

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

April 2019

Dear Colleagues,

**Mission Council
Monday to Wednesday 13 to 15 May 2019
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 doing business is in the 'Standing Orders' (which are also used at General Assembly). These can be found on the URC website at <https://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 A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting, where you can list the paper you wish to be withdrawn. If an item gets three signatures by close of business on the first day, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda, with time given for discussion.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 several 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 2020, 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. 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

A1	Plans for Assembly 2020
B1	Children's and youth work update
G1	Financial outcome 2018
H1	Ministries update
I1	Mission update
I2	Mission: terms of reference for environmental task group
J1	List of nominations
L1	URC Trust: Church House
L2	URC Trust: risk register process
M1	Clerk: excerpt minutes of a constitutional review
O2	Human resources advisory group: Assembly-appointed posts at Church House

Category B: two-thirds majority voting

N2	Changes to General Assembly
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Category C: consensus decision making

D1	Education and learning: discipleship development strategy
D2	Education and learning: benchmarks for ministry
I3	Mission: carbon targets
J2	Supplementary nominations (this paper is coming late) *
M2 + M3	Messrs Estill, Uden and Yates: listening and strategy
N1	General Assembly task group: moderators, clerks and councils
O1	Human resources advisory group: recruitment for General Secretariat
R1 + R2	Safeguarding
T1	Ministerial disciplinary process
X1 + Z1	Investments and fossil fuels

8. One discussion – involving papers X1 and Z1 – is designated by the Moderators as urgent. This is because we ought to come to a clear mind on the best way we can respond to earth's changing climate. So if consensus eludes us, other options will be available.
9. A small number of papers, which are identified above*, have to be prepared late, and will be available online a few days before the meeting – or, if you have requested hard copy, on arrival at the meeting.
10. 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 we seek the guidance of God.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

