

Pastoral Committee report

The pastoral committee have responsibility for the care of all churches across the Synod: helping ministers, leaders, elders, and members to work together for the care, life and mission of the local church.

Pandemic

The UK government's "road map" of dates to ease lockdown means that soon churches will be working towards opening buildings for worship and service in ways that are as Covid-safe as we can be. Advice from the Synod Moderators will be available by the time of our Synod Meeting. After over a year of living with the reality of the pandemic there is much to lament over and perhaps the beginnings of new hope.

Church closure

Kingskerswell URC made the decision to close on November 14th, 2020. We give thanks to God for over 100 years of witness in the village and the church are deeply grateful to the Revd Adrian Phippen for his care of them in recent years.

Numbers of ministers

The Pastoral Committee have been wrestling for a number of years with reduced numbers of ministers in the URC and local churches will know that 'scoping' (the amount of minister's time each church gets) has been falling in many places. Unfortunately, the South Western Synod currently has more ministers than our fair share in the URC, and so, area by area, we are looking at how changes can be made. There will be a presentation at Synod giving the background of the current discussions in the Bristol Area. Discussions have already begun in other areas.

Somerset Synod Pastoral Advisor

We are grateful to Revd Peter Henderson for his dedicated work on the committee as SPA for Somerset for nearly ten years. Farewells and thanks were said at the end of January. The post is currently being re-advertised and we hope an appointment will be made soon. In the meantime the Somerset churches can contact the Moderator directly Moderator@urcsouthwest.org.uk or Jim Thorneycroft, the 'neighbouring' SPA for South & East Devon jimthornbth@aol.com.