



# **Synod Residential Gathering**

## **‘Growing the Church’**

**24 hours of learning, worship,  
encouragement and fellowship**



**An Invitation to all**  
**(not just Synod Representatives!)**

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**Ask your Church Secretary for more details.**  
**(Please book via the Synod Office on 0121 783 1177)**

# Synod Programme

## Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October

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|--------|--|
| 5.00pm | Check-in available [earlier arrivals can leave luggage with the concierge and check in if their room is already available]   |
| 5.30pm | Registration   |
| 6.30pm | Dinner   |
| 8.00pm | Opening worship  |
| 8.30pm | Introduction to the vision   |
| 8:45pm | Keynote speaker: Revd Dr Jonathan Oloyede, Convenor of National Day of Prayer UK and the <i>Shine your Light</i> initiative  |
| 9:30pm | Free time options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prayer room</li><li>• Meet the keynote speaker</li><li>• Board games in the bar</li><li>• Rest and Relaxation</li></ul> |

## Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October

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|-------------|--|
| 6:30-8:30am | Breakfast  |
| 8:00am      | Day visitor registration begins                                    |
| 8:30am      | Tea & coffee available   |
| 9:00am      | Opening worship  |
| 9:30am      | Workshop 1 (5 options, see page 3)                                 |
| 10:30am     | Coffee break, resources display & bookstall                        |
| 11:00am     | Workshop 2 (5 options, see page 3)                                 |
| 12:00pm     | Carrying the vision forward – vision blockers                      |
| 12.30pm     | Worship  |
| 12:45pm     | Lunch  |
| 2:00pm      | Workshop 3 (4 options, see page 3)                                 |
| 3:00pm      | “Synod Lite” including grants review (presentation and discussion) |
| 4:00pm      | Closing worship  |
| 5.00pm      | Departures   |

## Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 7:00-9:00pm | Synod Business session via Zoom, including decisions arising from the Synod Grants Review |
|-------------|---|

## Workshops

<b>Workshop 1</b> <b>9.30am-10.20am</b>	<b>Eco Church</b> (Eco Core Team: Melanie Smith, Mark Meatcher, John Davey)	<b>Evangelism for Beginners</b> Andrew & Sally Willett (Synod Mission Development Officers)	<b>Reducing our age profile</b> Helen Laird (Synod Children & Youth Development Officer)	<b>Pioneering: thinking differently about Church</b> Anji Barker (Synod Pioneer Cluster Leader)	<b>Keynote Speaker's topic (tbc)</b> Revd Dr Jonathan Oloyede	<b>Prayer space</b>
<b>Workshop 2</b> <b>11.00am-11.50am</b>	<b>Grant Streams</b> Karen Wise (Synod Finance Officer) and Steve Powell (Synod Treasurer)	<b>Introduction to growing your church</b> Andrew & Sally Willett (Synod Mission Development Officers)	<b>Lay Presidency</b> Melanie Smith (Synod Training & Development Officer and Pastoral Consultant)	<b>Safeguarding</b> Donna Gordon (Synod Safeguarding Officer)	<b>Greening your church building</b> Andrew Mann-Ray, Alison Smith (tbc), (Wolverhampton & Smestow Brook Pastorate ministry team) & Matthew McDade (Synod Property Officer)	
<b>Workshop 3</b> <b>2.00pm-2.50pm</b>	<b>Eco Church</b> (Eco Core Team: Melanie Smith, Mark Meatcher, John Davey)	<b>Growing your Church part 2</b> Andrew & Sally Willett (Synod Mission Development Officers)	<b>Intergenerational worship</b> Helen Laird (Synod Children & Youth Development Officer)	<b>Pioneering: thinking differently about Church</b> Anji Barker (Synod Pioneer Cluster Leader)		

**Who's it for?**

Those who normally come to Synod and anyone who is interested - this is an open gathering to join others from United Reformed churches in the West Midlands to share ideas, resources and friendship, and to be encouraged.

**The venue needs an early indication of numbers - so to help you in estimating them here's some information about finance.**

1. The inclusive 24-hour cost to Synod of bed, breakfast, dinner on the Friday evening, lunch on the Saturday, coffee and tea breaks, is £195 for a single room and £280 for a double or twin room (plus VAT). Day visitor costs to Synod, inclusive of meals and refreshments, are £50 per person (plus VAT), not including hire of the main conference and workshop rooms.
2. Synod expects to pick up the other hire costs (plenary & workshop rooms, technical equipment). Synod will also contribute up to one quarter of the 24 hour or day visitor fee as well as paying all travel as usual.
3. However, we would be grateful (and will separately ask Church Treasurers about this) if churches could consider paying at least £100 towards the cost of each person attending and staying overnight.
4. Individuals who feel willing and able to contribute can pay whatever they wish towards the cost too.
5. **For those coming on the Saturday only**, we are asking for a minimum contribution of £30 towards this.
6. But please don't be put off by the cost – if there's a problem, talk to us on 0121 783 1177.
7. Parking is available, but we would encourage you to use public transport where possible. The hotel is a 6-8 minute walk from Birmingham International Train Station.

***We need your help*** to gauge numbers attending so please consider this invitation and let us know the names of people from your church including your Synod representative and Minister, who will be coming. Please let us know by **31<sup>st</sup> August 2025** and tell us who wants overnight accommodation and who will be a day visitor on the Saturday only. Please fill in the enclosed form with the details, **OR** send us the names, email addresses and telephone numbers if people are willing to complete their booking details when they receive an online link.

It would also help us if payment could be sent in advance with a note of what and who is being paid for. Please send cheques payable to 'URC (West Midlands) Trust Ltd' to the Synod Office or make a bank transfer and add reference "Synod2025", then let us know how much you have transferred and for whom. Email: [moderators@urcwestmidlands.org.uk](mailto:moderators@urcwestmidlands.org.uk) or [admin@urcwestmidlands.org.uk](mailto:admin@urcwestmidlands.org.uk).

The enclosed booking form gives bank details.

**VENUE:**

**HILTON BIRMINGHAM METROPOLE, THE NEC BIRMINGHAM,  
PENDIGO WAY, BIRMINGHAM B40 1PP**