

To: All Ministers in a pastorate, Church representatives, Synod/United Area Leaders, Administrators and Treasurers, Local Church Leaders, Children and Youth representatives, Synod Staff, Co-opted members, Retired Ministers, Students and Observers.

Dear Friend

2021 Autumn Together Meeting
Saturday 9 October 2021 10.00 am to 2.45 pm
'Virtual Meeting' via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82240608246?pwd=K2JWRmNTYlK3bURreVNSN3cza2IDUTog>

Meeting ID: 822 4060 8246

Passcode: 445291

Grace, mercy and peace to you.

It is a joy to invite you to attend the 2021 Autumn Synod Together Meeting.

We had hoped that it would be possible to meet in person for the Autumn Synod Together Meeting. However, the Synod Officers, reviewing the risks presented by the continuing pandemic, particularly relating to a large indoor gathering, the age profile of Synod Together members, the number of clinically vulnerable members who might/would need to attend, and the use of public transport to enable people to attend, have taken the decision to host the meeting online again on this occasion.

However, unlike the previous two online Synod Together meetings, it will be necessary, in order to fully discuss and debate a number of very significant issues, to base the meeting around 3 sessions. As you will see from the agenda, we will start promptly at 10.00 with Session One lasting until approximately 11.15. Session Two will run from 11.30am until 12.45 when there will be a 45 minute break for lunch. Session Three will run from 13.30 until 14.45.

In order to enable a prompt start at 10.00 we need people to register for the meeting from 9.30am onwards. Please read the enclosed paper "Guide to Synod Together Meeting" as this gives details of the timetable for registration (ie. 9.30-9.45am registration of voting members; 9.45-9.55 registration of non-voting members). Also please follow the advice about entering your full name and the means of identifying yourself as a voting or non-voting member.

Please also read the paper "Guide to using Zoom for Synod Together Meeting" which offers practical advice on how best to use the features of Zoom to enable us to have as productive a meeting as possible.

It is also vital that you read the accompanying papers prior to the meeting. Some papers are simply for reporting important business. Other papers include resolutions that will require a

decision of Synod Together. It is vital members come to the meeting familiar with the business before us.

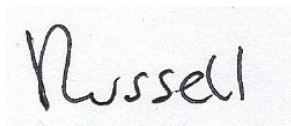
At the March Synod Together meeting, the Synod Treasurer introduced us to the challenge the denomination faces due to the projected deficit to the Ministers' Pension Fund. We return to this challenge at this meeting. In order to help you appreciate the complexities of the situation we encourage you to look at a video produced by Church House prior to General Assembly, where Ian Hardie, URC Treasurer, and John Piper, Deputy Treasurer, discuss the decisions before the 2021 meeting of the General Assembly about the future of the pensions scheme. The video is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp2VbQYtTyw>.

We are grateful for those with the necessary technical expertise who are making this meeting possible. Please, as always, be patient and gentle with all participants, including the Moderator and Synod Clerk, as we facilitate this important meeting.

Please let us know if you will **not** be able to attend by sending your **apologies** indicating clearly whether you are a minister, church representative etc. and your church to Opuene Charles on office@urcsouthern.org.uk

Despite the limitations of meeting 'virtually' again, I pray that the continuing work of the United Reformed Church in Southern Synod will be blessed through our meeting together online and we will, through our meeting, give God glory.

Yours in Christ,



Rev'd Russell Furley-Smith, Synod Clerk

27th September 2021