

# South Western Synod meeting Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## REPORT from the Discipleship and Service Committee

Revd Neil Thorogood (Convener) – email: [ministertthurc@gmail.com](mailto:ministertthurc@gmail.com)

1. In line with Mission Council resolutions, we are rolling out pastoral supervision for all active ministers in the synod. We have agreed to include our Local Church Leaders in this important provision of support. Some offers from individuals experienced in pastoral supervision and offering to supervise others have been received, and others are currently undertaking suitable training courses. Our aim is for the Synod office to hold an updated list of suitable supervisors known to us. In addition, a couple of UK-wide umbrella organisations offer us excellent access to qualified supervisors. Details of what pastoral supervision is and how it can be accessed for our synod are nearly ready to be sent to all active ministers and leaders. By summer 2023 the URC requires all active ministers to be receiving pastoral supervision.
2. Our Inter-Faith Advocate, Revd Tracey Lewis, and our Racial Justice Advocate, Revd Henriette Wentink, now sit on the committee and it is good to have their wisdom and perspectives to aid our thinking and planning. A new resource on the sharing of URC buildings with other faith communities is now available from the URC website. A variety of inter-faith resources can be accessed here (<https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/inter-faith/inter-faith-resources/>). Synod will hear from Henriette on the vital matter of the Legacies of Slavery project we share in with CWM partners globally. All local churches should have received material on the Legacies of Slavery and we are asked to submit our thoughts by the end of March ahead of resolutions going to this summer's General Assembly.
3. The Synod will hear a major presentation from Revd Roy Lowes on Stepwise which is a major resource for nurturing and refreshing discipleship across the synod.
4. There are 2 Ministers' Gatherings this year. Details are already circulating. The Denominational Conference, the second such URC-wide gathering, is 9-12 May at Yarnfield Park Conference Centre. Our much-postponed Spring School will be held 12-16 September at Westminster College, Cambridge. A further date for diaries is our 2023 Spring School which will be held 17-20 April at Saunton Sands Hotel, Devon.
5. There has been discussion at recent meetings about Lay Preachers and pulpit supply considering what support the Synod can and should offer to churches who are struggling to find people to lead worship. If anyone has suggestions and/or has come across good resources that we might point local churches towards, please let me know.
6. Churches should have received packs to help us celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the URC. Further information and extra materials can be found here: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/our-50th-anniversary/>
7. As I begin to find my feet (possibly) as new convener of this committee and discover the delights of the synod as we begin to escape aspects of the pandemic, I am very grateful for those who serve on it and for the collective conversation, insight and enthusiasm. Thank you all.