

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

October 2017

Dear Colleagues,

**Mission Council
Tuesday to Thursday 7 – 9 November 2017
The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire**

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: <http://bit.ly/2ol2sWX>, from page 247 onwards. They are also, for this meeting, printed in Paper M1.
2. In recent Mission Council meetings we have taken 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 A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting, where you can list the paper you wish to be withdrawn. If an item gets three signatures by close of business on the first day, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda, with time given for discussion.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 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 enclosed in this mailing listed according to the ways we mean to address them:

Category A: En Bloc

A1 Assembly Arrangements
B1 Children's and Youth Work Committee: report on work
G2, G3 The URC Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd: two changes to rules and procedure
I1 Mission: update on work
J1 Nominations
M1 Clerk: Standing Orders
M2 Clerk: Appeals Procedure
O1 Human Resources Advisory Group: report on work
R1 Safeguarding Advisory Group: Past Case Review

Category B: Majority Voting

C1 Funding for Reform
G1 Finance: budget for 2018
N1 General Assembly Task Group: where to hold General Assembly in 2020

Category C: Consensus decision making

D2 Education and Learning: the successor to TLS
H1 and H2 Ministries: Non-Stipendiary Ministry, and funding new forms of ministry
J2 Nominations: supplementary report *

P1 A complaints policy for the URC

U1 The role of General Secretary

Y1 Rules of Procedure for electing Assembly Moderators

For information or advice rather than immediate decision

D1 Education and Learning: Lay Development Strategy *

F1 Faith and Order *

I2 Mission: Commitment for Life

I3 Walking the Way

L1 URC Trust: Church House and Windermere *

M3 Data Protection

8. A number of papers, which have to be prepared late and will only be available at the meeting, are marked above with an asterisk.*

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,

