

Goodbye to 2018

2018 draws to a close with much for us to look back upon with joy and gratitude at Westminster.

With the college campus complete we're settling in to the new possibilities for collaboration and shared programmes that the proximity of six elements of the Cambridge Theological Federation on this site brings. It is a staggering and wonderful transformation to now have entirely revamped or newly built accommodation for Westminster itself, the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, the Eastern Region Ministry Course, the central administrative offices of the Federation, the Woolf Institute promoting dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims and the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion. Just as the CTF is one of the world's most diverse and broad theological education and formational communities, Westminster is now one of the great hubs for the Federation. I can only continue to pay huge tribute to everyone who has made this possible and whose work continues to ensure that all these endeavours flourish. It is a superb bringing into reality of the vision of the United Reformed Church, back in 2006, to redesignate us from being a theological college to being a much more all-embracing Resource Centre for Learning, serving the whole people of God and the wider world.

Alongside our central teaching through our three university partners (Cambridge, Durham and Anglia Ruskin) we have enjoyed running a series of courses and events for a diverse range of individuals and groups. We've welcomed URC lay preachers and Elders, helped people explore creativity and prayer, guided groups discovering new ways of working and ministering together and walked with individuals as they've joined us to discover some particular aspects of faith that have been important for them and the contexts within which they serve. We've been blessed to have a number of friends joining us from the world church family throughout the year, and are actively looking at ways in which this international sharing might grow and develop in the future. A significant recent highlight this November was welcoming the Board and other central committees of the Council for World Mission, the URC's closest international Christian family, who spent a week with us. All of this will continue into 2019 and will grow. We'll be welcoming groups of ministers from several URC Synods as they come to be refreshed and to learn more about how they might best serve in the rapidly changing situations they encounter. We'll see networks of URC people making use of the college and will be running several events in collaboration with partners like the Faraday Institute.

Alongside all of this the conferencing and event aspect of the college continues to develop and we continue to treasure the gift of hospitality we can offer. Our B&B operation sees a very wide range of people enjoying Westminster as a base from which to explore Cambridge. None of this can happen without the hard work of the

team who ensure that guests find everything they need when they come to stay with us, and I'm very grateful for the dedication and professionalism of everyone who makes it happen.

As I end these brief comments I want to particularly offer a word of welcome to some of those who have joined us this year. Dr Jane McLartey took over as our part time Tutor in New Testament to cover that aspect of our teaching and supervising for the year. Nick Lomax joined us as our new Business Development Manager. Nick will continue to help us build and develop our conference and events work. And Sarah Toyer has joined us in Reception. In a rather wonderful way these three represent the tip of the iceberg of the college with the work they do in welcoming our guests and students, planning and delivering wider events and ensuring Westminster's academic programmes remain of high quality and deeply engaged with the context of today.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a very happy new year.

Neil