



Stepwise Report for SW Synod March 2025

Stepwise is the discipleship development programme from the United Reformed Church. Stepwise is for everyone: all ages, shapes and sizes – including you!

Stepwise so far: over the past five years, over 60 people have engaged with a Stepwise Group, some thoroughly, some more fleetingly. There have been, including the current crop, about 10 groups in the Synod

Stepwise at present: There are currently three Stepwise groups running. One is in Bristol co facilitated by Sue Cossey, Stephen Newell and Helena Mackinnon. A second is a small group across Royal Wootton Bassett, Malmesbury and Cricklade which I am facilitating. And the third is an online group that draws people with very different church experience from right across the Synod. I am co facilitating that with Rachel Leach. All these groups are engaged in the introductory unit of Stepwise called Faith Filled life.

Faith Filled Life includes a project in which participants seek to make connections with their church's wider community, bearing in mind the material and reflections that they've engaged in while doing Faith Filled Life. All seem to be gaining much benefit from the experience.

Stepwise going forward: Our hope is to encourage more Faith Filled Life groups across the synod.

It is also to engage people with some of the additional streams that Stepwise offers - none of which have yet run in our Synod. These include Faith Filled Worship, Faith Filled Community, Faith Filled Environment and Faith Filled Confidence (this latter focuses on helping us to speak of our faith).

Whilst up to now it's been the case that these additional streams can only be done if a participant has already worked through Faith Filled Life, we understand that this requirement is being relaxed somewhat, though the details are not yet entirely clear.

With all this in mind our immediate plans include:

- Conversations (already started) with Stepwise Officers in the neighbouring Synods of Wales, Wessex and West Midlands to increase collaboration (and alliteration!)

- The possibility that one or two facilitators from this Synod might join a planned online Faith Filled Worship stream in Wessex to develop our familiarity with the material
- Seeing if we can use the Faith Filled Worship stream as a refresher course for worship leaders in our Synod as well as of course, as an initial training resource for worship leaders.
- Hoping to build a Faith Filled Worship group around two or three interested people in the Haydon Wick Church in Swindon.
- Seeing if when the current Synod Zoom Faith Filled Life group finishes, we can follow it up with a second one over next winter and also whether some of the participants in the current one might be able to gather new Faith Filled Life groups near to where they live
- Seeing if we can set up in conjunction with the other Synods that I have listed above, Faith Filled Life groups on any of the other streams that focus on environment, community, leadership, etc. This bearing in mind the increased flexibility that Stepwise seems to be offering.

I am happy to field expressions of interest or enquiries of any sort

Roy Lowes SW Synod Stepwise Advocate
 Email: roy.avril@btinternet.com
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