



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

**Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig
Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru
The United Reformed Church
National Synod of Wales**

**Cyfarfod Synod yr Hydref
Autumn Synod Meeting**

**Saturday 20th October 2018
Pavilion Mid Wales, Spa Road,
Llandrindod Wells LD1 5EY**

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1. Notices

1.1 Directions:

By rail:

Llandrindod Wells railway station is on the Heart of Wales Line which runs between Swansea and Shrewsbury. From the station it is less than ten minutes on foot to the Pavilion Mid Wales by walking along Station Crescent, Middleton Street and Spa Road.

By road:

Pavilion Mid Wales is very well sign-posted from the A483 (the main north-south road through Llandrindod Wells). Access is along Spa Road (A4081) which is one way (heading north-westwards). Turn left off Spa Road immediately before The Church of the Holy Trinity and the Pavilion Mid Wales will be seen immediately ahead.

1.2 Car Parking

There is ample free car parking on site, in front of the Pavilion Mid Wales, along the access road leading to the Bowling Club and behind the Bowling Club itself.

1.3 Food and Drink

Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided on arrival and during the lunch break.

1.4 Young People

Arrangements are being made for a parallel session for young people at this meeting. If you are planning to bring any young people to Synod Meeting, please contact Judy Harris so that the necessary arrangements can be put in place (cydo@urcwales.org.uk).

1.5 Visitors

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Synod Meeting, although only members of Synod will be able to vote.

1.6 On Arrival

- a) For Synod representatives: Please collect a label, to act as your name badge, a printed copy of the Synod papers (if you require one) and an expenses claim form. You may claim the cost of public transport, or car travel at 25p per mile. Please travel with others if possible. Please complete your expenses form with your bank details and leave it in the box before you leave: payment will be made electronically soon afterwards. If you would like the Synod to claim Gift Aid on all or part of your expenses claim, please complete the section on the reverse of the form. Please exchange

your completed attendance card for voting cards, which should be returned at the end of the meeting.

- b) For visitors: Please collect a label, to act as your name badge, and a printed copy of the Synod papers (if you require one).

1.7 **Mailings**

There will be a mailing for you to collect containing some fliers. Please note that the inclusion of third party materials should in no way be interpreted as an endorsement by the Synod.

1.8 **Forthcoming Synod Meetings are as follows:**

Saturday 2nd March 2019	Pavilion Mid Wales, Llandrindod Wells
Saturday 29th June 2019	'Big Day Out' Royal Welsh Agricultural Showground
Saturday 19th October 2019	Pavilion Mid Wales, Llandrindod Wells

BIG DAY OUT 2019

Saturday 29th June

Royal Welsh Agricultural Showground



2. Agenda

It would be helpful to those involved if any questions on the reports that are not the subject of resolutions could be supplied in advance to the Synod Clerk.

- 10.15am **Gathering and Refreshments**
- 11am **Worship led by Simon Walkling, including Commemorations**
- Introductions and Notices**
- Minutes of Autumn 2017 Synod Meeting (<https://goo.gl/C2RE1c>)**
- Matters Arising from the Minutes**
- 11.30am **General Assembly Resolutions ([resolution 1, 2 and 3](#))**
- Finance and Property Board and Trust Company**
- a) 2017 Accounts ([resolution 4](#))
- b) 2019 Budgets ([resolution 5](#) and [resolution 6](#))
- Musical Memories Choir (Christ Well, Swansea) and
Dementia Friendly Church**
- 20-40 Task Group (see [Appendix D](#))**
- 1pm **Lunch**
- 2pm **United Church Rhyl ASK Centre, Joint Winner of
Congregational Insurance Community Award 2018**
- Synod Priorities and Aspirations**
- Greenbelt 2018**
- Stepwise**
- Local Churches and Personal Data**
- Reports to Synod** – both those parts of these reports that are not
the subject of resolutions, and those reports circulated ahead of
the cancelled Spring 2018 meeting (<https://goo.gl/Z2FrjV>)
- 3.30pm **Closing Worship led by Simon Walkling**

3. Synod Officers' Meeting

3.1 Synod Priorities and Aspirations

The Synod Officers' Meeting continues to work towards revising the synod's priorities and aspirations. As a stage in that process, we offer the following to Synod Meeting for consideration:

- a) Our priorities relate to:
 - The stories we tell ourselves to affirm who we are
 - The vision we have to give us direction
 - The markers we have to show how far we have come
- b) We continue the traditions of God's people:
 - Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8)
 - Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done (Matt 6:10)
 - Life in all its fullness (John 10:10)
 - Loving God, loving others as ourselves, and making disciples (Matt 22:36-40, Matt 28:19)
- c) Our 'core work' continues:
 - Working with children, young people and their families
 - Advising on buildings and fundraising, for effective maintenance and redevelopment for mission
 - Training elders, ministers and lay people for the tasks of ministry
 - Ecumenical co-operation
 - Finance matters: budgeting, contributions from local churches, investments
 - Forming pastorates and seeking ministers
 - Encouraging congregations to take part in God's mission, in line with frameworks developed by the United Reformed Church and our partners
- d) We will weave together threads of our lives that help us face the future:
 - We will build confidence as part of the people of God:
 - Encouraging each other in Walking the Way – living the life of Jesus today
 - Promoting groups developing 'Holy Habits' through the use of the resource material
 - Promoting Appreciative Inquiry and training people in its use to take positive steps based on the good things that we are already doing
 - Providing 'Good Grief' training, to help people have confidence in handling bereavement and funerals.

- Developing disciples through using 'Stepwise', beginning with Faith-filled Lives
 - We will respond regionally:
 - Building relationships (especially those linking local churches and the Regional Pastoral Committees, and Regional Pastoral Committees with the Synod Pastoral Committee) to give meaning to structures described on paper
 - Working within local contexts, whilst upholding common standards
 - Using local knowledge and listening to local concerns
 - Supporting the Regional Pastoral Committees in their identified priorities
 - Building teams to help develop ministry in each region
 - We will develop the capacity of people to respond to change:
 - Aiming to do a few things well
 - Working from where we are, rather than focusing on what we lack
 - Building on the good things that are happening
 - Responding to need in the communities we serve
- e) We will ask guiding questions to shape the way we work:
- Share ecumenically – what can we do together?
 - Look for synergy – how can we act as salt and yeast to make a difference?
 - Recognise the issues that affect the lives of people in Wales and promote social involvement – how can we respond?
 - Understand our URC identity – what do we bring to any situation? How are we known?
 - Support volunteers so that they can fulfil their roles – Would people help more willingly, if they felt they had the help they need?
 - Develop support networks of people – How do we encourage each other in a positive way?
- f) We will devote time and resources to make progress on these aspects of our shared life.
- g) We will monitor progress and report to Synod Meeting: responsive to changes, but developing these aspirations over a three-year period (2018 to 2021)

3.2 **Welsh Language Policy**

The meeting reviews progress with the implementation of the Welsh Language Policy, which was approved by the Synod Meeting in Spring 2017, on an annual basis.

3.3 **Towards a Shared Understanding of Mission**

Following consultation with the Mission and Discipleship Board, the Synod Officers' Meeting has adopted a compilation of resource material as a reference document to aid the development of a shared understanding of mission across the synod's boards and committees.

3.4 **Criteria for Doing Things Well**

The [Criteria for Doing Things Well](#) document originated with the Moderators' Meeting and was presented to Mission Council in March 2018. The paper uses the biblical image of pruning for growth to encourage doing a few things well. The document offers three criteria to help fruitfulness: purpose, relevance and necessity. The Synod Officers' Meeting found the paper helpful, and a useful resource to aid our prioritising.

3.5 **Mutual Accountability, Personal Development and Team Building**

- a) Members of the Synod Officers' Meeting each have a Work Plan which includes their many responsibilities. These work plans are shared annually at the Synod Officers' Meeting to aid team working and to ensure that they reflect the synod's priorities.
- b) Members of the Synod Officers' Meeting anticipate planning a facilitated Away Day in the near future.

3.6 **Candidacy and Vocations**

Actively promoting vocations to the ministry of word and sacraments, lay preaching and worship leading, local church leadership and eldership is a priority, particularly for our Training and Development Officers.

3.7 **Communications**

- a) The meeting reviews the Synod Newsletter, and statistics relating to its use, at each meeting, recognising it as a key means of communicating with local churches and individuals within the Synod.
- b) A Communications Policy has been approved and adopted.
- c) The meeting regularly reviews the website and its effectiveness, alongside the synod's social media presence.

3.8 **Synod Meeting**

The Pavilion Mid Wales has been booked for both Synod Meeting in 2019.

3.9 **Safeguarding**

Judy Harris has been appointed as Safeguarding Officer for both children and young people and adults at risk. Appropriate training for Judy is being organised. For all safeguarding issues, Judy may be contacted

using safeguarding@urcwales.org.uk. Her e-mail address for children's and youth work development related matters remains unchanged.

3.10 **Working with Partners**

Each meeting reviews our essential co-operation with partners – both ecumenical and other agencies and charities.

3.11 **General Data Protection Regulation**

- a) The Synod continues to implement the new data protection regulation and has undergone an audit of paper and electronic files in the Synod Office, as well as any that are stored on individual computers and in home offices.
- b) All those who serve on Synod committees, boards and groups have now signed an undertaking to confirm that they understand the requirement to protect privacy and personal information and agree to a set of undertakings.
- c) As people leave Synod committees, boards and groups they are asked to sign a further undertaking to the effect that they have returned all papers and e-mails containing personal and confidential information to the Synod Office for shredding, or declare that they have securely destroyed them.

3.12 **Risk Management**

The meeting reviewed the draft risk management matrix and made some suggestions as to amendments.

3.13 **Synod Membership**

The Synod may co-opt up to twenty-four additional members, being people with a particular role or responsibility within the Synod. Those who are at present co-opted members of Synod for the duration of their appointment are as follows:

- Ron Prosser, Philip Rickards, Jill Shelton (Local Church Leaders)
- Judy Harris (CYDO)
- Ian Lloyd-Parry (Convener of FPB)
- Revd Adrian Bulley (Synod Clerk)
- Revd Gethin Rhys (Cytûn)

4. Synod Pastoral Committee

4.1 Training and Development Officer (South)

The committee has been delighted to welcome the Revd Gareth Dyer to this role and already appreciates the contributions which he will make to the life of the Synod.

4.2 Training and Development Officer (North)

The United Reformed Church has appointed the Revd David Salsbury as Stepwise Programme Manager and he left his role as Training and Development Officer (North), alongside his responsibilities in the Dyserth and Holywell Pastorate, at the end of September 2018. The Synod owes David a huge debt of gratitude for the service he has given as Training and Development Officer (North). The gifts he has developed will serve the URC well as he spearheads the development of Stepwise, the new intergenerational discipleship programme.

4.3 Terms of Agreement for Local Church Leader

The committee has approved terms of agreement for a local church leader (paralleling terms of settlement for ministers) which will be used for all new appointments and re-appointments.

4.4 Local Churches and Personal Data

The General Data Protection Regulation came into effect in the United Kingdom on 25th May 2018. Advice and materials for local churches, prepared in consultation with others by the Deputy General Secretary (Admin and Resources), have been produced and are available from the URC website (see <https://urc.org.uk/GDPR.html>). The materials were circulated to all church secretaries, treasurers and serving Ministers within the Synod in January 2018.

4.5 Vacancies

- a) Concurrence has been given to the call of the Revd Stella Hayton to the South Pembrokeshire Pastorate. Her Induction took place on Saturday 1st September 2018.
- b) Following the approval of the CRCW Programme Sub-committee, a vacancy has been declared for the Swansea CRCW post for five years maximum.
- c) Having been 'on hold' for some months, the vacancy in the western section of the Brecon Beacons Pastorate was re-activated with effect from 1st October 2018. The Revd Stephen Lewis has been appointed as Interim Moderator for this vacancy.

4.6 **Landsker Pastorate**

The committee has been pleased to learn that the Accreditation Sub-Committee has renewed the Certificate of Limited Service for the Revd Martin Spain for a further three year period.

4.7 **Reviews**

- a) A review of the ministry of the Revd Paula Parish-Foley at Dan y Graig will be carried out during Autumn 2018.
- b) A review to determine the shape of the Ecumenical Officer role, once Sally Thomas leaves post in November 2019, will be carried out over the coming months, with recommendations being made to the committee in March 2019.

4.8 **Evaluating Transitional Ministry**

By the end of November 2018, each of the various transitional ministry posts will have concluded. The Synod Pastoral Committee will then seek to evaluate the effectiveness of this experiment.

4.9 **Stepwise**

Stepwise is the programmatic element of Walking the Way, the first phase of which went live in September 2018. A presentation on Stepwise will be given at the Synod Meeting.

4.10 **DBS Clearance for Synod Recognised Lay Preachers**

This matter with the aim of ensuring that all Synod Recognised Lay Preachers have obtained DBS clearance in the very near future.

4.11 **Risk Management**

The meeting reviewed the draft risk management matrix.

4.12 **Northern College**

The remit of the Synod Pastoral Committee includes 'Maintain a link with Northern College'. It has now been agreed that Dr Graham Adams from Northern College will attend one meeting annually (commencing in December 2018) to contribute to our agenda from the perspective of the college.

4.13 **Authorisations to Preside at Sacraments 2019-2021**

Following a decision of Mission Council in March 2018, it is now necessary for those authorised to preside at Sacraments (now known as Authorised Elders) both to signify that they agree to abide by '[Guidelines on the Conduct and Behaviour for Authorised Elders](#)' and either to hold a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, or comply with an alternative Ministries Office disclosure process where this is not possible. In the Synod of Wales we have agreed to implement these provisions over a three year period as names are added to our list or renewed.

The list of Authorised Elders for the period 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2021 is included at [Appendix A](#).



5. General Assembly Resolutions

A number of resolutions were referred to Synods by General Assembly, and in one case by Mission Council, under the provisions of 3(1) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church. Each resolution was passed at General Assembly or Mission Council by a two-thirds majority and requires that no less than two-thirds of the synods raise no objections before ratification by Mission Council or General Assembly.

Four of these resolutions arise from the Task Group on the Future of General Assembly, you will see from resolution 2 ([below](#)) that it is our intention to take the resolutions falling in that category *en bloc*. Any of those resolutions may be taken out of *en bloc* if notice is given to the Synod Clerk (synodclerk@urcwales.org.uk) by 9am on Monday 15th October.

Resolution about the upper age limit for URC Youth

Mission Council, meeting in Swanwick in November 2017, resolved to make the following change to clause 2.(4)(A)(x) of the Structure of the URC – a clause that concerns one of the duties of synods:

Present version:

to appoint from time to time such number of representatives to the General Assembly (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall determine. This shall include, when possible, at least two representatives aged 26 or under. As far as possible all appointments shall be made in rotation from Local Churches;
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Proposed change:

To change '26' to '25'.

Comment:

Long ago Assembly fixed the upper age limit for URC Youth as 'aged 25 or under'. This means that a person's 26th birthday is the cut-off. People aged 25 are youthful; people aged 26 are not. This reference to '26' is a drafting error in one clause of the Structure and it ought to be corrected.

-----ooOoo-----

Resolution about the role of Elders and changes to Ordination promises

General Assembly, meeting in Nottingham in July 2018, resolved to make the following addition to Schedule B of the Basis of Union, which sets out the promises to made by elders of the Church:

Question and Response:

Q. Do you promise as an elder of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, unity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always so far as you are able to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?

A. By the grace of God I do, and all these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Comment:

The reason Mission Council brought this resolution to Assembly is set out on page 21 of [Book of Reports 2018](#). The main point is that the promises presently made by elders say little about what elders are expected to be and to do. This additional promise, although broad and general, is also quite weighty, and thus fills that gap.

-----ooOoo-----

Resolutions regarding General Assembly

General Assembly, meeting in Nottingham in July 2018, resolved to adopt the following amendments to the Structure of the URC:

Change no.1

To make the number of synod representatives equal – to be, for the present, sixteen for each synod.

Change no. 2

To introduce some flexibility to the 50-50 ministerial/lay divide – requiring at least a third of each synod’s representation to be ministerial (this term includes CRCWs) and at least a third to be elders or lay.

Current version of Section 2.(6)(a):

The General Assembly ... shall consist of:
(a) Such number of representatives of synods (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine. These numbers shall be calculated proportionately to the total membership of each synod, as recorded in the year book of the United Reformed Church (at present this calculation shall be such as to produce a total of synod representatives not exceeding 250).

Proposed new version of Section 2.(6)(a):

The General Assembly ... shall consist of:
(a) Such number of representatives of synods as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine. (At present this number shall be 16 per synod, to produce a total of 208 synod representatives). Within each synod’s representation, at least one third shall be ministerial and at least one third elders or lay;

Change no. 3

To include the synod moderators in the synod figures above, if their synods so wish, rather than giving them a place in Assembly in their own right.

Current version of Section 2.(6)(c and d):

The General Assembly ... shall consist of:
(c) The Moderators of the General Assembly and of the synods, and such other officers of the General Assembly as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (The Assembly has determined that the Clerk of Assembly and the General Secretary shall be members of Assembly);
(d) Where the Moderator of synod is an officer of the Assembly, the synod concerned shall appoint a substitute as its representative;

Proposed new version of Section 2.(6)(c and d):

The General Assembly ... shall consist of:
(c) As above, without the words ‘and of the synods’;
(d) To be dropped.

Comment:

Synod Moderators may be included in the synod representation, if their synods wish. If a Moderator were on sabbatical, for example, or unwell, a synod would be free to appoint someone else. Thus Moderators are no longer to be mentioned in (c). Then (d) becomes unnecessary, because a Synod could simply appoint someone else, if its Moderator were coming to Assembly in another role.

N.B. There will need to be some relabelling of paragraphs if (d) disappears. This does not need to be voted on. It will be sorted out once the substance of any changes has been agreed.

Change no. 4

To excuse the Convenor of Pastoral Reference and Welfare from membership of Assembly.

Current version of Section 2.(6)(e):

The General Assembly ... shall consist of:
(e) The convenor of each of the standing committees of the General Assembly;

Proposed new version of Section 2.(6)(e):

The General Assembly ... shall consist of:
(e) The convenor of each of the standing committees of the General Assembly, apart from the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee;

Resolution 1:

The National Synod of Wales raises no objection to the Mission Council resolution concerning the upper age limit for URC Youth.

Resolution 2:

The National Synod of Wales raises no objection to the Assembly resolution concerning the Role of Elders and Changes to Ordination Promises.

Resolution 3:

The National Synod of Wales raises no objection to the Assembly resolutions regarding General Assembly.



6. Finance and Property Board and Trust Company

Synod Treasurer

6.1 Role of Synod Treasurer and Trust Company Secretary

FPB and Trust had approved the proposals to combine the roles of Synod Treasurer and Trust Company Secretary with immediate effect, noting that issues of governance and conflicts of interest were addressed within the Relationships Paper. The post would be contractual rather than employed for an initial 3 days per week subject to review from January 2019, an increase of 1 day per week.

6.2 Contributions to MMF 2019

FPB approved calculations for Church contributions to Ministry and Mission Fund in 2019 with appeals invited by 30th September. FPB expressed support for the formula being applied which had greatly improved understanding and acceptance of the desire to create a supportive 'family' attitude to making contributions. Concern was raised for addressing situations where contributions were not being made or were very low. These often reflected challenging pastoral situations which required considerable resources to resolve. These resources were beyond current capacity of FPB and Synod Officers. It was noted that this should fall within the remit of Regional Pastoral Committees once they

had completed their transition period under the new Synod Structures and were fully functioning.

- 6.3 **URC (Wales) Trust Co Ltd Accounts** for the year ending 31st December 2017 [summary at [Appendix B](#)] were received by FPB and approved by the Trust Company, noting that all funds were operating within budget and a surplus had resulted for the fourth year running. In preparing for the transfer from Vistopia to Quickbooks, the opportunity was taken to make a number of technical changes to the layout of the Accounts. The most obvious of these is a clearer structure to unrestricted, restricted and designated funds held by the Trust on behalf of the Synod. [Resolution 4](#).
- 6.4 **Accounting software**
Transition to QuickBooks had been relatively smooth but time consuming. Only Management Accounts remained to be converted to a Quickbooks format.
- 6.5 **Synod Budgets** [see [Appendix C](#) – larger print copies of the General Fund budget will be available at Synod Meeting] were approved by FPB. (i) **Synod General Fund**: FPB noted our capacity to manage the work strategically had been broadened within a balanced budget. It further noted that our reserves had reduced for technical reasons outlined above in conjunction with the Annual Accounts. With ISRS now working to a 3-year model and all Synods engaged in the process, a more stable system was in place. The Synod Treasurers' Forum had also been influential in exchanging information and support. (ii) **Synod Training Fund**: figures for 2019 reflected the move from TLS to Step Wise which was more cost effective; and costs of the two Appreciative Inquiry courses running within Wales [resolution 5](#) and [resolution 6](#).
- 6.6 **Mission Development Fund**
FPB approved the following grant applications: £20,000 over 2 years awarded to Mumbles, Swansea in principle, subject to receipt of further information to clarify position relating to the Regional CRCW post.
- 6.7 **Synod Manse Fund**
A grant of £987 was approved for the Alyn Vale Pastorate towards the costs of a new bathroom. FPB noted that the Synod's share of costs associated with work required at 90 Coed Camlas, Pontypool would be £1,879.68.
- 6.8 **Daphne and Bethan Jones Memorial Fund**
FPB approved the following grants: £1,000 for Penrhys to take disadvantaged young people to North Wales; £1,170 to Beulah Rhiwbina for visit to Caldey Island.

6.9 **Jessie Munroe Fund**

FPB noted that a grant had been awarded by the local management committee to cover the costs of a Church presence at the Pembroke Show.

Trust Company Secretary

- 6.10 Revd Ian Kirby and Lesley Mower-Hill were formally appointed as **Synod nominated Directors** of the Trust Company on 24th April 2018.
- 6.11 The Trust Company approved and adopted the **Synod Data Privacy Statement** which became the Trust Company Data Privacy Statement.
- 6.11 **Custodial Funds:** Churches had been contacted with a proposal to move their investments to an ethical Investment Account with CCLA.
- 6.12 **Authorised signatories** were reviewed and confirmed.
- 6.13 **Persons of Significant Control:** Trust Directors confirmed that Chris Atherton remain on the Register as a Person of Significant Control for the Trust Company.
- 6.14 An **audit** was carried out in July 2018 by Williams Ross who had issued a clean audit report.
- 6.15 The URC (Wales) Trust Co Ltd resigned as sole trustee of the property at **7 Wye View Terrace, Rhayader**, Powys with effect from August 10th 2018. The Trust appointed a licenced agent to manage The Manse, Rhayader in compliance with directive from Rent Smart Wales.
- 6.16 Trust Directors approved a resolution to release endowment capital held in the **Revd John Morris Charity**.
- 6.17 The Relationships Paper which clarifies duties and responsibilities between the Trust Company; Synod Boards; staff and Officers to ensure there is no conflict of interest on setting priorities, activities and decision making has been revised. New sections have been added covering Grants, Ministry and Mission Fund, Governance, Risk and Data Protection. This was approved.
- 6.18 Training had been provided to all members of the FPB and Trust Company on **governance and GDPR**.
- 6.19 **Risk Assessment** had been conducted in consultation with all Boards.
- 6.20 The following **transactions** have been completed by the URC (Wales) Trust Co Ltd:

Purchase of freehold title former Horeb URC, Martletwy

Sale of 8 Barquentine Place, Cardiff

Sale of Bethel URC Sketty

Sale of 24 Tone Close, Bettws

Sale of land at Libanus Ebbw Vale to Western Power Distribution

Property Officer

6.21 **North Wales**

FPB and Trust approved the sale of Northop URC to Wales and West Housing Association for £80,000; and a request for a letter of comfort to be issued concerning the renewal of the Lease of the Hall at Old Colwyn URC to TAPE for a further term, subject to valuation.

It was noted that the Dyserth Manse would be let on a residential tenancy agreement to the Salsburys from 1st October 2018 when Revd David Salsbury took up his new post as Step Wise Co-Ordinator.

6.22 **South Wales**

FPB and Trust approved the letting of the Elfed Avenue Manse during ministerial vacancy; and the sale of the redundant manse at 8 Barquentine Place, Cardiff.

FPB and Trust approved the retrospective request from the Methodist Church to withdraw from the Sharing Agreement at Abercynon.

FPB and Trust approved renewal of Licence to Occupy premises at Christ Church, Fairwater by the Rainbow Café for a further term.

6.23 **Swansea Region**

FPB and Trust approved the sale of Bethel URC, Sketty and withdrawal from Sharing Agreement; approved the Church Meeting resolution from Carmarthen Road, Swansea to close in January 2019 and directing the Trust to dispose of the premises; and approved the sale of the manse at 17 Gower Rise

6.24 **Pembrokeshire**

Trust approved the purchase of freehold title to Horeb URC, Martletwy at £25,000 to allow whole site to be sold at auction

6.25 **Synod Property Committee:** Amendments to approved plans at Bethesda'r Fro, Llantwit Major are being considered

6.26 Form 3A issued on 17th July 2018 in connection with proposals at **St David's Uniting Church, Pontypridd** to raise the height of the balcony rail in the worship space.

Resolution 4:

Synod Meeting receives the accounts for 2017 as summarised in [Appendix B](#).

Resolution 5:

Synod Meeting approves the Budget for the Synod General Fund for 2019 as set out in [Appendix C](#).

Resolution 6:

Synod Meeting approves the Budget for the Synod Training Fund for 2019 as set out in [Appendix C](#).

Appendix A: Authorised Elders 2019-2021

North Wales

Buckley	Chris Byrne	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Frank Salt	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Trefor Suddick	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Gloddaeth	David Jewell	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Horeb, Dyserth	Trefor Suddick	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Mold, Tyddyn Street	Julie Davies	<i>to 31/12/2020</i>
Rhos-on-Sea	Keith Harrison	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Delyth Beecroft	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Rhyl	Tony Barkley	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Gavin Craigen	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Joy Davies	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Rivertown, Shotton	Chris Byrne	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	David Clarkson	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Sheila Kavanagh	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Hebron, Mostyn	Iris Williams	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Old Colwyn	Jean Jones	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
St. John's Flint with Bagillt	Iris Williams	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Salisbury Park, Wrexham	Shirley Devaney	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Barbara Jones	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Tabernacle, Holywell	Malcolm Scott	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Jon Stanford	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

East Wales

Cwmbran	Diane Brain	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Lyn Oelmann	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Stow Park, Newport	Ron Prosser *	
	Mathias Tchatoua	<i>to 31/12/2021</i>
Tabernacle, Llanvaches	Russell Davies	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Joyce Smith-Draper	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

Cardiff and Penarth

Bethel, North Llanishen	Sue Welpton	<i>to 31/12/2020</i>
Bethesda, Tongwynlais **	Janet Evans	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Barbara Tomlin	<i>to 31/12/2020</i>
Beulah, Rhiwbina **	Richard Edwards	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Sarah Edwards	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Derek Evans	<i>tp 31/12/2021</i>
	Alun Jones	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Louise Morgan	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	John Rhys	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Canton, Cardiff	Chris Atherton	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

City, Cardiff **	Beth Charles	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Nici Lintern-Gittens	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Liz Meek	<i>to 31/12/2020</i>
Parkminster, Cardiff **	Sylvia Abel	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Derek Jones	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Penarth, Elfed Avenue	Clive Curtis	<i>to 31/12/2020</i>
	Russell Davies	<i>to 31/12/2020</i>
	Elizabeth Lowder	<i>to 31/12/2020</i>
	Christine Clarke	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
St. Andrew's, Cardiff	Jill Shelton	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Ian Summers	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

Valleys and Vale

Bethesda'r Fro	Clive Curtis	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Russell Davies	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Nigel Williams	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Edwardsville Senghenydd	Phil Rickards *	
	Sandra Gough	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Pontypridd, St. David's	Jill Shelton *	
	Carol Thomas	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Iestyn Henson	<i>to 31/12/2021</i>
	Alan Hills	<i>to 31/12/2021</i>
Van Road, Caerphilly	Michael Howells	<i>to 31/12/2021</i>
	Lewis Lewis-Head	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Rob Moverley	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Ystrad Mynach	Bill Mallon	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

Swansea

Carmarthen Road	Jesse Griffiths	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Ian Ledgard	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Christ Well, Manselton	Geoff Griffin	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Mary Jeffreys	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Margaret Wells	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Hill, Swansea	Rosie Buxton	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	John Roach	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Tabernacle, Mumbles	Phyllis T. Roberts	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Verena Walder	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Temple, Gowerton	Andy Buxton	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Rosie Buxton	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Theresa Morgan	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

Pembrokeshire

Landsker Pastorate	Melanie Ablitt	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Maureen Canton	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

Mid Wales

Caebach/Christchurch	Alwyn Batley	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Llanidloes	John Wheeler	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Penuel, Llanwrthwl	Sally Tolson	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
Welshpool	Ruth Henriksen	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

Bridgend

Ogmore Vale	Heather Phillips	<i>to 31/12/2021</i>
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Brecon Beacons

Brecon Beacons Pastorate	Judith Negus	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Margot Seabourne	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Liz Tadd	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>
	Jill Williams	<i>to 31/12/2019</i>

* indicates those included for the duration of their term of service as Local Church Leader, although no renewal is required.

** these churches have resolved that any person who is authorised to preside at the sacraments in a United Reformed Church (or LEP involving the URC) within Regional Pastoral Committee be also authorised to celebrate the sacraments in their own church.

Appendix B: Summary Accounts for 2017

The United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited
Summary of Fund Movements
Year Ended 31 December 2017

	General Fund	Manse Fund	Mission Development	Grants and Loans Fund	Daphne & Bethan Jones	Livingstone Trust	Lay Preaching	Contingency	Training Fund	Glamorgan Chaplaincy	Endowment Funds	Totals for Year
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Budgetable income / costs:												
Income for period	417,122	16,697	21,798	4,837	-	-	-	22,563	7,560	4,206	494,783	
Expenditure for period	(412,995)	(65,027)	(17,461)	-	(2,520)	-	(3,267)	(10,231)	(7,560)	(1,068)	(520,129)	
	4,127	(48,330)	4,337	4,837	(2,520)	-	(3,267)	12,332	-	3,138	(25,346)	
Net unbudgetable income / (expenditure)	193,898	154,300	-	48,248	-	-	52,811	-	84,000	-	533,257	
Surplus / (deficit) for period	198,025	105,970	4,337	4,837	45,728	-	49,544	-	12,332	84,000	3,138	507,911
Investment revaluations - gains / (losses)	96,837	22,122	16,721	-	8,658	12,682	3,498	9,511	5,605	-	8,611	184,245
Net income / (expenditure)	294,862	128,092	21,058	4,837	54,386	12,682	53,042	9,511	17,937	84,000	11,749	692,156
Opening reserves brought forward	1,980,237	4,262,739	251,253	58,684	56,411	123,926	-	-	56,198	-	116,251	6,905,699
Transfers between funds	(127,449)	-	-	-	-	-	(2,716)	127,449	5,834	-	(3,118)	-
Funds carried forward	2,147,650	4,390,831	272,311	63,521	110,797	136,608	50,326	136,960	79,969	84,000	124,882	7,597,855

Appendix C: Budgets for 2019

The United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited
General Fund - Budget 2019-2021

	2017 Budget £	2017 Actual £	2018 Budget £	2019 Budget £	2020 Budget £	2021 Budget £
Incoming resources						
Dividends and interest	67,381	63,613	66,784	66,784	70,133	73,640
Inter Synod Resource Sharing	150,000	150,000	174,000	181,500	181,500	181,500
Inter Synod Resource Sharing (CYDO)	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Sales revenue & donations	400	480	400	400	400	400
Sponsorship	-	-	-	5,000	-	-
Property Sales Fees	2,500	13,050	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
MDF Return of grant	-	-	-	-	-	-
MdM clawback	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Church contributions	6,500	7,880	6,500	8,500	8,750	9,000
CWM Grant/Other Grants	28,500	4,821	14,250	14,250	-	-
Solar Panel income	500	500	500	500	500	500
Miscellaneous income - Redundant Chs	-	236,831	13,000	33,000	32,000	32,000
Miscellaneous income	11,250	19,330	11,500	11,750	11,750	11,750
Balance over 100k to budget	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
CBF Grants	382,031	611,020	404,444	439,194	422,633	426,280
Charitable expenditure						
Mission						
Mission grants	-	13,516	22,500	15,000	15,000	15,000
Mission grants - projects	-	5,800	13,363	-	-	-
			14,250	14,250	15,000	15,000
CBF grant due to churches	54,125	25,000	50,113	28,250	15,000	15,000
Grant - Retired ministers pension fund	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Ecumenical Officer's Expenses	7,476	8,119	6,272	6,272	6,429	6,589
Cytun	50	50	50	50	50	50
Chaplaincies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ecumenical pastorates	3,500	5,332	3,500	-	-	-
Synod Priorities	5,000	306	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
CYDO	55,080	54,875	55,800	55,800	56,637	57,486
Synod CYDO costs	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Training costs	2,250	7,050	7,050	3,000	3,200	3,300
Collections for other Beneficiaries	-	-	-	-	-	-
Synod appointments	180	552	180	180	180	180
	154,671	111,003	156,965	128,552	115,495	116,606
Property						
Property legal fees	500	380	500	500	500	500
Graveyards and closed churches	3,000	2,540	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Building contingency	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dona Lola cost (Other Trust Costs)	3,073	3,220	3,381	3,381	3,550	3,728
Trust legal fees	250	4,300	250	250	250	250
	6,823	10,440	7,131	7,131	7,300	7,476

Synod Related Costs									
Synods									
Synod Elders/Regional Pastoral Com.	3,000	2,153	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Boards and committees	3,300	746	3,000	3,000	-	-	-	-	-
Various boards / committees									
Area events	-	1,378	4,000	4,100	4,100	4,100	4,100	4,100	4,203
General Assembly	-	-	-	500	500	500	500	500	500
Synod Day	-	-	12,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Synod - task groups									
Trust Insurance	2,034	2,783	6,412	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	4,703
Other Trust Expenses	2,663	720	2,863	2,853	2,924	2,924	2,924	2,987	2,987
Contingency	720	1,877	720	720	720	720	720	720	720
Synod publications	2,928	60	1,871	2,035	2,187	2,187	2,187	2,352	2,352
	10,000	42,933	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
	<u>24,646</u>	<u>51,928</u>	<u>27,956</u>	<u>34,607</u>	<u>23,431</u>	<u>23,431</u>	<u>23,431</u>	<u>23,771</u>	<u>23,771</u>
Personnel Costs									
Employees' Salaries	108,925	94,020	110,559	144,106	146,269	148,463	148,463	148,463	148,463
Employer's NI Contributions	8,676	8,058	8,806	11,594	11,758	11,934	11,934	11,934	11,934
Employer's Pension Contributions	30,717	78,831	31,178	40,638	41,248	41,866	41,866	41,866	41,866
Employees' Expenses	3,418	11,251	3,501	3,501	3,598	3,679	3,679	3,679	3,679
Staff training	500	485	500	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	<u>152,234</u>	<u>180,456</u>	<u>154,544</u>	<u>200,829</u>	<u>203,864</u>	<u>206,942</u>	<u>206,942</u>	<u>206,942</u>	<u>206,942</u>
Premises									
Heating, Light and Water	1,011	1,200	1,260	1,290	1,387	1,491	1,491	1,491	1,491
Cleaning	1,260	1,395	1,260	1,280	1,260	1,260	1,260	1,260	1,260
Ground Rent for church land	3,850	3,850	3,850	3,850	3,850	3,850	3,850	3,850	3,850
Building Maintenance	1,000	845	5,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Depreciation on Office Building	4,634	6,504	6,179	6,179	6,179	6,179	6,179	6,179	6,179
	<u>11,755</u>	<u>13,594</u>	<u>17,549</u>	<u>13,579</u>	<u>13,367</u>	<u>13,177</u>	<u>13,177</u>	<u>13,177</u>	<u>13,177</u>
Office Costs									
Printing, postage & stationery	1,546	1,559	1,637	1,637	1,719	1,805	1,805	1,805	1,805
Telephone	1,896	1,528	1,605	1,605	1,686	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,770
Consumable Equipment	-	321	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equipment Rental (photocopier)	2,000	2,062	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Equipment Depreciation	75	148	133	120	108	97	97	97	97
Computer Running Costs	2,495	6,576	5,000	6,305	7,250	7,613	7,613	7,613	7,613
Sundry Expenses	1,000	322	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bank charges	-	174	-	200	225	250	250	250	250
	<u>9,012</u>	<u>12,681</u>	<u>11,376</u>	<u>13,467</u>	<u>13,987</u>	<u>14,534</u>	<u>14,534</u>	<u>14,534</u>	<u>14,534</u>
Legal and Professional Fees									
Accountancy fees	5,000	5,040	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Consultancy fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finance Support	15,360	17,240	35,100	35,100	35,100	35,100	35,100	35,100	35,100
	<u>20,360</u>	<u>22,280</u>	<u>24,200</u>	<u>40,100</u>	<u>40,100</u>	<u>40,100</u>	<u>40,100</u>	<u>40,100</u>	<u>40,100</u>
Total Administration Expenditure									
	<u>193,361</u>	<u>239,021</u>	<u>207,669</u>	<u>267,975</u>	<u>271,318</u>	<u>274,763</u>	<u>274,763</u>	<u>274,763</u>	<u>274,763</u>
Total Operating Expenditure									
	<u>379,501</u>	<u>412,995</u>	<u>399,720</u>	<u>438,265</u>	<u>417,545</u>	<u>422,607</u>	<u>422,607</u>	<u>422,607</u>	<u>422,607</u>
Net (Deficit) for the year - being from brought forward reserves									
	<u>2,530</u>	<u>198,025</u>	<u>4,723</u>	<u>926</u>	<u>4,969</u>	<u>3,683</u>	<u>3,683</u>	<u>3,683</u>	<u>3,683</u>

The United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited
Training Fund Budget 2018 - 2021

Incoming Resources	Notes	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Budget	2020 Budget	2021 Budget
CME Grant		£ 6000	£ 4893	£ 6000	6000	6000	6000
Lay Preaching Trinity Fund grant		4000	3267	4000	4000	4000	4000
Preaching fees		500	800	500	500	500	500
Training Fund Interest	2017 Actual + 5%	4716	5927	4716	4952	5199	5459
Induction Collections etc		0	0	0	0	0	0
Pantfyedwen Fund Interest	2017 Actual + 5%	2510	3118	2636	2636	2767	2906
Osborne Fund Interest	2017 Actual + 5%	1366	1088	1366	1434	1542	1619
SGF TDO Housing Costs	As SGF Budget 2019 - 21	2250	2250	2250	2250	2250	2250
Other Income	SGF Transfer	3000	5000	15800	3000	3200	3300
Total		24342	24093	37268	24772	25459	26034
Charitable Expenditure							
TDO Expenses	2017 Actual + 5%	7182	3790	7182	7541	7918	8314
TDO Housing	2017 Actual + 5%	2835	1547	2835	2977	3126	3282
ORF Grant		1200	1068	1200	1200	1200	1200
CME Grant		6000	7346	6000	6000	6000	6000
Lay Preachers		4000	3994	4000	4000	4000	4000
TLS Student grant	Allow for Stepwise	200	0	200	1000	1000	1000
Lay Training		1000	230	1000	1000	1000	1000
Ministerial Students		1000	300	1000	1000	1000	1000
Events		1000	2019	12300	500	500	500
Miscellaneous							
Total		24417	20294	35717	24218	24744	25296
Balance			3799	1551	554	715	738

* 2018 Events
16 places @ £300 = £4,800
Allow £2,500
50 places @ £100 = £5,000

Appendix D: Report from 20-40 Task Group

The text of the report from a task group that reported to General Assembly 2018

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 In 2012 a resolution was passed at the URC Youth Assembly requesting that General Assembly consider the Church's engagement with 20-40-year-olds. General Assembly 2012 subsequently passed a resolution calling Mission Council to consider how to improve the integration of 20-40-year-olds at every level of the United Reformed Church and hence a task group was formed. The group consisted of six people and brought together a range of experiences and skills from those both lay and ordained and those within and without the 20-40 age range. The group was formed independently of other Assembly committees but has received support from the General Secretariat.

1.2 Since the formation of the task group in 2014, the group has examined research into the Church's engagement with 20-40-year-olds. This has included academic research and research from other denominations, including the Methodist Church and the Church of England. The group has conducted its own research within the United Reformed Church through questionnaires to Children and Youth Development Officers, Training and Development Officers, Mission Enablers and university chaplains; through consultations with URC committees; and through conversations with Armed Forces chaplains, the United Reformed Church Youth Assembly and Mission Council. Additionally, members of the task group within the 20-40 age range shared their own reflections and experiences as well as those of their peers.

1.3 It is important to note from the outset that the group named as '20-40-year-olds' in this report comprises a wide variety of demographic groups. These include those single and married, those with children and those without, those living with parents, those living away from home and those who are homeless. It comprises those at university, those recently graduated, those in training, those unemployed, those in new jobs and those well established in jobs. With such a wide range of demographics to consider, it is virtually impossible to establish how the Church can better engage with this group. It may be more appropriate to simply ask how the church can engage better with people; however, this report will consider main themes and issues as they relate particularly to those aged 20-40.

2. Research from other denominations

Over recent years a host of denominations have commissioned research on the 20-40 age group. The scarcity of this age group in churches is a reality shared by all of the mainstream denominations.

2.1 Methodist Church ('Missing Generation' report)

2.1.1 In 2011, the Methodist Church published *The Missing Generation and the Methodist Church* (L. Clutterbuck and M. Janowski, 2011): a ground-breaking report that delved behind the reality that all UK mainstream denominations have grappled with since the 1960s – that people aged 20-40 (and beyond) are missing from churches. Whilst the authors point out that the research is only applicable to the Methodist Church, there are insights that bear some level of generalisation.

2.1.2 Perhaps the biggest finding was that 82% of people surveyed left church because of a change in circumstances. People, particularly those aged 20-40, are much more mobile than in previous generations and it would seem that this has a significant impact on church attendance. People move on in some way, either to a different home or through a change of job, relationship or children, and it is at that point that they break connection with their congregation. However, in general, these people still have faith. They still see that faith as important. They still identify as Christian. They just don't go to church.

2.1.3 The research also found that people who were still involved in Church valued a range of worship styles and opportunities. They wanted their faith to be firmly connected to their lives but to also be able to experience a connection to God in worship.

2.1.4 However, the report also noted that it was unlikely that Sunday worship would be a first point of contact for people, as many people encounter church through other activities. Those who were part of churches valued small group opportunities where they could discuss theological, moral and ethical issues and feel part of a community.

2.1.5 Finally, a breakdown in the traditional models of the provision of pastoral care meant that the opportunity for a mentoring relationship with an older person was less likely.

2.2 Perceptions of Jesus, Christians and Evangelism in the UK, 2015, Barna Group (EA, Church of England and HOPE)

2.2.1 In 2015, Barna Group discovered that the same percentage of every decade of life identify themselves as Christian, but the percentage attending church is vastly different. This implies that we are looking at a 'missing generation' of the institution of the Church, not of the Church of Jesus.

2.2.2 The research also found that most non-Christians (61%) know a practising Christian, like them and think they are caring, good-humoured and friendly. 42% of practising Christians grew up in a Christian family, while 72% of non-practising Christians grew up in a Christian home.

2.2.3 In 2017, ComRes conducted 'Church Mapping' for the Church of England. They found that 77% of people who self-identify as Christian became a Christian before they were 10 years old, thus placing great importance on children's and youth work.

2.3 Joint Study Leave report – Graham Duffin, Andrew Morrice and Norman Smith October 2013

2.3.1 Three Church of Scotland ministers, Graham Duffin, Andrew Morrice and Norman Smith, explored a similar age group as part of a study leave project in 2013. Rather than exploring what the problems were, they spoke to church leaders in places that bucked the trend and had flourishing ministries with people aged 20-45.

2.3.2 They found that church leaders identified the following as key components of effective ministry to 20-45-year-olds:

- Empowering, visionary leadership – whether we like it or not, ministers are key people.
- Significant leadership roles for under 45s – people with a stake are more likely to stay involved.
- Team ministry – a sense of a range of people being involved in ministry, not necessarily a formal staff team.
- Supportive church structures – a commitment to allow the time and resources necessary to engage and grow.
- Intentional discipleship programmes – a clear priority for everyone to be involved in a programme of growth and resourcing.
- Encouragement to be actively involved in church life – taking part leads to a sense of belonging and ownership.
- Inspirational, relevant worship – it may be that a variety of worship opportunities are needed.
- A commitment to build and maintain meaningful relationships – friends inviting friends is central to any mission and evangelism strategy.
- A focus on outreach and mission – the church should be outward looking with a clear mission focus.
- A reliance on God – prayer and discernment at the heart of everything.

2.4 Church of England

2.4.1 Over the past few years the Church of England has built on some striking examples of churches which seem to be able to grow and resource others by creating and supporting 'Resource Churches' in cities. A Resource Church is defined as 'a church which, working closely with the local bishop, intentionally resources mission across a city, by planting and revitalising churches, developing leaders and providing other resources for mission. Its aim is to help evangelise the city and transform society.'

2.4.2 This city focused mission strategy is based on some core principles which include:

- generosity – give away what we have been given (church planting, resources, teams, etc);
- partnership – work with others to reach our city (diocesan bishop, churches, other denominations, businesses, charities, etc);
- audacity – re-evangelise our city and help transform the structures and communities (with a vision big enough to capture the imagination of the city and only achievable with God)
- humility – serve the city and its churches (play our part, listen and serve the city).

3. Academic research

3.1 As well as denominational research, the task group has also read academic research into the area of churches' engagement with 20-40-year-olds.

3.2 Mayo, Collins and Savage (2004) researched the differences between Generation X (those born between 1960 and 1980) and Generation Y (those born between 1980 and 2000). They found that Generation X had generally been 'turned off' Church by negative experiences, whereas Generation Y had never entered it in the first place. According to their findings, it is not (generally) that under-30s have an issue with Church: they just do not see the relevance of it to their own lives. Therefore, the Church needs to be open and authentic and to engage in genuine conversation. It also needs to speak in a language that is accessible to all, regardless of previous exposure to Church or faith.

3.3 Further research has since been conducted into Generation Z (those born since 2000). This research has highlighted the importance that grandparents have to play in the faith development of Generation Z. This research implies the need for inter-generational churches, rather than single age worship such as youth services or student churches.

4. URC research: a picture of the United Reformed Church

The task group has also conducted its own research within the United Reformed Church. Questionnaires were circulated to Children and Youth Development Officers, Training and Development Officers, Mission Enablers and university chaplains. Conversations have been held with Armed Forces chaplains, Youth Assembly, Mission Council, General Assembly and various URC committees. Discussions have also been had in local churches and on social media.

4.1 Barriers to engaging with 20-40-year-olds

4.1.1 The barriers to engaging with 20-40-year-olds appear to be littered with misunderstandings and frustrations between the different generations within churches.

4.1.2 There are the many practical reasons as to why it is often difficult for 20-40-year-olds to engage with the Church. For example, this age range is often the time of life when people move location most frequently: from the childhood home to university or to new employment; maybe to set up home on their own or with a partner. These moves often require young adults to move to more affordable areas, which may be some distance away from the local church they know. Furthermore, these significant and demanding life events can leave little room for a regular commitment to the life of a local church, which can feel as if it poses more demands than it offers support.

4.1.3 It is not uncommon for a local church to view a lack of regular attendance or willingness to take on roles as a lack of commitment, accompanied by a frustration that younger people are 'just not willing to take over all our jobs'. Those in the 20-40 age range can feel their local church's only engagement with them is to ask them to take over that which they are no longer able to do themselves, rather than being given the space and encouragement to create new expressions of church life appropriate to their generation. The 'invitation' can feel like a requirement to simply maintain what has been done before.

4.1.4 Likewise, the timing of church events and activities, unless they are events specifically aimed at young families, are often at times which are not convenient for those in work, or with young children.

4.1.5 As a result of this, many in the age range are far less likely to meet their peers in church, and are far less likely to participate in leadership and decision making. Many of the younger adults the task group listened to felt regularly frustrated, misunderstood or ignored, with decisions which directly affect them often being taken at meetings at which no one from that demographic was present or consulted.

4.1.6 Lack of communication and understanding can easily lead to a breakdown in relationships with 20-40-year-olds in any local church. The institution demands that younger people learn the language and culture of the church, but often seems unwilling or incapable of learning from and adapting to the lives of younger adults in return. Through no intention, younger adults can feel slowly pushed out of church, or never completely feel like they were really allowed in.

4.2 Local church life

4.2.1 What's going well?

There are churches in the United Reformed Church where you are much more likely to regularly find significant numbers of people in their 20s and 30s. Common characteristics within these churches are a strong sense of shared purpose and mission, and not a particular theology or style.

In these churches it is common for people under the age of 40 to be regularly involved in leading worship: bringing to it their own sense of authenticity, honesty, and relevance. This richer diet of worship nourishes the congregation and inspires and equips it to offer a broader variety of activities aimed at supporting people across the full spectrum of ages (not only children and retirees). This enables them to go beyond entertainment and social activities to groups which seek to foster a sense of discipleship, growth and development, exploration and challenge.

Nurturing discipleship changes how churches operate. In decision making, everyone's voice is heard and respected, people are trusted to 'get on with it', and there is a real sense of everybody being involved in ministry, not simply being asked to do church 'jobs'.

In churches like this it is quite usual and natural for some of those serving as elders or with other significant leadership responsibilities to be under the age of 40.

4.2.2 The wider reality

For many in our congregations this may sound like the life of the Church they once knew, but no longer recognise. Many churches within the URC are unsure of their purpose and mission: creating worship has become the chore of filling the pulpit, and fewer people are doing more and more 'jobs'. Those in their 20s and 30s are 'the missing generations' and it would be easy to feel that churches with no one in this age bracket have little chance of changing this reality because people tend naturally to form relationships and community with those of similar age, outlook, and interests.

As both people and financial resources continue to feel more and more scarce, it is entirely understandable that at the local level, in 'seeking to do a few things well', many of our churches now see their mission as one to older people.

4.2.3 Reversing the trend

However, some churches do buck the trend with imaginative *Fresh Expressions*, *Messy Church*, *Pub Church*, and '*Insert another contextually appropriate adjective*' Church, held at times more convenient and in venues more

comfortable to young adults. A variety of provision for worship and nurture, specifically aimed at different demographics, is helping a growing number of local churches begin to reengage with people of the missing generations. Establishing several 'congregations' within the one church is a more realistic and desirable way to grow a local church, rather than the often self-defeating endeavour of trying to make Sunday mornings work for all.

However, what is also clear to the task group is that there is not one model or vehicle which has been 'successful'. There is no specific programme or plan which 'works'. Working on our welcome, our buildings and our language are all important ingredients but are no panacea. Furthermore, practical changes can often be used to distract us from the answers to our malaise which we suspect we have known all along: the long and more difficult road of building relationships through openness, vulnerability, and a willingness to be radically changed by our encounters with others who are often different from ourselves.

4.3 Denominational life

4.3.1 What's going well?

Work with young people and young adults in the United Reformed Church is defined as the age range of 11-26-year-olds. Those of ages which overlap with this report's remit (20-25) participate fully in the leadership of our youth structures and it is those at the older end of the youth work age range who predominately fill the spaces for under-26 representatives at General Assembly and Mission Council. Continued diligence by synods to ensure under-26 places at Assembly are filled continues to be of vital importance if the voice of younger adults is to be heard and have influence in our decision making.

4.3.2 The wider reality

However, we do wish to sound several notes of caution. In reality most of our programmatic work with young people stops at age 18, around the age of starting work, going to university, or leaving home. It would, perhaps, be understandable if, at times, those within the older age range felt not so much the *missing* generation but the *forgotten* one. Many of our younger adults commented that reaching this age can feel like a 'cliff edge', moving from a 'youth' experience of faith and church life with all the URC Youth programmes offer, to an experience that can be seen as a 'one experience fits all', which in reality can be very culturally different to the reality of most young adults' lives.

A significant cultural difference between the generations (at the risk of unintended caricature) is that a youth group programme might have lots of discussions and activities, whereas in a traditional church service you are much more likely to be expected to sit and listen! 20-40-year olds often want to continue their church experience as a socially-based shared exploration of faith and life.

Whilst we highlighted earlier the good work already taking place in ensuring young adult participation in our councils, responses to questionnaires showed that many young people sometimes feel as if their involvement is simply in order to train them to be committee members when they are older, rather than being taken seriously now as members now in their own right.

We would also like to note the often intractable issue of our various councils and committees taking place during university terms and working hours means participation of those within our remit is all the more difficult.

4.3.3 Reversing the trend

When considering how to reverse this trend, the task group began by asking whether a church of predominantly older people can foster and maintain a culture of regularly making decisions for the benefit of younger people, even if that means 'voting' against the perceived self-interests of the often older majority? Though this question was a helpful place to start our thinking, the task group soon recognised that the ideals which we aspire to in our councils should not facilitate the influence of self-interest or majority rule in any respect, so perhaps we merely need to remind ourselves of this more often!

The issue of the quality of our decision making, with regard to 'the missing generations', is not only that this age range are often absent from any discussion and decision, but that they are often also absent from setting the agenda of what is to be discussed and decided. Younger adults, who are students and parents, managers and problem solvers, creative thinkers and inspiring leaders in the world outside the Church, are all too often dismissed as the amusing or annoying oddity within it.

We note that tradition has it that Jesus' entire ministry was conducted between the ages of 30 and 33, and presumably many of the disciples were of similar age!

Under 40s can bring to Church life an attitude of 'This is where we want to be, how do we get there?' in contrast to church agendas which, however forward looking their aim, are often in tone: 'This is broken, how do we fix it?' or 'This is what we've got, what's the best we can do with it?'

5. Reflections on moving forward

5.1 Something to build on?

The United Reformed Church has been greatly blessed by FURY and URC Youth (including all types of work from Pilots to youth groups). The work, the programmes and the way faith has been explored and shared by children and young people has been a strong part of our denomination's life. Many people, including those who now are not church goers, have a faith connection

because of what they experienced as a child or a young person whilst connected, in some way, to a United Reformed Church. This is something for the denomination to celebrate.

5.2 Points of contact

5.2.1 As mentioned several times already, the varied life circumstances of people in the 20-40s age bracket can all too easily lead people, seemingly, away from God. However, as a church we know that many life events can draw people back into church life – if only for weddings, funerals and baptisms. Rites of passage and life events are clear ways of being able to engage with every generation. There are many examples of how various cultures and traditions can do this. Some may be dependent on cultural background; others may be dependent on family faith experience – but all can be God-given opportunities to explore faith with people.

5.2.2 When encountering people who have had a positive Church background, this is a good opportunity to reconnect. But, fewer and fewer of the 20-40s generation have ever had a connection with a church. Their first encounter with the Church may well be their first time of connection with any faith community. All of the task group's research and conversations have highlighted the need for this (re-)connection to be authentic and welcoming: to show that being a part of a faith community is relevant and a good thing. However busy people's lives may be, the task group believes people aged 20-40 will respond to church life which is purposeful and truly values them. A busy life is not the same as 'life in all its fullness'!

5.2.3 Frustratingly, the question that comes next for many in our churches is: 'even when we engage successfully with this generation we never see them "in church!" When are they going to sit in the pews on a Sunday morning?' Arguably, more than any other generation, this question may be irrelevant. If we are truly looking to be inclusive in our church life, it will mean reshaping already existing church life to include a wider variety and understanding of 'church' and not the reshaping new members to fit into our existing church life? It is perhaps the Church's 'chicken or the egg' question; Which comes first, 'believing' or 'belonging'? The Church has an image of requiring certain belief and behaviour before someone is allowed to belong. This is certainly a common perception of those in the 20-40s bracket. Church is a place for people who believe certain things about God and live in a certain way, so why would those who do not share those beliefs or lifestyle even consider attending?

5.3 Organic discipleship

5.3.1 Maybe due to life changes, maybe due to world events, maybe due to a whole host of things, there is an attraction amongst younger adults to what

discipleship can be. Not so much a taught way of being, but a shared journey of exploring. There are obvious links here to what 'Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today' may hope to be and achieve.

5.3.2 Discipleship for this generation can be a fluid experience. No longer do we see generation after generation of church family worshipping in the same place. Not only is the 20-40s generation more mobile in where it lives, but also in how it moves during the week; possibly working in one place, living in other, socialising in yet another, while having family and friends scattered even further afield. How does a person of faith live and express their faith with others in such a fragmented world?

5.4 Social media

5.4.1 Social media may be one answer to this question. This generation has been heavily influenced by social media. At its best, social media is a daily tool used to bring people together through shared interests and beliefs, and as a place of healthy disagreement and discussion.

5.4.2 However, one common criticism which the Church may share, is that social media can form distinct 'echo chambers' of community. These can become places where we gather with similar thinking people and simply reinforce our own worldview. The question this raises is whether Church can more visibly be much greater than that, a sign of authentic community – a place of discussion, disagreement, and deepening relationships, both on-line and on-the-ground. If we are to find ourselves attractive as 'authentic community', an open and exploring attitude should be a visible part of our identity and purpose.

5.4.3 There is much more we can explore as a denomination to create a vibrant online faith community, not least as a means of connecting with those in the 20s to 40 age range. We note the URC already has a Facebook and Twitter presence, a *Reform* App, and that the URC's 'Daily Devotions' have been a valuable resource for many. We are also hopeful that new resources for 'Walking the Way' and Stepwise will include video, online forums, webinars, and (despite the dangers that online dialogues sometimes suffer from) further opportunities for exploration and discussion based activities with much more interaction that emails and tweets allow.

5.5 Keeping pace with change?

5.5.1 It can be said that much of what has been learnt about this generation is already out of date – time passes and life moves on fast. In Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, after running fast, Alice remarks to the Queen of Hearts that it appears that they have not got anywhere. The Queen retorts: 'It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place.' Often Church can

feel like that! Maybe we need to do less of *running* churches, and more of being still with God and each other to build deeper relationships?

5.5.2 The task group firmly believes that people of all ages are attracted to communities of hope, of vision, and of love.

6. Resolution or recommendations

5.6.1 In its initial remit, the task group was asked to bring resolutions, with costings, of how the Church could better engage with 20-40-year-olds to General Assembly. However, the task group members are unanimous in the belief that such resolutions are either not possible or would achieve little. All of the group's findings have shown that engagement is about building personal relationships with individuals and moving forward together. Therefore, the group does not want to give General Assembly another programme or a resolution with steps for every local church follow in order to connect with younger adults. Instead, the task group wishes to signpost individuals and churches to good news stories, the resources that are already available elsewhere, and present questions and issues for all our councils and committees to act upon.

5.6.2 As in many areas of our Church life, what seems to be required of us first is an attitudinal change, from which all else will naturally follow. The challenge from the findings of this report is for our local churches, our synods and our denominational structures and programmes to intentionally build into their thinking consideration of a much broader spectrum of people, particularly those aged 20-40. However, we are hopeful that a renewed emphasis on discipleship ('Walking the Way') and a hands-on mentored approach to lay learning (Stepwise) are positive beginnings in this regard.

5.6.3 The cost to our churches of seeking to improve engagement to 20-40-year-olds is unlikely to be financial. If the Church is truly serious about engaging in with 20-40-year-olds, it needs to be open to radical change. For some this may be painful, for others it is what they have long been yearning for. Of course, the irony is that in ten or twenty years' time, 20-40-year-olds will be a different generation, and the solutions that work today will not be the solutions that work then.

5.6.4 We hope it is by now clear that there is no quick fix or easy answer to the question of engagement with 20-40 year olds, neither is there a 'one size fits all' programme or a step-by-step guide to filling churches with people of this age group. We are also aware that for some this report will have made for difficult reading and presented some uncomfortable truths. For others it will have revealed nothing new and feel like more talk and little action. The task group pray that it may be received as a call to all parts of our church to engage more readily in open and genuine conversation with those often missing from

our congregations, to continually seek to build new meaningful and mutual relationships, and to allow these encounters to shake us and to shape us.

5.6.5 The church of Jesus Christ *belongs* to all, and just as much to those aged 20-40!

Signposting

‘Walking the Way’ – discipleship

Education and learning – ‘Blended Lives, Blended Living’ report – digital age

Questions for reflection and discussion

These may be explored by individuals or in a small group setting, or discussed at an Elders, Church, or Synod Meeting.

Introduction

Having read the report of the 20-40 task group, spend a few moments to consider how you are feeling.

Some may be sad at the picture the report paints, others inspired by the opportunity to address this issue. You may be angry at the report, or at the Church, or simply feel helpless faced with such a huge issue.

There is no right or wrong answer, but acknowledging how we feel is important before we engage with the questions the report presents.

Reflecting on your own context

- What generation(s) are missing from the life of your local church?
- What part do people age 20-40 play in the life of your local church?
- How do you believe your church is relevant to the lives of people aged 20 to 40?
- Arrange a church meeting to discuss the Key components of effective ministry to 20-40s' (see page 32)

Making connections, deepening understanding

- What barriers to 20-40 year olds exist in your church?
- Take time this week to talk to someone you know age 20-40 about their views of church. If possible, speak to someone who attends your church and someone who does not attend any church.
- What stories can you find of churches that have good inclusion of those aged 20-40 and what can we learn from them?
- Ask your synod or ecumenical contacts which churches in your area engage well with people age 20-40 and arrange to visit their worship or other significant activities which include this age group.

Questions leading to change?

- Do people age 20-40 regularly participate in leading worship at your church? If not, what realistic steps could you take to change this, if any?
- Are any of your church elders age 20-40? If not, what realistic steps could you take to change this, if any?
- Does your church have more than one 'congregation' in order to connect with different generations? If not, what realistic steps could you take to change this, if any?
- Do those age 20-40 take part in your local church decision making, if not what realistic steps could you take to change this, if any?

- What changes has, or could, your local church make to make connections with 20-40s easier?
- Are there any aspects of your churches life which you would not want to change, and why?

Communication

- What activities in your church are specifically aimed at those in the 20-40 age range and how is this communicated?
- How does your church use social media? Could you be more effective?
- Many people age 20-40 think you have to first believe in order to belong to a church. How could your church communicate a change to this perception?
- How does your church communicate its vision, its mission, or its purpose? Does what you present feel attractive or relevant to those age 20-40?

Prayer

Spend some time now to pray for those in your church and in the wider community age 20-40, exploring if possible the challenges and aspirations of this generation.

Key components of effective ministry to 20-40s:

- a) Empowering, visionary leadership – whether we like it or not, Ministers are key people.
- b) Significant leadership roles for under 40s – people with a stake are more likely to stay involved.
- c) Team ministry – a sense of a range of people being involved in ministry, not necessarily a formal staff team.
- d) Supportive church structures – a commitment to allow the time and resources necessary to engage and grow.
- e) Intentional discipleship programmes – a clear priority for everyone to be involved in a programme of growth and resourcing.
- f) Encouragement to be actively involved in church life – taking part leads to a sense of belonging and ownership.
- g) Inspirational, relevant worship – it may be that a variety of worship opportunities are needed.
- h) A commitment to build and maintain meaningful relationships – friends inviting friends is central to any mission and evangelism strategy.
- i) A focus on outreach and mission – the church should be outward looking with a clear mission focus.
- j) A reliance on God – and discernment at the heart of everything.