



**Thames North Synod**  
**17<sup>th</sup> September 2016**  
10.00 am to 4.00 pm

**Minutes**

Hosts: Ealing Green Methodist /URC : Venue: Ealing Green Methodist/URC Church  
The Green, Ealing, London W5 5QT

Minister: Revd: Dr Jennifer Smith

Worship Leader for the day: Revd Jane Weedon

Synod Attendance: 91 voting members and 15 observers

**1. Welcome and constitution of Synod**

The Moderator, Revd Dr Andrew Prasad, constituted Synod and opened the meeting.

**2. Opening worship and mission of the local church**

The worship was led by Revd Dr Jennifer Smith and Revd Sue McCoan, Methodist minister at Ealing Green and newly inducted minister of St Andrew's Ealing, respectively.

Dr Smith introduced the work of Ealing Green church, particularly describing the refurbishment, which has made the buildings a community resource.

**3. Apologies**

Apologies were received from 39 voting members and from 8 non-voting members.

**4. Minutes of the Synod Meeting 12 March 2016**

The Minutes of 12 March 2016 Accepted following a number of amendments.

**5. Matters Arising**

**5.1 Queens Park URC closure – Appeal**

The Meeting of Synod on 12th March concurred with the closure of Queens Park URC. This decision was appealed by Mr Lisandro R Caffaratto. An Assembly Commission was appointed and on Wednesday 22 June 2016 met to hear the appeal. The Commission unanimously dismissed the appeal and the matter was reported to General Assembly.

**6. Personalia**

**In memoriam-** Revd Hugh Graham spoke about the life of the late Revd Norman Barry Jones who died 6 July 2016. Synod stood in remembrance of Barry

**6.1 Movement of Ministers-**Revd James Fields

**Moves out of Thames North Synod**

**Deacon Richard Goldstraw (Methodist)** has left Acton Hill and Ealing Green Methodist/UR Churches.

**Revd James Mather (Church of Scotland)** has left Kensington United Reformed Church and moved out of Thames North Synod.

**Revd Louise Morrissey (Methodist)** has left Trinity Methodist/UR Church.

**Revs Doug & Jodi Fondell (Overseas)** have left the American International Church

**Revd Dr Roger Scopes (retired minister)** has moved out of Thames North Synod to Wessex Synod.

### **Moves into Thames North Synod**

**Revd Sue McCoan** was inducted to the pastorate of St Andrew's, Ealing and Wembley Park UR Churches on 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

**Revd Jennifer Mills-Knutsen (Churches of Christ)** will be inducted to the American International Church on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September.

**Rev Dr Kathleen Richardson (Methodist)** has been appointed Interim Minister at Trinity Methodist/UR Church until September 2017

**Ms Gemma Dunning (Baptist)** was commissioned as Minister in Training at Leytonstone United Free Church (Baptist/United Reformed) on 20<sup>th</sup> August.

### **6.2 Staff changes – The Moderator**

**Revs Shabaz Javed and Edward Sanniez** have joined the Synod Pastoral Consultants, serving in a voluntary capacity.

**Revd Derek Lindfield (retired minister)** has been appointed Safeguarding Officer.

The Moderator thanked Simon Rudiger, CYCO, for holding the post until the new appointment was made. He then introduced and welcomed Derek, who addressed the meeting briefly. He reminded members of Synod of the two main booklets available to churches- *Safeguarding Policy for Local Churches* and the Handbook for churches- *Good Practice 4- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk*. There is also advisory help available from the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

There will be a speaker from the CCPAS at the Synod meeting on 19 November 2016. All churches will be asked to carry out a Safeguarding Audit in the coming months, all responses to be returned by 3 March 2017.

## **7. Report from General Assembly 2016: brief presentations by Synod Representatives**

**Thames North rep on the Youth Executive**, Rachel Southwood - spoke about the pre-Assembly gathering for young people: "What Do You Think". It gives young people a clearer understanding of what happens at General Assembly, learning to present resolutions, how representation at Assembly works, the experience of working and worshiping with other Synod members and gaining a better understanding of finance and budgets. The under 26's were grateful to have the Assembly Clerk, Revd Michael Hopkins, talk to them about Standing Orders.

**Resolution 1 of General Assembly welcomed the work of the Walking the Way steering group and commended it to the wider church.** Revd Jane Weedon and Sally Bateman. They spoke about the Paper - Walking the Way, living the life of Jesus today. The main points of the Paper - the development of a joint initiative within the URC and an update on its progress. Two main tasks to develop discipleship habits and carry forward Training for Learning and Service (TLS) to a full discipleship course. See Book of Reports pages 10-14. Resolution page 236

**Resolutions 28 & 29** (Book of Reports page 243) dealt with stipendiary minister numbers and deployment. The Ministry Committee was instructed to apply a certain formula for the allocation of stipendiary ministry posts to synods from January 2017 under Resolution 29. Revd Naison Hove spoke about the concerns raised in regard to the process of recruiting candidates for the ministry into the URC and a bias towards recruitment from the UK institutions. There was also

discussion about the upper and lower age limits currently used and how this might restrict the number of candidates recruited and trained to address the shortfall of ministers available to serve in churches.

Margaret Lampty spoke about her first time at General Assembly- she found it engaging and exciting. Walking the Way Resolution 1 was particularly thought provoking causing.

**Resolutions 6, 7, 25, 47 and 48** - Revd John Mackerness:

**Resolution 6** amendment of paragraph 2(4) of the Structure to clarify the roles of the synods of Scotland and Wales. (Book of Reports p 238)

**Resolution 7** a very lively debate, however the resolution was passed 241 in favour and 21 against; 7 members requested their dissent noted in the Minutes. (Book of Reports pp 32- 34.)

**Resolution 25** The Assembly welcomed the report of the Church of England and URC conversations.

**Resolutions 47** was passed to increase the budget for General Assembly by 15% from £200,000 to £230,000.

**Resolution 48** A major review of the Assembly will be carried out by a task group to report back in 2017 for discussion at the 2018 Nottingham Assembly.

**Resolutions 37a, 37b and 37c-The Palestinian Situation** Sally Bateman: three Synods, Eastern, Thames North and Wessex raised similar resolutions about concerns for justice and reconciliation in Israel and Palestine territories and a call for study and action. Wessex's resolution was debated, as it did not use the word "sanctions". Following lengthy discussion without agreement Assembly agreed to ask a facilitation group to work on the resolution. The new resolution (p 33 of Record of Assembly) was passed recognising disagreement. (See also pages 218-226 of the Book of Reports.)

**Resolutions 14-19 - appointment of authorised elders** – Revd Jane Weedon. The resolutions were passed and existing General Guidance on Presidency of the Sacrament is to be amended as set out in the resolutions.

Jane gave this Synod meeting 4 questions to consider followed by a brief discussion.

1. Why does it matter that someone is authorised?
2. What do you appreciate from the person presiding over the communion?
3. What kind of provision do you need in your context:-
  - someone authorised for emergencies
  - someone authorised to preside at all churches in the LAG
  - somewhere in between
4. If you were being authorised what kind of training or support would you want/need?

**Resolutions 31 and 32 Environmental Policy for the URC Climate Change** – Revd Owiny Laber reported on these two resolutions. Resolution 31 to adopt an environmental policy and Resolution 32 to appoint a task group for 4 years to monitor the church's progress towards meeting its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint. The Resolutions were passed without

much discussion. It was recognised that the policy was not a prescription for action, but simply a vehicle for exploring ways for raising awareness in churches. (See pp 185-190 Book of Reports.)

**Resolutions 33 and 24** – Revd Henriette Wentink

**Resolution 33 Renewal of Trident** – Revd Henriette Wentink: Mission Committee set out support for a new international nuclear weapons ban treaty under this resolution. (See pages 191-195 Book of Reports.)

**Resolution 24 The Wider Fold** - This dealt with church membership for those not within reach of a local church, or otherwise in transit, chiefly retired ministers to allow them to be a member of the URC without being attached to a particular church. **“Widerfold”** proposals to be brought to a meeting of the Mission Council in May 2017. (See pages 128-130 Book of Reports.)

**Resolution 27 Trustees and Finance Reports year end December 2015** – Simon Fairnington, the overall financial situation is satisfactory.

The new electronic URC logo is available on line. Change was necessary because the old logo was not digital.

Discussions are ongoing regarding replacement books for *Rejoice and Sing*.

There is an app that can be downloaded to phones or tablets or PCs for the online edition of Reform, the URC magazine.

## 8. Resolutions Referred to Synods Paper B – Synod Clerk

Resolution 42 and 3 had been referred to the Synods. Generally dealing with the church’s structure is a protracted exercise, which starts off in General Assembly and is then scrutinised by Mission Council. After Mission Council the Resolution is passed to Synods to be looked at again. Synods can ask for the Resolution not to proceed. If this request is made by more than ¼ of Synods, then the Resolution is stopped in its tracks. We have until 21 March 2017 to respond. There was some discussion as to who could actually attend and vote at General Assembly. Then clarification was sought as to who would make the nomination. No decision made. Synod voted to defer the motion.

**Resolution 3 – Referred from General Assembly 2016** (see pages 20-23 Book of Reports)

This resolution appears in full on Paper B – Appeals procedure

It was proposed by Revd Dr Allan Smith that this be discussed at a future Synod meeting to give opportunity for further discussion to those missing from the meeting today. Seconded by Sally Bateman. Agreed.

**The thanks** and appreciation of the Meeting was recorded to all of those who prepared reports.

## 9. Notices

- The annual Youth Assembly will be taking place at Staffordshire Whitehall Lakes 27-29 January 2017 It is hoped about 60 young people from North Thames will attend.
- Ickenham, URC one- day singing workshop on Saturday 1 October.
- Hertford URC is hosting the first annual Thames North Synod Church and Society Network meeting Saturday 8 October 2016.
- The Vine Church celebrating 80 years of Pilots 15 October 2016 for all 5-18 year-olds.

- TLS Lite learning programme in Thames North. Wednesdays from 21 September at High Cross URC Tottenham N.15. See leaflets and information sheet in envelopes.
- Meeting informed that Sue Russell, Personal Assistant to the Moderator and Synod Clerk would be retiring next Spring. Adverts would be placed to find a replacement.

**10. Worship** - led by Henriette Wentink- incorporating Resolution 49 and the Christian Aid presentation/film, which was shown to General Assembly. The resolution was agreed unanimously very quickly at Assembly- Henriette Wentink told the meeting more than 65 million people are currently displaced globally. There was a march taking place in Central London on this day (17 September) to let the world know we are changing our thinking about refugees.

**11. Recognition of Local Area Groups- The moderator**

The Moderator commented they were all different in shape and size, but all had signed up to the Memorandum of Understanding. Representatives were asked to come forward.

**Resolutions:**

(i) Synod recognises the Chiltern Group of churches with its current member churches of Amersham Free; Beaconsfield; Beaconsfield, Holtspur; Bourne End, Cores End; Burnham; Deanway United; Chesham; St Andrew's, Gerrards Cross; Trinity, High Wycombe; St Andrew's, Iver; Colnebrook & Poyle United; Kingsway, Slough; Trinity, Slough; Wendover Free; Fairford Leys, Aylesbury. Proposed Terry Hinks- seconded Bridget Power- passed nem con.

(ii) Synod recognises the East London Group of Churches with its current member churches: Barking; Gants Hill, Ilford; Seven Kings, Ilford; Vine, Ilford; Grange Park, Leyton; Leytonstone United Free; Walthamstow, Trinity; Walthamstow United Reformed Asian; Wanstead United Reformed. Proposed Hilda Darkwah - seconded Simon Fairnington- passed nem con.

(iii) Synod recognises the Enfield and East Hertfordshire Group of Churches with its current member churches of Broxbourne; Cheshunt Free; Edmonton; Bush Hill Park, Enfield; Christ Church, Enfield; Lancaster Road, Enfield; Trinity, Enfield; Hertford; Palmers Green; Ponders End; Winchmore Hill. Proposed Adrian West- seconded Nancy Hands- passed nem con.

The Moderator prayed recognising the member churches commitment to work together as Local Area Groups.

**12. Closures and Amalgamations –Synod Clerk**

**12.1 Closure of Chigwell Row URC**

Synod approved the closure of Chigwell Row United Reformed Church on 30 September 2016 and giving thanks for 232 years of Christian witness and service in the Chigwell Row area.

In 1784 worship commenced at Chigwell Row when services were held in an outbuilding belonging to a Mr. Shepherd. In 1804 the present building was consecrated, and services have been held continuously up to the present day including throughout both world wars.

But after 212 years of continuous worship, on 31<sup>st</sup> January the Church Meeting decided, to close as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016, due to lack of numbers in the congregation.

Vote in favour- unanimous, with no abstentions

### **12.2 Amalgamation of St John's Northwood and St Martins Oxhey URCS**

Synod approved the amalgamation of St John's URC, Northwood and St Martin's URC, South Oxhey, the new church to be known as St John's URC, Northwood.

St Martin's is not viewing this as a closure, but as how best to use the resources for the community.

Vote in favour- unanimous, with no abstentions.

### **12.3 Amalgamation Harecourt URC with Claremont URC**

Synod approved the amalgamation of Claremont URC and Harecourt URC, the new church to be known as Islington United Reformed Church.

On 12<sup>th</sup> June both church meetings unanimously decided to be amalgamated as from the first day of August 2016, with a new name, 'Islington United Reformed Church'.

Vote in favour- unanimous, with no abstentions

### **13. Any Other Business**

None.

### **14. Closing worship – led by the Moderator and Jane Weeden**

Date of Next Meeting Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at City Temple.