



The
United
Reformed
Church

Children's and Youth Work Committee **Report to Synod Together, October 2019**

Submitted by Graham Purdye

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*The good leave an inheritance to their **children's children**... Proverbs 13:22a*

Membership: 6 active members: Graham Purdye (Chair), Reuben Watt(Acting Secretary). Thomas Hackett attends as staff responsible to this committee (see below). Representatives from Boys Brigade, Scouts/Guides & Youth Executive.

We are very grateful to Reuben for continuing to take on the secretary's role and taking the minutes of the meetings, despite his other roles in Synod and further afield. We are still however looking for a secretary so please could everyone give some thoughts as to whether they or anyone in their congregations who may feel able to take on this role which is mainly taking minutes of 5 meetings a year.

There is also still a need to get more involvement from Local Areas on the committee.

Youth Assembly – 24-26 January 2020 – Theme: Common Ground: Where is it?

The event will include keynote speakers, workshops, social events, Bible studies and worship as well as business sessions. A weekend to focus on Jesus, to share in community with other young people, and to explore what it means to be church together. Age Year 10 - 25 year olds. Assembly meet at Whitemoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffordshire.

Booking Details and Cost on or before 11th November: £110

Cost from 12th November: £140 Age: Year 10 to 25 years

Please encourage your young people to attend. As usual, there will be some financial help available, so please contact Tom for details.

SYNOD CYDO:

Tom is continuing to work through the renewal of Child Friendly Church Awards and any new applications as well.

A group of CYDOs are currently working on updating the criteria. There will be a move to clearly thinking about children & young people across a wider age range. The number of assessment criteria will be reduced to make the award more accessible for churches. Tom has also continued with Safeguarding training.

Synod Youth Executive(SYE)

There has been no SYE meeting in 2019, but plans are underway for a new youth exec.

Tom and Reuben have met up to discuss Synod youth rep role and plans for the year.

Reuben attended the South London Synod area meeting and had 2 minutes to report.

Reuben has spoken to Ali Greaves regarding the Northern Synod internship scheme.

On receipt of further information we will review this at a future meeting.

Reuben has been updating SYE twitter account – scheduling daily tweets going out at 6pm using buffer.

Tom has promoted this on Synod Facebook group and is looking to post more often and share good news stories on the Synod Facebook page.

Representation of Young People and 20s-40s at General Assembly

The demographic of children and young people, defined as those aged 25 and below by the URC, now make up a third of the church and they are the only group in the URC that, according to the latest 2019 Year Book statistics, has increased in number at worship in the past year. This demographic is represented at Assembly level by the URC Youth Executive which includes a representative from each synod. The purpose of these Synod Rep roles is to offer a voice for all young people in their synod and to offer the voice of young people at Assembly level throughout the URC. Currently there is nothing to ensure that these Synod representatives offered a place at General Assembly by their synod.

Furthermore, at General Assembly 2018, a report was received about the 20s-40s demographic and their slowing engagement in the church. One of the main reasons is the lack of representation at all levels of the URC once they have gone beyond the age of URC Youth. If youth representation were a clearer part of our structures, then the possibility of those aged up to 25 being engaged in the wider church and continuing to be part of the church beyond URC Youth (i.e. 20s-40s), would be increased.

So, the following motion is proposed:

Motion -

The Southern Synod of the United Reformed Church:

- a) recognises the importance of the voice of young people to the URC at all levels throughout the United Reformed Church, and commits itself to aiding this wherever possible;**
- b) commits to ensure that the Southern Synod Youth Representative, or equivalent, attends General Assembly, either as one of our young person quota or in a capacity as a synod post holder.**
- c) will make every effort to send at least one person aged between 20-40, in addition to the prescribed places for under 26s.**

Notes for Discussion or Issues:

- It should be noted that the above motion is positively supported by the Children and Youth Work Committee who would endeavour to facilitate any issues, including financial ones, to ensure the application of this motion, should it pass.