



Children's and Youth Work Committee

Report to Synod, March 2023

Submitted by Graham Purdye



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

Membership: There have been no recent changes to the committee so there are currently 8 active members

The secretary's post is still vacant, so, if anyone knows somebody in their church that may be willing to take on this role, please let me know. Many thanks to Tom who is still valiantly fulfilling this role.

Synod Youth Assembly 2023.

This took place at Whitemoor Lakes, Staffordshire from 27th-29th Jan. The weekend was based around 'Love is' which is the Children's & Youth Work theme for 2023. 9 young people attended from the Synod (including some from Gillingham who attended last year). News roundup from assembly is now available on URC website <https://urc.org.uk/youth-assembly-round-up-27-29-january-2023/>

Congratulations to Heather Moore how was elected as URC Youth Assembly Moderator Elect. As a result, there is now a vacancy for Synod Youth Representative.

From the Committee

I thought you might like to see some rough ideas which came from our recent meeting. The group split into break out rooms to explore what events and training could be offered within Synod for children, young people and their leaders.

Feedback from discussion groups included:

- Synod Together Events – explore relaunching youth events alongside synod together or how to include more young people within the synod together meetings.
- Training for youth leaders – Youth Work Essentials trial has gone well, looking to repeat this training in 2023.
- Encouraged to see young adults attending Synod Lay preacher course. Is there a way to encourage younger age group to be involved in worship. Eg 10–16-year-olds.
- Fun days – opportunity for children and young people to get together and socialise. This could be online and in person.
- Looking for ways to increase numbers at Synod run events.
- Developing skills of younger generation – 11-16. Sowing seeds for ministers in the future.
- Intergenerational worship – training and opportunities for different generation to plan worship together.
- Youth Mental Health First Aid – Continue to offer courses within Synod. Both 2 day and ½ day awareness course can now be run.
- Godly Play experience sessions – repeat as these were very popular. Explore opportunity to have additional experience sessions and follow up training course.

- LGBT Pastoral Training – This was a popular session in 2022. Speak to Frontier Youth Trust to about offering additional dates in 2023. Explore other training options in this area. E.g. All Sorts Brighton.
- October Children's and Youth Days had low attendance. Need to explore why there were small number of bookings and how we can address this going forward.
- Explore events elsewhere in Synod – e.g. Brighton.
- Go to where the young people are. Could we hold events at churches that have current young people, e.g. Gillingham, Petts Wood, Charlton. Focus on identifying churches that have young people and hold an event there.
- Camps and residential. Exploring offering residential with Thames North, which also focussed on younger secondary age group so would help fill the 11-14 gap. Need to identify suitable venues for this event.
- Suggested venues included Broadstone Warren in East Grinstead, Frylands Wood, Carrot Wood, Blacklands Farm East Grinstead, Wilberforce. It was highlighted that many of these sites are primarily accessible by car and may not have good public transport links. Need to consider this when deciding on venue.

For the latest news and resources for your Children's & Youth Work, please follow this link. <https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

Youth Mental Health First Aid

There have been 2 further "classroom based" training sessions which were delivered together with Steven Mitchell from Mersey Synod. 14 participants attended November course in London and 11 participants attended February course in Manchester.

New Online Course dates have been set for March and May (www.bit.ly/march-mfha & www.bit.ly/may-mfha)

Bookings are open and spaced are fully funded for Southern Synod participants.

Youth Worker Project – Update

This model was suggested as a practical way to support young people in engaging with the church, through providing opportunities for sessional work. Info letter went out to all churches in Synod. Looking to match young people to local churches. For a large number of churches, the cost of a full/part time worker is too much.

Tolworth – a young person has recently been appointed at Tolworth and is working 10 hours per week across a number of different projects. Tom is also currently in discussions with a couple of other churches.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

22nd March

14th June

13th September

15th November

(Via 'Zoom')