****

**Paper A**

**Southern Synod**

**Spring Synod Together Meeting, Saturday 14 March 2020**

**at Petts Wood URC**

**Synod Council and Synod Ministries Report**

**1. Moderatorial cover** Revd Bridget Banks and Revd George Watt have been covering the Moderator’s roles since last October. They are grateful for the support of the Synod Staff, the Synod Area Officers and the Synod as a whole in taking on this responsibility. It has proved to be interesting although at times challenging!

**2. Partnership between the URC and the Presbyterian Church of Korea.**

A review has been carried out on Ms So Young Jung’s post. The churches involved are delighted with the work she is doing and the post has been extended for a further 3 years.

**3.** **New Housing Areas – Ashford** Southern Synod are contributing to the funding of a lay worker. The post had been advertised and Mr Tom Lewis had been appointed. He will start on 1st September 2020.

**4.** **Search for new Moderator** The advert had gone out with interviews planned for May.

**5.** **Christchurch URC, Walton-on-the-Hill** The Church has agreed to close enabling a Mission Project to open with a partnership between the United Reformed Church, Walton-on-the-Hill Primary School and St Peter’s, the local Anglican Church. A Management Group is being set up.

**6. News of Churches:**

**West Langdon URC, Dover has closed.** Their final service was on 1st December 2019.

**Bexhill URC** - It has now be sold to the South Eastern Baptist Association.

**East Croydon URC** - Negotiations on the redevelopment plans, to include the Synod Office) are continuing.

**Christ Church URC, Leatherhead** - They have decided to close their premises at the end of the year. They are exploring to see if a fellowship may continue to meet after that time.

**St Mark’s, Hastings** – They have decided to close on 31st May 2020 with a closing service on 24th May.

**7.** **Division of Responsibilities** Discussions are ongoing about Division of responsibilities between Synod Area Pastoral Committees and Synod Ministries Committee.

**8.** **Children and Youth Work Committee** They continue to look to have more involvement across the Synod Areas and a Secretary for the Committee. Five young people from the Synod attended the Youth Assembly on 24th -26th January at Whitemoor Lakes, Staffordshire where the theme was ‘Common Ground: Where is it?’ Reuben Watt was inducted as the Youth Moderator.

There is an exciting new venture to provide training for young people interested in leading worship & preaching. It is hoped to present a youth friendly course of 4 – 5 sessions where the material will be based on the existing lay preachers’ training course but adapted to make it accessible to young people. It is hoped to pilot this shortly.

Crossfire is taking place from 22-25th May and once again it is hoped to have a group from the Synod attending.

**9. Safeguarding Officer** Belinda Nielsen has begun in this role. She is half time with Southern Synod and half time with Thames North Synod. She hopes to be able to offer training shortly for volunteers and local designated safeguarding officers.

**10. General Assembly - Aston University, 10th - 13th July 2020** Synod representation has been reduced to 16. For this year each Synod Area has been asked to nominate two representatives from amongst their number. We hope this will include at least one under 40 and one Black, Asian and minority ethnic representative. Synod Youth Executive has been asked to nominate 2 under 26’s.

**11. Nominations** We are still seeking a Synod Racial Justice Advocate.

Revd Bridget Banks and

Revd George Watt

March 2020