

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

2022 Spring Synod Together Meeting
Saturday 12 March 2022. 10.30 am to 4.00 pm
at Christ Church, Petts Wood Kent BR5 1LH

Grace, mercy and peace to you.

Synod Together was last able to meet in person in October 2019. So it gives me great joy to invite you to attend, in person, the meeting of Synod Together on Saturday 12 March 2022 at Christ Church, Petts Wood.

The decision to hold an 'in person' meeting of Synod Together was taken in the knowledge that Covid-19 remains a real threat to public health but, we believe, the time is now right to meet in person again. However, we recognise that some members of Synod Together may still feel hesitant to return to an in-person meeting. Therefore, several mitigations have been put in place. We would encourage those attending to do a lateral flow test before travelling. Hand sanitisers will be available throughout the building, and we would strongly urge those attending to wear masks throughout the day unless addressing the meeting or whilst eating and drinking. Also, I am pleased to say that the meeting will be streamed live on YouTube so that those unable to attend will at least be able to view proceedings. It won't be possible to be actively involved in the meeting online (viewers will not be able to address the meeting or vote) but we hope you will benefit from at least viewing it. To view the meeting on YouTube please use this link: <https://youtu.be/wfkEs36W8oI>. The link is repeated at the foot of the agenda.

We are extremely grateful to the Minister and Elders and others at Christ Church for making this meeting possible and for the measures they have put in place to keep us as safe as possible. They have very helpfully set up a page on their own website providing invaluable information for those planning on attending. This information includes travel directions, information about parking for those travelling by car and a plan of the premises. You will find this information at: <https://christchurchpettswood.org.uk/synod-together-2022/>.

A powerpoint presentation will be shown at lunchtime advertising events across the Synod. If anyone wishes to have an event advertised, Revd Nadene Snyman will be happy to include it the presentation as long as it is sent to her as a PowerPoint slide in advance. Her email is: nadene72@gmail.com

When you arrive at the venue, you will be directed to the Registration points which will be done in Synod/United Areas for Ministers, Local Church Leaders and church representatives. All others should please check the allocated tables.

Voting cards will be given at the registration desk.

A voluntary contribution of at least £2 will be welcomed to assist with the cost of pre-meeting coffee, lunchtime soup and afternoon tea, biscuits and cakes at the close of Synod.

All Ministers in active service, church representatives, Synod/United Area Leaders, Administrators and Treasurers, Local Church Leaders, Children and Youth representatives, Synod Staff, and co-opted members are voting members. Others, including Retired Ministers, Students and Observers, are welcome and will be able to address the meeting but are not allowed to participate in decision-making.

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

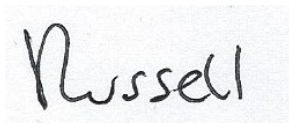
Please, don't forget to bring your lunch!!! Soup, tea and coffee will be provided.

The theme of the meeting is 'Synod – Together'. As well as dealing with much business that can seem very routine there will be a presentation about exciting ecumenical work happening in the Ashford area, the presentation of a significant number of newly accredited Synod recognised lay preachers and discussions about ministerial deployment. All of these matters, alongside the routine business, are central to the life and work of Southern Synod as we move beyond a very stressful and challenging couple of years.

As always, I urge you to read all the reports and papers before attending the meeting as well as taking notes of information to report back on to your various areas, committees and local congregations. If you have any detailed questions about any of the reports or paperwork please can I urge you to address specific questions to those responsible for producing the reports prior to the meeting. There will only be limited time for discussion and questions on the day.

Finally, it will be so good to be able to be 'Synod -Together' in person on this occasion. I look forward to being with you. I pray that the continuing work of the United Reformed Church in Southern Synod will be blessed through our meeting together and we will, through our meeting, give God glory.

Yours in Christ,



Rev'd Russell Furley-Smith, Synod Clerk

24th February 2022