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1. ELDERS TRAINING

There are two further opportunities planned for Elders to explore their responsibilities as Trustees, in mission and evangelism, in working with children and young people and in relation to health and safety on **Saturday 2nd December 2017** at Shrewsbury United Reformed Church SY3 7BJ and **Saturday 24th March 2018** at Warwick Road United Reformed Church, Coventry CV1 1EX. A booking form will be sent out at a later date.

2. CHURCH SECRETARIES TRAINING

Church Secretaries fulfil an important role in the life of the local Church. An opportunity is presented for support and training in some key areas. Date: Saturday 11th November at Wylde Green United Reformed Church, B73 5SW. Booking forms will be available soon or contact Rachel Vernon at the Synod Office for more details on admin@urcwestmidlands.org.uk

3. NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTERS/ SELF-SUPPORTING MINISTERS

What are the distinct challenges and opportunities of this form of ministry in the United Reformed Church? Come to share your own experience and learn from others. Date to be confirmed **either Saturday 16th September** at the Synod Office, Digbeth-in-the-Field United Reformed Church B26 1TW. Details to follow...

Booking form and details are being sent to all ministers serving churches in this way in the Synod.

4. END OF LIFE

A number of the Synod's ministers recently attended a study day in London around approaches to the end of life. Plans are in hand to share their learning and reflection more widely. More details to follow...

5. KIRCHENTAG

Colin Offor, the Synod's Ecumenical Officer, has recently attended the

Kirchentag in Berlin (and features in the current issue of Reform and the Digest). There is a video review on line at <https://www.kirchentag.de/english.html>

Colin is willing to share his experience with local churches, pastorates and areas and can be contacted by email on colin@offor.co.uk.

6. RURAL MINISTRY COURSE

The next Germinate: The Arthur Rank Centre Rural Ministry Course is on **Tuesday 7th – Thursday 9th November 2017**. Based at the King's Park Centre in Northampton, the residential programme employs a variety of approaches including practical sessions, group work and workshops led by practitioners. It is designed for Lay and Ordained Ministers across the denominations who may be entering a rural appointment for the first time, or already in rural ministry and feel the need for a 'refresher'.

Sessions cover:-

- Rural contexts
- Mission and growth
- Leadership
- Working with children and young people in the countryside

For more information and to book go to <http://germinate.net/training/ruralministrycourse/>. The Cost is £255.

7. CREATIVE MINISTRY

Two years ago at the Ministers' Summer School we shared creative gifts – writing, drawing and painting, photography and music. It was agreed that we should do this more often! If you are interested in this sort of opportunity, please contact Stuart Scott at tdo@urcwestmidlands.org.uk or phone 0121 442 6325.

8. FUND-RAISING

Andrew Mann-Ray has experience, knowledge and training in this important area to help churches as they seek to resource their engagement in God's mission. If your church would be interested in hosting a session for Andrew to share his expertise, please email him on amannray1979@gmail.com or contact the Training and Development Officer on tdo@urcwestmidlands.org.uk

9. GREENBELT

Greenbelt <http://www.greenbelt.org.uk/> is a Christian Arts Festival that takes place over the August Bank Holiday

weekend. The venue is currently Boughton House near Kettering and the United Reformed Church is a partner in the event. This year's theme is "The Common Good" and the United Reformed Church will explore the theme "More than Welcome".

10. **CONSTANCE COLTMAN**

A year or so ago, Kevin Snyman produced this film <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpFfb8QhpgI> to raise awareness of the centenary of one of the first women to be ordained to ministry in a mainstream British denomination. Recently Francis Brienen, Deputy General Secretary (Mission) has written with this invitation "It is my great pleasure to invite you to a special Service to celebrate the centenary of the ordination of the Revd Constance Colman.

The service will take place on **Sunday 17th September 2017** at the American International Church on Tottenham Court Road in London at 3.00 pm and will be followed by refreshments. The centenary is an important event in the life of the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation and we would be delighted and honoured if you would attend." To respond to this invitation email Tracey Hardingham at tracey.hardingham@urc.org.uk

11. **MARTIN LUTHER**

Another of this year's "Feasts and Festivals" is the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther hammering his theses to the church doors in Wittenberg. James Church will help us explore the significance of this event for us at 7.30 pm on **Thursday 5th October 2017**. Further details, including venue, to follow...

12. **VISION4MISSION 2017**

As this year of "Feasts and Festivals" draws to an end, we are invited into "Walking the way – living the life of Jesus today". The theme of the residential Synod, **13th - 14th October 2017** at the Holiday Inn, Birmingham is "Missional Discipleship/People of the Way" and all are invited. Please contact Helen Cavaco at the Synod Office for details or to book a place on moderators@urcwestmidlands.org.uk.

13. **WESTMINSTER COLLEGE**

www.westminster.cam.ac.uk
Saturday 18th November 2017
10.00 - 4.00 - Quest for peace.

A quiet day particularly for those new to retreat days offering simple ways to explore stillness, solitude and silence "to enhance well-being in the midst of a busy life"

14. **GEAR**

The Group for Evangelism and Renewal (GEAR) have created a website dedicated to prayer for the URC and especially **Walking the Way...** www.praytheway.org.uk.

They have also organised a conference from **20th to 22nd November 2017** <http://www.gear.org.uk/conferences/refreshing-your-ministry> for Ministers of word and sacrament, Church Related Community Workers, and Elders in Local Leadership.

The speakers are Andrew Roberts and Martin Robinson with contributions from Sheila Coop, Louise Franklin, Steve Newell and Brian Harley, plus some input from the Evangelism and Renewal Advocates – John Hardaker, and Sally and Andrew Willett. Brian Clarke will be leading worship and Steve Tomkins, Editor of Reform, will also be dropping in.

15. **PULPIT SUPPLY**

There have been recent discussions about the advocacy and recruitment, training, mentoring and support of lay preachers and worship leaders. This is in some ways related to the ongoing concern about the deployment of ministers of word and sacrament but it is not about plugging the gap but recognising the ministry that lay preachers offer.

The Elders' meeting is responsible for the conduct of worship but the pulpit supply secretary plays a crucial part in providing worship that sustains and nurtures faith. There are no quick fixes but a meeting is being planned for pulpit supply and church secretaries in the Gloucester area as an initial step forward.

16. **URC GOLFING SOCIETY** **WHITEHORN CUP GOLF DAY**

Monday 4th September 2017 at the Bromsgrove Golf Centre. Book by 23rd August. Contact Revd John Maile johnfmaile@gmail.com or phone 01562 515423.

Entry costs £38 per person and includes goodie bag, bacon bap, range balls, 18 holes of golf, dinner, presentation and prizes.

17. **LOCAL MINISTRY AND MISSION REVIEW (LMMR)**

Re-launch and looking forward

The LMMR scheme is a tool for churches to explore and develop their participation in God's mission. It is not working as effectively as it might and some resistance is evident. We are aiming to clarify and streamline the process for the benefit of the Synod's Churches and Ministers and those who give their time as partners in the process. New partners are sought but current partners will be invited to a vitally important meeting to relaunch the scheme. There will be two opportunities – either **Tuesday 23rd or Saturday 27th January 2018**. Further details to follow...

18. **CRUCIBLE COURSE**

Urban Expression in partnership with others including the Northumbria Community run two streams each consisting of three weekend courses a year. They take place at the International Mission Centre in Selly Oak, Birmingham.

This year's dates are **18th - 19th November 2017, 3rd - 4th February 2018 and 19th - 20th May 2018**.

Titles for Stream 1 are "After Christendom", "Urban Challenge" and "Creating new churches" and for Stream 2 "Restoring hope", "Becoming human" and "Jesus unplugged".

The cost is £95 per weekend or £260 if all three are booked. Placements are also offered to apply the learning from the weekends. For further information email info@cruciblecourse.org.uk or see <http://www.cruciblecourse.org.uk/>

19. **Ministry Enquirers' Day on Saturday 4 November 2017**

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Westminster College, Cambridge

For full details contact: -

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