

Westminster College

# IMAGINE

*“Time present  
and time past  
Are both  
perhaps  
present in time  
future,  
And time future  
contained in  
time past.”*

*T.S. Eliot  
Extract from  
Burnt Norton  
1943*

#

IMAGINE

... a regular reflection from me as I journey with you in this adventure that is our life together at Westminster.

NEIL

## gift

The future of URC ministries is taking up ever more attention. I find it across Synods, grappling with the deployment of Ministers of Word and Sacraments and the consequences of teams, shared pastorates, vacancies and lay training. I find it across Assembly committees from the Walking the Way task group to Ministries exploring the call process to Education and Learning (the one I attend) looking at the successor to TLS and how deepening discipleship can be fostered. Much is in flux, many ideas are afloat, lots of hopes and dreams are in play. So, too, are many fears, much loss and plenty of angst and scapegoating. All this is part of the air Westminster breathes.

## Looking towards Lent

Ash Wednesday falls, with the usual early morning CTF worship, on 14th Feb. The Reformed traditions have tended to be rather less focused upon seasons and special days than our sisters and brothers across other parts of the Christian family. One of the gifts I've gained from

How to live into it - well - then? A few things have come together in recent days to inspire and encourage me. The first is prayer. At a time when there is so much planning going on and so many options to weigh and enact I find myself needing more, not less, time to pray. My prayer life is often far from as vibrant as I think it should be. But I've been rediscovering just how vital stopping is so that instead of bombarding God with either my wish or my to-do lists I try to listen more. Deep, consistent, attentive, open and passionate prayer is one fundamental I want to foster.

Two more come from Nigel Uden's address at the CTF graduation this week. He challenged us to retain our sense

being in the Federation is precisely this encounter with more ways of being Christian than those I know best and wear most comfortably. Ash Wednesday is one such moment. I now value afresh this moment to acknowledge the depth of sin and brokenness, my own and the



of humour and to retain our sense of gift. Plenty around us is incredibly serious. Mockery is cruel and destructive. But not taking myself too seriously, keeping perspective, fuels faithfulness.

Gift. I am far less a gift to the world as a URC Minister than God and the Church have given me the gift and honour of letting me be a minister. That keeps me grateful and true to my vocation. It's not all about me, but God.

world's. Doing so doesn't deny that confession is a constant. It does invite me to dwell more deeply upon what and why I confess, and thence upon all that Christ accomplishes on the cross for us all.

