

URC South Western Synod meeting, Saturday 16th October 2021

Ministries Committee Report

1. The committee gave thanks for the service of Lythan Nevard as she convened her final meeting in June ahead of her move to become Moderator of Eastern Synod this summer. Neil Thorogood had been nominated to become convener.
2. The committee has been expanded to include regular space on its agendas for the work of the Synod's Interfaith Advocate (Tracey Lewis) and Racial Justice Advocate (Henriette Wentink). These important aspects of our life and work deserve this integration into the Synod's structures and thus a greater voice.
3. Stepwise continues to benefit people in groups across the Synod and the committee is very grateful for the continuing work Roy Lowes is doing to help us see this resource shared as widely as possible. We have reflected upon the extent to which Stepwise can be one tool amongst several to encourage discipleship and learning across the Synod. The committee has asked a couple of small groups to see how best Stepwise and other materials can be highlighted on the Synod website and what resources might best complement or refine our use of Stepwise.
4. Denominationally accredited training pathways for new worship leaders at Synod and Assembly levels are being developed although a number of issues still need clarification. The possibility of an online and regular opportunity for our Lay Preachers to meet for support and encouragement has been suggested.
5. Largely positive feedback has been received after the 2021 online Ministers' Spring School. The Synod has arranged a day's retreat and space for serving Ministers, Local Church Leaders and Synod Pastoral Advisors at Monks Yard, Ilminster on 20th October. A denomination-wide gathering of serving ministers will take place 9-12 May 2022.
6. In the light of recommendations from General Assembly about pastoral supervision for ministers and church leaders, the committee is looking to create a database of potential supervisors from within the URC and from other traditions.
7. The committee has received information about the new training pathway for Non-Stipendiary Ministry Model 4 (where a candidate will ultimately be ordained to serve only in the pastorate/context where they currently are). Such training will require careful planning of the programme with full and active collaboration between the Synod and whichever Resource Centre for Learning [RCL] a candidate attends.
8. In the light of the wide remit of the committee it is suggested that it be renamed to better reflect the areas of Synod life it attends to. Thus, it is suggested that we become the Discipleship and Service Committee.

Neil Thorogood

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