



To: Members of Mission Council,  
staff in attendance and observers

February 2018

Dear Colleagues,

**Mission Council  
Monday to Wednesday 19 to 21 March 2018  
High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire**

I look forward warmly to seeing you at Mission Council, and write now to mention several practical matters as we prepare for the meeting.

1. There will be an introduction session at 12 noon on the first day for new Mission Council members, to outline processes and procedures, introduce the Assembly officers, and explain some items of business. Old timers who would like to attend are welcome too. A full version of our rules for procedure is in the 'Standing Orders' (which are also used at General Assembly). These can be found on the URC website at [www.urc.org.uk/about-mission-council.html](http://www.urc.org.uk/about-mission-council.html)
2. At General Assembly and Mission Council meetings we take certain business *En Bloc*. The fact that an item is listed as *En Bloc* does not make it less important than timetabled items. Rather, the *En Bloc* list contains those items where the Moderators think that decisions might be reached responsibly without further discussion. You will see that the agenda includes a slot when these items will be voted on.

I suggest you read the *En Bloc* papers first. This will give you time to contact the author of a paper if you have questions. Authors' names and email addresses are noted on the cover sheets. If you think any of these papers need discussion at Mission Council, particularly if you disagree with a proposed course of action, you may ask that a piece of business be removed from *En Bloc*. A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting, where you can list the paper you wish to be withdrawn. If an item gets three signatures by close of business on the first day, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda, with time given for discussion.

I need to remind you too that we really rely on every Mission Council member to read the papers and take note of information to relay back to their synods. In using the *En Bloc* method of decision-making there is no wish to bury information or to avoid discussions which Mission Council ought to have. We must all ensure the appropriate flow of information from Mission Council to the synods.

3. You should already have a number of papers from the first mailing: a cover letter, an expenses form, directions to our venue, a list of members, and (for new members) 'What we are about in Mission Council.' If any of these are missing, please contact Helen Munt at Church House, 020 7916 8646, [helen.munt@urc.org.uk](mailto:helen.munt@urc.org.uk)
4. Observers and URC staff who are not members of Mission Council should not participate in decision-making. Staff members are welcome to speak but, like observers, they should not use orange and blue cards.
5. I remind you that we are not expected to post on social media sites during business sessions. This restriction only applies when Council is in session; members may join in online debates during breaks, about business that is completed (although not on business that has only been adjourned to a later

session of the meeting). As ever, everything shared on these sites is the responsibility of the author and subject to the same defamation laws as any other written communication.

6. All bedrooms are en-suite (except for a small minority which aren't – those who are not in an en-suite room will have already received an email from Helen Munt). To comply with the venue's health and safety regulations, please do not bring food from outside into the Centre, nor take food from the dining room to your room.
7. Below are the papers expected at the meeting, listed according to the ways the Moderators presently mean to address them:

**Category A: En Bloc**

B1	Children's and youth work committee	
D1	Westminster College Governors	
H1, H2, H3	Ministries committee	
I1	Mission committee, re Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana	
I2	Additional mission Committee paper	*
I3	Walking the Way	
J1	Nominations committee	
J2, J3	Additional Nominations papers	*
K1	Pastoral Reference	
P1	Complaints Policy	
R1, R2	Safeguarding	
T1	Ministerial Disciplinary Process	
V1	Resource sharing task group	

**Category C: Consensus Decision Making**

D2	Education and Learning: discipleship development strategy	
L2	URC Trust: approach to risk management	*
M1	Supporting the Church's worship	
Y1	Procedure for electing Assembly Moderators	
Z1	The Synod Moderators: criteria for pruning	

**For discussion but no resolution**

F1	Faith and Order: scripture and the Church	
G1	Finance committee: planning for the budget	
L1	URC Trust: Church House and the Windermere Centre	*
M2	The Church's hymnody	
N1	Future of General Assembly	

8. A number of papers, which have to be prepared late, are marked above with an asterisk.\* These will be available online a few days before the meeting and, if you have requested a hard copy of the papers, this will be available on arrival at the meeting.
9. During worship at Mission Council, the Moderators and Chaplains will draw on the Letter to the Philippians, and they invite us to read and reflect on this letter ahead of our meeting.

As always, please come to share, listen, reflect and discern together, and to support each other in fellowship outside the formal timetable. Let us treat one another with grace as together we seek the guidance of God.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

