

Youth Assembly Moderator  
 Youth Assembly Moderator Elect  
 Youth Assembly Executive and General Assembly Representative  
 Equality and Diversity Representative  
 Northern Synod  
 North Western Synod  
 Mersey Synod  
 Yorkshire Synod  
 East Midlands Synod  
 West Midlands Synod  
 Eastern Synod  
 South Western Synod  
 Wessex Synod  
 Thames North Synod  
 Southern Synod  
 National Synod of Wales  
 National Synod of Scotland  
 URC Youth Communications Intern (ex officio)  
 URC Youth Assembly Clerk (ex officio)

Jo Harris  
 Philippa Osei  
 Laura Everard  
 Alanna Hurman and Megan Westgarth (job share)  
 Dylan Hall  
 VACANT  
 VACANT  
 Mordecai (Kai) Weynberg  
 Ella Lemon  
 VACANT  
 Brandon Stein  
 VACANT  
 Maya Withall  
 Aaliyah Stewart  
 Heather Moore  
 Nathanael Stinton  
 VACANT  
 Charlotte Elliott  
 Nick Booth (until December 2022)  
 Elinor Davies (from December 2022)

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Image credits: Jacob Lowe/URC

URC Youth and Quaker Junior Yearly Meeting have a lot in common. Our events provide a space in the church for young people to be themselves and, in many, many cases are the only places where true spiritual experiences occur. Fellowship, both spiritual and temporal, is what binds us – URC, Quakers, Youth Church – together. I have experienced both kinds in abundance here.

Ed Rugg, Quaker Youth Representative



URC Youth's dedication to ecumenism was echoed throughout the assembly with a constant reminder that the unifying of Churches was a part of their foundation fifty years ago. URC Youth showed a joyful and renewed commitment to following their ecumenical legacy. [...] let this inspiring vision be a sign to the Churches across Britain.

Shermara Fletcher, CTE's Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multicultural Relations

2023 Youth Assembly  
 27-29 January at Whitemoor Lakes:  
 Love is...



JUBILEE!

28-30 January 2022  
 Whitemoor Lakes

Youth Assembly 2022 was a blast. Our theme was Jubilee, marking the United Reformed Church's (URC) 50th anniversary. For the first time in two years we came together as young people to share what makes us passionate and to spend time with God.

Youth Assembly this year was slightly different due to Covid-19 – we wore masks 24/7, abided by one-way systems and refrained from hugging our friends. However, that didn't stop us from having a fantastic time! We were joined by our ecumenical friends from the Congregational Federation, Quakers, the Methodist Youth President and Churches Together in England.

For the first time, we livestreamed our worship and keynotes. These were based around the theme for Youth Assembly: "JUBILEE – Commemorate the past, celebrate the now, create the future". Our worship was led by the Revd Dr Phil Wall. We were joined by the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, who led our Commemorate keynote; the Revd Fran Kissack, who led our Celebrate keynote; and the Revd Samantha Sheehan, who led our Create keynote. You can watch these by going to the URC Children's and Youth Work YouTube channel.

We took time to **Celebrate** with a good old-fashioned pub quiz and made bunting. **Create**, a sensory session, gave us the chance to get a bit crafty. **Commemorate** was a chance to look back at the past and celebrate good things that have come from it, including inducting the new Youth Executive.

Youth Assembly 2022 said a sad goodbye to the longest serving URC Youth Moderator, Reuben Watt. We elected Philippa Osei as our new Moderator-Elect, Laura Everard as General Assembly and Assembly Executive



Representative, and Megan Westgarth and Alanna Hurman (job-share) as the new Equality and Diversity Representatives. We also inducted new Synod Youth Representatives, along with myself as Youth Moderator, and I am looking forward to working closely with them.

Jo Harris, URC Youth Moderator

A Rocha UK eco-recognition for URC Youth Assembly

URC Youth have displayed a strong commitment to 'get its own house in order', introducing innovation to ensure that its events and meetings are as environmentally friendly as possible, considering travel, food, energy, waste and sustainability. In recent years, Youth Assembly passed resolutions urging the URC to recognise the climate emergency and divest from fossil fuels. These were agreed and adopted by General Assembly and have influenced policies at Synod and local church level.

In the letter of commendation to URC Youth, Andy Atkins, CEO of A Rocha UK, and Helen Stephens, Church Relations Manager for Eco Church, said: *Thank you for being such a significant part of this movement and for helping the whole of the URC to respond to the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Please continue to make your voices heard, to demand action and accountability from leaders and to take practical actions yourselves such as you are doing in running your event in an as environmentally sustainable a way as possible. Leading by example is so powerful.*



This year was my first URC Youth Assembly. Although I helped to plan it as part of URC Youth Executive, I had no knowledge of what it was like. Having a fresh view of Youth Assembly, I can see why it is such a loved 'event of the year'. It was a collection of diverse individuals all brought together for their love of God. It allowed people to meet others from all around the UK that they would otherwise never have had a chance to, and to reconnect with people they hadn't seen for a long while.

Across the weekend, I could see how powerful the voice of the young people is in our Church. I enjoyed YOUTH Decide (the sessions where we discuss motions), as you got to vote on what you wanted and everyone, no matter their role, was able to voice their opinions. With the great worship, keynote speakers and evening entertainment, as well as the overall friendly environment and the support team of the CYDOs, it really was a great weekend and I can't wait until next year.

Maya Withall, Wessex Synod Youth Representative



## Disability, Church, and Us workshop

This workshop aimed to develop understanding and awareness of impairments and invited those who have witnessed or experienced the effects of impairments to share their stories.

Legal definitions, such as in the Equalities Act (2010), identify people as being disabled by their impairments (what they **can't** do) and their differences. Often, the body is viewed as a machine which needs fixing in order to conform with the norms of society. The social model sees people as disabled by barriers in society, and not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets, or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things. The emphasis is on recognising and removing barriers that make life harder for disabled people, in order to create equality and offer more independence, choice and control.

A motion was developed which will come to Youth Assembly 2023:  
*URC Youth asks URC Youth Executive and General Assembly to review and assess their current definition of 'disabilities', widening it to include long-term, short-term and dynamic impairments.*

In the meantime, the URC Youth Equalities and Diversity representatives will seek to work with the Youth Exec, Equalities Committee and Education and Learning to explore opportunities to create, or further develop, resources to support and improve accessibility, and raise awareness and understanding within local churches and for church members.

*Alanna Hurman,  
URC Youth Equalities and Diversity Rep*



[www.urch.org.uk/youth](http://www.urch.org.uk/youth)  
Search for URC Youth on Facebook,  
Twitter and Instagram

## Last words



When I first became Moderator-Elect, I had a great idea as to what I would include in this closing speech. I was going to say that I had travelled up and down the country, travelling x number of miles, x number of hours on the train. But how wrong was I. Despite serving an extra year as Moderator, for the most part, the furthest I travelled was from my bedroom to my desk.

This weekend, I think I was asked my favourite ever question: **Has URC lost its FURY?** The answer is No. To me, the URC makes a difference. As Mod and Mod-Elect, I have seen the URC divest from fossil fuels, URC Youth release a statement on conversion therapy, Black Lives Matter, urging Churches Together in England to prioritise reconciling conversations, as well as urging the government to provide free school meals. Now I don't know of any denomination or group that has done all of that.

Being part of the URC means making a difference. It means community and friendship. At the very last Youth Exec meeting, someone said that URC Youth is their Church and without it they have felt lost. The URC is something special and although in your own individual churches it can be lonely, as a community we are supporting each other and can make such a huge difference.

I cannot wait to see what Jo, Philippa and the new Youth Exec do over the next year as we celebrate the URC's 50th anniversary.

*Reuben Watt,  
URC Youth Moderator*



## Youth Assembly 2022 resolutions

**1. Amending standing order resolution**  
Assembly representatives who would have been in their final year last year at Youth Assembly 2021 have been included this year only, with an increase to the upper age limit to 26.

**URC Youth Assembly will, for the duration of Youth Assembly 2022 only, suspend Standing Order 1.3. In its place shall operate the following:**  
**"All those present at the Youth Assembly between the ages of 14 and 26 shall be members of the Assembly."**

The motion was passed unanimously.

**2. URC Children motion**  
With the creation of URC Children, URC Youth Assembly agrees to expand the role of Pilots Representative to a wider Youth Representative to URC Children, recognising this is a necessary role to link both URC Children and URC Youth. Reflecting the expanded remit of this role, representatives will be selected by election commencing at Youth Assembly 2023, the role being co-opted onto Youth Executive until that time.

**Proposer: URC Youth Executive**

Standing Order 7.3 was requested which allows for the closure of debate and refers the resolution to the next Youth Assembly. The motion was deferred by agreement to Youth Assembly 2023.

**3. Conversion therapy resolution**  
URC Youth Assembly affirms and supports the statement made by URC Youth Executive (December 2021), and paper I4 from Assembly Executive (November 2021) in condemning all acts of conversion therapy (according to the definition set out in the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK). URC Youth Assembly encourages those who feel called to do so to contribute to the current UK Government consultation, which closes on 4 February 2022. Assembly also encourages its equivalent ecumenical youth bodies to adopt a similar stance.

**Proposer: Dan Morrell, Yorkshire Synod**  
**Second: Hannah Jones, Southern Synod**  
The motion was passed by consensus.

**4. Youth review resolution**  
Youth Assembly tasks the Youth Executive to form a task group that will review the running



of the Youth Executive as well as the wider URC Youth, including a review of the racial diversity of URC Youth Executive. This group will comprise of six to eight people, including a chair who is not a member of the URC Youth and will report back to URC Youth Assembly 2023 with their findings so far and their proposed next steps.

**Proposer: URC Youth Executive**  
This motion was passed by agreement.

## 5. General Assembly Moderator resolution

**URC Youth Assembly instructs Youth Executive to take the following resolution to General Assembly:**

**General Assembly resolves that nominations for the post of Moderator of General Assembly can be received from Youth Assembly in addition to Synods. Should this resolution be passed by General Assembly, Youth Assembly further instructs Youth Executive to work with the General Assembly officers to establish a proper process for these nominations.**

**Proposer: Victoria Turner, General Assembly/ Assembly Executive Rep**  
**Second: Tom Howells, East Midlands Synod**  
This motion was passed by agreement.

**6. Mental health first aid resolution**  
URC Youth Assembly reaffirms its commitment to tackle the stigma surrounding mental ill health. Youth Assembly strongly encourages individuals to take part in mental health first aid training and for local churches, Synods and General Assembly to look into ways to help individuals access this training. Youth Assembly recommends that local churches strive to ensure that at least one member of the leadership team has undertaken this training.

**Proposer: Chloe Elmer, Eastern Synod**  
**Second: Holly Clancy, North Western Synod**  
This motion was passed by consensus.

