

**Report for GURC on Synod Together
Meeting 12th October 2019
Reigate Park URC, Reigate**

The theme for the meeting was "Endings and Beginnings".

This was the Reverend Nicola Furley-Smith's last Synod as she moves on after 8½ years as Moderator of Southern Synod. Nicola moves on soon to work as Secretary of the Synod Ministries Committee.

The Moderator welcomed us before leading into the opening act of worship.

Under the item Pastoralia we were asked to pray for those members of Synod who had died since the last Synod Together meeting.

Jubilee ministers were received and thanked for their service, including our own Minister, Andrew for 25 years service and also the Rev Michael Davies for 60 years service.

Three churches had applied to become host to isolated members.

The Synod Report showed that not much had changed since the report to Synod together in March 2019. The links with the Presbyterian Church of Korea are going from strength to strength. The meeting agreed that the PCK should be our Mission Partner under the URC's Global and Intercultural Link.

The report also emphasised that churches should consider taking up the grants available from the Church Building Fund and the Strategic Mission Fund.

This topic was taken up by the Treasurer, who said that Synod had produced guidance on the availability of the grants and how they should be applied for. He had produced a flow chart for applications to be used by churches after contacting Synod Office. This information was available on the Synod web-site. The Treasurer emphasised the need for small claims, less than £2,000, to be supported by receipts. Up to £500 of unused grant can be carried forward to the following year.

The representatives of the Synod Children's and Youth Work Committee reported on its work including the new FOFA (Friends on Faith Adventure) programme, which includes a crate of props. The initial crate contains six bible stories and appropriate props for children to act out the stories and a polaroid camera for each child to take home in turn and photograph his or her own faith adventure before the next meeting. The next Youth Assembly will be held from 24th to 26th January at Whitemoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffs. This will also include a one-day taster session.

Moving on the Training Officer said that each church needed to consider the following questions:

What is God's why for your church?

What is the Leader's why for your church?

What is the church members' why for your church?

What is an outsider's why for your church?

Any change is easier if the need or basis for change is obvious.

He went on to examine the background to change and planning for change. In particular he stressed the need to take advantage of MAD (Make a Difference) days. The next MAD day for Southern Synod is on Saturday 9th November in Canterbury. Details have been circulated to all churches.

Decisions on additional wording for elders' promises and on whether the Southern Synod of the URC should declare a Climate Emergency were referred back for further consideration and will be brought before Synod Together in March 2020.

St. John's Church, Marsh Green was congratulated on winning the URC's first Eco Church Gold award.

Details of the timetable for the search for a new Moderator will be sent to all churches. It is hoped that a profile for the future holder of the position to will have been decided on by April 2020.

There was no major business after lunch. Instead the meeting finished with a stirring service of Thanksgiving and Farewell to celebrate 8½ years ministry by the Reverend Nicola J Furley-Smith as Moderator of Southern Synod.

The meeting closed at 4.00pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for 14th March 2020 in East Croydon URC.