

	<b>Thames North Synod Discipleship Steering Group</b>	<b>Paper F 19 October 2024</b>
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### **DSG Report for TNS Synod Meeting October 2024**

The Steering Group have met three times since the last Synod meeting. Our next meeting date will be Thursday, 14 November via Zoom.

#### **Walking the Way Grants**

We continue to encourage churches to apply for a Walking the Way Grant (up to £5,000 for discipleship-related purposes). We have recently awarded grants for a church weekend away, and the design, equipment and decoration of several prayer/meditation spaces in existing church spaces. This grant is available to all churches, and we very much want to give these funds away. Please be in touch with Eddie Boon, who has consulted on a number of these grant applications over the last few years.

#### **Children and Youth Ministry**

In the last couple of months, we have heard feedback from some of our youth who represented TNS at General Assembly and the Youth Residential. Work continues on recruitment strategies for Children and Youth Advocates positions. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please contact our CYDO, Lorraine Downer.

#### **Training**

Our Lay Preaching program continues to move ahead strongly with 12 out of 14 students in the Aspire to More program enrolled on the Local Recognized Worship Leaders program. Additionally, TNS has a newly qualified Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher, Penny Stuart of Adeyfield Church, Hemel Hempstead; and two new students, Anna Erikson of Palmers Green URC and Jeremy Day of Ickenham URC enrolled on the September 2024 AALP training at Northern College

#### **Discipleship Enabler**

Eddie Boon continues to be busy in his work with local churches and LAGs. Art in Plain Sight has a complete cohort of 13 churches through late 2025/early 2026 when new churches can enrol. He is focused on his continuing monthly Zoom gatherings, as well as promoting the Vital Signs tool as a resource to our churches. He is also involved with planning the Conversations at the Crossroads event—a gathering of URC Mission and Discipleship Animators which will take place in January.

Eddie's status as a Special Category Minister for Thames North Synod expires at the end of next year. A review panel acting on behalf of the DSG has returned a recommendation to the Synod Executive Committee that the Synod apply to Church House for a five-year extension to Eddie's term. We are very optimistic about this process and are hoping to have a decision from Church House within the next month.

### **Green Apostles**

A successful Green Day was held at the Vine in Ilford in June. The event was well-attended and well-received. As the committee starts to plan for future events, they are also focused on recruiting, as several members of their team will complete their terms of service next March.

Brian Buschkill October 2024