



Maidstone United Reformed Church



Pastorate Profile

Updated at the Church Meeting September 2014



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Maidstone United Reformed Church

Pastorate Profile

1. History

The present church is on the site of a chapel built in 1747. A larger building was constructed in 1822 and the present building dates from 1865 although it was substantially rebuilt following a fire in 1915. A map showing the location of the church and the manse is reproduced at **Appendix 1**.

By the beginning of the 20th century there were three Congregational churches in Maidstone. In addition to Week Street there were churches at Westborough and King Street. In 1965 the three churches came together to form one united church and since 1973 when the King Street church was acquired for the construction of a shopping centre, the church has been based at the present premises in Week Street.

The 1865 building has been considerably modified and adapted in recent years but retains much of the original sanctuary although parts were rebuilt following the 1915 fire.

2. The Community being served

The church is situated in the town centre on what is currently the edge of the shopping area. Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and the borough has a population of 149,000 of which 61 % are of working age. Maidstone has been identified as one of the south east growth points where up to 10,000 new homes are anticipated to be built within the next 10 years.

The local unemployment rate is currently 2.6%, and in recent years the town has seen the loss of its traditional brewing and paper making industries. Most of the locally employed labour force is in the retail and public service sectors with both County and Borough Councils being based in the town. 42% of the working population is in managerial or professional jobs although many of these workers commute to London and elsewhere.

Although considered to be a generally prosperous area, Maidstone has two wards which are among some of the country's most severe areas of deprivation.

Ethnic minorities are estimated to make up about 4% of the population.

Further Information about the town can be found at the Maidstone Borough Council Web Site
“www.maidstone.gov.uk”

3. The Ecumenical Scene

There are a total of five Churches of other denominations in the vicinity of Maidstone URC and Churches Together in Maidstone includes most of the main-stream Christian denominations. CTinM hold regular joint services at Easter, Whitsun and Advent with other activities from time to time. The URC plays a major role in Ecumenical activities with its recent Ministers having all played a significant part. Until recently a



Maidstone URC elder was vice-chairman of CTinM. The Church has monthly joint services with the local Methodist Church and a formal amalgamation was considered during 2008 – 2012 but did not proceed.

4. Pastorate Arrangements

Although Maidstone URC has had a long standing connection with the LEP at Grove Green and has played a significant role in the joint Methodist/URC church at Snodland there are currently no joint or group pastorate arrangements. At Grove Green the congregation recently decided to become a joint Anglican/Methodist church and the church at Snodland has had to close due to the poor condition of the building.

The scoping decision has resulted in the pastorate having 75% of a Minister's time and we are pleased that the remaining 25% is allocated to ecumenical work given the church's history of involvement with and support for ecumenism locally. The job description for the 25% ecumenical work is set out in the following section.

5. Synod Area Ecumenical Job Description [Southern Synod]

The Synod Area Ecumenical Officer is a member of the URC Synod Area (SA)/United Area (UA) meeting and Pastoral Committee/s meetings, holding an 'ecumenical brief' and offering information, advice and support in all discussions.

The Synod Area Ecumenical Officer is normally a 25% post to be linked with a 75% pastorate.

The Synod/United Area Ecumenical Officer will:

1. Be informed about procedures required when Local Ecumenical Partnerships [LEPs], Covenanted Partnerships [CPs] and ecumenical Sharing Agreements are being set up;
2. Visit, offer support and advice to congregations seeking to explore ecumenical possibilities, share church buildings or enter into negotiations about the formation of an LEP or CP;
3. Provide pastoral oversight to all LEPs in the SA/UA in order to ensure that
 - a) full account is taken of ecumenical interests in appointments made to LEPs;
 - b) churches are supported through any periods of difficulty encountered in the life of LEPs and relations with Support Groups and Sponsoring Bodies are encouraged;
 - c) the ecumenical ethos within LEPs continues to be fostered;
4. Keep the SA/UA informed on ecumenical issues [national and local ecumenical developments] and publicise ecumenical literature through the SA/UA meetings;
5. Monitor ecumenical activity within the SA/UA including local Churches Together work;
6. Foster new developments, encourage training and good ecumenical practice;
7. Be available to take part in pastoral consultations and reviews of LEPs and CPs;
8. Be a link between the SA/UA and the local Intermediate Bodies/Sponsoring Bodies;



9. Meet quarterly with the Ecumenical Officers of other denominations;
10. Attend the URC Southern Synod Ecumenical Development Group, convened by the Moderator twice a year;
11. Attend ecumenical conferences/consultations representing the URC or Intermediate Bodies;
12. Receive and distribute mailings from the National and Synod Ecumenical Officers.
13. Act as an Advocate for Ecumenism at all levels in S/UA and among local churches, and in relation to Synod Officers concerned with development and regeneration.

6. Pastorate Priorities

We have an ageing membership. While we are attracting new members, in recent years our overall membership has reduced year on year. Like many churches, our once healthy youth church has likewise reduced in size as our young folk move on to further their education or face the competition of other demands from modern day life.

Our ageing premises require constant maintenance but because of their position, in the centre of the town, and their considerable floor area they present some exciting development opportunities which could provide the county town of Kent with landmark Christian buildings, fit for the 21st century, for worship, teaching and community use.

These are real challenges, but challenges which we have faced and are continuing to face head on.

In 2006, we undertook our own “Catch the Vision” activity which drove our vision to be a Town Centre Church and to deliver a Mission to Maidstone through an outreach to the Town Centre that added value by addressing specific needs.

Early examples of this were:

- our support and resourcing for a Chaplaincy initiative in a neighbouring Shopping Mall – Fremlin Walk,
- the creation of a Drop In Centre for Prison Visitors to the nearby HMP Maidstone,
- the creation of an after school club which removed a large number of young folk from the Town centre Streets between 3.00pm and 5.30pm.

Although much increased and more varied use of our premises was experienced through 2007, it was recognised that to move forward effectively with our Vision, our premises and fabric infrastructure needed to be addressed.

Having explored various initiatives, including the possibility of forming a united church with a near-by Methodist Church, we decided in 2012 to commission a professional feasibility study as to how our premises could be improved so as to enable our community activities to be expanded and improved.



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Following receipt of the study the church resolved to raise the funds to enable the necessary works to be undertaken and our Property Development Project was launched early in 2014. We produced a funding brochure and having received generous donations from our congregation the Property Development Group is currently engaged in approaching relevant charitable trusts and grant making bodies.

The church also has an active Fund Raising group which arranges various events to raise funds for specific projects. These range from themed evening meals, book sales, Christmas Café, musical recitals and coffee mornings to theatre and museum visits. In recent years this fund has provided equipment to record services for the housebound, maintain the organ, provide blinds to improve the visibility of the screen in the sanctuary and purchase new display boards to be used in the shop. Each year a charity is chosen to receive a 10% tithing of the monies raised.

In 2012 the church responded to the appeal from Westminster College and agreed to hold two fund raising events a year. Quiz evenings and a coach visit to Cambridge have been organised. This continues the tradition of the generosity of our members to appeals for a wide range of good causes.

Our journey continues. Much has been achieved in seeking to shape our future. Much remains to be done and, of course, we recognise that it is a never ending journey.

It is against this background that we have sought to determine the Pastorate Priorities that are set out below:

Priorities for the Pastorate in Maidstone URC		
A	Church growth	Developing strategies and actions to grow the church both spiritually and numerically
A	ecumenical relations	Work with local churches to develop and enhance links and to foster sharing of resources and ideas
A	evangelism	Evangelising by taking Christ outside the church and encouraging folk to talk about their faith.
A	new forms of worship	A willingness, as part of the desire for growth, to experience new forms of worship to meet the demands and expectations of modern society.
A	pastoral care	Providing care and support for all members and adherents by prayer and personal contact
A	preaching	Challenging preaching on all subjects in faith and with personal commitment
A	Spiritual direction	Recognising the spiritual needs of the church, preparing and delivering programmes to fulfil that need through preaching, teaching and personal interaction with members
A	teaching	Teaching for all age groups by expanding knowledge of the Bible and other related Christian material.
A	Community Development	Working with local authorities, business and other organisations to integrate the church into the local community through addressing needs



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B/A*	Youth and children's work	Recognising the needs and expectations of young people and seeking to involve them in all aspects of church life. Developing a youth friendly atmosphere in worship and lead young people to a lifelong commitment to Christ. Work with and for Children (*the church currently has only a few children and young people regularly attending Sunday Worship but is working to attract children and young people into its premises, therefore currently a B but working towards an A). Ministerial input into the work of Junior Church is appreciated by all Junior Church leaders
B	action for social justice and world mission	Involvement in issues relating to social justice locally and in the wider world (eg prison work and Link Romania) and support for the World Church Committee in maintaining and developing our knowledge and involvement with world mission and links with Zimbabwe plus fund raising for Christian Aid, the URC Commitment for Life, World in Need, MAF and the Leprosy Mission.
B	administration	Activities associated with the administration of church Life including Finance, Property, Duty Rotas etc (The church currently has a good administration scheme and a church office staffed on Wednesdays)
B	house groups	Support for house groups as a valuable part of church life
B	music	Understanding the needs and expectations of the congregation to use music to enhance worship.
B	stewardship	Encouraging the care of all the resources available to the church
B	wider URC links	Maintaining appropriate links with the wider URC organisation so as to be up to date with the issues, direction and strategy of the URC
C	drama/the arts	Bringing drama or the arts into the life of the church and its witness and organizing concerts etc.
C	multi-cultural programme	(Not a priority due to the demographics of the area)
C	conferences	Attending local and national conferences to gain ideas to enhance personal and church development and growth (The church is always open to helping people grow through learning).

Notes: "very important" (A), "fairly important" (B) and "not so important" (C).



7. Ministry and Mission

Maidstone URC is set in part of the shopping area of town. Whilst in the past there have been very few residential properties locally, recent developments have included residential property. Many of those who attend Maidstone URC and live locally are in specially provided accommodation for elderly people. Other members of the congregation come from further afield (e.g. Medway Towns to the north and villages outside of the town), making it very much a gathered church.

Administratively, Maidstone URC is well organised. Each area of church life is overseen by one of 5 MINISTRY GROUPS (Administration and Finance, Education, Pastoral Care, Outreach and Worship). These groups discuss and organise day-to-day life in the church and they have authority to make decisions where necessary. They report to the Elders' Meeting, obviating the need for elders to discuss things in detail with matters, as appropriate, being referred to Church Meeting. Further details are given in **Appendix 4**.

Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and is a business and shopping hub. During the daytime it is very busy with people going about their business. Many of those who live within the area commute away from it for business purposes, so those working in the town centre are, for a large part, people who come in for that purpose. The night time economy of Maidstone is thriving; there are many restaurants, nightclubs and bars – the congregation supports Street Pastors who are active in the town on Friday and Saturday nights. Through its lettings, the URC also supports work being done by other agencies, e.g. Hi-Kent use our premises for a number of their activities and fund raising events, KCC has run an after-school drop-in for secondary school children and, until recently when accommodation was found within the Prison itself, Maidstone Prison used one of our halls as a lounge and registering point for visitors to the prison. Once a month a small number of our members worship at the Prison and are able to interact with staff and prisoners over refreshments after the service.

The church runs a “Toybox” Mothers and Toddlers group once a week which provides an opportunity for young mums and their children to meet with each other and church members in a child friendly environment.

In addition to our weekday coffee mornings a regular Friday Market is held in the main hall and gives mostly older folk an opportunity to meet and enjoy a cup of tea whilst doing some shopping for secondhand bargains.

The Church is committed to Fair Trade and is an active supporter of Traidcraft with a stall being manned in the main hall during coffee time after Sunday Worship. We also support Christian Aid, Humanitarian Aid, World in Need and Link to Hope among others.

In 2013 the church was fortunate in being able to induct a new Minister following a five year interregnum. The Revd Andrew Royal came to us from Suffolk with his wife Linda and son Callum and has brought a new enthusiasm and joy to much of what we do. Andrew is playing a very important part in the community



with his support of the Fremlin Walk Chaplaincy, and the relationship he has developed with other clergy and churches in the town. The whole congregation appreciates his preaching, his pastoral care and the way in which he has been able to involve our youngsters in our acts of worship

8. Church Family and Spiritual Life

Our family worship is at 10:30am on Sunday. In common with most large towns the majority of shops are open on Sunday in the town centre and car parking charges apply. This can lead to parking difficulties particularly in the weeks leading up to Christmas (although the church has negotiated exclusive use of three on-street parking bays in St. Faith's Street). Our services therefore start at 10.00am during December.

Our average attendance at Sunday Worship is currently in the region of 83.

Holy Communion is celebrated monthly – usually on the first Sunday of each month. Additionally, we celebrate Communion on Easter Sunday. We occasionally celebrate Communion on a small number of other special occasions.

We light a “Candle for Peace” during our Sunday Worship and this is taken out into the church vestibule at the end of the service as a symbol of our taking God's peace into the world.

We enjoy the usual Harvest Thanksgiving Services and such like but, additionally, each year we usually hold services with a specific theme – such as a Service focusing on world mission, a Zimbabwe Gift Service and a Gift Service near to Christmas to receive gifts for local children and young people. Our candlelight service on Christmas Eve is one of our most well attended services. These special services have become something of a regular feature in our Church Family Worship calendar. We have over the past few years sought to include variety to our Sunday Worship pattern by including “one off” Services celebrating our young people or enjoying a Songs of Praise type approach. We are also working on ways to include the Vision4Life Initiative within our Worship.

We are blessed by a number of our folk who feel able to lead our Worship. Naturally, our three accredited Lay Preachers are a part of this capability. We also support our folk who regularly lead Services of Worship at the Heart of Kent Hospice.

Our Sunday Worship is supported by the use of Songs of Fellowship and Rejoice and Sing Hymn Books although with our new audio/visual capability in our Sanctuary we are finding that fewer Hymn Books are required weekly and folk are relying on the words projected for the congregation through our IT System. The IT system also allows photos and videos to be displayed as part of worship. We have a splendid organ and are fortunate to have the services of a very talented organist.



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Our Church Family spiritual and social life is enhanced through a variety of mid-week activities. There is a bi-weekly Bible Study and Prayer Meeting held in members' houses. We have two well attended House Groups meeting monthly which provide mutual support and care as well as opportunities for folk to meet and enjoy varied programmes of talks and discussions. There is a Group – Open Circle – which meets monthly in the nearby Methodist Church. The Group is open to all – both members and non-members - and usually attracts a variety of interesting speakers. Our active Fund Raising Group organizes a number of social type events – including Quizzes, Concerts and such like. We also have a well attended series of Concerts, Mid-Summer Music, held annually during the summer months in our Sanctuary when a wide variety of Maidstone folk come to take their lunch in the Sanctuary while listening to talented musicians. In recent years we have shared the proceeds from these concerts with the Heart of Kent Hospice.

Our World Church Committee normally organizes an annual summer lunch.

We have a walking group which meets weekly and provides mutual support and care as well as an opportunity to enjoy the countryside and take some exercise.

We support the work of Unlock via its annual London walk.

There have been seven Baptisms in our Church over the past 4 years of which six were infant/child Baptisms and one was an adult Baptism prior to becoming a member of our Church. The children baptised were family members of our existing Members or Adherents.

The last Marriage Ceremony conducted in our Church was a few years ago. Typically, folk who are married in our Church have family ties to our Church.

With an ageing Membership, sadly, we are experiencing an increasing number of Funerals in our Church. That said, not everyone, nowadays, seems to feel the need for a Church based Funeral Service. We are seeing an increase in Funerals at our local Crematorium and these are sometimes either preceded or followed by some form of Service of Celebration of the life of the departed one in our Church.

We hold Church Meetings every two months where the average attendance is around 55.

As previously mentioned our five Ministry Groups (Administration & Finance, Education, Outreach, Pastoral Care and Worship) play a key role in the effective management of our Church affairs. Further details are given in **Appendix 4**.

The Pastoral Care Ministry Group oversees an effective infrastructure of “Pastoral Carers” who, working with our Minister, endeavor to ensure that contact is maintained with all of our members and adherents and that prayer and other help is provided as necessary. A prayer network, known as the Prayer Spider exists to enable urgent prayer needs to be disseminated. A prayer book and prayer tree are maintained for prayer requests which are then incorporated into family prayers at Sunday worship. It is this Pastoral Care, in particular, which makes our Church Family what it is and what we try to be.



Our “Youth Church” side caters for two age-groups.

- Creche -ages “0” to 3
- Junior Church – ages 4 – 11

These Groups meet during Sunday Worship as appropriate.

We previously had a 12-18 group but we currently only have 1 young person attending church in this age group and therefore the group has ceased for the time being.

Our Creche assistants look after babies and toddlers – 4 might be regarded as “regular” . .

Numbers at Junior Church total 5 with 2 of these youngsters being regarded as “regular”. The age range is currently 6-11

We currently have four Leaders, one “helper ” and three Crèche assistants for our “Junior Church” activities. The Church has a variety of resources which are used to plan lessons and has accessed relevant Scripture Union material when required

Currently, there are no activities for our young people - beyond those offered on Sundays. We did organise social type events for some of the older ones but these tapered off as the demands of their studies impacted.

Our various activities are summarised each year in a book of reports. The edition produced for our 2014 AGM is reproduced as Appendix 5

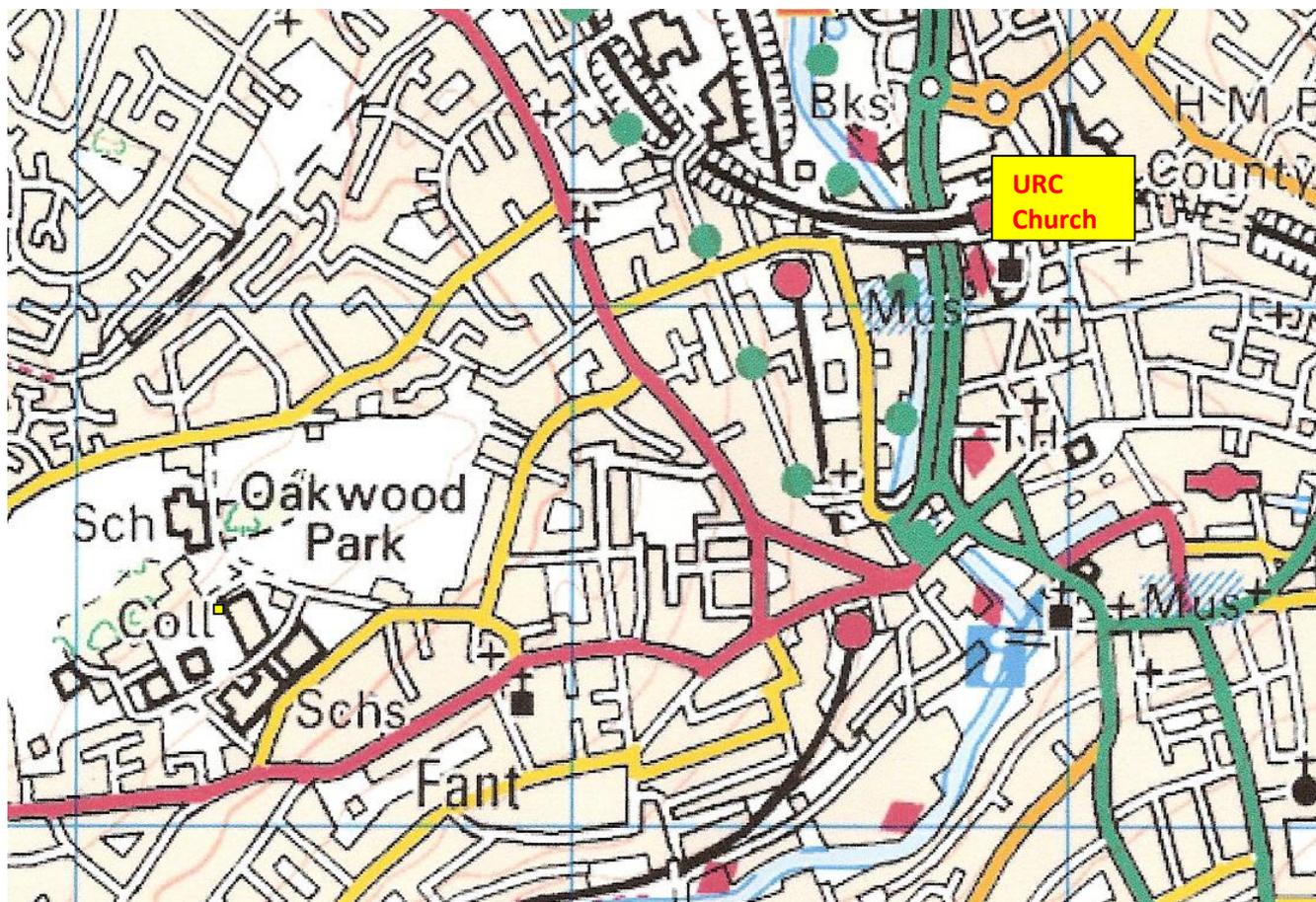


9. Church Statistics

	Dec 2009	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013
Members	125	120	113	104	99
Adherents	48	30	48	47	46
TOTAL	173	150	161	150	145
Members Received					
<i>Prof Faith</i>			1		
<i>Transfer</i>					2
Members Lost					
<i>Death</i>	2	1	5	3	3
<i>Transfer</i>	3	4		4	4
<i>Resignation</i>			2	2	
<i>Other</i>					
Members / Adherents					
>65	103	95	96	88	89
40 - 65	42	34	39	39	37
25 - 40	5	3	3	5	5
<25	23	18	23	18	14
Elders	44	42	42	42	40
Serv Elders	10	10	9	9	9



Appendix 1 – Location Map



Maidstone United Reformed Church
67B Week Street
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1QU

The church can be seen on Google Earth but as it is in a pedestrianised area it cannot be seen on Street View.



Appendix 2 – Manse

The manse is an Edwardian detached four bedroom house situated approx. 1.5 miles from Maidstone town centre. It has recently been modernized and improved although some remedial work is still outstanding.

On the first floor there are four bedrooms, one with an en-suite toilet and shower, and a family bathroom and on the ground floor a lounge, dining room and study together with a fully fitted kitchen and cloakroom and toilet. The property is double glazed and has a modern conservatory attached to the rear accessible from the dining room

There is gas fired central heating throughout

There is a dry cellar which is a useful storage area.

The garage is approached by a shared drive and has extra hard standing for several vehicles



Appendix 3 – Job Responsibilities

Maidstone URC Job Responsibilities

Working with each other and supported by the Elders, Ministry Groups and Church Family

Minister

Mission and Outreach

To be a figurehead for mission and evangelism to the town.
Help forge ecumenical relationships, attend united services and meetings and the ministers fraternal.
Be a force within Churches Together in Maidstone.
Find ways to enhance our profile in the town.

Leadership

Congregation leadership to help the church grow in numbers and faith.
Foster concern for witness and service.
Enable others to develop their gifts.
Prepare and strengthen members for Christian witness and discipleship.
Develop the spirituality and faith of the congregation.
Team leadership as required.
Maintain oversight of and work with children and young people.
Bring concerns to the attention of Southern Synod and WKESSA as appropriate.
Support the Church Secretary.
Seek at all times to further the day to day life of Maidstone URC.
Write monthly article for "Contact" magazine

Sunday Worship

Lead Worship and Preach
Liaise with Pulpit Supply Secretary as necessary

Elders

Chair meetings or arrange for meetings to be chaired.
Ensure elders are adequately trained and equipped.

Church Meetings

Chair meetings or arrange for meetings to be chaired.
Lead devotions or arrange for devotions to be provided.



Training

Personal devotion and study.
Agree with the elders appropriate in-service training.
Encourage the training of elders, junior church staff and any internship students.

Ministry Groups

In conjunction with the church secretary:
Liaise with Ministry Group chairmen as necessary.
Support chairmen in identifying and securing members for each group.
Agree policy via elders as appropriate.
Respond to issues raised by groups as appropriate.

Pastoral Care

Receive support as appropriate from elders/pastoral carers/minister's support group.
Be aware of all pastoral care issues.
Provide pastoral care and support for the congregation in conjunction with the pastoral care ministry group.
Home and hospital visits as necessary.
Interviews/preparation classes prior to admission to church membership, baptisms and marriages.
Bereavement support.

Strategic Issues

In conjunction with the church secretary:
Ensure elders are aware of all strategic matters affecting the church.
Discuss and agree with the elders proposed strategic responses.
Agree approach to church meeting.
Action/implement agreed strategic responses as appropriate.

Contact Point

Together with the church secretary:
Provide a point of contact for members and adherents for all matters affecting the church family.
Provide a point of contact for the Maidstone town centre.



Church Secretary

Leadership

Support the Minister

Through the elders ensure Worship and Holy Communion are offered regularly.

Ensure that the role of members and adherents is maintained.

Ensure effective care and maintenance of church premises is undertaken.

Maintain oversight of finance.

Act on behalf of church meeting and elders where appropriate.

Sunday Worship

Agree elders' responsibilities with the elders and implement.

Ensure duty elders and others are present.

Organise offertory stewards.

Meet and greet.

Elders

Chair meetings in absence of Minister.

Prepare Agenda and supporting papers.

Review Minutes.

Prepare brief report for church meeting.

Action issues resulting from meeting.

Manage/monitor all matters arising from meetings.

Church Meetings

Chair meetings in absence of Minister.

Prepare Agenda and supporting papers.

Review Minutes.

Action issues resulting from meetings.

Manage/monitor all matters arising from meetings.

Prepare the secretary's annual report for the annual meeting and co-ordinate all other annual reports.

Ministry Groups

In conjunction with the Minister:

Liaise with Ministry Group chairmen as necessary.

Support chairmen in identifying and securing members for each group.

Agree policy via elders as appropriate.

Respond to issues raised by groups as appropriate.



Procedures and Administration

Monthly fire alarm testing.

First Aider training every 3 years.

Ensure CRB checks are undertaken as necessary and that register of CRB checked personnel is maintained.

Ensure arrangements agreed with Police and Parking Attendants for vehicular access for weddings and funerals.

Completion of URC annual return.

Ensure processes for elections of officers and elders are maintained.

Manage correspondence received ensuring church meeting, elders and officers are made aware as necessary.

Handle correspondence received in the way in which the church family would expect.

Ensure that church is represented at Southern Synod and Synod Area.

Ensure that church is represented at Gravesend Churches Housing Association.

Liaise with editor of Contact as necessary.

Strategic Issues

In conjunction with the Minister:

Ensure elders are aware of all strategic matters affecting the church.

Discuss and agree with the elders proposed strategic responses.

Agree approach to church meeting.

Action/implement agreed strategic responses as appropriate.

Contact Point

Together with the Minister:

Provide a point of contact for members and adherents for all matters affecting the church family.

Provide a point of contact for the Maidstone town centre.

Assistant Church Secretary

Elders

Issue Agenda and all other papers.

Take Minutes.

Prepare Minutes.

Maintain rota for devotions and refreshments.

Church Meetings



Issue Agenda and all other papers.
Take Minutes.
Prepare Minutes.
Maintain record of attendance/apologies.
Maintain library record of matters discussed.

Sunday Worship

Arrange for preparation of duty rota.
Issue duty rota.
Prepare notices.
Assist church secretary as necessary.
Deputise for church secretary as necessary.

Ministry Groups

Maintain record of proceedings at Ministry Groups.

Pastoral Care

Manage the phone and e-mail Prayer Spider.

Procedures and Administration

Issue Parking Permits.
Issue church keys and maintain record of key holders.
Deputise for church secretary as necessary.

Office Secretary

Prepare weekly orders of service.
Assist the church secretary and assistant church secretary in office duties as necessary.



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Appendix 4 - Ministry Groups

Background

Within the United Reformed Church the local congregation, through church meeting, is responsible for making decisions regarding the ministry of the local church. The Church Meeting is the final authority in deciding local church matters. The serving Elders of the United Reformed Church are given responsibility for leadership in considering all matters regarding the life of the local church and assisting the Church Meeting in the decision making process.

In 1991 the Maidstone URC Church Meeting approved a proposal to form four, subsequently increased to five, Ministry Groups. These are:

- Administration & Finance
- Worship
- Education
- Outreach
- Pastoral Care

Each group is normally made up of two serving Elders, (the Treasurer automatically being a member of the Administration & Finance Group) and three others, with the exception of Administration & Finance which is augmented by members who represent different administrative areas of the church. Members serve for three years with a sabbatical of at least one year before being eligible to serve again on a Ministry Group.

A serving Elder acts as chairman of each Ministry Group, normally selected by the members of the Ministry Group. The chairman will be responsible for reporting information from the Ministry Group to the Elders' Meeting.

Other members of Ministry Groups are appointed by the Church Meeting on recommendation from the Elders at the church meeting following the AGM. Any group may invite up to 2 people to attend for a limited period to help with specific tasks. Appointments to groups and other church appointments will be recognised at a service of worship at some date after the AGM.

The ministry groups bring items of business and recommendations directly to the church meeting in most circumstances. However, because in the URC the Elders are responsible for the total life of the church, the Elders on the Ministry Groups have the right and responsibility to choose the items that they feel should be discussed by the Elders before being brought to the Church Meeting.

Meetings are normally held on the fourth Thursday of alternate months between Church Meetings.

Responsibilities of the Ministry Groups



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The Minister is supported by the Ministry Groups in the oversight of the conduct of public worship; the administration of the sacraments; pastoral care and visitation in the congregation; Witness and service of the congregation in the community; evangelism and ecumenical involvement; world mission; Christian education and the support of our young people in the Church.

Worship Ministry Group

The Group acts as a "sounding board" for new approaches to worship and is responsible for Pulpit Supply through the Pulpit Supply Secretary who is normally a member of the Group. It undertakes various activities in relation to promoting our worship and supports the music co-ordinator as appropriate.

Pastoral Ministry Group

Organises the cadre of "Pastoral Carers" to support the infrastructure of pastoral care and visitation in the Congregation. The Group is responsible for the operation of the "Prayer Spider". The Group also acts as a liaison point for the following activities - supporting the individual organisers as appropriate :

- Prayer Fellowship
- Transport
- Worship at the Prison

Outreach Ministry Group

Promotes and supports the Witness and Service of the Congregation both in the local community and the wider world. The Group also support opportunities for evangelism and initiatives which offer ecumenical involvement. It also acts as a liaison point for following activities - supporting the individual organisers and leaders as appropriate :

- Friday Market
- Week Day Coffee Mornings
- Midsummer Music
- World Church Committee
- Publicity
- Toybox
- Representation to and links with IBRA; BRF; SU; Bible Society; Reform; Leprosy Mission; Women's World Day of Prayer; CTIM; Provincial Synod.

Education Ministry Group

Promote and support initiatives which foster our Christian education programme. The Group directly supports the youth ministry and fellowship groups and their individual Leaders - the Junior Church Administrator normally being a member of the Group. The Group also acts as a liaison point for the following activities supporting the individual organisers as appropriate:

1.
 - Bible Study
 - Traidcraft
 - Church History
 - House Groups



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- Cradle Roll
- Open Circle

Administration and Finance Ministry Group

Oversight of the property, finance, budget and trust accounts. It is involved in the following areas:

- Property Stewardship
- Catering Committee
- Freewill Offerings / Gift Aid
- Independent Examination
- House Committee / Cleaning
- Lettings Management

Appendix 5 – Book of Reports

The Annual reports are produced for the Annual Church Meeting in March each year