

SYNOD COUNCIL MATTERS

I write the report of Synod Council on Transfiguration Sunday, a time of change and transformation for the first followers, as the early church was reminded that it was not meant to be static. As I go around the Synod I am heartened that Southern Synod continues to be transformed by the gospel, announcing good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom for those in prisons of wealth, poverty, disease and disorder, committed to making a difference to the world's kingdoms as we live Christ's Kingdom. Synod Council continues to look for opportunities of making a difference as it considers issues of deployment, transitional ministry and the new framework for Local Unity in Mission.

1. There have been many 'comings and goings' on the Council. At the end of the year we said thank you and goodbye firstly to Revd. Jennifer Millington, Convener of Synod Ministries Committee, and Mr. Ian Fleming as Synod Treasurer. Jennifer has ably convened the Synod Ministries Committee for the last six years gently but firmly guiding Synod Ministries with such clarity as we focus on supporting church as people. Ian has served as Synod Treasurer for 9 years. With his dour sense of humour and resilient manner, he has skilfully enabled the Synod to get back to that place where we can, once again, help local churches with loans and grants for mission. In their place we welcome Revd. Bridget Banks as Convener of Synod Ministries Committee and Mr John Denison as Synod Treasurer. We look forward to working closely with them as we work together for the sake of the Kingdom.
2. We also welcome Mr. Thomas William Hackett to the training team as our new CYDO (Children's and Youth Development Officer).
3. URC Urban Network. 31st December saw the completion of this work with Thames North Synod. Thames North Synod had for some time not been able to support the work of the Steering Group. A subsequent withdrawal of their Urban Churches Networker, Revd. Dr. John Campbell, meant that the collaboration was no longer viable. However, the flagship Cause for Celebration and the Westminster College Students Urban orientation week will still continue on an annual basis.
4. Following a trip by the Moderator, the Revd. Lesley Charlton, Minister of Kingston URC, the Revd. Simon Walking, Moderator of the National Synod of Wales, and the Revd. Andrew Prasad, Moderator of Thames North Synod to the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) in Seoul and Gwanju, Synod Council have agreed to continue to explore
 - strengthening the link with the PCK through Revd. Suk In Lee and the churches at New Malden and Kingston by their sponsoring a Korean lay worker who has experience of working with North Koreans;
 - look at whether we have a London church which can seed a Korean speaking URC. This would not come from deployment;
 - explore the link with the National Synod of Wales to support Hanover Chapel as a place of pilgrimage through Inter-Synod Resource Sharing making the venture project based.

5. Past Case Review part 2. By now each church should have received and be displaying the Past Case Review poster. The URC wishes to learn from the past and do better in the future. The Past Case Review is a way for the United Reformed Church to listen and to learn.
6. Outcomes of Moderator's Review. The small group continues to look at the outcomes of the Moderator's review. This will be dealt with under a separate item on the agenda.
7. Big Day Out! Synod Council felt that organisation from the Synod Office was not viable. However, it does recommend Warwick Castle, a Feasts and Festivals celebration, renowned for its heritage, fun and celebration, bringing history alive in a way that is accessible and engaging for all generations. An exciting and ever-growing list of speakers is being compiled, including John Proctor, our General Secretary, Neil Thorogood, Principal of Westminster College, Paul Northup of the Greenbelt Festival, representatives from the Christian Aid Collective, representatives from Messy Church and Wayne Hawkins of CWM to name but a few. It is hoped that as many as can will be able to join this celebration of the life of our church.
8. Feasts and Festivals Celebration. Synod Council recommends a service of Thanksgiving for 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Details will follow shortly.
9. Walking the Way – living the life of Jesus today. Work is progressing on a Walking the Way booklet to be circulated to churches in the autumn of 2017. It will include resources for reflection on and engagement with discipleship for personal and group use. It will also contain a guide to further useful resources. A leaflet will be sent to all churches in September with a simple liturgy which is offered for use on Advent Sunday. Education & Learning have set up a task and finish group to set about the design of a new discipleship course, which will complement the other materials which Walking the Way is producing. The group will set the framework and commission writers to produce fresh materials which can be used by all those wishing to deepen their discipleship. We hope that this will support every local church in its task of growing, making and releasing disciples.
10. LMMR. Synod Council requested a review of LMMR (Local Mission and Ministry Review). I am extremely grateful to Mr Steve Allott, Mrs Deirdre Harrison and Revd. Andy Twilley for their input into this. Synod Council listened to the cries that what we had was too people hungry and too time consuming and detracted from the business of being church. What we have, I believe, will enable local churches to set their own priorities in their Living Document. Andy will speak to this as a separate item.

Resolution 1: Southern Synod endorses the new LMMR process as laid down in Paper A1?

The Moderator
26/02/2017