

# Paper 13

## URC 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee: Not long now...

### Walking the Way Steering Group

#### Basic information

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<b>Action required</b>	For discussion only.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	N/A

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	This paper provides an update on planning for the URC's 50 <sup>th</sup> Jubilee in 2022.
<b>Main points</b>	Planning for this important milestone continues. It is hoped that a mix of local, regional and denominational activities will be united through theming, messaging, branding and merchandise options, which are being considered. Two specific denominational events are being planned, along with some denominational resources to support celebrations.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Mission Council 03/21, Paper I4 Mission Council 11/20, Paper O1.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Ministries Education and Learning Children's and Youth Work Ecumenical and Interfaith Global and Intercultural Ministries.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Potential costs and sources of existing, internal funding are being considered.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	The support of our ecumenical partners has been crucial to the denomination's life. It is imperative that they be involved in these celebrations. Methodist friends are willing to arrange a significant discount on the use of Westminster Methodist Central Hall for an event, as well as organise a worship service in St Mary Undercroft (Palace of Westminster). A joint resource is being pursued with the Congregational Federation, which shares the same milestone in 2022.

#### 1. General update

- 1.1 Following discussions at the November 2020 meeting of Mission Council, including in small groups, the URC 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Planning Group, acting on behalf of the Walking the

Way Steering Group, has continued exploring possibilities for the celebration of this important milestone in the denomination's life.

- 1.2 Feedback from the Mission Council discussions mentioned above has been central to the group's further planning. A clear desire was expressed for united celebrations which bring people from across the denomination together, but which are also outward-looking, taking into account the vibrant heritage and continuing life of the United Reformed Church contextually and locally, as well as focussing on our strong tradition of social justice and missional engagement.
- 1.3 To help achieve this, it is still hoped that celebrations will come in a mix of local, regional and denominational events, resources and opportunities. Theming, messaging and branding will be vital in holding all of these contributions together under a single banner. Discussions continue on how best to proceed with this, but it is already clear that with a number of celebrations taking place in the same year, including the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the Congregational Federation and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, that Jubilee itself will be an important theme.
- 1.4 Merchandising is also being explored as a possibility, as this too can be a good means of promoting a single theme in a range of ways and settings.
- 1.5 Within the planning group, smaller groups are working on plans for worship, supporting the organisation of regional and local events, and sharing the story of the URC in drama form.

## **2. Events**

- 2.1 The planning group feels that it is especially important to mark the debate and passing of the legislation, as well as the signing of the agreement document, both of which brought the United Reformed Church formally into existence. Central to these are the Palace of Westminster, where legislation was debated and, ultimately, passed, and Westminster Methodist Central Hall where the agreement document itself was signed.
- 2.2 As such, the planning group intends to organise an event at Westminster Central Hall on Saturday 1 October 2022 offering a mix of workshops, stalls and activities culminating in an act of worship. Our friends in the Methodist Church are prepared to offer a significant discount on the use of this venue, should this event go ahead. It is hoped that as many people as possible will be able to come together physically from across the United Reformed Church, but streaming options are being considered for those unable to do so, as well as how this event can link in with regional and local events. Given the inability of people to meet physically for most of 2020 and a significant part of 2021, it is hoped that a great effort can be made to bring everyone together physically for this important milestone.
- 2.3 It is also hoped that an evening service of worship could be organised in the chapel of St Mary Undercroft, located in the Palace of Westminster. Such an event would require cross-party support. Our Methodist friends can help us to build this, based on their existing experience of organising covenant services in the chapel, and there are already a number of MPs who have expressed an interest in such a service. It is important to note, however, that due to the low amount of space available, attendance at such a service would need to be limited.
- 2.4 It will be important to mark the jubilee at General Assembly in 2022. Ideas for this are being considered, alongside existing plans to celebrate the jubilee at the URC Youth Assembly, the Ministers Gathering, Greenbelt, and hopefully through synod meetings and events.

## **3. Resources**

- 3.1 Progress with new books on the denomination's history is going well, but Covid-19 and refurbishment plans have seriously affected access to libraries, people and other sources of key materials, which could bring some delays.
- 3.2 A piece of work exploring the hymnody of the URC is being developed, which could perhaps be linked to a hymn writing competition. We might even be able to sing together physically!
- 3.3 The idea of a calendar competition to share photos and artwork depicting the life of the denomination is also being explored.
- 3.3 It is important to note that the Congregational Federation shares its jubilee year with us in 2022, so there is an opportunity, amongst other things, to produce a joint resource. A collection of reflections will be launched in June 2021.
- 3.4 The URC Prayer Handbook, Diary and Yearbook for 2022 will all have a focus on the jubilee, providing more opportunities to engage people in celebration and reflection.

## **4. Finance**

- 4.1 As celebrations will be a mix of local, regional and denominational events, it is hoped that much of the costs will fit naturally into existing plans and budgets. However, various avenues of opening up more of the denomination's existing funds to assist our celebrations and use them to help prepare the United Reformed Church for the future, are being explored.
- 4.2 The planning group expresses warmest gratitude, especially to our friends in the Methodist Church, for the support, discounts and other assistance which is being offered. This helps to reduce pressure and increase possibilities for us in this important time of celebration.