quiet Days is led by the **Revd Jay Phelps** on **Tuesday 14 May**: simply email [training@urc5.org.uk](mailto:training@urc5.org.uk) to register now, at no charge.

# Northamptonshire Quiet Day

Quiet Days give you an opportunity to pause, to contemplate your faith and to be refreshed.

In a tranquil setting, a leader offers a simple scriptural starter, then gives you the gift of time to meditate, wander, listen and pray as you choose. The day finishes with a short time of sharing. A Quiet Day offers a respite from pressure and a space to rest in God.

**ALL WELCOME!**

**JOIN US, TO BE  
REFRESHED AND  
RENEWED**



**Tuesday 14 May**

**10.00am - 3.30pm  
Yelvertoft Independent  
Chapel  
Northampton**

**Led by the Revd Jay Phelps**

Be influenced and inspired  
by the late Michael Forster's book  
"Being there. The healing power of presence"

**For more information or to book, please contact: [training@urc5.org.uk](mailto:training@urc5.org.uk)**

**Other Quiet Days coming soon:**

**Derbyshire**

**Saturday 29 June**

10.00am - 12.30pm

**Dale Abbey, Derbyshire**

Led by the **Revd Ruth Allen**

**Lincolnshire**

**Friday 13 September**

10.30am - 3.30pm

**Heckington Fen, Lincolnshire**

Led by the **Revd Jane Weedon**

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**Also in May: Community Audit Day**

**Saturday 18 May 2024**

**Newport Pagnell URC**

Following the success of previous events, this month offers a further chance to learn from Church Related Community Worker **Vicky Longbone** about working out how to make your church's mission meet the community's most pressing needs. This time Vicky is visiting Newport Pagnell: to book a place, free of charge, simple email [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk) .



# COMMUNITY AUDIT DAY



Led by Vicky Longbone

**Saturday 18 May  
10.30am - 3.30pm**

Do you want your church to be more relevant to its local community? Would you like help in discerning what your local mission should be? Are you eager to reach out to the people in your vicinity, but not sure of the most fruitful way?

**Newport Pagnell URC  
Milton Keynes**



Then you will want to find out about running a Community Audit. This is a tailored process, in which you combine existing information sources with your own close observations and encounters to form a complete picture of your geographical community and its most pressing needs. It will help your church to learn exactly who your neighbours are – and what you can do for them.

To book your free place email: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk)

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## Join a Special Pentecost Celebration

**Sunday 19 May at 6.00pm**

**at St Andrew's with Castle Gate URC, Nottingham and live-streaming online**

As its final project, the Synod's Stepwise **Faith-Filled Worship** group is devising a special, intergenerational celebration of Pentecost - and you are warmly invited to take part.



**TONGUES  
OF FIRE**

The  
United  
Reformed  
Church  
East Midlands  
Synod

**An intergenerational, interactive  
service for Pentecost**

led by members of our Stepwise **Faith-Filled Worship** group across the Synod

**SUNDAY 19 MAY 2024 at 6.00pm**

**In person:**  
at  
St Andrew's with  
Castle Gate URC,  
Nottingham

**Streaming live:**  
at  
[www.youtube.com/c/  
StAndrewswithCastleGateURC/live](http://www.youtube.com/c/StAndrewswithCastleGateURC/live)

**A service for everybody - please celebrate the  
Church's birthday with us in Nottingham or online!**

Stepwise

Photo by Hamid Roshan on Unsplash

The service is at **6.00pm** on **Sunday 19 May**. You can either come along in person to **St Andrew's with**

**Castle Gate URC**, Nottingham NG1 5JT, which is generously playing host - or join in online with the live stream at [www.youtube.com/c/StAndrewswithCastleGateURC/live](http://www.youtube.com/c/StAndrewswithCastleGateURC/live) .

Pentecost is the birthday of the Church: if you're able to be present, there is free parking and maybe even cake. (Those joining from home are also encouraged to indulge in cake.)

## Synod Team on Tour



Synod staff members and officers were on the road again this week, kindly hosted on Tuesday by **Abington Avenue URC**. A steady stream of folk from around Northamptonshire took opportunities in both afternoon and evening to drop in to share thoughts, seek advice and find out more about support available to every church through the East Midlands Synod.



Dates are now available to meet the team in **Lincolnshire** and **Leicestershire** in the coming months - and if you'd like one of them to come and lend a hand in your summer project, see below!





at **St Columba's URC**  
**Lincoln**

**Thursday 20 June 2024**  
**2.00-8.00pm**





Photo: Abhishek Babaria/Unsplash

**at Christ Church URC  
Leicester**

**Monday 28 October 2024  
2.00-8.00pm**

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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) .

## 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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**South Western Synod** brings us the news of the death of retired minister, the **Revd Kenneth Wilkinson**, who died on Sunday 21 April 2024.

Ken served at Brighthouse 1967-69; Banners Gate 1969-78; Shrewsbury 1978-86; Redditch 1986-91; and Central, Swindon 1991-2002. Our thoughts and prayers are with all who hold Ken dear.

## ECO News

**Charles Jolly**, Associate Member of our Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation group (JPIC), shares this update:

### **The Global Plastics Treaty**



In striving to safeguard the integrity of Creation, we are confronted by serious environmental degradation resulting from climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution (especially chemical and plastic). Most scientists agree that there's still time to take effective action provided that we act now.

2024 could mark a turning point in rolling back **plastic pollution**, with final negotiations on the first ever global treaty to attempt this scheduled for December in South Korea. The latest round of talks was held in Ottawa this April, but there are still deep divisions between the parties involved.



The 66 nations of the **High Ambition Coalition**, consisting mainly of the EU (along with the UK), Japan and island nations, want to end plastic pollution by 2040 but most petroleum-producing countries together with most petro-chemical industries and many large corporations seem opposed to legally binding targets and strong regulations because of self-interest.

### What can we do?

1. Every **action** that we can take helps to reduce pollution and to reinforce public pressure for change. Individuals and businesses can take action in this order (not only for plastics, of course):

- **Refuse plastic items** (especially where there is a viable alternative)

- **Reduce use of plastic** (especially of single-use plastic as much as possible)
- **Reuse plastic items** (e.g. food containers, refilling printer cartridges)
- **Repurpose** (or Upcycle - be creative and think divergently)
- **Recycle** (bigger supermarkets often take formerly 'hard to recycle' products like crisp packets and (clean) single-use plastics - maybe collect these centrally at church?)

2. **Add your voice** to campaigns and sign petitions for change. For example, Tearfund's:

<https://www.tearfund.org/forms/rubbish-campaign-petition>

3. **Write to your local MP**; encourage the Government to stand firm in the treaty negotiations. Ask demanding questions at hustings when the general election is announced.

### **A Prayer for an Effective Treaty to End Plastic Pollution**

**Almighty God**, you call us to care for your beautiful planet. We are filled with sorrow by the environmental degradation that we humans have caused through ignorance, carelessness and greed.

We thank you for everyone who is working to sustain and renew the life of Earth, especially for the negotiations this year towards a treaty to eliminate plastic pollution.

We remember before you all those who are negotiating on the treaty. We recognise that there are many different interests involved and ask that you will give all parties wisdom and insight and a commitment to the greater good. May the High Ambition Coalition hold firm to their target of ending all plastic pollution by 2040.

We pray for the two billion people who have no waste collections, for the many who try to make a living picking materials on the huge refuse heaps in poor countries and for other species that are being harmed by plastic pollution. We pray that the integrity of Creation will be restored. For the sake of Jesus Christ, who came to make all things new, Amen.

Please let us know of actions that you are taking: email [charles.jolly13@btinternet.com](mailto:charles.jolly13@btinternet.com)

## Lets End Poverty!



A diverse, growing movement of people united behind a vision of the UK where poverty can't keep anyone down.



**Let's End Poverty** is a diverse, growing movement of people who are united behind a vision of the UK where poverty can't keep anyone down. Supported by over 50 churches, charities, trade unions and community groups, and made up of over 630 movement builders across the UK, the movement is coming together to make sure that in this General Election year, tackling poverty is a top priority on the agenda of **all** our political leaders.

The aim is to empower better conversations, from kitchen tables to the cabinet table, to make sure our political leaders know that tackling poverty must be a priority for anyone with aspirations to be in government.

### What can you do to get involved?

You can be part of the growing network of people who are getting resourced and supporting one another to take action.

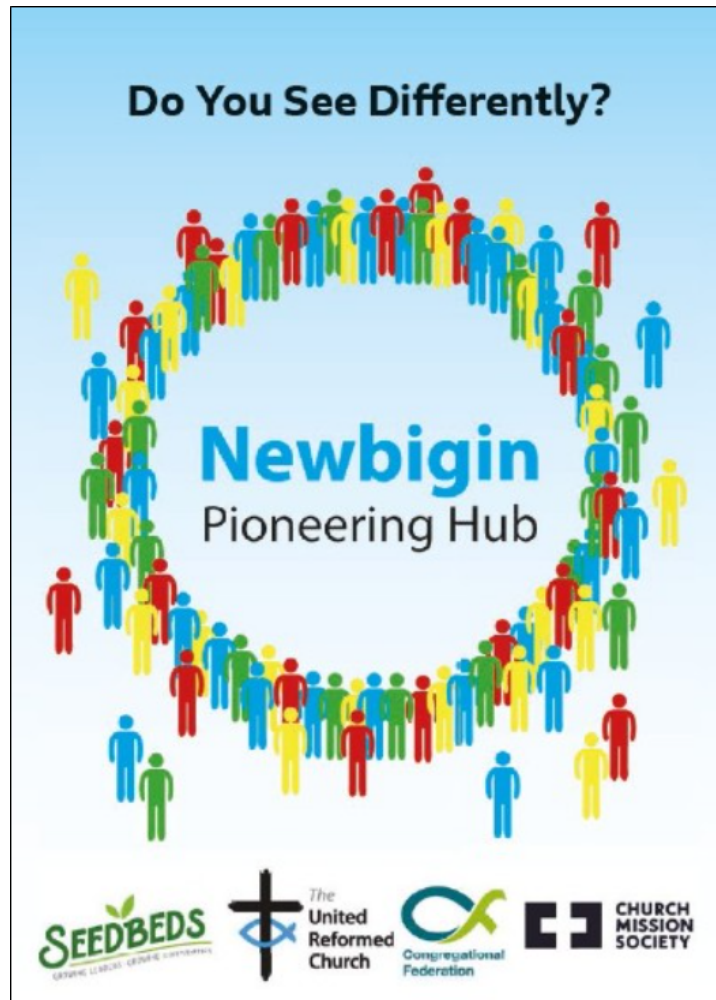
The best way to get involved is to head to the **Let's End Poverty** [website](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/about-us/), where you can sign up as an individual or as a community group. Visit: <https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/about-us/>

## Pioneering New Ways of Being a Church

**URC Children's and Youth** are running two online sessions:

**Wednesday 8 May** 12.00-1.00pm

**Saturday 11 May** 9.30-10.30am



Run by: **Revd Dr Ash Barker** (NSM Minister of Lodge Road URC, Winston Green, Birmingham and Director of Seedbeds / Newbigin Pioneering Hub) and **Dr Sam Richards** (Head of Children's & Youth Work).

Do you know a young adult with a passion for doing something new, connecting people with God in new ways, seeing God at work in the world – or could this even be you? **Pioneering** is all about making a way where there is none – and the URC offers training and support through the **Newbigin Pioneering Hub**.

Come along to find out more! Visit <https://bit.ly/find-out-sessions> to book your place!

## From URC Spirituality

The **Revd Jane Weedon**, our Synod's Spirituality Contact, shares the following updates:

### Y-Pray? Women's Conference



Y-Pray? is back as a **ZOOM-PRAY**

...the same intimate and nourishing  
all in your own home



Join us for a time of spiritual refreshment  
as our speaker, Liz Hall leads us in

**'I made you wonder'**

Along with the whole National Committee of the **World Day of Prayer UK** we would love YOU to join us at our Women's Conference on **Saturday 4 May** for a morning of worship, teaching, prayer and fellowship from the comfort of your own home. I have just booked and it would be good to share this together, Book online today: [www.wwdp.org.uk/about-y-pray/](http://www.wwdp.org.uk/about-y-pray/)

### National Day of Prayer and Worship



The **National Day of Prayer and Worship** takes place on **Sunday 19 May** and churches are being encouraged to turn their Pentecost celebrations into a prayer meeting. The theme of this year's campaign is 'In One Accord' and its aim is to encourage Christians to pray for loved ones, their neighbours and communities to come to Jesus.

On **Friday 17 May**, there will be a hybrid "night watch" where Christians can come together to pray through the night, between 10.00pm-5.00am in person at **St Andrew's URC** in Watling Street, Canterbury CT1 2UA and online. Register for the online service

here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZclduyrqj8uGdKlcd6wbY7f5QmRPH2mDo5E#/registration>.

On Sunday 19 May at 6.00pm, Christians can watch the national celebration via the National Day of Prayer and Worship YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@nationaldayofprayerandworship>) or attend the service in person at **Canterbury Baptist Church**, St George's Place, Canterbury CT1 1UT.

To learn more about the National Day of Prayer and Worship, see <https://www.ndopw.com/>. Please let us know if your church is planning to participate in this day and what you have on offer: email [training@urc5.org.uk](mailto:training@urc5.org.uk).

**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).

## Job Opportunities



# WE ARE HIRING

## URC YOUTH INTERN : COMMUNICATIONS

- AGED 17-25, AT LEAST NATIONAL FIVES & HIGHERS / GCSE LEVEL STANDARD, WITH EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND WIDER CHANNELS.
- HOMEBASED
- 12-MONTH FIXED-TERM CONTRACT, 8-30 HOURS PER MONTH
- SALARY: LIVING WAGE RATE
- CLOSING DATE FOR CVs: 12 NOON, TUESDAY 28 MAY 2024
- INTERVIEW DATE: FRIDAY 14 JUNE 2024
- THIS POST REQUIRES A SATISFACTORY ENHANCED CERTIFICATE FROM THE DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE



The United Reformed Church Youth

**APPLY NOW**

More information  
[URC Youth Intern job description](#)

Send your CV and covering letter [recruitment@urc.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@urc.org.uk)

For more information visit:

[URC Youth Intern - Communications - United Reformed Church](#)



## The Methodist Church Northampton District

### District Office Administrator

Permanent part time role  
 Working Monday - Friday  
 Office-based role with some working from home



Salary up to £13,000 depending on experience

Working Monday-Friday up to 20 hours per week

Do you have a customer service and administrative background? If so, please read on....

If you're a highly organised individual with excellent administration and communication skills and have a willingness to respond spontaneously as situations arise, we want you on our team!

This is a diverse role and no two days are the same.

Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity. Apply now and be part of our busy office.

If you wish to apply for this role, please email Leslie Jaeger

l.jaeger@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk for an application form. If you would like to learn more about the role or visit for an informal chat, please contact Claire Handley at office@northamptonmethodistdistrict.co.uk or telephone 07548 315536.

The deadline to submit your application is by 4.00pm on Friday 10th May 2024

Interviews to be held on Tuesday, 28th May 2024 at our District Office in Unit 1, Bouverie Court, The Lakes, Northampton, NN4 7YD.

## Find us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.unc5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:

<https://www.unc5.org.uk/>



Our [East Midlands Synod Facebook Page](#) 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:

The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.

Telephone: 0115 960 9241

The inclusion of items in this newsletter does not constitute endorsement by the East Midlands Synod. Any views expressed do not represent the views of the East Midlands Synod or any of its officers or staff except where explicitly stated.

CCL1067405

Sparrows - Photo by [Cédric VT](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Promotional graphics by Hannah Holmes and Derek Graham

***Next edition: Thursday 16 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 13 May 2024**

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