

Synod Council Report

Since Synod Together last met on the 8th October 2022, Synod Council has met on the 15th December and the 16th February.

Racial Justice Advocacy

We are thankful to Jacob Bali who has agreed to work alongside Sharon Henriquez after Janet Lane stepped down. We want to thank Janet for all her good work on the issues of Racial Justice. We are also thankful for the presentation that will come before us today.

Closure of Christ Church Walton on the Hill

A resolution was brought to the Synod Council concerning the closure of Christ Church. Acting as the District Council of Southern Synod the resolution was accepted, Christ Church closed as a congregation on the 31st December 2022. Synod Council give thanks for all their dedication, hard work and faithful witness to the community, over a number of years.

Southern Synod Ecumenical Officer

It was agreed that the new Ecumenical Officer would be scoped 50% alongside serving Crawley URC also scoped 50%. We also give thanks for Revd Paul Dean who has served the Synod faithfully in this role and wish him well in his retirement.

Staffing review

Conversations so far have highlighted the need for further staff at the Synod. It has been recognised that a 25% post for the Synod Clerk is not realistic and unmanageable. The Moderator also carries a heavy workload. The demands on the office staff as well as the potential for greater need and assistance in the years ahead, requires careful consideration. We are grateful to Nigel Macdonald and Revd Roger Jones for being part of this process.

Ministers of other denominations

The meeting recognized that there was not always clarity concerning the voting rights of Ministers of other denominations serving in URC/Ecumenical partnerships. The meeting clarified that all such ministers are full voting members of Synod/United Area Meetings and Synod Together and should be invited to attend. However, it was noted that the office didn't always have an up to date list. An invitation comes to all Synod Area leaders to inform the office when someone serves in their area.

Synod Prayer Day

The Synod Prayer Day centers on the theme 'Listening,' we come to listen for God's guiding voice. In doing so we recognize that each Synod Area is distinctive, each faces its own unique set of issues. Therefore, the intention is to hold a 'Prayer Day' in each Synod Area in June/July. In listening to this 'collective' voice from the different Synod Areas, we hear a prophetic voice in ways we hope will enable the 'Synod' to grow stronger in faith and in purpose. Synod Area leaders will be contacted to explore venues and the hope that we can seek some additional help.

Movement across Synod Areas

After being referred to all the relevant bodies of Southern Synod, it was agreed that the move of the Ewell URC from the Surrey and Sussex Area to the South London Area be accepted.

New Synod Council Convenor

I thank everyone for their patience and consideration in allowing me to convene Synod Council. It has taught me a great deal and even though I have learnt so much, I am aware that I have so much to learn. Thank you for your graciousness.

Synod Council next meets on the 18th May 2023

Revd Kim Plumpton