**A cross and fish symbol

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**Checklist for Church Closure**

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|  | **Action** | **Date** |
| 1 | **Making the decision:** |  |
| (a) | * Elders discuss options (close, unite with another congregation, meet elsewhere) |  |
| (b) | * Elders engage with Synod Pastoral Committee for support and information |  |
| (c) | * Elders bring discussion to Church Meeting on options for the future |  |
| (d) | * Church Meeting passes resolution to close and further resolutions, and an extract minute is sent to Synod Office |  |
| (e) | * Synod resolves that the church should close at the date agreed |  |
| (f) | * If there is a sharing agreement as part of a local ecumenical partnership, due notice should be given to terminate, probably by the Synod |  |
| 2 | **Membership:**  Arrange certificates of transfer for members wishing to join other churches |  |
| 3 | **Marking the closure:** |  |
| (a) | * Consider whether to brief the local media about the closure, using the URC’s communications guidance and support |  |
| (b) | * Hold a closing service to celebrate the life of the church |  |
| (c) | * Remove information about church services and contact details from notice boards – possibly removing them altogether |  |
| (d) | * Amend the church website and social media them to show that the church is no longer meeting, and close them down after a reasonable interval |  |
| 4 | **Properties:** |  |
| (a) | * Fill in property handover forms to enable the trustees to take over responsibility for your properties, including insurance and utilities |  |
| (b) | * Hand over burial records to the trustees along with details of anyone with rights to be buried there if there is a graveyard |  |
| (c) | * Hand over health and safety file and any significant property records to the trustees |  |
| (d) | * Gather in all spare sets of keys not needed in the short term, and hand over to the trustees |  |
| (e) | * Agree a date for handing over responsibility for your properties to the trustees, and give final meter readings |  |
| (f) | * If your buildings are regularly hired by community groups, inform them of the planned closure; liaise with the trustees if any of them may wish to continue beyond that date |  |
| (g) | * Ideally, draw up an inventory and keep a record of where contents are removed to, sending one copy to Synod Office, and one copy to the county record office |  |
| (h) | * Possibly donate artefacts of historic or artistic interest to a museum |  |
| (i) | * Notify the UK National Inventory of War Memorials and the North East War Memorial Project (if appropriate) before relocating war memorials, in liaison with the trustees |  |
| (j) | * Obtain listed building consent before removing any fixtures from a listed building |  |
| (k) | * Dispose of contents that are no longer needed as soon as possible, beginning before closure |  |
| (l) | * Liaise with the trustees about selling or auctioning valuable items |  |
| (m) | * Hand over any remaining keys to Synod Office (or the trustees) once they are no longer needed |  |
| 5 | **Finances:** |  |
| (a) | * Gather in all sums owing |  |
| (b) | * Close your account with HMRC once all Gift Aid claims have been made |  |
| (c) | * Settle outstanding debts |  |
| (d) | * Advise the trustees of any loans or grants outstanding with clawback provisions |  |
| (e) | * Pay out any small donations previously agreed by Church Meeting |  |
| (f) | * Close investments or transfer to the United Reformed Church (Northern Province) Trust Limited |  |
| (g) | * Close bank accounts and transfer balances to the United Reformed Church (Northern Province) Trust Limited |  |
| (h) | * Draw up final accounts for checking and signing off as usual, and send a copy to Synod Office |  |
| (i) | * If the church has any registered charities, the Charity Commission should be informed of their closure |  |
| 6 | **Archiving:** |  |
| (a) | * Possibly create a brief photographic record of the church (both the buildings and the people), and a brief historical account, if there are none in existence |  |
| (b) | * Box up six years’ accounting records, which can be kept and Synod Office and destroyed after that time |  |
| (c) | * Deposit documents of historical interest at the county record office |  |
| (d) | * Shred any confidential documents that are not of historical interest once they are no longer needed |  |
| 7 | **Registration as a place of worship and marriage:**  Inform the Superintendent Registrar that the church has ceased to be used for worship, using Form 77, and hand in your marriage registers at the Register Office |  |

Andrew Atkinson, Trust Officer

5 August, 2025