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Advice to churches about coronavirus

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The United Reformed Church (URC) is offering advice and resources about the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Stay at home/Stay alert. Protect the NHS. Save lives. God is with us.

Visit www.urchop.co.uk/coronavirus for a range of practical resources including signs, banners, badges and floor tape to remind people to stay apart and to wash their hands. You can also [download free Coronavirus resources for churches](#) from the URC website.



Items in bold denote the latest additions but please read the whole list for a huge range of advice and resources.

- **Doing Online Differently - a roadmap for digital discipleship** is the latest free guide from the URC and will help you navigate your church's digital journey.
- The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church took place on Saturday 11 July. It included the inductions of the General Secretary, the Revd Dr John Bradbury, the Moderators of the General Assembly, the Revd Clare Downing and Peter Pay, and contributions from around the URC. Please watch the service on this [website](#). The service is also available with British Sign Language interpretation.
- URC Minister the Revd Carla Grosch-Miller, who is involved in the [Tragedy and Christian Congregations](#) project, has written a new downloadable reflection on the Coronavirus pandemic: [Easing out of lockdown - what next?](#) (Word document).
- The Tragedy and Congregations Team is holding half-day Zoom meetings for ministers on [Trauma-informed Ministry in a time of COVID](#) (PDF).
- Read the latest advice from the United Reformed Church, [Emerging into the New Normal](#) (PDF). This resource provides the basis for further local discussion and some clear church policy. Download the new [Personal Risk Assessment](#) (PDF) mentioned in the document. Download an [example of the Personal Risk Assessment](#) (PDF).
- The UK Government has published [guidance for the safe use of places of worship from 4 July](#). We are currently reviewing this guidance. It has also published [guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships](#).
- The URC Bookshop has many practical items including signs, banners and stickers for you to use when your building reopens. Visit www.urchop.co.uk/coronavirus for the full list. You can also download lots of free resources from www.urchop.co.uk/coronavirus-resources
- Download a blank [Covid-19 Risk Assessment](#) (PDF) or use the editable version [Covid-19 Risk Assessment](#) (Excel spreadsheet).
- Three more information guides can be found on our [Church Information Guides page](#): A guide to Zoom etiquette; Online and contactless giving at local churches; Covid-19 and Safeguarding. There are now 20 guides on that page.
- Read the [latest guidance from the General Secretary and the Synod Moderators](#) (Word document) about the opening of church buildings for private prayer.
- Download a [Covid-19 Secure Disclaimer poster](#) (Word Doc), to be displayed once a Risk Assessment has been completed and it is safe for the building to reopen.

- A new booklet, [New reality, same Mission](#), has been written by members of the URC's Church Related Community Work (CRCW), Mission and Discipleship teams, along with Church Action on Poverty, to enable individuals and local churches to explore in more detail questions of community presence, engagement and social justice. [Download the booklet](#).
- [Zoom Breakout Rooms - a free to download guide](#): Breakout Rooms are part of Zoom and can help meetings break up into smaller parts for prayers or discussion. Our new guide will take you through how to make the most of this feature of Zoom.
- The United Reformed Church has produced a [series of free guides](#) with advice for churches and church organisation to help them stay in contact and support their local community during and after lockdown.
- URC Minister the Revd Carla Grosch-Miller, who is involved in the Tragedy and Christian Congregations project, has written these two downloadable reflections on the Coronavirus pandemic: [Lament and the Pandemic](#) (Word document) | [Mapping the journey through uncharted territory in Covid 19](#) (Word document)
- [They've asked me to be a children's and youth work elder](#) (PDF) - all churches are encouraged to have an Elder with particular responsibility for children's and youth work. This free booklet has been primarily written for those who have been asked to consider a call to being such an Elder for their church – although it will also be useful for those who have recently taken up the role.
- [They've asked me to be a member of the welcome team](#) (PDF) - this free booklet has been written for those who have been asked to consider joining their church's welcome team. Although it might seem like a small role, it's a crucial one: providing a genuine and appropriate welcome to everyone who walks through the doors of the church is really important!
- Read the latest advice from the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (CLAS) and its ongoing conversation with HMRC about the [Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme \(GASDS\)](#) (PDF).
- Designer and URC staff member Samara Andrews has added more designs to her collection of Bible verses for you to download, share, print off and colour in (all in PDF format). One of these new designs was suggested by Youth and Children's Work Programme Officer Lorraine Webb - can you guess which one?!: [Psalm 139: 9-10](#) | [Proverbs 27: 14](#) | [2 James 32: 6](#) | [Philippians 4:6](#) | [Philippians 4:13](#) | [Jeremiah 29:11](#) | [1 John 4:18](#) | [Body of Christ](#) | [One body, many parts](#) | [Psalm 24](#) | [Trees growing](#) | [Attitude of mind](#).
- *Reform*, the magazine of the URC, is now free. For as long as people are shut up indoors, you can read the digital edition on tablets, computers and smartphones, including issues going back to 2014. [Find out more](#).
- NCVO (The National Council for Voluntary Organisations) has a range of guidance for charities, including how [volunteers can pay for goods or services during lockdown](#), and, on its Twitter page, a breakdown of the [latest changes to the government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#).
- The Methodist Church has produced a much needed resource, [Mental Health and Wellbeing for ministers 2020](#). Ministers are supporting people through all kinds of difficulties, challenges and unprecedented anxieties. Used to being with and alongside others in illness, bereavement, the end of life, and amid mental health difficulties, the scope and scale of Covid-19 is new, challenging and potentially overwhelming.
- Our friends with the team behind the Methodist Church's hymn book *Singing the Faith* have produced a new resource: [Prayers for the dying, the bereaved and those who cannot attend funerals](#). The URC has also produced [Virtual funerals liturgies and words for our digital world](#) (PDF).
- Download the latest [Families on Faith Adventures activity pack](#) (PDF), part of the range of resources from URC Children's and Youth. Read their latest [Training Digest](#) (PDF) too.
- Read or download the [advice and guidance about using Zoom securely](#), the latest in the our [range of information guides](#). Feel free to share this, and the other guides, with others.
- If you're using Zoom for church purposes, and would like others to stop looking at the walls behind your head, why not use these backgrounds instead? Optimised for Zoom, there is a plain background with a URC logo, or a background with multiple URC logos, in either JPG or PNG formats: Plain background - [JPG format](#) | [PNG format](#); Multiple logos - [JPG format](#) | [PNG format](#).
- Read the updated [Safeguarding people in the midst of coronavirus](#) from our Safeguarding team.
- One of our young people from an LEP in Redditch has created a massive piece of pavement art to say thank you to key workers. [Watch this video](#) to see the artwork and to listen to some Michael Buble too!
- Read this [new guide from the URC for those wanting to use Instagram](#) for church communications.
- Safeguarding: DDC, our DBS/PVG checking service provider, has published a response relating to the [services that DDC will be providing](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic. DBS has also published [new guidance on DBS checks](#) which means ID

documents can be checked by video link or scanned images. Read DDC's update regarding [relaxed document checking processes](#).

- Here's a [list of churches](#) offering live streamed services, sermons as podcasts, recorded services on YouTube, Facebook and Zoom, audio files of services, sermons and other worship and Bible study resources.
- The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is [providing a hub for information](#) and sharing of needs, opportunities and stories of good practice around how churches and communities can, and are, looking out for those who are particularly vulnerable during the pandemic.
- YourNeighbour is a website aiming to support the work that churches are doing to be good neighbours in communities across the UK during the coronavirus crisis. [YourNeighbour.org](#) aims to offer support via a coordinated national response.
- The URC has [published a new resource for use with those who can't attend funerals because of coronavirus](#) (PDF). 'Virtual funerals - liturgies and words for our digital world' is a free resource available from the URC website. The 28-page, A4 booklet offers a starting place for those dealing with lockdown bereavement, with texts and ideas for ministers, worship leaders, families and friends, all of which can be tailored to the needs of each situation.
- Download customisable posters for your noticeboards, windows, doors or other public-facing areas. These can be opened in Adobe Reader and customised to add your church's website and contact details. Available in an [A3 version](#) and [A4 version](#). (Note: if your browsers will not edit a PDF, use [Adobe Reader](#)). An ecumenical version of the poster with room for other logos can be found here: [A3 version](#) and [A4 version](#).
- Read [Covid 19, the Church and Holy Communion - 15 Theses: United and Reformed](#) (PDF), some personal thoughts from the Revd Dr John Bradbury.
- Read the [Virtual Communion in the URC?](#) (PDF) paper from the Faith and Order Committee and the General Secretary.
- Many people in our churches don't have access to the internet. There is a low-cost way of broadcasting sermons via mobile phones. Read a [guide to setting this up using Twilio](#). Simply follow the steps and you'll get \$10 credit which will last ages. Note: this website has a lot of adverts and pop-up boxes.
- Read some [guidelines for video and audio conferencing](#) (PDF) from the Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of the Wessex Synod.
- Visit a hub for [rural churches from the The Arthur Rank Centre](#), supporting rural Christians and churches during the pandemic. Named 'Together Apart', the hub has a range of resources including farming and agriculture support, practical resources, guidance and advice, resources for children and families, and weekly reflections.
- Read the new Walking the Way resource for Covid-19, *Continuing to support each other*, available [here](#) (PDF).
- Download and print off a [leaflet about prayer for children](#) (PDF), written by the Revd Jenny Mills. If you're a bit older and would like a similar leaflet, [download this daily prayer cycle](#) (PDF) from the Revds Ian Fosten and Phil Nevard.
- Download [a hints and tips infographic from Matt Collins](#) (JPEG) about how to get the best results when filming sermons. There is also a new illustrated hints and tips guide about [using Zoom for meetings](#) (JPEG) from Naomi RW.
- Read a letter about furloughed church workers with an example leave agreement from the URC's Treasurers and Chief Finance Officer: [PDF version](#) or [Word version](#).
- Read [new guides from the URC about Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp](#), written for those who have never used them before but are thinking about doing so to stay in touch with their church or community. Also available is guidance about the recording of podcasts, using Facebook Live, YouTube and Zoom.
- The staff contacts list is [can be found here](#) (PDF). Please use direct lines as the switchboard is now closed. The email protocol is *firstname.lastname@urc.org.uk*.
- Follow the URC on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates, ideas and resources.
- The latest advice from the NHS can be found [on its website](#). **If you feel or become unwell, always seek the advice of your GP or call the NHS Helpline on 111 from landlines or mobiles.**
- Regularly phone or keep in touch with those who are unable to come to church.
- Do not visit those in self-isolation, and follow local healthcare professional advice for visiting those in care homes or hospital. Take extra care with hand washing before and after visits.
- Remember to also [clean your phone](#) or device.

Updated: 14 July

Image: Badge available from the [URC Online Shop](#) for 97p +p+p



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