

**Minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church held on  
Saturday 8th October 2016 at Holme Church, Bradford.**

**1. Welcome**

The Lay Pastor, Mr John Rider, welcomed Synod to Holme Church and gave the House Notices.

**2. Synod convened**

Synod was convened by The Moderator, The Rev Kevin Watson.

**3. Greetings**

The Moderator, The Rev Kevin Watson, welcomed everyone and greeted those attending Synod for the first time including Mrs Geraldine Sands, the newly appointed Synod Safeguarding Advisor, for the Yorkshire and Northern Synods.

**4. Present**

There were 63 Lay people, 22 Ministers and 7 Retired Ministers.

**5. Apologies**

Apologies were received from 22 Lay people, 8 Ministers and 8 Retired ministers.

**6. Opening Worship**

The Moderator, Rev Kevin Watson, and the Rev Mark Robinson led the Synod in worship with the Moderator preaching on John 21, verses 1-19 which is the story of Jesus appearing to seven disciples after they had been fishing all night and caught nothing until told to cast their nets on the other side.

**7. Minutes**

The minutes of the Synod meeting held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Moderator.

**8. Matters Arising**

Referring to Item 25 (Committee Reports), the Synod Clerk said the Moderator had written to all Synod Representatives and Ministers following the last Synod meeting with regard to point 2 (Pastoral Committee) to say that a change of name by a church was a local decision but the wider church was informed as a matter of courtesy and information. The change of name from Bolton Villas United Reformed Church to Bolton Villas Family Church was subsequently reported to and noted by Synod Council.

The Synod Clerk also reported that since the meeting in March, Synod had met on two other occasions: on Monday September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm at The Church in Cottingley to induct The Rev Peter Clarkson into a 50 per cent two-year transitional ministry at Cottingley and on Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> at 3.00pm at Central United Reformed Church in Sheffield for the induction of The Rev Jamie Kissack into the Sheffield URC Team Ministry.

**9. Agenda**

The Clerk reported that Synod representatives had been given advance notice of an additional resolution, Resolution 14, concerning the continuation of the Synod Levy for a further three years. There would also be two other resolutions concerning personnel serving the Synod as a result of information received during the week.

**10. Synod Notices**

The Synod Clerk gave the notices and asked Synod representatives to take note of the information they had received with the Synod mailing and on their seats as they came in. He also pointed out that the Office Manager, Mr Bill Marland, had copies of the 2017 Prayer

Handbook for sale at £6.50 each and these could be purchased when representatives collected their travel expenses.

**11. Date and Place of the next Synod meeting**

The next meeting of Synod would be on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at The Bridge Church, Otley and then on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October at Christ Church, South Ella.

**12. Appointment of Tellers**

The following were appointed as tellers for this meeting of Synod:

Mrs Val Morrison, Mrs Jenny Poulter, The Rev Tony Lee and Mr Alex Walker.

**13. General Assembly**

i) The Rev Zaidie Orr reported on the main decisions and events of General Assembly in Southport in which the Moderator of the Yorkshire Synod, The Rev Kevin Watson, was inducted as Moderator of General Assembly along with Mr Alan Yates as the Lay Moderator.

A full copy of The Record of General Assembly Southport 2016 can be found at:

<http://www.urch.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Assembly2016/RECORD-2016w.pdf>

ii) A feature of General Assembly is the announcement of the Congregational Insurance Community Awards and two short videos were shown of the first and second placed community projects. The first prize went to Cornerstone United Reformed Church in Hythe near Southampton for its Families Matter project and second was Broadway United Reformed Church, Worcestershire for its Feel Better, Enjoy Life More initiative. The Moderator said there would be further information on Community Award winners in the afternoon.

iii) Two resolutions had been referred to the Synod by General Assembly. These were Resolution 3: Appeal, Reference, and Constitutional Review and Resolution 42: URC Youth representation on Synods and General Assembly. There was some discussion on both resolutions and some concerns were expressed. However, no one felt sufficiently strongly to move that either resolution 3 or resolution 42 be not proceeded with. Therefore, the Synod is deemed to be content for the resolutions to proceed and the Clerk would report this to the General Secretary, The Rev John Proctor.

**14. The Big Day Out**

Mrs Ruth Roddison who along with Mr Alan Kendall had helped to organise The Yorkshire Synod Bid Day Out at Flamingo Land, North Yorkshire on September 10<sup>th</sup> introduced a ten-minute video of the day which had concluded with an act of worship. The weather had remained fine, young and old had a great time and those who attended felt it was a very worthwhile event. It is hoped to be able to repeat it in two years' time.

**15. Announcements**

**Two Conferences:** The Rev Dr James Coleman drew attention to two courses. The first, for all preachers, was at St Andrew's URC, Roundhay, Leeds on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016, from 9:45am to 3:30pm and would be led by The Rev Dr Rosalind Selby, Principal of Northern College in Manchester. There was no charge. The second, Subversive Peacemakers, was on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November from 9.30am at The Mirfield Centre and would be led by The Rev Dr Clive Barrett and The Rev Dr James Coleman. The cost would be £25.

**Peter's House:** The Rev Chris Dowd said Peter's House was a new project from the United Reformed church in Hull. Students would live rent-free in a student house in exchange for work in the churches. They were hoping to find six students by the start of the next academic year. Leaflets explaining the scheme were available.

**Christian Dance Fellowship:** The Rev Clare Davison said that the Yorkshire branch of the Christian Dance Fellowship was meeting at Heath United Reformed Church in two weeks' time from noon and she invited those present to come along and share dance.

**Annual Peace Service:** Mr John Tilbury, the Synod Acting Interfaith Representative, said that he had been invited to light one of the candles at the Interfaith Peace Service on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 7.30pm at The Banquet Hall, Leeds Civic Hall. Candles would be lit by representatives of all the major faith communities in Leeds and by the Lord Mayor on behalf of all the people of Leeds.

**16. Lunchtime adjournment**

The Moderator said Grace and Synod adjourned for lunch.

**17. Safeguarding**

The Moderator, The Rev Kevin Watson, introduced Mrs Geraldine Sands, the newly appointed Safeguarding Advisor for the Yorkshire and Northern Synods. She explained that she had retired from the NHS in January having been the Safeguarding Lead across Yorkshire and Humberside. She saw the post advertised and felt it was just ideal for her, enabling her to combine her church worship and faith with her expertise in safeguarding.

The Moderator moved Resolution 2:

**Resolution 2**

*Synod receives the report of its Council.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

There was no discussion on the Safeguarding Report which formed part of the Synod Council Report and the Moderator moved Resolution 3:

**Resolution 3:**

*Recognising the importance of taking safeguarding matters seriously, Synod agrees that the Safeguarding Group is taken into the formal structure of the Synod and becomes a Committee of the Synod with immediate effect.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

**18. Property Matters**

The Trust and Property Secretary, Mrs Sheila Duncan, said most churches wished to make their premises available to the community and many had asked for a model agreement as legislation changes regularly. The Synod solicitors had been asked for a model agreement and it was hoped to be able to circulate one before Christmas. There would also be guidance to help churches decide on the right type of agreement as there was a difference between long-term rentals and one-off lets. If churches were in any doubt they should contact Sheila.

**19. Refugee Support Group**

Mrs Judy Rogers, who attends St Andrew's, Skipton spoke about the development of a Refugee Support Group which had organised a hosting event when 35 refugees came and stayed in the homes of people in the town. There had been a walk and also a visit to Skipton Castle. On the Sunday many attended worship at St Andrew's which was memorable and life-changing not just for the refugees but also for the hosts.

**20. Council for World Mission**

The Rev Zaidie Orr reported on the Council for World Mission (CWM) Assembly held in June on Jeju Island, South Korea. The theme of the 2016 Assembly was *Healing: Hope in Action*, which was a continuation of the 2012 Assembly of Hope.

Zaidie visited the Gangjeong Village which maintains a constant prayer, fasting and protest against the construction of the controversial Jeju Naval Base. The building of the base is seen as an enhancement of South Korea defence systems and the government has said that the

naval base would have minimum impact and it would create jobs and help the economy. However, in 2006, Jeju was designated as an 'island of peace', so Gangjeong Village has become a symbol of the peace movement.

Despite local and international protest against the construction of the naval base, the work continues but the continued protest has resulted in the building work being halted on several occasions.

On the Sunday Zaidie had the privilege of preaching at the Hanlim Church where everyone was made very welcome. There was a meal with all the members of the congregation after the service which is customary after Sunday worship.

The rest of the Assembly consisted of morning worship, thought provoking bible study, sub-theme discussions and working groups.

## 21. Feasts and Festivals

The year 2017 is a year of anniversaries and Synod watched a short PowerPoint presentation on this year of Feasts and Festivals:

- Five hundred years have elapsed since Martin Luther challenged others to a debate which sparked off the protestant reformation in Europe.
- One hundred years ago Constance Coltman was the first woman to be ordained to the ministry of the Congregational Church at King's Weigh House in London on 17 September 1917.
- Forty-five years ago the United Reformed Church came into being on 5 October 1972 as a union of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales. It was joined later by the Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ in 1981 and the Congregational Union of Scotland in 2000.
- Twenty-five years ago the Church initiated Commitment for Life which is the United Reformed Church's main programme through which the Church carries forward its work for justice throughout the world.

## 22. The Moderator's report

The Moderator moved resolution 1

### Resolution 1

*Synod receives the report of its Moderator.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

The Moderator, The Rev Kevin Watson, said he wanted to use his report to begin the discussion on deployment. We also needed to talk about membership and M&M. Some churches were using reserves to keep going while another church was paying £80,000 a year in M&M. Ministry, money and resources and the right structure for the church today all needed to be looked at. Did we still have to be this big organisation? he asked.

## 23. Synod Council Report

### i) Many are Called:

**Leeds Mission and Care Group** - As part of the Many are Called process, The Rev Angela Hughes reported on what was happening in the Leeds Mission and Care Group. She said there was a whole new sense of confidence and excitement. Many are Called had given the churches an impetus and they were sharing stories and getting to know each other with monthly visits and they were developing the concept of a loose partnership between the churches.

**Prayer Pilgrimage** - Mr Alex Walker spoke of his prayer pilgrimage. He had wanted to get to know the Leeds churches better and came up with the idea of a prayer pilgrimage walking

from church to church during which he visited each church in the Leeds Mission and Care Group to pray and learn more about the church and its mission. He split the churches into three blocks of four churches and with one exception he was warmly greeted at each church. He also did not have to walk alone and was accompanied throughout by Mrs Jenny Poulter. He is planning another prayer pilgrimage next year but this time it will be by bus.

**Community Award, Beeston Hill** - Mrs Pauline Peacock from Beeston Hill spoke about The Charity Shop which won third place in the Congregational Insurance Community Awards. She is one of 12 volunteers at the shop which is filling a need in the area. Synod then saw the Community Awards video on the work of the charity shop.

**Cottingley** - The Rev Peter Clarkson spoke of his call to The Church in Cottingley. He said the ministry in Leeds was trying to serve God in new ways. Cottingley was a deep need of leadership and there was a need for all agencies to work together. He took the plunge and answered the call. He said there was no time to waste in Cottingley and there was a sense that the touch of God was needed everywhere.

#### **ii) Transitional Ministry:**

The Rev Clare Davison and the Rev Zaidie Orr spoke about transitional ministry. Both had attended a conference in Cambridge during which they met transitional ministers from all over the United Reformed Church and shared their experiences of how this ministry worked out in practice. It could take many different forms. They felt that Synod needed to discuss the role of transitional ministry more fully and that at the moment transitional ministry was being used "under cover." Synod needed to know how it was being used. Flexibility in its use was key.

#### **iii) Lay Presidency:**

The Rev Alison Micklem spoke about the decision taken at General Assembly regarding Lay Presidency and Authorised Elders. Different Synods had different practices and the resolution passed at Assembly was an attempt to standardise what happens across the Synods. Resolution 14 agreed at Southport amended guidance on Presidency so that authorisation for presidency would be for an initial period of three to five years (according to Synod judgement) including a probationary year on first appointment.

Synod would seek names for authorisation in the normal way in January but during the year Resolution 14 would be considered and a decision made on whether future authorisations would be for three or five years.

#### **iv) Yorkshire JPIT**

The section of the Synod Council report on the move to establish a Yorkshire JPIT (Joint Public Issues Team) was introduced by the Clerk. The formal launch date will be March 4<sup>th</sup> 2017 and terms of reference for the new body had been circulated with the Synod papers.

The Clerk moved Resolution 4.

#### **Resolution 4**

*Synod gives its approval to the terms of reference for JPIT Yorkshire as circulated with the Synod papers.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

### **24. Changes in Personnel serving the Synod**

The Clerk drew attention to the appointment of The Rev Zaidie Orr to serve as Racial Justice Advocate for the Synod which was made by Synod Council since the March Synod.

The Clerk reported that in May Synod Council had appointed Mr Justin Charlesworth to serve as Synod Treasurer until the Synod meeting. The Clerk invited Synod to re-affirm the appointment and moved Resolution 5.

**Resolution 5**

*Synod appoints Mr Justin Charlesworth to serve as the Synod Treasurer until March 2021.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

A number of people had agreed to serve the Synod in various capacities and the Clerk moved Resolutions 6 to 9.

**Resolution 6**

*Synod appoints The Rev Jamie Kissack to serve as the Synod Candidating Secretary for a five-year term to September 2021.*

**Resolution 7**

*Synod appoints Mrs Gillian Chapman to serve as a Synod Pastoral Elder in the Central area of the Synod for a three-year term to September 2019.*

**Resolution 8**

*Synod appoints Mrs Alex Jowitt to be the Synod's Green Apostle for a three- year term until September 2019.*

**Resolution 9**

*Synod appoints Mrs Heather Raistrick to serve as a Yorkshire representative on Mission Council for a three-year term from March 2017 to March 2020.*

The resolutions were passed unanimously.

A number of people had agreed to serve a further term and the Clerk proposed Resolutions 10 and 11.

**Resolution 10**

*Synod re-appoints The Rev Michael Mewis to serve as a Synod Pastoral Elder in the Eastern area for a further three years until September 2019.*

**Resolution 11**

*Synod re-appoints Mrs Elaine Merlin to serve on the Financial Resources Committee for a two-year period to September 2018.*

The resolutions were passed unanimously.

The Clerk reported that Mrs Pauline Mewis was having to stand down for health reasons and moved Resolution 12.

**Resolution 12**

*Synod wishes to express its thanks to Mrs Pauline Mewis for her service as a Mission Council representative and wishes her a speedy recovery.*

As a result of information received during the week that The Rev Wilfred Bahadur was standing down from the Financial Resources Committee for personal reasons, the Clerk proposed the additional resolution, Resolution 15.

**Resolution 15**

Synod thanks The Rev Wilfred Bahadur for his services to the Financial Resources Committee.

The Clerk proposed a second additional resolution, Resolution 16 followed information received in the last few days.

**Resolution No 16**

*Synod appoints The Rev Janine Atkinson to serve as the Yorkshire Synod’s representative on the newly formed Yorkshire JPIT for a three-year term until September 2019.*

**25. Financial Resources**

The Synod Treasurer, Mr Justin Charlesworth moved Resolution 14.

**Resolution 14**

*Synod agrees to the continuation of the Synod Levy at the rate of £10 per year per member for a further three years during 2017, 2018 and 2019.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

The Treasurer moved Resolution 13.

**Resolution 13**

*Synod receives the accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 and accepts the budget for 2017.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

The Treasurer moved the following resolution:

**Resolution 17**

*Synod agrees an offer of £1,050,000 to the 2017 Mission and Ministry Fund which is a decrease of £50,000 on the 2016 figure.*

The resolution was passed unanimously.

**26. In Memoriam**

The Moderator remembered in prayer, Ministers and Elders who had died since the last meeting of Synod.

- Clara Mollitt, St Mary’s in the Wood, Morley
- Barbara Lockwood, The URC in South Leeds
- Margaret Waite, The URC in South Leeds
- Donald Clarke, Headingley St Columba
- Frank Hobson, Hornsea URC
- Pam Brookes, Zion URC, Oughtibridge
- Peter Spinks - Central United Reformed, Sheffield
- Geoff Manterfield - Central United Reformed, Sheffield

**27. Thanks**

The Moderator expressed thanks to everyone at Holme Church for their hard work in preparing for and organising the day with particular reference to the caterers who had provided a splendid lunch.

**28. Closing worship**

The closing worship was led by members of Holme Church, Bradford.

Signed.....Date.....