

# LONGTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

*We aim to serve the community and share the  
Good News,  
endeavouring to look forward not back.*



**September 2026**

## *A Message from our Minister Karen*

**September:** Harvest in a Summer of Heat and Hardship

September usually arrives with a sense of steadiness — cooler evenings, ripening fields, and the quiet promise of harvest. But this year, the season feels different after an unusually hot summer, with record-breaking temperatures, long stretches without rain, and land so dry that we have seen many wild fires across our country, some very close to home! Many farmers across the country are facing one of the most difficult growing seasons in recent memory. And yet, harvest still comes. Not in the way we hoped, not with the abundance we're used to, but with a deeper reminder of what it means to depend on God, on one another, and on the land itself.

Harvest is never guaranteed. It has always been a partnership between human labour, the rhythms of creation, and the faithfulness of God. Scripture often speaks of harvest as a sign of God's provision — "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest... shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22) That promise doesn't mean every year will be easy. It means God remains present in every season, even the hard ones. This summer has shown us just how fragile that partnership can feel. Crops have struggled. Livestock farmers have faced rising feed costs. Many rural communities are anxious about the months ahead. The land itself seems tired. And yet, the fields still offer what they can. The earth still gives. The harvest — though smaller — still arrives.



September is a time to recognise the extraordinary resilience of those who work the land. Farmers carry burdens most of us never see: early mornings, financial pressures, unpredictable weather, and the emotional weight of watching a year's labour hinge on forces beyond their control.

This year especially, **we give thanks for:** Those who have persevered through drought and heat, those who have cared for animals in difficult conditions, those who have risked their lives to fight wild fires and save wildlife and habitats, those who have made hard decisions to protect their farms and families, those who continue to steward the land with hope, even when the future feels uncertain.

Harvest is not just about crops. It is about community — and farmers are at the heart of ours.

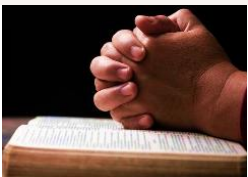
**A difficult harvest invites us to reflect more deeply on what "fruitfulness" means.**

It reminds us that abundance is not always measured in quantity. Sometimes it is measured in perseverance, compassion, and shared strength.

**As a church, this season calls us to:** Pray for farmers and rural communities, support local producers where we can, offer practical help to neighbours under strain, notice the beauty that still surrounds us — even in a changed landscape and to trust that God is present in both scarcity and plenty.

The unusually hot summer has challenged us, but it has also awakened gratitude: for water, for shade, for community that rally together in hard times, for the resilience of creation, and for the God who walks with us through every season.

### A Harvest Prayer



#### God of seed and soil,

We bring before you this year's harvest — small in places, hard-won in others, yet still a gift.

Bless our farmers with strength, rest, and hope.

Renew the land that has been scorched by heat, and devastated by fire.

Teach us to share generously, care deeply, and trust you fully.

May this September be a season of gratitude, compassion, and renewed commitment to one another. **Amen.**

Many blessings

**Karen**

### *Preparation for our Harvest celebrations...*

This year we as a church will be celebrating Harvest right at the beginning of next month on October 4<sup>th</sup>.



As you are aware we now collect tinned and dried food as our Harvest goods. Last year Foodbank thanked us for donating that harvest of 110.31 kg or 263lbs of food which was a fine effort indeed **but** could we improve on this by asking for help from our families and neighbours? Along with our normal donations most of us will have food items which have been languishing in our cupboards for some time -as long as these are within the sell by dates Foodbank will gratefully redistribute them. (The foodbank also welcomes nonperishable goods including toiletries).

**At 10.45am we will have our All Age Service led by Kath Warren.**

We look forward to something different here each year.

**At 4.30pm we will have our Harvest Supper.**



This is a ticketed event costing £5. Tickets are available from Vic or Linda. The cutoff date (for catering purposes) will be Sunday Sept 27<sup>th</sup>.

For anyone who might be undecided the fare consists of ham salad and apple pie with cream served with excellent company!!

**At 6pm we will have a more traditional Harvest Service led by our choir.**

As we worship together we will celebrate the occasion with some old favourite hymns and we will have the opportunity to listen to the choir rendering their new choice for this year.

*What you may have missed...*

## **MENS' GROUP**

A big thank you to the group met on August 1<sup>st</sup> for fitting new feet to all the stacking chairs in the school room and fitting handles to the toilets.

Watch this space for future developments!!

## **FUNDAYS**



A massive thank you to everyone who helped at our Family Fun Days during the school summer holidays! What a privilege to work alongside you all and particularly with our young volunteers (pictured right) who were a credit to themselves, their families and their church.



Over both events a total of 16 families, including 28 children, enjoyed board-games and crafts; water play based challenges or sports challenges; outdoor games including a sand pit area; a bouncy castle in the shape of an octopus at our first event; puppet shows re-telling first the story of 'The Good Samaritan' and then for the second event 'Creation'; and we served drinks and healthy snacks – even had some ice-cream!

Sadly, our second event was not as well attended as the first, but everyone had a great time, especially the volunteers!

Our next Family Fun Day will be held during Half-Term, on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October. If you'd like to help in any way just let us know!

With God's blessings, Kath W & Denise.

## JOHN'S BIRTHDAY



A picture of John enjoying his birthday at Coopers' Croft.

## Events to look forward to this month...

### MOVING FORWARD

We would like to join Junior Church in wishing Patricia and Ava our best wishes as they start the next stage of their education as they move to High School in September.

We are also thinking of our other children as they head into a new year of education in their schools.

May each new day/week/ year bring you a variety of opportunities to be happy and to excel.

### CHURCH MEETING

This church meeting will take place on Monday Sept 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm. Everyone is invited to attend and their contribution will be valued, however only official church members are able to vote.

Can I remind everyone that they were asked to view

<https://www.inclusive-church.org> before the meeting.

### MIDWEEK COMMUNION

Karen is starting a midweek communion service with coffee each month. She is starting the venture on Tuesday Sept 22nd at 1.30pm. We hope this initiative gets off to a flying start!

{NB Karen will be continuing to offer a short prayer meeting on the following day (Monday) after she has preached here on the Sunday. This will take place at 6.45pm. So this month it will be on Monday 21st Sept.}

### SYNOD NEWS

Synod have asked us to make you aware of the following;-

#### 1) VACANCY URC representative on World Day of Prayer National Committee

Closing date: Tuesday 15 September 2026

At the heart of the United Reformed Church (URC) lies a strong commitment to active ecumenical partnership and global Christian unity.

We are looking for someone with a passion for prayer and ecumenical unity to serve as a URC representative on the World Day of Prayer National Committee for England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

The World Day of Prayer service is held annually on the first Friday in March. There are approximately 1,500 local branches which hold about 3,000 services each year. It is part of

the international World Day of Prayer movement with over 100 countries and islands involved.

Representatives are expected to be able to commit to an initial 3-year term, followed by a further 2 terms if willing (max. 9 years).

Why volunteer with us?

- **Make a Global Impact:** Connect with a worldwide movement active in over 120 countries, while helping allocate vital charitable grants funded by service offerings globally.
- **Enrich Your Spiritual Journey:** Immerse yourself in worship materials, theology, and lived experiences shared by Christians from countries around the globe (such as Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Italy).
- **Build Ecumenical Bridges:** Form deep friendships and collaborate creatively with committee members representing different Christian traditions across the UK.
- **Grow Your Skills:** Gain valuable hands-on experience in publishing, proofreading, workshop facilitation, Bible study leadership, and charity governance. (Mentoring and training are provided to help build your confidence!)

**If you're interested in volunteering for this role** or would like more information, please contact Victoria Blunt, Convenor of Nominations Committee at [nominations@urc.org.uk](mailto:nominations@urc.org.uk)

### **1) WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE EVENT**

The Synod is hosting a **Walk Through the Bible** event on **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September** at **Weoley Hill United Reformed Church**.

'Walk through the Bible' is an established charity which guides churches and schools through the Bible through day events. The event can be booked by individual churches at £16 per person to include a workbook and a devotional with a minimum of 30 attendees. **For this event, the Synod is covering the costs!** You are encouraged to invite others along to see if it would be a good idea to book an event in your pastorate (financial assistance may be available from Synod for that).

This comes highly commended by people who have experienced the event for themselves. As well as for lay preachers and local worship leaders, it's great for anyone in Bible-study groups and Elders who may take part in leading Elders' services. It gives insight to those on reading rotas as well. In fact, it's suitable for anyone who would like to get to know more about the Bible or would like more confidence.

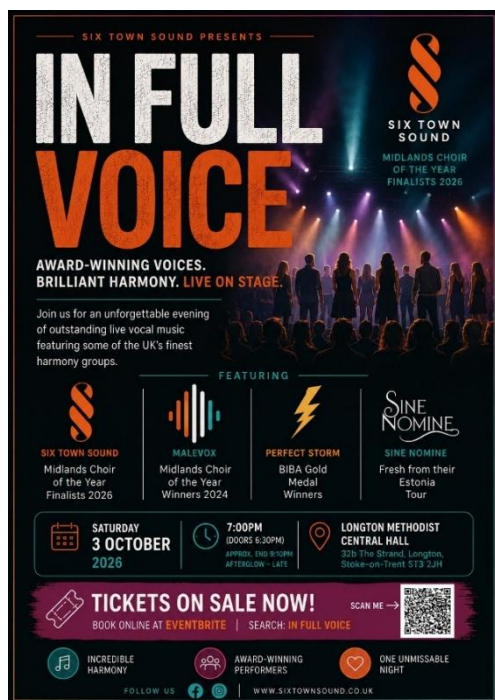
- It's an interactive and engaging teaching event that uncovers the Big Picture of the Old Testament - Genesis to Malachi.
- It's an encouraging way to consolidate prior Bible knowledge and help fill in gaps.
- An experienced Presenters from the organisation will lead the event.
- We use the room to explain the Biblical geography and how it impacts the story.
- You'll receive a specifically designed Workbook, accompanied by a PowerPoint, contains maps, charts, and book summaries.
- You'll gain access to 'Inspired By...' small group study series with videos for each session filmed on location in the Holy Land.

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 10.00 - 4.30pm**

Bring your own lunch/Drinks provided

Weoley Hill URC Green Meadow Rd, Selly Oak, B29 4DE  
Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/4gdEN1D>

## A REMINDER



Six Town Sound are based at our church – they rehearse here, store their equipment here and are joining us at Christmas.

They are very talented and are giving this concert at Central Hall on Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> October with several other acts. It starts at 7pm.

## Thank you...

For the favourable comments made to me about the newsletter. They are much appreciated. I in return wish to thank Karen for her articles which this year are centred on the Fruits of the Spirit. She has produced articles that are fresh and insightful while remaining upbeat setting the tone for the magazine and for further thought. **Kay**

## September Dates for the Diary...

1<sup>st</sup> Bible Study 2pm

6<sup>th</sup> Creation Sunday Service 10.45am

7<sup>th</sup> Elders Meeting (including discussion with Church Members) 7pm

14<sup>th</sup> Wives Group 7.30pm

15<sup>th</sup> Bible Study 7.30pm

21<sup>st</sup> Short prayer meeting with Karen 6.45

Church Meeting 7pm

Deadline for magazine items

22<sup>nd</sup> Midweek Communion with coffee 1.45pm

## Services ...

| DATE         | TIME    | WORSHIP LEADER                | DUTY ELDER                  |
|--------------|---------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sept 6       | 10.45am | Denise <b>Creation Sunday</b> | Linda A                     |
| 13           | 10.45am | Revd Stuart Hickerman         | Sarah                       |
| <b>20***</b> | 10.45am | Revd Karen Jones              | Philippa                    |
| 27           | 10.45am | Revd Bill Partington          | Denise                      |
| <b>***</b>   |         | <b>Holy Communion</b>         | <b>Margaret &amp; Sarah</b> |

| DATE   | GREETERS |         | READER | INTERCESSION | HYMNAL | TEA     |       |
|--------|----------|---------|--------|--------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Sept 6 | Linda R  | Linda E | -      | -            | Colin  | Joyce   | Tony  |
| 13     | Linda A  | Liz     | Marion | Philippa     | Vic    | Mary    | Tracy |
| 20     | Sonja    | Eileen  | Sonja  | Vic          | Andrew | Linda A | Liz   |
| 27     | Linda R  | Andrew  | Vic    | Linda R      | Sarah  | Denise  | Kath  |

## Details for the next newsletter ...

Please send any information you wish to share in the next newsletter to

[churchnewsletter25@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsletter25@gmail.com) by Monday Sept 21st. Thank you **Kay**

### Other specific Church email addresses

[Admin](mailto:admin@urclongton.co.uk)

[admin@urclongton.co.uk](mailto:admin@urclongton.co.uk)

[Roomhire](mailto:roomhire@urclongton.co.uk)

[roomhire@urclongton.co.uk](mailto:roomhire@urclongton.co.uk)

[Weddings etc](mailto:ceremonies@urclongton.co.uk)

[ceremonies@urclongton.co.uk](mailto:ceremonies@urclongton.co.uk)