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Weekly Letter – 17 August 2025

Luke 12.49-56

Life: to make a series of decisions?

Having read this passage, if you were thinking Jesus is a mild-mannered man who just reveals gentleness and kindness, you might now be thinking, “well, perhaps not!”

What is for sure is Jesus Christ, this unusual and enigmatic person, suddenly speaks with considerable passion to his disciples, saying, “you need to go out into the world and set it on fire”. Jesus is clearly aiming to challenge his disciples (you), and thereby saying, “Either proclaim God’s good news or go in another direction”,

Once again, here Jesus of Nazareth states, “I’m not into unresponsive disciples who are sluggish and buy into cheap grace, for each one of you needs to make a decision about what you really value”.

There can be no doubt that St. Paul responded to Christ’s call to bring the Good News to all. He like all true believers knew, “Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16).

A Prayer

Every day is proof of your love. As you bring us to this new day teach us to live in the Good news, renewing our hearts and minds for your glory. Amen.

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Mrs Adella Pritchard

Bible Reading: Luke 11.1-4

Cycle of Prayer in the Region - Uniting Church, Sketty

Prayers for every household – Manor Road nos. 73-127

Christwell.co.uk – our updated website is up and running, so please take a look and even make suggestions about different things to add so that other people know what goes on in Christ Well:

<https://christwell.co.uk/>

Reflective Prayer

'As part of Christ Well's Green Journey, I invite you to join me in reflective prayer in the peaceful surroundings of Manselton Park on Sunday 17th August, meeting at 3pm at the Manor Road entrance. We will start with a short time of group prayer before we walk reflectively round the park enjoying the beauty of nature and the stunning views across Manselton and beyond. Our time together will end with another group prayer, leaving the Park at 4pm. I look forward to sharing this special time with you. Thanks. Adella

"A few words of grateful thanks to the members of the congregation who either volunteered at or supported the Community Fun Day last Saturday & to the Elders for agreeing in the first place that the event could take place at the church. Adella"

Thanks. *Adella*

URC DIARIES AND PRAYER HANDBOOKS FOR 2026 are now available.

SHAKE, MOVE AND DISPLACE US, O GOD ...

(Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 5.1-7 and Psalm 80.1-2, 8-19: Jeremiah 23.23-29 and Psalm 82: Hebrews **11.29-12.2**: Luke **12.49-56**)

O God,
too often we have spoken
when we should have been silent
and we have been silent
when we should have spoken.

Shake us from our apathy,
move us from our misunderstanding,
displace us from our discrimination.

So we can pray and act for justice
in our churches,
in our communities,
in our world,
in Jesus name.

Amen.

Nicola Robinson (URC Prayer Handbook 2025)



FROM THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT OF THE URC

A Letter of Gratitude and Hope

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace to you all.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the faithfulness and generosity you have shown to God's work through your local churches. Your contributions—whether through time, talents, or treasure—have been a beautiful expression of discipleship and community.

Celebrating Faithful Stewardship

In these challenging times, when many families have faced difficult decisions about household budgets, rising energy costs, and the ongoing cost of living pressures, your continued commitment to supporting God's work has been truly remarkable. We have witnessed the church at its best: caring for one another, maintaining mission and ministry, and trusting in God's provision.

Your financial contributions through the Ministry & Mission Fund have enabled us to continue our shared calling across England, Scotland, and Wales. Through this Fund, we support ministers' stipends, theological training, Assembly gatherings, and the vital central services that strengthen our witness and ministry in every community we serve.

God's Provision in Action

We rejoice that in 2024, despite significant economic challenges, your collective giving to the M&M Fund reached £16.2 million—slightly behind our budget, but late contributions in early 2025 would have taken us over the budget, had the auditors allowed us to bring them in. This achievement reflects not just financial commitment, but spiritual resilience and trust in God's faithfulness.

We are particularly grateful for the additional support from our synods, who contributed approx. £2.0 million of the amount noted above, demonstrating the interconnectedness of our church family. Total income for 2024, including investment income and grants etc. was £18.5 million.

While our expenditure of £20.0 million resulted in a deficit of £1.5 million for 2024, we remain committed to balancing our budget over the next 4-6 years through difficult, but necessary reductions in central costs and continued partnership between local churches and synods.

Looking Forward with Hope

As we move through 2025, we recognise that challenges remain. Economic pressures continue to affect both individuals and churches. Yet we face the future with confidence, knowing that God's call to faithful stewardship remains constant, and that together we can continue to serve Christ's mission in our communities.

We have a clear plan: synods have committed to maintaining their enhanced support, and we are implementing careful budget reductions of an average of 3-5% annually in our central costs. This balanced approach ensures we remain good stewards while maintaining our essential ministries.

A Call to Continued Faithfulness

In the spirit of 2 Corinthians 9:7, your giving has been a source of joy and strength to the whole church. As we move forward, we invite you to continue this journey of faithful stewardship, giving "as the Spirit directs and as our means allow."

We understand that every church's situation is unique, and we celebrate with those who have been able to meet their full commitments, while also deeply appreciating those who, facing their own challenges, have continued to prioritise the M&M Fund within their means.

Partnership in Ministry

As officers of our denomination, we treasure our roots in local URC congregations and LEPS. We understand firsthand the joys and challenges of local church life, including the financial pressures you face. This shared experience strengthens our commitment to wise stewardship of the resources you entrust to us.

Your local church treasurer has received detailed financial information and can answer specific questions about our accounts. If further assistance is needed, our finance team at Church House stands ready to help.

Our Deepest Thanks

To every member who has contributed to their local church, to every congregation that has supported the M&M Fund, and to all who have made this work a priority even in difficult times—thank you. Your faithfulness enables ministry to continue, training to be provided, and the gospel to be proclaimed across our three nations.

May God bless you abundantly as you continue to be faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted to you. Together, we participate in God's wonderful work of transformation, both in our own lives and in the world around us.

In Christ's service,

Alan Yates, Treasurer.

Vaughan Griffiths, Deputy Treasurer.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." - 2 Corinthians 9:7