

# Proudly URC at Greenbelt



**The Lodge Road United Reformed Church** team were delighted to be part of the URC Kitchen Tent at this year's Greenbelt Festival. In addition to the core team of 7, 12 more members of the church joined on day trips, embracing the festival spirit—though their greatest joy came from being part of the wider URC community in the Table Tent, which this year was shared with the Trussell Trust.

Altogether, 60 volunteers from URC churches across the UK came together to welcome thousands of festivalgoers into the tent and around the table. We shared radical hospitality and delicious meals, all made from food rescued from landfill by the brilliant team at Refuse Durham. The meals were lovingly prepared by both the Refuse and Lodge Road teams, transforming what would have gone to waste into something truly nourishing.

Whether we were cooking, chatting with guests, scrubbing pots, or leading workshops and seminars, every person played a part in creating a space of warmth, welcome, and connection.

This weekend got me thinking about what God is doing across our churches. Despite what the dominant narrative often suggests, there is still a deep sense of hope, passion, and energy alive in our communities. We're witnessing God at work in our neighbourhoods, and we have the privilege of being places of welcome and rest for "all who are weary and heavy burdened."

Hospitality is so often undervalued as a form of evangelism. We're not feeding people in order to convert them to a set of doctrinal beliefs—rather we are sharing food with our neighbours as a connection and spiritual practice. As followers of Christ, we're called to respond to the needs in front of us using what's already in our hands. More often than not, this means recognising where God is already active in our communities and choosing to join in—not necessarily lead.

Sharing time, food, and friendship with those who are isolated, lonely, or simply struggling to get by is a simple but powerful way to live out the abundance of Christ. It echoes the life of Jesus, who took just a few loaves and fish and fed thousands. This kind of abundant living feels countercultural in a world—and sometimes in our churches—where messages of scarcity are constant. But what if we began to see the little we have not as something to cling to, but as abundance to be shared? Our buildings, our finances, our time, and even our very lives—all can become instruments of grace.

When we make space for others, inviting them to contribute their gifts and talents alongside us, something beautiful begins to emerge. We've seen this at Lodge Road, and we saw it on a larger scale at Greenbelt this weekend, as people from across the URC came together in a powerful act of servanthood.

As we return to our churches across the UK, my prayer is that new ways of joining in with God's movement will take root among us—that we would notice, nurture, and celebrate them as genuine expressions of the gospel.

I'm proud to be part of the diverse, faithful, and hope-filled family that is the United Reformed Church.

Rev Anji Barker





