

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 20 MAY 2023

At Edinburgh, within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 20th day of May 2023 at 10.00 am.

SESSION 1

After worship conducted by the Right Rev Dr Iain Macleod Greenshields, BD, CertMin, DipRS, ACMA, MSc, MTh, DD, Moderator of the General Assembly, the Commissioners elected as members of the General Assembly appointed to be held this day convened within the Assembly Hall and via video-conference, and the General Assembly was duly constituted with prayer.

The Roll of Commissioners was laid on the table and had been circulated to Commissioners.

The General Assembly proceeded to the election of a Moderator, when it was unanimously agreed that the Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, BA, BD, be appointed Moderator.

The appointment was intimated to Mrs Foster-Fulton who was welcomed by the Moderator, and, after the Prayer of Consecration, took the Chair.

His Majesty's Commission to the Rt Hon Lord Hodge, appointing him to represent His Royal Person in this Assembly, was then read with all due honour and respect and ordered to be recorded.

His Majesty's Most Gracious Letter to the General Assembly was also read with all due honour and respect and ordered to be recorded.

His Grace, The Lord High Commissioner, addressed the General Assembly in a speech and the Moderator made suitable reply.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Moderator, the Very Rev Dr Iain Macleod Greenshields, for his distinguished and valued service during his year of office. The Retiring Moderator then addressed the General Assembly.

A Committee was appointed to prepare an answer to His Majesty's Most Gracious Letter, viz:

Rev Neil Gardner (9)

Mr Mark Evans DCS (50)

Mrs Pauline Weibye (49)

The Very Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, *Convener*

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Standing Committee on Commissions, which was given in by the Principal Clerk who reported that all Commissions had been received and were in order.

The Principal Clerk reported that the Standing Orders of the General Assembly were laid on the table and had been circulated to Commissioners.

The General Assembly appointed a Procedure Committee to arrange the Order of Business, viz:

Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener

Rev Michael Mair, Vice-Convener

Moderator

Principal Clerk

Depute Clerk

Procurator

Law Agent

The General Assembly agreed that the following should serve as the Panel of Tellers.

Mr Finlay Buchanan	(32)
Mr Michael Cunliffe	(35)
Rev Alistair Cook	(54)
Rev Tom MacIntyre	(95)
Mr John Kitson	(158)
Miss Ann Pickering	(261)
Mrs Alison Hay	(273)
Rev Conor Fegen	(285)
Mrs Pamela Scott DCS	(313)
Mr Daniel Gunn	(350)
Rev Sheila Kirk	(387)
Mr Matthew Philip	(418)
Rev Scott McRoberts	(441)
Rev Mary Stobo	(465)
Rev Dr Stewart Gillan	(506)

The General Assembly appointed a Committee to prepare a Minute on Deceased Ministers, Missionaries and Deacons, viz:

The Very Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, *Convener*

Principal Clerk

Depute Clerk

Intimation was given of the arrangements for the Celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall and online via video-conference on Monday 22 May 2023 at 9.15 am.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 11.28 am until 12.01 pm.

SESSION 2

The General Assembly received the following Delegates and visitors who were introduced by the Rev I Ross Blackman and the Rev Karen Hendry:

The Presbyterian Church of Wales

Rev T Evan Morgan, Moderator

The United Reformed Church

Rev Fiona Bennett, Moderator

The United Reformed Church (National Synod of Scotland)

Rev Paul Whittle, Moderator

The Church of England

Rev Tim Norwood, National Officer for Local Ecumenism

The Methodist Church in Scotland

Rev James Patron Bell, Ecumenical Officer

Religious Society of Friends – General Meeting for Scotland

Mary Woodward, Ecumenical Officer

The Scottish Episcopal Church

Rt Rev Dr John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh

The United Free Church of Scotland

Rev Archie Ford, Moderator

Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland

Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh

The Salvation Army

Major David Cavanagh, Assistant Secretary for Scotland

The Congregational Federation in Scotland

Rev Ruairidh MacRae – was also present online.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Dr Nicola Brady, General Secretary

World Council of Churches

Ms Miriam Weibye, Member of the Central Committee

AFRICA

Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

Rt Rev Ini Ukpoho, National Director of Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Relations

Rev Miracle Ajah, Principal Clerk

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (Presbytery of Zimbabwe)

Rev Lydia Neshangwe, Moderator Elect

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia

Rev William Boshoff Tembo, General Secretary

AMERICAS

Presbyterian Church of the United States of America

Dr Yvonne Dianna Wright, Director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, Office of the General Assembly

ASIA

Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Rev Kim Chang Ju

Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance & Settlement (CLAAS)

Mr Nasir Saeed, Director, CLAAS UK

CARIBBEAN

Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago

Rev Adrian Sieunarine, Principal, St Andrew's Theological College

EUROPE

United Protestant Church of France

Rev Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal, Representative of Eglise Protestante Unie de France

Chiesa Valdese (Waldensian Church in Italy)

Mr Ulf Hermann Koller, Delegate Member for the III District

MIDDLE EAST

Tent of Nations

Mr Daoud Nasser, Director

Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Father Nael Abu Rahmoun

The reception of the Delegates being completed, the Moderator welcomed them on behalf of the General Assembly.

The Moderator of the United Reformed Church, Rev Fiona Bennett, addressed the General Assembly in the name of the Ecumenical Delegates and was thanked by the Moderator.

Rev Lydia Neshangwe, Moderator Elect, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (Presbytery of Zimbabwe) addressed the General Assembly in the name of the Overseas Delegates and was thanked by the Moderator.

AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

Section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Report of the Legal Questions Committee was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

2. Amend Standing Orders as detailed in (i) section 2 and Appendix A of this Report and (ii) section 4 and Appendices B and C of the Report of the Assembly Business Committee.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.27 pm until 2.01 pm.

SESSION 3

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Assembly Business Committee, including an Overture from the Highlands & Hebrides Presbyteries wishing to unite, which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

The Lord Lyon King of Arms, the Reverend Canon Joseph John Morrow CVO CBE KC FRSE, addressed the General Assembly and was thanked by the Moderator.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the proposed Order of Business set out in the Order of Proceedings.
3. Appoint Rev Colin Renwick to be Precentor until May 2025.
4. Appoint Mr Roy Pinkerton to index the verbatim record.
5. Invite Commissioners to submit to the Procedure Committee via email: pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk by Monday 22 May at 12pm, nominations for consideration to serve on the Selection Committee.
6. Note the expenses levels for those attending at least 13 of the 17 General Assembly sessions in person.
7. Approve the sale of the Moderator's Residence at 2 Rothesay Terrace and the investment of the proceeds.
8. Approve the acquisition of a replacement residence, preferably by the repurposing of a property already owned by the Church.
9. Note the work undertaken to date by the Presbytery Development Group in implementation of sections 12, 13 and 14 of the Committee's deliverance at the General Assembly of 2022 and instruct the Assembly Business Committee to bring a further report to the General Assembly of 2024.
10. Instruct Presbyteries to work with the Assembly Business Committee and others to formulate and implement terms and conditions of employment for all Presbytery staff to ensure coherent terms and conditions across the Presbyteries in Scotland; such terms and conditions to be compatible with Church and civil law.
11. Approve the recommendations contained in section 9.5 of the Report in regard to the role of the Moderator of the General Assembly.
12. Pass Regulations amending the Nomination of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs I 2013) (as amended by Regs I 2020) as set out in Appendix D.
13. Pass Regulations amending the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs II 2013) as set out in Appendix E.
14. Commend the Scottish Bible Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members, and support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to encourage confidence in the gospel and in sharing the Bible.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 7 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

"and bring to the General Assembly of 2024 a plan for the innovative and missional use of the proceeds".

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the proposed amendment to section 7:

Add:

"net" before "proceeds".

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed amendment of the proposed amendment to section 7, there voted For 165 and Against 156 and it carried For.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed amended amendment of section 7, there voted For 90 and Against 224 and it carried Against.

Section 7 in the print was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Insert a new section 14 and renumber:

14. Thank Ms Laura Dunlop KC for her many years of outstanding service as Procurator, note her resignation with effect from 31 May 2023 and appoint Jonathan Brodie KC as the Procurator with effect from 1 June 2023.

Rev Dr S Grant Barclay, Convener, Legal Questions Committee thanked Ms Dunlop for her 18 years' service and commitment to the Church and his sentiments were warmly supported by the General Assembly. Ms Dunlop thanked the General Assembly in response. The General Assembly welcomed Jonathan Brodie KC who was present.

OVERTURE FROM THE PRESBYTERIES OF ARGYLL, ABERNETHY, INVERNESS, LOCHABER, ROSS, SUTHERLAND, CAITHNESS, LOCHCARRON-SKYE AND UIST ANENT UNION

The General Assembly took up consideration of an Overture from the Presbyteries of Argyll, Abernethy, Inverness, Lochaber, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Lochcarron-Skye and, Uist anent union.

In terms of Standing Order 52 the General Assembly agreed to treat section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture as a proposed new section 14 in the print of the Deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee and renumber.

The Rev Doug McRoberts (Inverness) appeared and Rev Susan Cord (Ross), Rev Rory McLeod (Lochcarron-Skye), Rev Marion Kinnear (Lochaber), Rev Mary Stobo (Sutherland), Mrs Mary Stewart (Abernethy), Rev Elizabeth Gibson (Argyll), Rev Gavin Elliott (Uist)) and Rev David Macartney (Caithness) appeared in support. The Rev Doug McRoberts expressed gratitude to Mr John Cunningham (former Clerk to the Presbytery of Lewis), whose work had been integral in producing the Overture, and moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Argyll, Abernethy, Inverness, Lochaber, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Lochcarron-Skye and Uist to form Clèir Eilean Ì: The Church of Scotland in the Highlands & Hebrides as set out in the Appendix to the Overture.

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee starting at section 14 in the print.

The Moderator welcomed Ms Elaine Duncan, Executive Director, Scottish Bible Society, who addressed the General Assembly. On behalf of the Directors of the Society, Ms Duncan presented a Bible and book, "Love, Death and Resurrection" to the Moderator. The Moderator thanked Ms Duncan for the gifts and the work of the Society which she cherished.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Convener, the Rev Donald McCorkindale, on behalf of the General Assembly, for his commitment and dedication to the work of the Committee, particularly as Convener, and to the work of the Church as a whole.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 15.39 pm until 16.01 pm.

SESSION 4

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ETHICS OF INVESTMENT PRACTICE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Special Committee on the Ethics of Investment Practice which was given in by Mrs Val Brown, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Agree the recommendations set out in section 11 of the Report.
3. Establish as a Standing Committee of the General Assembly an Ethical Oversight Committee ('EOC') made up of nine people, each of whom would serve no more than two 3-year terms, to be populated as follows: (i) three persons would be trustees of the Investors Trust, (ii) one person from the General Trustees, and (iii) five appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination process; of these five, three will have a social justice and/or world church background; one will be a parish minister; and one will be 30 years of age or under at first appointment.
4. Agree the following remit for the EOC: The Ethical Oversight Committee (EOC) is an advisory group that will help the Church of Scotland Investors Trust (COSIT) to focus on the theological and ethical background of what the Church should be investing in, consider the complexities of the investment options, and be a space for intelligent conversations that can support the COSIT to provide the investment managers with very specific briefs, in line with the Church's values.
5. Thank and discharge the Committee.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Convener, Mrs Val Brown, on behalf of the General Assembly, for her work as Convener and thanked the Committee as a whole for their valuable, insightful and considered work.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Investors Trust, which was given in by Mr Robert Burgon, Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the re-appointments of Mr R Black and Mr G A Young as members of the Investors Trust from 1 June 2023.
3. Receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Investors Trust for 2022.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee which was given in by the Rev I Ross Blackman, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Affirm the ecumenical imperative embedded within the Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland.
3. Note the ecumenical implications of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and the “Presbytery Mission Plan Act: Guidance and Code of Practice”.
4. Pass an Act amending the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000) as set out in Appendix 2.
5. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee, in consultation with the Theological Forum, to explore the ecumenical implications of a theology of friendship, and report to a future General Assembly.
6. Welcome the Signing of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland on 16th November 2022 in Dunfermline Abbey.
7. Commend the *Saint Margaret Declaration* Liturgy, as set out in Appendix 3, and encourage its use within the parish as an expression of that which the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland hold in common.
8. Approve the terms of the revised Remit of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, as detailed in Appendix 5.
9. Approve the delegates to Assemblies, Synods and Conferences of other Churches, and the appointment of representatives to Ecumenical Bodies as detailed in Appendix 6.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

4. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee urgently to initiate a conversation across the whole Church with our sister Churches in Scotland about cooperation in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly adjourned at 17.32 pm to meet again in this Hall, and online via video-conference, on Monday 22 May at 9.15 am for Holy Communion and thereafter business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 20 May 2023, 17.32 pm

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 22 MAY 2023

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings on the 22nd day of May 2023 at 9.15 am.

Holy Communion was celebrated in the Assembly Hall.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 10.18 am until 10.44 am.

SESSION 5

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

REPORT AND SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary Report of the Assembly Trustees, including an Overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow as to the Presbytery Mission Plan Process, which was given in by the Rev David S Cameron, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and the Supplementary Report.
2. Agree the total number of planned ministry posts for 2024 remains at 600 plus 60 vacancies and for this to be the basis for the next five years, subject to annual reporting and agreement of the General Assembly.
3. Note that under Giving to Grow congregational contributions will reduce from a total of £47.7 million in 2020 to £38.9 million in 2023 and:
 - (i) urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to engage with the National Stewardship Team and the range of its resources to develop new streams of income and generous giving;
 - (ii) urge congregations and Presbyteries to consider making voluntary contributions towards our ministries during the transition phase as the scheme is implemented and to develop Giving Agreements in the longer term.

4. Agree with the decision of the Assembly Trustees in respect of the following areas as priorities:
 - (i) the growth and development of the Church through the new Presbyteries working closely with the local congregations;
 - (ii) the work of the national on the local need with a particular emphasis on recruiting and equipping our future leaders in ministries of the Church and
 - (iii) the modernisation and simplification of our governance structure
5. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to identify and deliver further savings in line with the deficit reduction plan which will impact on all areas other than the agreed priorities (Deliverance 4).
6. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to provide a five-year rolling budget plan to the General Assembly on an annual basis, noting that in future the current budget will be set by the Assembly Trustees in the previous Autumn.
7. Instruct the Trustees to carry out a review of the Giving to Grow Scheme and bring any modifications to the regulations to the 2024 General Assembly.
8. Pass Regulations amending the Congregational Contributions “Giving to Grow” Regulations (Regs I 2022) as set out in Appendix 1.
9. Agree to the funding arrangements for the Presbytery of International Charges and Presbytery of England.
10. Encourage Kirk Sessions to engage with the rescheduled Christian Aid and ecumenical partners’ legacy giving initiative, *Faith Will...*, around Harvest 2023 in order to encourage giving to the Church including CrossReach.
11. Welcome the launch of the Seeds for Growth Fund as of 1st June 2023 recognising that it is an investment in the future of mission and growth within the local church that will draw on our reserves.
12. Pass Regulations amending the “Seeds for Growth” Fund Regulations (Regs IV 2022) as set out in Appendix 2.
13. Celebrate the work of CrossReach and note that it accounts for approximately half of the Church of Scotland’s total income and expenditure.
14. Approve the merger of the work of the Faith Nurture Forum with the work of the Faith Impact Forum to become the work of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, as prioritised and shaped in anticipation by the Forums, to take effect on 1 June 2023, with the structure, remit and membership set out in Appendix 3 of this Report, and to note the involvement of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum in the membership of the Leadership Team (*Appendix 3 – Structure and Remit of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team*).
15. Thank and discharge the members of the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums with effect from 31 May 2023, noting the huge amount of work done by them and the significant challenges faced, including that of the Covid-19 pandemic during the first two years of their life.
16. Note that the Ministries Council and World Mission Council will remain as constituent committees of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, for the purposes of acting as the statutory employer for the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministers and Overseas Missionaries and the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministries Development Staff.
17. Approve the appointment of members of the Assembly Trustees as the (ex officio) trustees of the Salvesen Fund in succession to the members of the Faith Impact Forum.
18. Urge all congregations, Presbyteries and national entities to engage with the work of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group, in particular the research outcomes of the Research Group on Ethnic Minorities and the work of the Disability Inclusion Working Group.

19. Agree the decision of the Assembly Trustees in respect of the George Street Building in terms of an income generation strategy for the next five years.
20. Approve amendments to the Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, including a remit for the Governance Group, as set out in Appendices 4 and 5 (Section 22).
21. Approve the appointment of Miranda Heggie, member of St. Giles. Edinburgh as Assembly Trustee for a two-year period and the reappointment of David Harrison, Jean Couper, Geoff Miller and Jennifer MacDonald for a second (and final) full term (Section 22.6.1).
- 22 (2). Receive the 2022 Report and Accounts of the Church of Scotland Unincorporated Entities.
- 23 (3). Note the budget for 2024 and the indicative budgets for 2025 to 2028 (*Appendices 1 and 2*).

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 3 and renumber:

3. Note that 600 plus 60 vacancies has been used as a base for planned ministry in 2024 but, instruct the Trustees to explore:

a. A new approach to sustainable planning for ministry posts which ensures local charges (single or linked) which meet a quota for ministry costs, presbytery dues and national contributions retain a right to call a minister (subject to the call being upheld by presbytery)

b. a new approach to sustainable planning for ministry posts which ensures local charges (single or linked) which meet presbytery dues and national contributions, but cannot meet a full quota for ministry costs retain the right to offer a call to ministry on a 'house for duty' or appropriate fractional basis (subject to the call being upheld by presbytery)

c. New solidarity mechanisms for augmenting the resources of local charges, which ensure that all priority charges meet the quota required to call a minister and that all charges not meeting quota can apply for augmentation to reach quota or fractions of a quota;

and instruct the Trustees to continue to maintain focus on increasing vocations to stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries as a strategic priority in the next five years.

OVERTURE FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF GLASGOW AS TO THE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN PROCESS.

The General Assembly took up consideration of an Overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow as to the Presbytery Mission Plan Process.

In terms of Standing Order 52 the General Assembly agreed to treat sections 2 and 3 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture as proposed new sections 3 and 4 of the Deliverance of the Assembly Trustees and renumber.

Rev Mark Malcolm (Glasgow) appeared and moved the Deliverance as follows:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Instruct that a Special Commission of 7 persons appointed by the Selection Committee be formed to consider the missional and pastoral impact of the planning process instituted by the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), assess other possible approaches, consult

with the Assembly Trustees and the Faith Nurture Forum, and report with recommendations to the General Assembly in 2024.

3. Instruct the Theological Forum jointly with the Faith Nurture Forum to reflect on the decline of the Church of Scotland in regard to membership and ministry candidates and to offer guidance on what steps should be taken to address it, reporting by 2024 failing which by 2025.

The General Assembly agreed to receive the Overture.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 2 of the Overture:

Amend section 2 by adding the words:

"General Trustees" after "Assembly Trustees".

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.36 pm until 14.02 pm.

SESSION 6

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

The General Assembly agreed to appoint the following Commissioners to the Selection Committee:

Moria McDonald, Convener	(17)
Sandy Horsburgh, Vice Convener	(61)
Pauline Weibye	(49)
Jonathan Fleming*	(141)
Teri Peterson	(147)
Mark Malcolm	(189)
Isabel McDerment*	(199)
Joanna Love DCS	(218)
Julie Rennick	(239)
Crawford Gillies	(249)
Fiona Shaw	(275)
Jane Barron	(280)
Michael Goss	(324)
Neil Glover	(342)
John Cook	(379)
Jim Donald*	(411)
Matthew Philip	(418)
Susan Cord	(456)
Cath Chambers	(461)
Donald MacLeod	(487)

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the Overture.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 2 of the Overture:

Amend section 2 by deleting:

"2024" and substituting "2024, failing which by 2025".

On a vote being taken For or Against the amended section 2 of the Overture, there voted For 156 and Against 194 and it carried Against.

Section 3 of the Overture was then Agreed.

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Assembly Trustees.

On a vote being taken For or Against section 4 of the Deliverance in the print, there voted For 249 and Against 62 and it carried For.

The General Assembly agreed that Standing Order 95 be amended to limit speeches to three minutes.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 8 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

“, and also add the following further amendments to Regs I 2022:

1. *At the end of paragraph 14(e) add “and those raised for local mission posts and associated local mission programmes subject to 14. (f)”.*

2. *Add a new paragraph 14(f): “Funds raised exclusively for local mission posts and associated local mission programmes, provided that Ministry Here as defined under paragraph 16. (a) is met and that year on year the congregation maintains payment of their Ministry Elsewhere and Shared Activities contributions as defined under paragraphs 16. (b) and 16. (c) respectively.”*

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 9 and renumber:

9. Instruct the Assembly Trustees, in consultation with the Faith Action Leadership Team, to:
(i) Report to the General Assembly 2024 on the broad expectations of those in ministries;
(ii) Review stipends and detail the system how these are to be determined, including all factors taken into account;
(iii) Provide details of support available to those in ministries and what may be required going forward as they meet the challenges of change and radical reform.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 12 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

“, and also add the following further amendment to Regs IV 2022:

1. Delete paragraph 12”.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 14 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

"subject to amending the fourth bullet point entry in section 4 of the Church of Scotland Faith Action Programme Leadership Team Structure and Remit at Appendix 3, to take effect from 2024 and without affecting appointments made this year, by deleting the words from 'General Assembly through the Nomination Committee' to 'Leadership Team and Programme Groups' and replacing them with the word 'Presbyteries', so that the fourth bullet point reads "Twelve members appointed by Presbyteries. There will be one such member for each Presbytery or Presbytery grouping".

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed amendment of section 14 of the Deliverance, there voted For 204 and Against 129 and it carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 14 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

"subject to amending point 6) about the Resource and Presence Programme Group where it appears in section 4 of the Appendix to Appendix 3 by deleting the existing wording " Ensuring the business viability of the Israeli Entities" and substituting " Have oversight of the work of the Church's Establishments in Israel".

Section 14 as amended was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 19 and renumber:

19. Note with alarm the research which reports that Black ministers, ministers of colour and ministers from an ethnic minority are being overlooked or asked not to officiate at funerals but to give way to a White Scottish minister: instruct the Assembly Trustees through the work of the EDI Group to highlight this issue; urge the Faith Impact Forum to liaise with relevant public bodies and funeral directors to invite their intervention; and encourage Presbytery Clerks to raise awareness of this issue in every parish.

The Procurator spoke about the responsibilities of funeral directors in relation to equalities law.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 15.54 pm until 16.17 pm.

SESSION 7

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 19 and renumber:

19. Commend the work of Assembly Trustees and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDI) and (1) request that Assembly Trustees encourage the Conduct and Culture Group of the EDI to collaborate with the Theological Forum on projects of a theological nature; (2) instruct the Assembly Trustees to report to the 2024 General Assembly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 22 and renumber:

22. In order to achieve Net Zero by 2030, instruct the Assembly Trustees to assess carbon emissions from national Church travel (both international and national), determine options to reduce this, agree an annual carbon budget for the national Church and report to General Assembly in 2024.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Theological Forum which was given in by the Rev Dr Liam Fraser, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the Confessions of Faith Overture as set out in Appendix 1 and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2023.
3.
 - (a) Receive the Report "The Calling of the Church" as a response to the instruction given by the General Assembly of 2022 (*Appendix 2*).
 - (b) Approve and adopt this report as an expression of the Church's calling and purpose.
 - (c) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to raise awareness of the calling and purpose of the Church.
 - (d) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to provide resources to enable every member of the Church to discover and develop their giftings and callings.
 - (e) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to introduce training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament in recognising, developing, and deploying the gifts of members and Elders.
 - (f) Instruct the Theological Forum, the Faith Nurture Forum, and the Ecumenical Relations Committee to explore options for widening access to ordained sacramental ministries within the Church in light of the principles contained in the 2019 Report of the Sacramental Ministry Working Group, and report to the General Assembly of 2024.
 - (g) Instruct the Theological Forum and the Faith Nurture Forum to investigate the production of pastoral guidance on situations where a minister or congregation's sense of call is not affirmed by the Presbytery during its planning processes.
4. Instruct the Theological Forum to explore the theology of transgender identities within the context of the Church's life and ministry, and report to the General Assembly of 2024.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add at the end of section 2:

"...and noting for the avoidance of doubt that the Book of Confessions referred to in the Overture will contain the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the 1992 Statement of Faith."

On a vote being taken For or Against section 2 of the Deliverance as amended, there voted For 226 and Against 19 and it carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 3(h) and renumber:

3 (h). Instruct the Theological Forum, Assembly Trustees, Ecumenical Relations Committee and Legal Questions Committee jointly to reconsider the Third Article Declaratory and how this may be interpreted given the radically changed landscape of the Church and of Scotland as a whole since this was last considered and, specifically, if the commitment to a territorial ministry can realistically be maintained and report to a future General Assembly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Instruct the Theological Forum to: (1) study the Scottish Government's Independent Report entitled, 'Ending Conversion Practices: Report and Recommendations'; (2) collaborate with the Faith Impact Forum to review previous General Assembly Reports and decisions on the matter of conversion therapy, and (3) report findings back to the 2024 General Assembly.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

PETITION – KIRK SESSION OF ST ANDREW'S BO'NESS ANENT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The General Assembly took up consideration of a Petition from the Kirk Session of St Andrew's Bo'ness anent Congregational Meetings. Mr Neil MacLennan and Mr Andrew Wells appeared and were heard. Mr MacLennan moved the following crave of the Petition:

1. Instruct the Legal Questions Committee to consider bringing forward proposals to a Commission of Assembly, to be held in any format permitted under s4(2) of the Commission of Assembly Act (Act VI 1997) before 30 November 2023, to enable congregational meetings convened for any purpose to be held, in addition to wholly in person, online or by a combination of in-person and online (ie in hybrid format) with voting and thus decision-making similarly taking place simultaneously in person and/or online, such proposals to be contained in a new Protocol to be passed for that purpose.

The General Assembly agreed to receive the Petition.

On a vote being taken For or Against the for or against the crave of the Petition, there voted For 234 and Against 8 and it carried For.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly agreed that the Report of the Legal Questions Committee be taken in a later session, the timing of which is to be intimated by the Procedure Committee.

MINUTE OF THE APPEAL HEARING BEFORE THE APPEALS COMMITTEE OF THE COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly called for the Minute of the Appeal Hearing before the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly, which was laid on the table and had been circulated to Commissioners.

DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Delegation of the General Assembly which was given in by the Principal Clerk, Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report of the Delegation of the General Assembly and thank it for its work.
2. Continue the appointment of the Delegation with the same powers as hitherto – the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly to be Chair, the Depute Clerk of the General Assembly to be Vice-Chair and the Solicitor of the Church to act as Secretary.

The General Assembly adjourned at 18.38 pm to meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference tomorrow at 9.15 am for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 22 May 2023, 18.38 pm

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 23 MAY 2023

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 23rd day of May 2023 at 9.15 am.

SESSION 8

The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with prayer.

The Minutes of Sessions 1-4, being available in the Assembly Paper, were submitted and approved.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, *Convener*.

The General Assembly agreed that the Report of the Legal Questions Committee be taken in Session 11.

The General Assembly were reminded that the amendment of Standing Order 95 remained in place.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum, which was given in by the Rev Rosie Frew, *Convener*.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to work with Priority Area Congregations and the supplementary network of congregations to ensure their stories, including the learning and experience from their mission are shared with the wider church via the Church's website and other platforms.
3. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to support congregations' and Presbyteries' engagement with response to poverty.

4. Commend the work of the Education and Schools Group and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to support Ministers, paid workers and volunteers in their ministry to schools.
5. Urge Presbyteries to recognise their Local Education Representatives' contributions to Local Authority policy and the welfare and holistic development of young people generally by encouraging networking across the Local Authority boundaries.
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to welcome new Gaelic-medium resources for children from Scottish Bible Society and the Gaelic Committee of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to be alert to opportunities for mission with Gaelic-speaking communities and schools, and to make use of the Gaelic-medium resources now available.
7. Pass an Act on Ministries for Deaf Congregations as set out in Appendix i.
8. Pass an Act amending the Ordination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons Act (Act I 2018) as set out in Appendix ii.
9. Approve the allocation of the total number of planned ministry posts among the Presbyteries as contained in Appendix iii for 2024 (Appendix iii).
10. Note the proposal from the Diaconate Council to use endowment funds to create a part-time Development Worker post to research and shape proposals for the future of the Diaconate and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to bring a report to a future General Assembly.
11. Re-appoint Rev Dorothy U Anderson as a Trustee of the Housing and Loan Fund for Retired Ministers and Widows and Widowers of Ministers, in the capacity of Chair of said Fund.
12. Note the introduction from 1 January 2024 of an integrated support allowance of £250 per year for those in fulltime ministry.
13. Pass an Act amending the Act on Selection and Training for Full-time Ministry Act (Act X 2004) as set out in Appendix vi.
14. Encourage the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to develop work on an Apprenticeship Route with hope to pilot in 2024, subject to further General Assembly approval.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 10.40 am until 11.05 am.

SESSION 9

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum.

The Convener led an appreciation, warmly supported by the General Assembly, of the Rev Jean B Montgomerie, the longest-serving female minister in the Church of Scotland who had recently celebrated fifty years of Ordained Ministry, and thanked her for her courage in following her call.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 10 and renumber:

10. Reaffirm the ecumenical aspect of the secondary principles and existing guidance relating to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), and
 - a) instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to emphasise this in future guidance, and;
 - b) instruct Presbyteries to consider this and articulate it more clearly in implementation and at the annual evaluation and development of Presbytery Mission Plans.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 12 and renumber:

12. Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to consider the original reasons for asking congregations to make Manses available to Ministers of Word and Sacrament and to determine whether these reasons are relevant today and to send this Report to the General Trustees Manse Liaison Group for inclusion in their report to the General Assembly of 2024.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed new section 12 of the Deliverance, there voted For 106 and Against 230 and it carried Against.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 12 and renumber:

12. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to liaise with the Assembly Trustees and General Trustees and others as appropriate, as part of the action on manses, to bring proposals to the General Assembly 2024 which would allow the option for ministers to live in their own home and be paid a housing allowance for use as a manse.

The Procurator made comment on the tax exemption implications of living in a manse.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed new section 12 of the Deliverance, there voted For 162 and Against 175 and it carried Against.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 13 and renumber:

13. Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to commission or otherwise conduct a comprehensive independent survey of ministerial well-being with the aim of deepening understanding of the causes of work-related ministerial stress and developing strategies to reduce it.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.46 pm until 14.02 pm.

SESSION 10

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

15. Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum (1) to create an apprenticeship programme for those seeking to serve young people and youth; and (2) Enable local congregations to resource Youth Ministry through grant making bodies of the Church and congregational funds; being an important next and vital step once the Apprenticeship route is established.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

15. Instruct Presbyteries in consultation with the Faith Nurture Forum to communicate via their Clerks with all funeral directors which have offices within their bounds to request that any worship leader of the Church of Scotland who is being asked to conduct a funeral is always contacted by the funeral director before a date for such a service – whether provisional or firm – is set.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment to the proposed new section 15 of the Deliverance:

Remove the words: "in consultation with the Faith Nurture Forum".

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed new section 15 of the Deliverance as amended, there voted For 141 and Against 188 and it carried Against.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

15. Agree that the pulpit supply fee (and the fee where congregations have to pay for funerals) should be raised from £60 to £100, and any additional service raised from £30 to £50.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed amendment of section 15 of the Deliverance, there voted For 273 and Against 70 and it carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

15. In the light of the creativity shown by Presbyteries in the development and implementation of Presbytery Mission Plans and the increasing variety of part-time ministries being designed in different contexts, pass Regulations amending the Regulations for Remuneration and Reimbursement of Parish Ministers as follows:

[] REGULATIONS AMENDING THE REGULATIONS FOR REMUNERATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF PARISH MINISTERS (REGULATIONS I 2015)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Regulations for Remuneration and reimbursement of Parish Ministers (Regulations I 2015), shall be amended as follows:

1. In the Schedule, Part 2, delete the fifth bullet point (ie delete "All part-time Parish Ministers are expected to conduct Sunday services as part of the duties of their Office in the same way as full-time Ministers. There is therefore no difference in the number of Sundays in any calendar year on which Pulpit Supply is to be paid (7 Sundays).")

and confirm that it is for Presbyteries in the drafting of Bases of Adjustment to determine the frequency of conduct of worship by any part-time minister.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

15. Noting that the General Assembly has backed the call for frontline social care workers to be paid a minimum of £12 per hour, instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to review the pay and conditions of those who serve as Locums, giving consideration to the provision of written employment contracts, and report to the General Assembly of 2024.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Convener, the Rev Rosie Frew, on behalf of the General Assembly, for her Convenership of the Ministries Council and the Faith Nurture Forum and for her service to all which was guided by her work as a Parish Minister.

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GORDON PRESBYTERY

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Special Committee on Gordon Presbytery, which was given in by the Rev Richard Baxter, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Record appreciation of the full and generous assistance given in addressing the matter referred to the Special Committee.
3. Acknowledge that communication of information from the (former) Ministries Council could have been handled more effectively, for which the Convener of the Faith Nurture Forum has apologised, and acknowledge the consequent difficulties borne by the Presbytery of Gordon in respect of decision making and staff redundancies.
4. Agree that any future changes in the basis on which ministries weightings are determined should be reported to the General Assembly and clearly communicated to any Presbyteries for whom specific changes are envisaged.
5. Thank and discharge the Special Committee.

CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church Hymnary Trustees, which was given in by Lord Philip Brodie, Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Appoint Reverend Joanne C Hood and Reverend MaryAnn Rennie as Trustees of the Church Hymnary Trust.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Social Care Council, which was given in by the Rev Thom Riddell, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

National Care Service

2. Note the report which has been published by the Archbishop's Commission and instruct the Social Care Council, in partnership with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, to continue to engage with the Scottish Government in the development of a National Care Service, and urge the Scottish Government to respect the views of care service providers and service users and their families for the implementation and delivery of a National Care Service which:
 - a. Promotes co-design and co-production of services between commissioners, service providers and service users.
 - b. Makes Scottish Government ministerial accountability clear and transparent.
 - c. Makes sure that the principles of a National Care Service are based on values which protect and uphold human rights and dignity.
 - d. Respects the Fair Work Convention recommendation for Fair Pay across the whole sector.
3. Welcome the investment in residential rehabilitation services and note the excellent progress made in the recovery volunteers programme, recognising the importance of this in reducing stigma and opening up opportunities for those affected by alcohol and drug use.
4. Instruct CrossReach to work alongside the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and give advice on the information being developed to support the work of local congregations in order to reduce stigma in relation to those affected by alcohol and drug use.

Dementia Strategy

5. Endorse the roll out of the Heart for Art groups and recognise the potential for further collaborative working between CrossReach and local congregations in order to support those living with dementia and their carers.

Workforce Matters

6. Note the huge challenges in recruiting to posts in social care, commend the existing workforce for their dedication and commitment so that supported people of all ages can continue to live life to the full and encourage Presbyteries to engage in this issue as a matter of urgency by using their networks to distribute CrossReach recruitment resources.

Presbytery Promise and Support from Congregations

7. Encourage Presbyteries to explore the many opportunities which exist within the 'Share the Love' initiative and to share these with congregations in order to find areas of mutual interest and raise vital funds for both CrossReach and congregations as part of their commitment to the Presbytery Promise.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 15.59 pm until 16.17 pm.

SESSION 11

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Guild, which was given in by Mrs Helen Eckford, National Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend the Guild for ways in which they support the members and encourage and develop their spiritual growth.
3. Encourage men across the church to consider joining the Guild.
4. Celebrate the opening of a new Guild in Ellon.
5. Congratulate the Guild and the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia on the development of the green canopy for Malawi.
6. Encourage uniting congregations to ensure that the Guild is involved in discussions and enabled to explore ways in which Guilds merge or work in new ways.
7. Commend Guilds in Forth Valley and Clydesdale for piloting a new way of working together and recommend to other Presbyteries and Guilds Together Groups that they explore new ways in which they can work together to support the greater involvement of Guilds in the mission of the Church.
8. Welcome the establishment of the Young Adults Guild and encourage congregations and Presbyteries to promote this group to their young adults.
9. Congratulate the Guild on the work of its Project Partnership Scheme 2021-24 and recognise the important issues tackled and vital monies raised.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 10 and renumber:

10. Give thanks for the vibrant life that the Guild brings to the Christian witness of local congregations.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Convener, Mrs Helen Eckford, on behalf of the General Assembly, for her service as a role model for faith and action and in developing new ways of working as National Convener.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Legal Questions Committee (remaindered business from session 7, Monday 22 May 2023), which was given in by the Rev Dr S Grant Barclay, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. *Consideration of section 2 was dealt with in Session 2.*
3. Pass the Church Courts Act as set out in Appendix B to this Report (Section 3 – Draft Church Courts Act).
4. Pass an Act amending the Ministers and Deacons in Same Sex Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015) as set out in Appendix D to the Report (Section 4 – Review of Act I 2015).
5. Approve the principles for Presbytery Review set out in Appendix E to the Report (Section 6 – Presbytery Review).
6. Pass an Act amending the Appeals Act (Act I 2014) as set out in Appendix F to the Report (Section 12 – Appointments to Legal Bodies).

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add new section 3 and renumber:

3. Instruct the Assembly Business Committee in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Faith Nurture Forum to consider the issue of representation within the General Assembly, of Candidates in Training and Probationers, including the possibility of voting rights and to report to the General Assembly of 2024.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add new section 3 and renumber:

3. Instruct the Assembly Business Committee in consultation with Legal Questions Committee and the Faith Nurture Forum to consider the issue of youth representation within the General Assembly, including the possibility of voting rights and to report to the General Assembly of 2024.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Insert a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Instruct the Committee to consider what revisions to Church law might be required in light of the introduction of Team Ministry in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and report, with proposed legislation if applicable, to the General Assembly of 2024.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Insert a new section 7 and renumber:

7. Instruct the Committee collaboratively to review the Complaints process, seeking views of Presbyteries and congregations to find ways of alleviating the stress, strain and hurt of those involved in the process and report to the General Assembly of 2025.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Moderator expressed gratitude to the Retiring Convener, the Rev Dr Grant Barclay, on behalf of the General Assembly, for the expertise, sharp focus and good humour which he had brought to his service with the Legal Questions Committee and to his work within the Church as a whole.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The General Assembly agreed that the Report of the Safeguarding Report be taken in session 16 (item 5), Thursday 25 May 2023.

TRUSTEES OF THE HOUSING AND LOAN FUND

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Trustees of the Housing and Loan Fund, which was given in by the Rev Dorothy Anderson, Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Appoint Rev Dawn Anne Laing as a Trustee of the Fund.

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Registration of Ministries Committee, which was given in by the Rev Hilary McDougall, Vice-Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

The General Assembly adjourned at 17.44 pm to meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference tomorrow at 9.15 am for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 23 May 2023, 17.44 pm

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 24 MAY 2023

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 24th day of May 2023 at 9.15 am.

SESSION 12

The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with prayer.

The Minutes of Sessions 5-7, being available in the Assembly Paper, were submitted and approved.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

REPLY TO HIS MAJESTY'S GRACIOUS LETTER

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee appointed to prepare a Reply to the Gracious Letter from His Majesty the King which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Iain Greenshields.

The Reply to His Majesty's Gracious Letter was submitted and approved for signature and transmission to His Majesty.

The Reply was in the following terms:

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

May it please Your Majesty We, Your Majesty's loyal subjects convened in General Assembly, have received with pleasure Your Majesty's most gracious letter to us.

As a Church it was our honour and privilege to offer thanksgiving for the life of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth: a life exemplified by faith and service. We continue to hold Your Majesty and the whole Royal Family in our thoughts and prayers as you continue to mourn the death, not only of our Queen, but of your mother.

We greatly value Your Majesty's continuing pledge to maintain the historic rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland. So soon after the Coronation, we give thanks for the example of Christian duty

and service which Your Majesty has already given to the nation as our Sovereign as well as for your years of dedicated service as Prince of Wales and Duke of Rothesay. Please be assured that Your Majesties will continue to be in our prayers as together you work for the good of all.

The re-appointment of the Rt Hon Lord Hodge as Your Majesty's Lord High Commissioner to our General Assembly has been wholeheartedly welcomed. His Grace's deep commitment to and knowledge of the Church of Scotland and indeed the General Assembly is truly appreciated by us all.

We appreciate your Majesty's understanding of the ongoing challenges which the Church of Scotland is facing as we continue the process of reform. As a Reformed Church we remain committed to reform; as a National Church we seek to love God and to love our neighbours. This task calls us to follow Christ and listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance as we continue the work of prioritising the use of our limited resources. There are many difficult choices to be made but we face them with the love and the hope that our faith in Jesus Christ brings us.

We thank you for your words of encouragement about the work of our local congregations who are a beacon of light as they faithfully serve others in their communities. We also greatly appreciate your acknowledgement of the Church's continued commitment to support those most vulnerable and marginalised in society which includes our work in collaboration with others for refugees and asylum seekers.

We join Your Majesty in praying for a swift end to the current hostilities in Sudan to ease human suffering and to bring peace to that whole region. We remain determined to continue to foster and nurture friendships amongst our Christian brothers and sisters as well as with other faith communities: deepening understanding and building relationships based on trust and acceptance with all people will lead to peace, a peace which our world so desperately craves.

Finally, we commend Your Majesty and Her Majesty The Queen to the unfailing grace and protection of Almighty God, and we pray that God will bestow favour upon Your Majesty, as you continue to reign over us.

Your Majesty's most faithful and loyal servants.

THE MINISTERS, ELDERS AND DEACONS OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND CONVENED IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Signed in our name, in our presence and at our appointment by the Right Reverend Sally Foster-Fulton, Moderator of the General Assembly on this 24th day of May 2023.

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on Chaplains to His Majesty's Forces, which was given in by the Rev Scott Brown, Convener, who also paid tribute to the late Venerable Martyn Gough, Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy 2018 – 2021 who had recently died.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

2. Thank those who serve in His Majesty's Forces as Chaplains for their service to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel, their families, and the wider military community, and commend them, and their own families, to the prayers of the Church.
3. Recognise the contribution of our Chaplains in supporting our personnel who are deployed following the invasion of Ukraine.
4. Recognise the contribution of Chaplains in supporting our personnel following the death of their Commander-in- Chief, Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, whose loss was felt intensely across the military community.
5. Encourage eligible ministers of the Church to consider service as a Chaplain to HM Forces, Regular or Reservist.
6. Encourage those eligible to consider service as Chaplains in any of the Cadet organisations and thank all serving Cadet Chaplains.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 7 and renumber:

7. Note the importance of Chaplains and Service charities such as SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, in supporting the pastoral and welfare needs of serving personnel and encourage the wider Church to seek out and support veterans and their families throughout Scotland.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Senior Royal Navy Officer and First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB, CBE, ADC, addressed the General Assembly and was thanked by the Convener.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 10.37 am until 11.09 am.

SESSION 13

FAITH IMPACT FORUM SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - JEWISH-CHRISTIAN GLOSSARY PROJECT

The General Assembly called for the Supplementary Report of the Faith Impact Forum, the Jewish-Christian Glossary Project, which was given in by the Rev Karen Hendry, Convener.

The Very Rev Dr Susan Brown presented the Supplementary Report.

The Moderator welcomed the Chief Rabbi, Sir Ephraim Yitzchak Mirvis KBE, who addressed the General Assembly, and was thanked by the Moderator for his powerful and informative words, his vision and for his friendship.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Supplementary Report.
2. Welcome the work of the Jewish-Christian Glossary project, noting that the Glossary aims to improve mutual understanding; encourage Ministers in particular to study and engage with it in a way that will inform local, national and international relationship with Jewish communities.
3. Pass an Act amending the International Presbytery Act (Act II 2016) as set out in Appendix 1.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM REPORT

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Faith Impact Forum, which was given in by the Rev Karen Hendry, Convener;

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. *Legacies of Slavery*
 - a) Commend the report on 'the Church of Scotland and the legacies of slavery' for study and action and reaffirm the Church of Scotland's teaching and action for racial justice.
 - b) Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to consider ways to support the delivery of the recommendations set out in the report.
 - c) Instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in partnership with the Theological Forum and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group to prepare a statement of acknowledgment and apology for the Church's involvement with and connection to historic chattel slavery, to be considered for adoption at a future General Assembly.
 - d) Encourage congregations to research the history of slavery and its connections in their local areas, and to continue to celebrate Racial Justice Sunday to challenge racism and speak out against racial injustice.
3. *Net Zero*

Urge Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and national committees and agencies to note and consider ways of taking forward the outcomes of the 'Net Zero Strategic Outline', and instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in partnership with the Assembly Trustees, General Trustees, CrossReach and Eco Congregation Scotland to continue to develop plans and activities to encourage and enable all parts of the Church to work towards the target of Net Zero by 2030.
4. *Earthquake in Syria*

Encourage Presbyteries and congregations to offer prayerful and financial support to the rebuilding of lives and churches in Syria and Lebanon through 'Standing Firm – Rebuilding lives in Syria'.
5. *Pakistan*

Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to continue to engage with ecumenical and international partners on the misuse of the blasphemy law and forced conversion and forced marriage in Pakistan.
6. *Integrity: Violence Against Women Task Group*

Instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in collaboration with Integrity to develop the Violence Against Women Charter as a resource to build a network of congregations, supported and equipped to help respond to and prevent this form of violence.
7. *Cost of Living*

Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to share the Church's practical experiences and policy ideas in relation to tackling poverty and helping people with the cost of living with the Scottish and UK Governments, and to report to the General Assembly of 2024.
8. *Assisted Suicide*

Support the current legal protections which prohibit assisted suicide/assisted dying and urge members of the Church to make representation to their MSPs.
9. *Constitutional issues*

Reaffirm that the Church will remain impartial on the issue of Scottish independence and on related questions about the holding of a referendum.

10. *Addictions/substance use*

Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to research and develop thinking on the policy, ethical, spiritual and theological issues arising from Scotland's current crisis with regards to addictions and substance use, including producing advice and information to support the work of local congregations.

The Convener of the Procedure Committee reminded the General Assembly that the amendment of Standing Order 95, limiting speeches to three minutes, remained in place.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.45 pm until 14.03 pm.

SESSION 14

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the Report of the Faith Impact Forum.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 4 under the heading "Net Zero" and renumber:

4. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to follow the Net Zero Pathway and use the Energy Footprint Tool (both of which are to be published by the Faith Impact Forum) to help them measure and reduce their emissions in line with the Net Zero 2030 target.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5 under the heading "Net Zero" and renumber:

5. Encourage the Faith Impact Forum to explore partnerships and opportunities that will enable the Church to contribute to wildlife and biodiversity restoration and call upon the Scottish Government to do more in their efforts to improve national biodiversity for the wellbeing of both people and wildlife.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 6 under the heading "Net Zero" and renumber:

6. Welcome the decision at COP27 to establish a Loss and Damage Fund, and instruct the Faith Impact Forum to work with Christian Aid and other ecumenical partners to call on the UK Government to pledge a fair and reasonable contribution to the Loss and Damage Fund and call on the Scottish Government to deliver its existing promises and funding pledges.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 4 under the heading "South Sudan – section 5.2.1" and renumber:

4. Give thanks for the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan and encourage ongoing contact with the Anglican Communion, the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) to continue to support local and international efforts in peace-making and reconciliation, and commend the shared pilgrimage as a model of cooperative working.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 6 under the heading “Sri Lanka - section 5.4.3” and renumber:

6. Commend the Debt Justice for Sri Lanka campaign; instruct the Faith Impact Forum to work with Jubilee Scotland to provide information to congregations and Presbyteries about the campaign.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 8:

8. Note with regret the reduction of Scottish Government funding to third sector organisations and instruct the Faith Impact Forum to enter into a dialogue, on behalf of organisations affected, with the Government expressing the Church’s concerns about the reduction and the Government’s practices around funding.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 8 and renumber:

8. Urge the UK Government to revise the Illegal Migration Bill in alignment with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and (1) instruct the Faith Impact Forum to continue to advocate for refugees and immigration policy; (2) commend those congregations which have worked to welcome those forcibly displaced from their homes, and; (3) promote the engagement of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees in its ongoing efforts to co-ordinate the Church’s mission to support and care for asylum-seekers and refugees.

It was moved and seconded as a countermotion to section 8 of the Deliverance (the Rev Tara Granados (178)):

8. Note that the historical decisions of the General Assembly have been to support current civil law as to assisted dying, but now recognise that there exists a range of theological views and ethical opinions on assisted dying within the Church, therefore in order to represent the diversity of opinion in its membership, agree that the Church moves to a pastoral position of liberty of opinion as regards assisted dying, and encourage an ongoing, sensitive, respectful and nuanced dialogue about the ethics and practice of assisted dying.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 15.38 pm until 15.52 pm.

SESSION 15

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the Report of the Faith Impact Forum.

It was moved and seconded as a second countermotion to section 8 of the Deliverance:

8. Noting that the historical decisions of the General Assembly have been to support current civil law as to assisted dying, but now recognising that there exists a range of theological views and ethical opinions on assisted dying within the Church, instruct the Faith Impact Forum, the Theological Forum and other relevant parties to explore such views and opinions and report to a future General Assembly.

The Rev Tara Granados withdrew her (the first) counter-motion and the General Assembly agreed.

On a vote being taken there voted for the motion 103 and for the (second) counter-motion 225 and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed counter-motion, there voted For 238 and Against 71 and it carried For.

Dissent

Mr Kingsley Nwafor (047) recorded his dissent with regard to the General Assembly's decision to approve the counter-motion to section 8, to which the following Commissioners adhered:

Rev Alistair W Cook	(054)
Rev Jonathan Keefe	(182)
Rev Dr Nathan S McConnell	(328)
Mrs Marion Manson-Morley	(448)
Mr Kenneth D Morley	(449)

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Convener, the Rev Karen Hendry, on behalf of the General Assembly, for her courage in taking up the Convenership of the Faith Impact Forum in August 2022 and for the grace, wisdom and good humour with which she had carried out her work.

GENERAL TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the General Trustees which was given in by Mr Alan Kennedy, Chair.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Welcome progress on the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).
3. Welcome the appointment of further Presbytery Buildings Officers and encourage other new reformed Presbyteries to take advantage of this offer.
4. Manses
 - (a) Instruct Congregations to ensure that all retained Manses are fully wind and water tight and meet the Repairing Standard as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 by 31 December 2024.
 - (b) Instruct Congregations to provide a valid Energy Performance Certificate and a report on compliance with the Repairing Standard along with the next Manse Condition Schedule sent to Presbyteries.
 - (c) Remind Presbyteries of their oversight obligations in regard to each of the above.
 - (d) Establish a Manse Liaison Group to present a proposal on manse provision to the General Assembly of 2024 with the involvement of the General Trustees, the Faith Nurture Forum, the Assembly Trustees, Presbyteries, Presbytery Buildings Officers and the Law Department.
5. Property Disposals
 - (a) Remind all Congregations and Presbyteries about how funds in the Consolidated Fabric Fund can be utilised.

- (b) Approve the creation by the General Trustees of Presbytery-based sub-funds of the Central Fabric Fund.
- (c) Note that consideration will be given in the coming year to amendments to the operation of the “Application of a Levy on Proceeds of Sale Regulations”.
6. Note the delay of the Consolidating Act until the General Assembly of 2024.
 7. Note and endorse the position of the General Trustees in relation to ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government about the significant adverse impact on the Church of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 (Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land) Regulations 2021.
 8. Appoint Mr Alan Kennedy as Chair and Rev Scott Rennie as Vice-Chair of the General Trustees (Section 8.1.1) and Mr Michael Craig, Rev Alan Gibson and Mrs Isobel Gray as members of the General Trustees.
 9. Authorise the payment of £1,900 to each of Mr Alan Kennedy as Chair Pro Tem and Rev Scott Rennie as Vice-Chair Pro Tem for their services over the past year.

On a vote being taken For or Against section 2, there voted For 165 and Against 119 and it carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 3 and renumber:

3. In relation to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and taking decisions as to categorisation of buildings in Mission Plans, whether on first agreement of a Mission Plan or on annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan, affirm that these decisions are to be taken on the basis of section 2.1.1 of the Act, ie primarily on the basis of Mission as defined; and also affirm that once decisions as to the categorisation of buildings in terms of section 2.1.2 of the Act have been taken, the categorisation may thereafter change at annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 3 and renumber:

3. Affirm that, as a national Church, the Church of Scotland seeks to have adequate spaces in as many places as are properly affordable, and instruct the General Trustees to report to the 2024 General Assembly on the application of this principle in relation to the Trustees’ approach to the annual evaluation and development of Presbytery Mission Plans in terms of section 2.3.2 of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 3 and renumber:

3. Commend the thorough analyses used by the General Trustees in Presbytery Mission Planning, and instruct the General Trustees to continue their theological reflection on buildings classification, in particular with respect to geographical presence and liturgical diversity.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 3 and renumber:

3. Instruct the General Trustees to explore alternatives for buildings categorisation (alongside the current system) and report to the General Assembly of 2025.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 4(d) of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

"...; In presenting its proposal on future manse provision, the Manse Liaison Group will review the reasons behind the current manse provision rules and assess their ongoing suitability as well as consider alternatives such as the possibility of ministers living in their own home and being paid a housing allowance for its use as a manse."

Section 4(d) as amended was then agreed.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5(b) and renumber:

5(b). Instruct the General Trustees to explore bringing to the General Assembly of 2024 a process for expanding the use of Consolidated Fabric Fund monies to include projects and programmes which fulfil the 5 Marks of Mission.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed new section 5(b) of the Deliverance, there voted For 127 and Against 108 and it carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5(b) and renumber:

5(b). Instruct the General Trustees to produce a professional communication electronically and in print to Ministers, Session Clerks and Congregational Treasurers which sets out clearly and straightforwardly the respective purposes of the Consolidated Fabric Fund and the Central Fabric Fund and specifically how congregations can utilise the Consolidated Fabric Fund; also urge congregations with substantial funds in the Consolidated Fabric Fund to consider donating a proportion of their holdings to financially less well-off congregations in neighbouring parishes, for fabric purposes.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5(d) and renumber:

5(d). Permit congregations attempting to sell historic or listed church buildings to keep using them until such time as a sale has been agreed to facilitate their care and limit costs.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5(d) and renumber:

5(d). Note the continuing shortage of affordable housing, and the projected disposal of many church buildings under the agreed Presbytery Mission Plans, and urge the General Trustees, in cooperation with Presbyteries and congregations, to look at creative ways in which any such disposals might

consider affordable housing and other social aims as part of the sale process, noting the charitable purpose of the Church of Scotland is the furtherance of religion.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5(d) and renumber:

5(d). Instruct the General Trustees and Assembly Trustees, in consultation with Presbyteries, to consider ways of generating income for the work of the Church through the creative use and development of land and buildings where retention may make a more positive economic case than disposal.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 10 and renumber:

10. Request that the General Trustees assess climate risks to assets and function of the Church, then prepare guidance to congregations on how to mitigate these risks to their buildings and report to the General Assembly in 2025.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 10 and renumber:

10. Instruct the Trustees to investigate possible innovative uses of glebe land which could provide new recurring income streams to resource local mission and congregational financial resilience and report back to the General Assembly of 2024.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Iona Community Board, which was given in by the Rev Tom Gordon, Convener. The Rev Ruth Harvey, Leader of the Iona Community, also addressed the General Assembly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend the Assembly Trustees for the work being done on issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, and the Faith Impact Forum for its research into the Historic Legacy of Slavery, and urge all Church people to continue to take appropriate action on these issues at a local, regional and national level.
3. Urge the Church at all levels to remain informed, vigilant and engaged with issues of justice and peace for Israelis and Palestinians, and to use its voice to condemn illegality and violence wherever these are apparent.
4. Deplore the continued escalation of war in Ukraine and in other parts of the world, and the use of language that dehumanises victims and distances us from the horror of war.

5. Commend the Iona Community for its development work with young people, in particular the focus on environmental issues, and look forward with interest to the creative use of the MacLeod Centre on Iona.
6. Are grateful for the work of the Iona Community in its renewal of worship, and thank it for the wealth of worship and contemplative material it has made available to the whole Church.

The Moderator thanked the Rev Tom Gordon on behalf of the General Assembly, for the gifts which he had brought to his role as Convener of the Iona Community Board, since 2019, and for successfully steering a path between the Church as an institution and as a movement during his service.

The General Assembly agreed that the Reports of the Church of Scotland Pension Trustees and of the Chalmers Lectureship Trust be taken in session 16, Thursday 25 May 2023.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TRUST

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Trust, which was given in by Mr Leon Marshall, Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and thank the members of the Trust for their diligence.
2. Re-appoint the Very Rev Dr Lorna Hood and the Rev Dr George Whyte as members of the Trust from 1 June 2023.

The General Assembly adjourned at 18.44 pm to meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference tomorrow at 9.15 am for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 25 May 2023, 18.44 pm

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 25 MAY 2023

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings on the 25th day of May 2023, at 9.15 am.

SESSION 16

The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with prayer.

The Minutes of Sessions 8 – 11, being available in the Assembly Paper, were submitted and approved.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Following decisions made under the Report of the Assembly Trustees, instruct the Clerks:

- i. to amend the Collated Deliverance and the Minute, where appropriate, by replacing instructions and encouragements to the “Faith Nurture Forum” and the “Faith Impact Forum” with instruction or encouragement to the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team;
- ii. to amend the Standing Orders by replacing references to both Faith Nurture Forum and Faith Impact Forum with Faith Action Programme Leadership Team; and
- iii. in line with existing powers granted to the Clerks, to make the appropriate amendments to the Acts and Regulations of the General Assembly to reflect the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team’s succession to the Faith Nurture Forum and Faith Impact Forum.

The General Assembly agreed that Standing Orders 118 and 122 should be suspended to allow the alterations to Standing Committees of the General Assembly set out in section 3 of the Deliverance of the Nomination Committee to be made.

Ms Lisa Whyte, Youth Representative, addressed the General Assembly.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Nomination Committee which was given in by the Rev Julie Rennick, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Nomination Committee to carry out a strategic review of the General Assembly's nomination process and put forward proposals for reform to the General Assembly in 2024.
3. Make alterations to the Standing Committees of the General Assembly as set forth in the Report.
4. Reappoint Bill Hewitt as a Convener of the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly.
5. Reappoint David Burns as a Convener of the Discipline Tribunal.
6. Appoint Michael Mair as Convener of the Assembly Business Committee.
7. Appoint Tommy MacNeil as Convener of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.
8. Appoint Anikó Schütz Bradwell as Convener of the Iona Community Board.
9. Appoint Marjory MacLean as Convener of the Legal Questions Committee.
10. Appoint Andrew Gardner as Convener of the Nomination Committee.
11. Appoint Adam Dillon as Convener of the Safeguarding Committee for one further year.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 3 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

subject to the following alterations:

Faith Action Programme

-Resource and Presence Programme Group

Minister Appointed Teri Peterson (Gourock: St John's) (3yrs)

Appointments to Legal Bodies

-Discipline Tribunal

Vice-Convener Appointed Dr Kirsty Hood KC

-Judicial Panel

Minister Resigning Marjory MacLean

-Personnel Appeal Group

Delete: Minister Appointed Norman Smith (Lothian and Borders Presbytery)

Registration of Ministries Committee

Convener Appointed Robert Hamilton (Airdrie: New Wellwynd) (2yrs)

Safeguarding Committee

Vice-Convener Resigned Fiona Reynolds May 2023

Vice-Convener Appointed Judy Wilson (Cardross) (1yr)

Member Resigned Judy Wilson May 2023"

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 12 and renumber:

12. Instruct that the Structure and Remit for the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team as set out in Appendix 3 to the Report of the Assembly Trustees shall be amended by deleting the first and bullet point entries in section 4 and substituting the following:

- a Convener appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee
- four Vice Conveners, appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, to deputise for the Convener when unavailable and lead Programme Groups (with one of the Vice Conveners to be designated, on the recommendation of the Nomination Committee, as Depute Convener)

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 12 and renumber:

12. Appoint Robert Hamilton (Airdrie New Wellwynd) as Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee for two years until May 2025.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Convener, the Rev Julie Rennick, on behalf of the General Assembly, for her leadership, the welcoming opportunity she had provided to new Committee members and for her energy and service as Convener of the Committee.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Selection Committee which was given in by the Rev Moira McDonald, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Appoint the following five persons to serve on the Ethical Oversight Committee established in terms of section 3 of the Report of the Special Committee on the Ethics of Investment Practice:

Rev Jenny Adams, Minister (Duffus, Spynie and Hopeman)

Mrs Val Brown (Williamwood) (*Convener*)

Rev T Nigel Chikanya, Minister (Ardrossan and Saltcoats: Kirkgate)

Miss Julia Corcoran (Operation Noah)

Mr Andrew Wells (Bo'ness: St Andrew's)

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Safeguarding Committee, which was given in by the Rev Adam Dillon, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the reviewed remit of the Committee set out in section 2.1.
3. Remind every Kirk Session, Presbytery, Employing Agency and department of the National Office, that no person may be employed or appointed to undertake or carry out regulated work unless that person is a member of the PVG Scheme, or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or has provided the Safeguarding Service with an appropriate overseas check and has been cleared by the Safeguarding Service.
4. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to amend the Ministers Learning Pathway for all those who are currently in role, to enable them to complete their safeguarding training requirements as soon as reasonably practical, whilst retaining the mandatory requirement that training be undertaken within the last five-year period (Appendix 1).
5. Authorise the Safeguarding Service to audit periodically congregational safeguarding records and practice and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to facilitate and co-operate with such audits.
6. Instruct the Safeguarding Service to begin work to update the 2009 report 'For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven' and report back to the General Assembly of 2024.
7. Note the availability of the new revised Safeguarding Handbook which can be found on the Safeguarding Service area of the Church's public website and:
 - a. Encourage congregations, Presbyteries and staff of the National Office to become familiar with the revised Handbook; and
 - b. Encourage congregations to provide a link to the Handbook on their own Church website.
8. Encourage all those in congregations and Presbyteries who are no longer undertaking regulated work for the Church to contact Disclosure Scotland and the Safeguarding Service as soon as possible so that their records can be brought up to date.
9. Note the ongoing work to bring a Survivor Policy to the General Assembly of 2024.
10. Note the good ongoing working relationships with Boys' and Girls' Brigade, CrossReach and the United Reformed Church in Scotland.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to develop and roll out refresher trainings for volunteers and trustees who have previously completed the introductory or trustee training within the last five-year period; to amend the Learning Pathway for other Church roles to reflect available refresher trainings; to consider making such trainings available as online resources to allow individuals to complete them independently; and report progress to the General Assembly of 2024.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND PENSION TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Pension Trustees, which was given in by Mr Graeme Caughey, Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

2. Approve the appointment of Stuart Stephen and George Russell as Employer Nominated Trustees of all three Schemes.

The Moderator thanked the Retiring Chair, Mr Graeme Caughey, on behalf of the General Assembly, for his expertise, insight, collaborative ethos and professionalism during his twelve years of service on the Board of the Pension Trustees, six years of which were as Convener.

CHALMERS LECTURESHIP TRUST

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Trust, which was given in by the Principal Clerk, Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report
2. Appoint the Rev Dr Ruth Morrison (Minister) and Mr Jamie Sutherland (Elder) as Trustees of the Chalmers Lectureship Trust.
3. Re-appoint the following Trustees for the periods of office specified: Rev Dr John McPake (2022-2025), Rev Janet Mathieson (2022-2026) and Rev Dr Scott McKenna (2022-2026) (Ministers); and Mr Roy Pinkerton (2022-2025), Mrs Kay Keith (2022-2025) and Mrs Isobel Hunter (2022-2026) (Elders).
4. Welcome the appointment of the Rev Professor John Swinton and Dr Katie Cross as the joint Chalmers Lecturers for the cycle 2022-26 and note that the Trustees will bring to the General Assembly 2024 detailed proposals for this Lectureship cycle.

The General Assembly closed its session with prayer at 11.33 am, subject to intimating that it will meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference this afternoon at 14.00 pm.

SESSION 17

The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with prayer.

DECEASED MINISTERS, MISSIONARIES AND DEACONS

The General Assembly called for the Report anent Deceased Ministers, Missionaries and Deacons, which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, Convener, as follows:

DATE OF DEATH

2018

May	9	Rev Donald S Wallace, formerly Chaplain, Royal Caledonian Schools
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2022

April	20	Rev Thomas Crawford Ballentine, formerly of Cummertrees linked with Mouswald with Ruthwell
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May	7	Rev Denis Ian Sutherland, formerly of Glasgow: Hutchesontown
	30	Rev Isabel Patricia Lang, formerly of Dunoon: The High Kirk

June	4	Rev Donald Kinloch Edmonds, formerly of Glasgow: Househillwood St Christopher's
	9	Rev Alan Anderson Stuart Reid, formerly of Bridge of Allan: Chalmers
	9	Rev Dr Walter Riggans, formerly of Overseas Council: Tiberias: Israel
	13	Rev Alan Thomas Taylor, formerly of Kilninian and Kilmore linked with Salen and Ulva linked with Tobermory linked with Torosay and Kinlochspelve
	25	Rev Dr James Davidson Martin, formerly Dumfries: Dunscore, Professor of Old Testament
July	4	Rev Dr Rev Dr Graham Richard Houston, formerly of Cairngryffe linked with Symington
	10	Rev Dr Donald John Barker McAlister formerly of North Berwick: Blackadder
	25	Rev Diane Elizabeth Stewart, formerly of Milton of Campsie
	30	Rev Kenneth John Pattison, formerly of Kilmuir and Logie Easter
August	1	Rev Ian Kenneth McLachlan, formerly of Barr linked with Dailly lked with Girvan: South
	5	Rev Robert James Victor Logan, formerly of Abdie and Dunbog linked with Newburgh
	11	Rev George Miller Allan Fawkes, formerly of Lonmay linked with Rathen: West
	12	Rev John Hay Paterson, formerly of Kirkintilloch: St David's Memorial Park
September	8	Rev Angus Wilson Morrison, formerly of Kildalton and Oa
	26	Rev Colin Andrew Westmarland, formerly of Malta: St Andrews Scots Church
	30	Rev Thomas Tait Scott, formerly of Kilmarnock: St Marnock's
October	26	Rev William Grant Ramsay, formerly of Glasgow: Springburn
	29	Rev Donald Rutherford Gaddes, formerly of Kelso: North and Ednam
November	3	Rev Ian Taylor, formerly of Abdie and Dunbog with Newburgh
	11	Rev John King Pollock Fergusson, former Mission Partner in Pakistan
	30	Rev George Grant Scott; formerly Dundee: Camperdown
December	9	Rev Alan David Birss, formerly of Paisley: Abbey
	10	Rev Stuart Douglas Rogerson, formerly of Strathaven: West
	10	Rev James Hay Wilson, formerly of Cleland
	13	Rev John Murdo Smith, formerly North Uist: Lochmaddy and Trumisgarry
	22	Rev John R Osbeck, formerly Aberdeen: St John's Church for Deaf People
	30	Rev Ann McColl-Poole, formerly Moray: Dyke linked with Edinkillie
2023		
January	9	Rev Donald Campbell, formerly Paisley: Houston and Killellan
	13	Rev Eric John Alexander, formerly Glasgow: St George's Tron
	20	Rev Alasdair John MacLennan, formerly Ross: Resolis & Urquhart
	21	Rev James Finlay Scott, formerly Aberdeen: Dyce
	26	Rev Graham Bruce Raeburn; Forthvalley & Clydesdale: Newmains Bonkle linked with Newmains Coltness Memorial
February	2	Rev Catherine W Owen, formerly Wishaw Chalmers
	9	Mrs Marjory Burns, DCS, formerly Bellshill McDonald Memorial

	24	Rev David Reid, formerly Largoward with St Monans
March	20	Rev Hamish Gault Smith, formerly of Tingwall
	24	Mr Harry Walker, formerly Mission Partner at Murray College, Sialkot, Pakistan.
April	2	Rev George Strachan Noble formerly Carfin with Newarthill
	5	Rev John McLean, formerly Bathgate: Boghall
	8	Rev Alexander John Geddes, Stewarton: St Columba's
	12	Rev Hugh Bain, formerly Dunning
	17	Rev Jean White Johnstone, formerly Domasi Mission Station, Malawi,
	18	Rev William Thomson, Stenhouse and Carron
May	17	Rev Richard Durno, Community Minister for Deaf People in Glasgow and the West of Scotland and was Minister of John Ross Memorial Church for Deaf People.

The General Assembly, upstanding, were led in prayer by the Very Rev Dr Iain Greenshields.

The Minutes of Sederunts not yet submitted were held as read and approved.

REPORT ON PRINTING OF ACTS

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on Commissions as to the Printing of the Acts of the General Assembly which was given in by the Principal Clerk, and it was remitted to the Committee on Commissions under Standing Order 26 to revise and print the Acts.

PROTESTATIONS

Protestations were called for but none was taken.

The Clerks were appointed a Committee to revise the Minutes.

The General Assembly passed an Act appointing the Commission of Assembly in terms of Act VI 1997.

The General Assembly passed an Act appointing the next General Assembly to meet in Edinburgh and online on Saturday 18 May 2024.

PRESENTATIONS TO THE MODERATOR

The following people were presented to the General Assembly:

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

New Staff Member:

Calum Macleod, Communications Officer

GENERAL TRUSTEES

New Staff Members:

Amanda Davidson, Business Support Assistant

Mhairi Macleod, Buildings Officer (Forth Valley and Clydesdale)

Gigha Macpherson, Business Support Assistant
Sebastian Walls, Leasing and Property Manager

HOUSING AND LOAN

New Staff Member:

Mark Learmonth, Project Manager

LAW DEPARTMENT

New Staff Member:

Lauren Burt, Property Marketing Assistant

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New Staff Members:

Victoria Linford, Presbytery Resource Adviser

Alisdair Macleod, Secretary of the Theological Forum

Gordon Macnaughton, Nominations and General Assembly Support Administrator

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

New Staff Member:

Ramil Valdez Escudero, Project Accountant

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

New Staff Member:

David Moodie, Churches Support Officer

Staff Member Leaving:

Sandy Sneddon, Associate International Partnership Development Manager

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

New Staff Members:

Martin Fair, Pathways to Ministry Manager

Eleanor McMahon, Ministries Recruitment and Training Manager

Ministers recently inducted and introduced to their first charge or appointment:

Rev Dougie Adam, Assistant Minister, Renfrew North

Rev Kwane Ahaligah, Assistant Minister, Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale

Rev Eckhardt Bosch, Assistant Minister, Forth: St Paul's

Rev Julia Cato, Assistant Minister, Edinburgh: Greenbank

Rev Fiona Crawford, Assistant Minister, Cumbernauld: Old

Rev Andrea Fraser, Assistant Minister, Dalgety, Inverkeithing and North Queensferry Parish Churches

Rev Stuart Finlayson, Assistant Minister (In Church Service)

Rev James Gemmell, Assistant Minister

Rev Darren Jalland, Minister, Aberdeen: Bridge of Don Oldmachar

Rev Pamela Kennedy, Pioneer Minister, Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn, Cardrona Village

Rev Ruth Kennedy, Pioneer Minister with people under forty in Dunblane

Rev Fiona Lister, Minister of Aberdeen North Parish

Rev Michelle McAdoo, Pioneer Minister, Shetland

Rev Josh Milton, Kirkcaldy: Templehall and Torbain

Rev Andy Muir, Stranraer

Rev Alastair Munro, Dunblane: Cathedral

Rev Gillean Richmond, Assistant Minister, Troon: Old

Rev Daniel Spencer, Assistant Minister, Dundee: Menzieshill/Fintry
Rev George Sneddon, Assistant Minister, East Kilbride: Mossneuk
Rev Moira Taylor-Wintersgill, Assistant Minister, Birsay, Harray and Sandwick
Rev Kerr Wintersgill, Assistant Minister, Birsay, Harray and Sandwick
Rev William Watt, Assistant Minister, Edinburgh: Corstorphine Old

Recently appointed Chaplain:

Rev Anne Redpath, Chaplain, Presbytery of Perth, Interim Moderator Errol Parish Church

Recently appointed Deacon:

Miss Kirsty Forsyth DCS, Edinburgh: Richmond Craigmillar

Ordained Local Ministers recently introduced to their first appointment:

Rev Brenda Elwell-Sutton, Dundee: North East
Rev Fiona Kennedy, Edinburgh: Polwarth
Rev Dr Mary Macleod Rivett, Edinburgh: Granton
Rev Derek Munn, Dalmeny and Queensferry
Rev Dr Sarah Whittle, Fife: Kingsbarns

Recently Appointed Ministries Development Staff:

Mrs Shirley Billes, Lothian: Tranent
Mrs Heather Thorp, Ministries Development Staff (In Church Service)
Miss Carla Ingram, Arbroath: St Andrew's
Mrs Shona Mackay, Presbytery of Glasgow

Recently Retired Ministers:

Rev David Bartholomew, Balmacellan, Kells and Dalry l/w Carsphairn
Rev David Cameron, Dalmeny l/w Queensferry
Rev Roderick Macdonald, Beith
Rev Stewart McMillan, Dundee: Strathmartine
Rev Donald Prentice, Dallas l/w Forres St Leonard's l/w Rafford
Rev Grace Saunders, Cumbernauld: Condorrat
Very Rev Colin Sinclair, Edinburgh: Palmerston Place
Rev Norman Whyte, Ayton and District Churches

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

New Staff Members:

Lucille Conway, Service Manager at Tayside Support Services
Miriam Coutts, Counselling Manager at Perinatal East
Doreen Hall, Manager at The Bungalow
Eilidh Macdonald – Harte, Managing Coordinator for Counselling East
Tracey Mackintosh, Manager at South Beach House
Eilidh Massie, Head of Business Support and Strategy
Lisa McGilvray, Counselling Manager at Tom Allan Centre
Mairi McNaughton, Managing Coordinator for Counselling North and West
Lucy Micha, Counselling Manager at Confidential Conversations
William Murphy, Manager at Cumnor Hall
Christina Smiley, Head of Service for Counselling and Community
Victor Walker, Director of Adult Care Services
Craig Wills, Head of Fundraising and Engagement

Retiring Staff Members:

Sandra Davie, Support Worker at Threshold Edinburgh
Janice Jakubowski, Night Care Worker at South Beach House
Kathleen Keith, Manager of The Bungalow

The Moderator addressed all those who had been presented to the General Assembly, conveying the good wishes of the Assembly to them.

The Moderator addressed the General Assembly.

His Grace addressed the General Assembly and concluded with these words: "Right Reverend and well-beloved, your labours are now at an end and now, in the King's name, I bid you farewell".

A verse of the National Anthem was sung.

The Moderator and members of the General Assembly having bowed to His Grace, the Moderator, turning to the General Assembly, said "Right Reverend: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, sole King and Head of the Church, I now dissolve this General Assembly, and appoint the next General Assembly to be held at Edinburgh on the 18th day of May 2024."

The members of the General Assembly, prior to lining the Quadrangle of the College as His Grace passed from the Assembly Hall, concluded their Session at 15.14 pm with the Benediction pronounced by the Moderator.

ASSEMBLY HALL, EDINBURGH
and online via video-conference
25 May 2023, 15.14 pm