

# Feasts & Festivals 2017

*A year of celebration*

2017, a year for the whole United Reformed Church to celebrate all that we have been, are now and are called to be as we continue walking the way of Jesus Christ today.

It's 500 years since the Lutheran Reformation, 100 years since the ordination of Constance Coltman, the first woman to enter congregational ministry, 45 years since the URC came into being, more than 80 years since Pilots started and 25 years since Commitment for Life began. So, let's celebrate! And, in doing so, let's think about who we are, what we're about and how we can support one another as we all, in our own ways and contexts, seek to be better disciples of Jesus.

## 27-29 Jan URC Youth Assembly

Whitemoor Lakes, Staffordshire

A weekend for Year 10s/53s to 25 year olds focussing on the theme of *Feasts and Festivals: We're all invited*, giving an opportunity for young people to focus on Jesus, to share in community with others and to explore what it means to be Church together.

020 7916 8683 [bit.ly/urcya17](http://bit.ly/urcya17)

## 20 May URC Big Day Out

Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire

A day of fellowship for the whole United Reformed Church, celebrating all that our diverse and colourful denomination has to offer as we walk the way of Jesus Christ together. Organised for the whole URC by Pilots.

020 7916 8637 [pilots@urc.org.uk](mailto:pilots@urc.org.uk)

## 24-28 May Kirchentag

Berlin and Wittenberg

This massive, biennial festival of fellowship, worship, discussion and encounter will be bigger and better than ever as 500 years since the Lutheran Reformation are celebrated by more than 1,000,000 participants from around the globe. The event will culminate in a huge worship gathering in Wittenberg, the place where it all began! This is an event not to be missed!

[www.kirchentag.de/english](http://www.kirchentag.de/english)

## 26-29 May Crossfire Camp

Strathern Lodge, Leicestershire

An exciting weekend focussing on 'Feasts and Festivals' with talks, small group sessions, sung worship and great food, for young people aged 12 and over.

[www.crossfire.org.uk](http://www.crossfire.org.uk)

## 10 June Synod Family Day Out

Suffolk Showground, Trinity Park

A day of fun and celebration for all the family.

Eastern 01223 830 770 [admin@urceastern.org.uk](mailto:admin@urceastern.org.uk)

## 11 June Celebrating Freedom

Across East Midlands Synod

A synod-wide festival encouraging all local churches to spend some time, on the same day as others, to focus on the theme 'Celebrating Freedom'.

East Midlands 0115 960 9241 [office@urc5.org.uk](mailto:office@urc5.org.uk)

## 1 July Big Day Out

Burgate School, Fordingbridge

A day of fun and celebration for all the family.

Wessex & South Western 023 8067 8570 or 01823 334 522  
[office@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:office@urcwessex.org.uk) or [synodoffice@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:synodoffice@urcsouthwest.org.uk)

## 8 July Big Day Out

Southport Convention Centre

Barrel loads of fun and inspiration for young and old with speakers including Steve Chalke, workshops from puppetry to piety and a plethora of stalls, worship and singing.

Mersey & North Western 0151 722 6590 or 0161 789 5583  
[synodoffice@urcmerseysynod.org.uk](mailto:synodoffice@urcmerseysynod.org.uk) or [admin@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:admin@nwsynod.org.uk)

## 15 July Synod Study Day

Sherwood URC, Nottingham

Study Day led by the Revd Dr David Cornick on the theme of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

East Midlands 0115 960 9241 [office@urc5.org.uk](mailto:office@urc5.org.uk)

## 25-28 Aug Greenbelt

Boughton House, near Kettering

Celebrating the arts, faith and justice – re-imagining the Christian narrative for today. The URC is an official associate of the festival.

020 7916 2020 [www.greenbelt.org.uk](http://www.greenbelt.org.uk)

*During the year*

### Intercultural Celebrations

Southend, St Davids, Sheffield and New Malden/Kingston

A series of gatherings, taking place across the URC, to celebrate our status as a multicultural church with an intercultural focus.

URC's Global and Intercultural Office 020 7916 8654

### Vocations

A series of area meetings to be hosted by the synod's pastoral consultants looking at the theme of 'vocations'.

East Midlands 0115 960 9241  
[office@urc5.org.uk](mailto:office@urc5.org.uk)



We hope you will be part of making 2017 a year to remember.

Our celebratory themes are:

*January:* celebrating Christian unity (45 years of the URC)

*February:* celebrating our intercultural Church

*March:* celebrating our worldwide partnerships (40 years of the Council for World Mission)

*April:* Easter – celebrating resurrection

*May:* celebrating children and youth (over 80 years of Pilots and the URC's Big Day Out)

*June:* Pentecost – celebrating the Church's birthday

*July:* celebrating our work for global justice (25 years of Commitment for Life)

*August:* Celebrating pioneers (pioneers in world mission in civil rights movements and ministering to people with AIDs.)

*September:* celebrating women in the church (centenary of Constance Coltman's ordination)

*October:* celebrating faith – 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation

*November:* celebrating the saints

*December:* Christmas – celebrating Jesus and giving thanks

See [www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk) for regular updates!





## Let's celebrate!

The year 2017 is special in the life of the United Reformed Church – and we'll have plenty to celebrate! It's 500 years since the Lutheran Reformation, 100 years since the ordination of Constance Coltman, the first woman to enter congregational ministry, 45 years since the URC came into being, more than 80 years since Pilots started and 25 years since Commitment for Life began – these events all played a big part in making us who we are, and also give great opportunities for one or more parties in 2017! And so, under the banner of Feasts and Festivals, we are inviting everyone to celebrate!

Feasts and festivals are important in the Bible. When God did something the community wanted to remember or mark, a festival or a feast was often celebrated. Food, dancing and music are central to the life of the Jewish people and, in turn, for the followers of Jesus. So why not continue this great tradition and use this special year to celebrate how God has led us on our journey?

Celebrating the milestones in our life as The United Reformed Church will help us rediscover our history, look more deeply into who we are now and think about where we might go. We have a tradition of breaking the mould, choosing freedom in worship or interpreting the Bible for ourselves, all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have many pioneers who have taken brave steps and led us in new directions. We have much to be proud of and much to be grateful for.

## We're all invited

All churches are invited to celebrate 2017. Every month there will be a specific reason for celebration to focus on. These include special anniversaries and events in the life of the Church, as well as major festivals in the Christian year. You might want to join in some of these celebrations or all of them.

We'll provide resources for each month, including insights from scripture and history, as well as ideas about how to celebrate our identity now. The materials will be flexible, allowing you to pick and choose how you use them in your own context and community. You can use them in worship, in Bible study or to organise celebrations and events. You can also use them to share the wider story of the whole United Reformed Church in your own church magazine, website, social media channels etc. There's an example of the resources we're preparing on the opposite page which you might like to try.



## Taster resource

# Celebrating January: One Church

The United Reformed Church came into being in 1972 through the union of the Presbyterian Church of England and the majority of churches in the Congregational Church in England and Wales. In 1981, we joined with the Reformed Association of the Churches of Christ and in 2000 with the Congregational Union of Scotland.

Seeking unity and being ecumenical is second nature to the United Reformed Church, as shown in our strong relationships with

Churches and Christian organisations around the globe, including the Council for World Mission, World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches.

During this month, the worldwide church marks the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from 17 to 25 January. Its theme for 2017 is 'Reconciliation – the love of Christ compels us', inviting us to reflect on deep divisions in the Church and to take new steps towards reconciliation.

As a church, or in small groups, read 2 Corinthians 5:14-20.

### Reflect together:

- In what ways do you experience the love of Christ urging you on? Can you tell a story about something that happened in your church that you would describe as reconciliation?
- Where do you see the need for reconciliation in your community – and what role can the church play?

### Things to do:

- Put time and energy into marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Resources can be found at [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk).
- Support and celebrate what Christians in your area are doing together, for example lunch clubs, food banks or Street Pastors.
- Pray for reconciliation throughout the Church and the world.

## What to do now?

The Feasts and Festivals resources for worship, Bible study and action will be available on [www.urb.org.uk/feasts-and-festivals](http://www.urb.org.uk/feasts-and-festivals) from 1 October 2016, with new resources added every three months. If you do not have access to the internet and would like to receive materials in the post, please phone us on 0207 916 2020

Together, we can make 2017 a year to remember. It will also prepare us for a new emphasis on discipleship in the life of the United Reformed Church called: *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today*. Materials for this will be available towards the end of 2017. Let's celebrate!

