URC South Western Synod

Meeting 8th March 2025

Report from the Discipleship and Service Committee

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**OUR COMMITTEE’S REMIT**: to advocate and coordinate Synod work in areas of training, resourcing, support and encouragement for all members of our congregations and those who share leadership and pastoral oversight amongst us.

1. Since Synod last met, we have continued work with the Synod Executive Committee to explore staffing needs and possibilities. The outcome of this work will be the subject of a separate paper for the March meeting of Synod.
2. Stepwise continues to be used both in person and online and participants are finding real blessing in the sharing and learning. We are also starting to explore the possibilities for online Stepwise groups across several synods sharing together.
3. The denomination-wide Church Life Review continues and will come into sharper focus at an extra meeting of General Assembly in November, 2025. We know that provision and development of educational and discipleship material and programmes is likely to evolve as a consequence, and continue to be part of the key conversations. As always, we aim to help the denomination appreciate our context and our local churches to benefit from wider URC resources.
4. Racial justice and Interfaith matters continue to be dominated by the conflict around Gaza and its aftermath, and the journey the URC is continuing to become an anti-racist church. We are delighted that the Synod will be invited to contribute to the URC’s Legacies of Slavery fund.
5. We continue to encourage our two students in training for URC ministry and to receive students coming to do placements within the synod.
6. The Minister/CRCW Spring School will take place again at Saunton Sands Hotel from 28th April to 1st May. The programme will include input from Place for Hope – an organisation that equips churches in areas around conflict resolution and peace-making with which the URC is now in formal partnership. And we will be joined by Revd Tim Meadows, Moderator of General Assembly. Spring School is a wonderful gift of refreshment and encouragement the synod offers, and we are blessed by it.

We remain, as ever, deeply grateful for all of you, across the synod, who enable and support so much to help our churches thrive and make a difference in God’s aching world.