

What is the URC?



A brief introduction
to The United Reformed
Church



What is the URC?

Welcome!

We're delighted that you're interested in finding out a bit more about the United Reformed Church – the URC. This church has helped our commitment to Jesus Christ to grow, and we believe it can do the same for you.

This leaflet tells you a bit more about the URC. You can also visit our website, www.urb.org.uk, or find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube or SoundCloud.



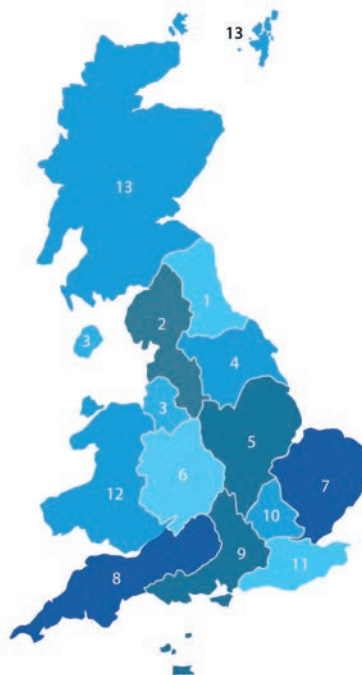
42,000 worshippers each week



1,198 congregations



600 ministers



13 Synods

Who we are

The URC is a family of Christians who meet in local churches across England, Scotland and Wales, part of the worldwide family of Reformed Churches, a group of more than 70 million Christians.

The URC has around 42,000 members in about 1,198 congregations with more than 600 ministers. More than 48,484 people worship in our churches either in person or online each week, and many more take part in the weekday activities of the churches.

What we believe

God loves you. And as Christians, we do too.

Regardless of who you are, your background, your family, your past, your present or future, we are in this church because we believe that God is alive and listening to us through prayer, guiding and speaking to us through the Bible, forgiving us for what we have done wrong, and waiting for us in Heaven after we pass away.

We believe that each and every one of us can find contentment through loving and serving Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

A lack of hierarchy, and a respect for individual principles, means that the URC is not rigid in the expression of its beliefs, and embraces a wide variety of opinions.

At the same time, in the words of the URC's *Statement of Nature, Faith and Order*, together we are committed to '**God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the living God, the only God, ever to be praised.**'

You are welcome here

We are proud to be an intercultural Church, where people with varied ethnic and cultural roots meet, worship, discuss and learn from one another.

We were pioneers in ordaining women – our first female minister was ordained more than 100 years ago in 1917.

Most jobs and roles in the URC, whether voluntary or paid, are open to all.



More information about our core beliefs can be found at www.urc.org.uk/what-is-the-urc

Our roots

Being reformed sets us in a stream of tradition that goes back 500 years. In 1517 Martin Luther launched a movement of challenge in the Church that we call the Protestant Reformation.

Changes came quickly. Bibles were translated and printed in languages everybody used (not just in Latin). There was a new emphasis on the importance of the whole church and everybody in it – members and ministers together.

Being reformed is part of our DNA. It reflects our continual aim of reforming ourselves to be a Church for the present day.

Being reformed means that we delight in exploring the Bible, we do not fear change, and we try to run our churches in ways that take everyone's insight and contribution seriously.

The history of the URC

The creation of the United Reformed Church in 1972 formally merged the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales. One Member of Parliament at the time described this merger as: “one of the most historic measures in the history of the Christian churches in this country.”

The denomination expanded when Churches of Christ joined it in 1981, followed by Scottish Congregationalists in 2000.

The URC is a nonconformist Church. Put most simply, this means that we are not an ‘established’ Church, with a formal link to civil authority like, for example, the Church of England has.

However, the URC is committed to working closely with Churches of all traditions, in prayer and social action, and many of our local churches are now united with local churches from other traditions (Baptist, Church of England, or Methodist to name a few).

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Our organisational structure

The URC has a three-tier structure, which is open for everyone to participate in.

Local churches have an Elders’ Meeting, in which the Ministers and Elders share pastoral and spiritual oversight and leadership, and a

Church Meeting, where all members gather to seek God's will and to discuss the life and work of the church.

At a wider level, the URC has 13 Synods: the national Synods of Scotland and Wales plus eleven regional Synods across England. Each provides oversight of about 100 local churches and is led by a Synod Moderator.

The General Assembly of the URC is its ultimate decision-making body. It meets every year to celebrate, discuss and make decisions about the life and work of the church.

Committees

The General Assembly has several committees which look after a range of areas including communications, education and learning, discipleship, mission, safeguarding, ecumenical work, global justice and church and society.



Getting involved

Local churches offer a huge range of community activities in addition to Sunday worship, which is at the centre of URC life. For details of activities at our church, ask a member of the congregation or visit the directory on the URC website, www.urb.org.uk.

Becoming a member

People often ask whether they need to 'join' their church and become a member. This is not essential but, for those who decide to take this step, it

can deepen their sense of belonging and it entitles a person to share in decisions about the life and future of the local church.

The URC encourages regular attendees to consider church membership when they start to think of a particular place of worship as 'their church'.

Church members commit to supporting the church through giving, action, and by taking part in the Church Meeting, as well as through regular attendance at worship.

Find out more

If you would like to know more about becoming a member, please speak to the minister or an Elder – they will be delighted to answer any questions.

*Read the leaflet **Join the family,**
... available in your church or
online from the URC website,
www.urb.org.uk*



The
United
Reformed
Church

www.urc.org.uk

www.urc.org.uk is the website you are welcome to explore to find out much more about the life and work of the United Reformed Church.

If you're interested in our books and resources, please visit www.urcshop.co.uk.

Welcome to the United Reformed Church.



www.reform-magazine.co.uk

Email reform@urc.org.uk for a free copy of our magazine

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