

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 21 MAY 2024

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 21st day of May 2024 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 Michael Mair, Convener.

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.
2. Recognise the continued pressures with recruitment across the sector, commend the workforce for all they are continuing to achieve in the face of that, and encourage the sharing of recruitment resources across wider Church of Scotland networks.
3. Note the initiative being piloted with Scottish Workforce Chaplaincy and endorse the move to ensure that spiritual wellbeing remains a priority for the CrossReach workforce and those it supports.
4. Commend the ecumenical and interfaith efforts to bring attention to the issue of Fair Work in social care and endorse further collaboration in this area.
5. Express alarm about the cuts to vital care services being experienced by CrossReach and other care providers in the social care sector and ask CrossReach, working with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, to raise awareness about the crisis in social care with

Presbyteries and congregations and to make representations to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government.

6. Note the extensive consultation exercise undertaken by CrossReach to set a clear way forward which will allow it to continue to play its part in the overall mission of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries to continue to work with CrossReach in a spirit of collaboration and mutual support.

The Moderator thanked the retiring Convener, the Rev Thom Riddell, on behalf of the General Assembly, for his dedication and commitment as Convener of the Social Care Council. The Moderator also thanked the CrossReach staff for all that they do. Thom had played an essential role in this work and it was apparent how much he has been appreciated.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 10.28 am until 10.47 am.

SESSION 9

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

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

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Continue to 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, welcoming those mergers that have taken place.
3. Encourage Kirk Sessions to consider if establishing a Guild can assist in their mission to their local community.
4. Welcome the ways in which Guilds are reaching out to local communities and encourage Guilds and congregations to see this as an opportunity for mission together.
5. Encourage youth workers, ministers, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to support the work of the Young Adult Guild.
6. Commend the Guild for the work of its Project Partnership Scheme 2021-24 and recognise the important issues tackled and vital monies raised.
7. Congratulate the Guild and the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia on their collaborative working and learning together.
8. Commend Guilds Together Groups for exploring new ways of working together and welcome the new structure of Guilds at a Regional Level agreed by the Guild conference.

The Moderator thanked, on behalf of the General Assembly, Mrs Rae Lind, who would be retiring as Guild National Convener in September, for her service to the Church. Rae had offered her time and energy in different areas of the country and had also been an effective leader. The General Assembly had heard about the Guild's fundraising, and feedback from the ground, and the Moderator asked the Convener to pass on the General Assembly's appreciation to the Guild for all of its work.

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (including the Overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow and the Overture from the Presbytery of Lothian & Borders) which was given in by the Rev Thomas MacNeil, Convener.

Main Report

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
PEOPLE
2. Instruct Presbyteries to appoint Church of Scotland representatives to local authority committees which deal with education, according to the principles set out in the report; and affirm the report on Church of Scotland representatives' voting powers on education committees.
3. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to review the Income Protection and Ill Health Act (Act VI 2019) in light of its operation in practice over the past five years (such review to include consulting with people who have had direct experience of it) and report to the General Assembly of 2025.
4. Adopt the 'Terms of Responsibility for Ministers Serving in the Church of Scotland', as contained in Appendix II, as a standard for the duties of the office of Ministry of Word and Sacrament, instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to make this available to all Ministers of Word & Sacrament as well as including it in the Ministers' Handbook and encourage ministers to study and adhere to these.
PRAISE
5. Commend the Church Hymnary Supplement 'God Welcomes All' and thank the Hymnary Supplement Committee for their work in producing this resource of contemporary songs supporting the renewal of worship.
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to conduct research, including consultation with Presbyteries, into the use of local worship leaders and Readers across the church, and to report to the General Assembly in 2025 with recommendations on how these roles should be shaped to best support the emerging shape of the Church of Scotland and its worshipping communities.
POVERTY
7. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to encourage Presbyteries to engage with Priority Areas to explore ways in which the Church of Scotland's priority for the poorest and most marginalised in society can continue to be delivered in areas where major adjustments have taken place to Priority Area parishes.
8. Call for the introduction of a Minimum Income Guarantee and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Theological Forum, to explore theological perspectives on this issue.
PRESENCE
9. Give thanks for the faithful witness and service in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), and the Waldensian movement and Church in Italy, CCAP celebrating their centenary, and the Waldensians reaching 850 years and pray God's richest blessing on both.
PEACE
10. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to share the voices of Palestinian Christians, and to continue to support the Church's contribution to interfaith dialogue.

11. Call on the whole Church of Scotland to pray for peace in the conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas and in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, and restate the 2015 General Assembly call urging the UK Government to recognise without delay the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, as a contribution to securing lasting peace and justice for all.
 12. Urge political leaders and media institutions to avoid the use of dehumanising and hostile language when describing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to work with partners in speaking out against this rhetoric.
- PARTNERSHIP**
13. Re-appoint Rev Bruce Sinclair as a Trustee of the Housing and Loan Fund for Retired Ministers and Widows and Widowers of Ministers.
 14. Invite congregations and Presbyteries to use and share resources prepared for the upcoming UK Parliament general election by the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office, especially the Voter Champion initiative to promote voter registration and awareness, and guidance on how to organise an election hustings.
- PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING**
15. Approve the allocation of the total number of planned ministry posts among the Presbyteries as contained in Appendix VI for 2025.
 16. Pass an Act amending the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, as set out in Appendix VIII.
- REMITTS AND THE CREATION OF PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (PMPIG) AS AN ADDITIONAL PROGRAMME GROUP**
17. Note the creation of an additional Programme Group, Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group, in terms of the remit contained as Appendix IX.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.40 pm until 2.00 pm.

SESSION 10

ORDER OF THE DAY

The CrossReach Makaton Choir sang Hymn CH 189: Be still, for the presence of the Lord, and were thanked by the Moderator on behalf of the General Assembly.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Rev Michael Mair, Convener, advised the General Assembly that under Standing Order 17, the Procedure Committee had added an Order of the Day at 3.45 pm to consider sections 15 to 17 of the proposed Deliverance of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, including the Overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow and the Overture from the Presbytery of Lothian & Borders.

The General Assembly agreed that Standing Order 95 be amended to limit the time for speeches to three minutes except those relating to an Overture.

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM (CONTD.)

Main Report

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (including the Overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow and the Overture from the Presbytery of Lothian & Borders).

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

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

4. Encourage FAPLT, in relation to the basic level for locum remuneration, to consider moving towards benchmarking this against the real living wage rather than the national minimum wage.

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

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consider introducing, in relation to ministers in their First Five Years, an annual two-week allocation for study leave and investigate whether the present financial allocation for the Continuing Ministerial Development Fund can be increased from £200 to £275 for ministers in their First Five Years; strongly encourage all ministers in their First Five Years to utilise the resources available, including the Continuing Ministerial Development Fund, and urge all congregations with ministers in their First Five Years to encourage their minister to take up what is on offer.

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

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and other relevant parties, recognising the pace of societal change at this time, acknowledging the significance of the recently released Cass Report, and informed by the work done by the Theological Forum on Transgender Identities, to consider the implications of the Cass Report to the work of the Church, particularly amongst young people, 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 Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to review the support which may be provided to those ministers from overseas who have completed their familiarisation periods and presently seek a charge, with the administrative and financial challenges of renewing visas, and report to the General Assembly of 2025, and in the interim supply any support which may be provided without budgetary implications.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 6 of the Deliverance:

Delete:

"to conduct research, including consultation with Presbyteries, into"

and substitute with:

"to consult with Presbyteries, Readers and local worship leaders about".

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 6 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

"and in the interim encourage Presbyteries to promote the use of Readers already Set Apart and willing to serve."

Section 6 as amended was then agreed.

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

Delete:

"and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Theological Forum, to explore theological perspectives on this issue."

Section 8 as amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 3.30 pm until 3.48 pm.

SESSION 11

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM (CONTD.)

Main Report

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (including the Overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow and the Overture from the Presbytery of Lothian & Borders).

ORDER OF THE DAY

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

Add at the end:

"recognising that some of a Presbytery's overall allocation of posts may be divided into part-time roles."

Section 15 as amended was then agreed.

OVERTURE FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF GLASGOW

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

Section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture was treated as a proposed new section 16 of the Deliverance of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

The Rev Dr Ruth Morrison appeared and moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Determine that all vacant charges which conform to the final position in the Approved Presbytery Mission Plan and which in all other respects qualify for permission to call shall not have such permission withheld by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (working through the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group) for the reason only that the number of ministry posts allocated to that Presbytery by the General Assembly has, at that time, been exceeded.

The General Assembly agreed to receive the Overture.

On a vote being taken For or Against section 2 of the Overture, there voted For 147 and Against 197 and it carried Against.

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM (CONTD.)

Main Report

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

Add a new section 16 and renumber:

16. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, to review the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and to report to the General Assembly of 2025 with proposed revisions, particularly in relation to team ministry and the adjustment process, and meantime note the willingness of the Principal Clerk's office to assist Presbyteries with flexible solutions, in particular to issues arising with team ministry.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 16 of the Deliverance in the print:

Add at the end:

And further amend the Act by deleting paragraph 7(10)(e)(E).

On a vote being taken For or Against the second amendment of section 16 of the Deliverance, there voted For 81 and Against 223 and it carried Against.

Section 16 in the print was then agreed.

OVERTURE FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF LoTHIAN & BORDERS

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

Section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture was treated as a proposed new section 17 of the Deliverance of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

The Rev Norman Smith appeared, and Mrs Abigail Morrison appeared in support, and moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Instruct that the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) (“the Act) shall be amended so as to require only comments from FAPLT and the GTs on an annual evaluation and development, with approval from FAPLT and the GTs only being required every five years, and to that end pass an Act amending the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) as set out in the Appendix to this Overture.

APPENDIX (detailed changes required to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021))

[] ACT AMENDING THE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN ACT (ACT VIII 2021) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2024, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. Delete the existing definition of “Approved Mission Plan” and substitute:
““Approved Mission Plan” shall mean a Mission Plan that has initially been approved by the Presbytery, FAPLT and the General Trustees and which thereafter has been annually and five-yearly evaluated and developed in accordance with this Act;”
2. Delete the existing section 2.1.2(a) and substitute:
“(a) to be retained beyond the five years from the date of the Approved Mission Plan”.
3. In section 2.2.2, delete “annual” and substitute “five-yearly”.
4. Delete the existing section 2.3.2 and substitute:
“The process of annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan shall be initiated by the Presbytery, and shall proceed in consultation with FAPLT and the General Trustees but the approval of FAPLT and of the General Trustees to the Mission Plan shall not be required. Once final approval of the Mission Plan following annual evaluation and development is recorded at a meeting of the Presbytery, the Mission Plan shall be re-dated to cover the next five years, becoming the Presbytery’s Approved Mission Plan and an extract minute of the Presbytery’s decision and a copy of the Approved Mission Plan shall be sent to FAPLT and the General Trustees.”
5. Add a new section 2.3.3:
“If a Presbytery fails to carry out an annual evaluation and development of its Mission Plan within a reasonable period of when it was due, a referral may be made by the Principal Clerk to the Presbytery Review Committee.”
6. Add a new section 2.4 headed “FIVE-YEARLY EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION PLAN” and renumber the existing section 2.4 as section 2.5:
 - “2.4.1 Each Presbytery shall also carry out a process of five-yearly evaluation and development of its Mission Plan so as to maintain in rolling form an accurate, comprehensive and up to date Mission Plan for the shape of church life in the next five years in that Presbytery.
 - 2.4.2 In the year when a five-yearly evaluation and development of a Mission Plan takes place, this process shall replace the annual evaluation and development process set out in section 2.3.
 - 2.4.3 The process of five-yearly evaluation and development of the Mission Plan shall be initiated by the Presbytery, and shall proceed in consultation with FAPLT and the General Trustees. Thereafter approval by the Presbytery, and final approval by FAPLT and General Trustees shall be sought and this process shall follow the procedure set out above at section 2.2, save that the period to achieve final approval of the Plan shall be one month rather than three months. After

such five-yearly evaluation and development, final approval and recording of that approval at a meeting of the Presbytery, the Mission Plan shall be re-dated to cover the next five years and that shall become the Presbytery's Approved Mission Plan.

2.4.4 The first five-yearly evaluation and development of each Mission Plan shall take place five years after a Mission Plan first became an Approved Mission Plan in terms of section 2.2.6, and thereafter a five-yearly evaluation and development shall take place every five years."

7. In the existing section 2.4.2, to be re-numbered 2.5.2, after "annual" add "or five-yearly".

8. Delete the existing section 3.1 and substitute:

"Within fourteen days of the date of the Presbytery meeting at which one of the following has been recorded:

(a) the agreement of FAPLT and the General Trustees to the Mission Plan; or

(b) the approval by Presbytery to an annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan; or

(c) the agreement of FAPLT and the General Trustees to a five-yearly evaluation and development of a Mission Plan;

it shall be open to any twelve or more members of the Presbytery or to any Kirk Session within its bounds to seek a review of the process used by the Presbytery in preparing and approving the Mission Plan (or its annual or five-yearly evaluation or development, as the case may be). This shall be done by sending intimation to the Principal Clerk (who in turn shall inform FAPLT and the General Trustees in the case of a first agreement to a Mission Plan or a five-yearly evaluation and development of a Mission Plan)."

9. Delete the existing section 4.1 and substitute:

"After achieving the final approval of FAPLT and the General Trustees to the Mission Plan (or the approval by Presbytery to an annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan, or of FAPLT and the General Trustees to a five-yearly evaluation and development of a Mission Plan, as the case may be), and when there are no outstanding requests for review to be heard by the Mission Plan Review Panel, the Presbytery shall proceed to implement the Approved Mission Plan."

10. In the fifth sentence of section 7(5), after "normal annual" add "and five-yearly".

11. In section A2.(b) of the Schedule, delete "2.3" and substitute "2.4" and delete "annual" and substitute "five-yearly".

12. In section A2.(c) of the Schedule, after "annual" add "or five-yearly".

The General Assembly agreed to receive the Overture.

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to section 2 of the Overture:

Instruct that the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) shall be amended so as to substitute biennial evaluation and development for annual evaluation and development, and to that end pass an Act amending the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) as set out in the Appendix to this countermotion.

APPENDIX to countermotion (detailed changes required to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021))

[] ACT AMENDING THE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN ACT (ACT VIII 2021) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2024, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. Delete the existing section 2.1.2(a) and substitute:

- “(a) to be retained beyond the five years from the date of the Approved Mission Plan”.
2. In section 2.2.2, delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”.
 3. Retitle section 2.3 as “BIENNIAL EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION PLAN”.
 4. In section 2.3.1, delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”.
 5. In section 2.3.2, delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”.
 6. In section 2.4.2, delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”.
 7. In section 3.1 delete “annual” and substitute “biennial” on two occasions.
 8. In section 4.1 delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”.
 9. In the fifth sentence of section 7(5), delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”.
 10. In section A2.(b) of the Schedule, delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”.
 11. In section A2.(c) of the Schedule, delete “annual” and substitute “biennial”

On a vote being taken, there voted for the motion 196 and for the counter-motion 119, so the motion carried and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

On a vote being taken For or Against the motion, there voted For 210 and Against 95 and it carried For.

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM (CONTD.)

Main Report

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

Add a new section 17 and renumber:

17. Invite the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to record the number of ‘Bases of Adjustment’ being processed by Presbyteries (in terms of the various forms of Adjustment referred to in Section 7 of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021)), the time taken to process these and whether or not these Bases were consistent with the relevant Presbytery Mission Plans; and report to the General Assembly of 2025.

Sections 10-14 of the Proposed Deliverance of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (these being the only sections of the main Report which had not been considered), along with the Supplementary Report, were remaindered. The Procedure Committee will report on where they will be taken.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 21 May 2024, 6.14 pm

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 22 MAY 2024

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 22nd day of May 2024 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 Michael Mair, Convener.

The Convener advised that sections 10-14 of the Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team will be considered in Session 15 on Wednesday 22 May 2024 and that the Supplementary Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team will be considered in Session 16 on Thursday 23 May 2024.

REPLY TO HIS MAJESTY'S MOST 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 Sally Foster-Fulton, Convener.

The Reply to His Majesty's Most 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. We greatly value Your Majesty's continuing pledge to maintain the historic rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland.

The appointment of His Royal Highness The Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh as Your Majesty's Lord High Commissioner to our General Assembly has been wholeheartedly welcomed. His Grace's

deep affection for Scotland as well as his sound knowledge of the Church of Scotland and indeed the General Assembly is truly appreciated by us all. The heartfelt words of his opening address were warmly received and lifted the Assembly. We have also been grateful for the presence and participation of Her Grace, The Duchess of Edinburgh at many events during the week and for visits to more remote parts of Scotland.

We also wish to convey our continued concern for the health of both Your Majesty and Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales. Please be assured of our ongoing prayers for both your recoveries and for the whole Royal Family who, like so many others, are bearing the strain and anxiety of loved ones going through cancer treatment. Your Majesty's and HRH The Princess of Wales' openness about your cancer diagnoses has been an inspiration, encouragement and comfort to countless others walking the same path.

We greatly value the wisdom of your words about creating the space amongst one another so that we can with respect and kindness, speak to and treat each other as we would wish to be treated. Such space enables us to perceive with heart and mind the God-given human dignity of the other person. Your commendation of our endeavours to uphold the values of the Kingdom of God as we seek to promote justice and peace for all people is greatly appreciated.

We thank you too for your recognition of the huge contribution of congregations across Scotland and beyond who are tirelessly working to serve all people but especially the most vulnerable and marginalised in our society. In these challenging times for the Kirk your prayers for us as well as your words of encouragement, hope and peace mean so much.

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 Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly on this 22nd day of May 2024.

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.

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. Note the significant contribution of HM Forces personnel in a variety of theatres, notably the NATO response to the war in Ukraine and current operations in the Red Sea area.
4. Note with concern the lack of applications for military chaplaincy, and encourage all eligible ministers of the Church to consider service as a Chaplain to HM Forces, Regular or Reservist.

5. Welcome the review by Lord Etherton KC into the historic treatment of LGBT+ personnel, and urge HM Government to implement the recommendations in full and note with regret any breach, in the past, of the pastoral relationship between Chaplain and military personnel.
6. Encourage those eligible to consider service as Chaplains in any of the Cadet organisations and thank all serving Cadet Chaplains.

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

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

4. Acknowledge the Committee's tireless work towards recruitment and instruct the Committee to produce a letter defining the role, rights, and deployment protections for Reservist Chaplains and Kirk Sessions.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the proposed new section 4 of the Deliverance:

Add after "Reservist Chaplains" the words "and Cadet Chaplains".

The new section 4 of the Deliverance, as amended, was then agreed.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Tim Jones CBE, addressed the General Assembly and was thanked by the Convener.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 10.57 am until 11.15 am.

SESSION 13

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. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to develop and implement processes and working practices which ensure compliance with The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, to be enacted in April 2025, and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to cooperate with such processes and work practices.
3. Instruct the Safeguarding Service to consider the vision of safeguarding across all areas of the Church and encourage all to support the development of a positive Safeguarding Culture.
4. Note the ongoing work of the Safeguarding Committee to roll out the Leadership and Trustee Safeguarding training courses and encourage those for whom such training is

- mandatory to attend training and use their learning to promote a positive safeguarding culture.
5. Note the ongoing work by the Safeguarding Service to assess child and adult wellbeing and protection concerns and provide professional advice to congregations, Presbyteries, CrossReach, the national offices of the Church of Scotland and the Girls Brigade.
 6. Note the ongoing work to review and update the 2009 report 'For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven'.
 7. Note the ongoing work by the Safeguarding Service to manage those who pose a risk in Church Communities.
 8. Approve the Support for Survivors of Historical Abuse Policy as set out in the Appendix and encourage its implementation in Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the National Office.

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

Add a new section 6 and renumber:

6. Note that the Safeguarding Committee will work with the Assembly Trustees and the Boys' Brigade to explore how the relationship between the Boys' Brigade and the Church might develop so as to ensure continued close working arrangements which are compliant with the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 and Data Protection legislation.

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

Add a new section 9 and renumber:

9. Invite the Safeguarding Committee to consider its processes as they relate to people who have been found not guilty in criminal proceedings but who are subject to Safeguarding procedures.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed new section 9 of the Deliverance, there voted For 225 and Against 69 and it carried For.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Moderator thanked the retiring Convener, the Rev Adam Dillon, on behalf of the General Assembly, and colleagues in Kirk Sessions, for his five years' service as Convener of the Safeguarding Committee. The Moderator said that Adam had steered the Committee in the right direction and had been described as a champion of good safeguarding practice.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

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

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.37 pm until 2.00 pm.

SESSION 14

Mr Phill Mellstrom, Worship Development Worker and Mr Iain McLarty, Worship Development Worker (Priority Areas) presented the Moderator with a copy of *God Welcomes All*, the Church of Scotland's new hymnary supplement and the Moderator thanked them for all the work which they

do.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly agreed that Standing Order 95 be amended to limit the time for speeches to two minutes except those relating to the presentation of Reports by Conveners and Chairs.

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Report of the Iona Community Board.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Encourage the Church of Scotland at every level - nationally, at Presbytery and in congregations - to identify specific ways in which the different strands of the work of the Iona Community might inform and influence the future planning and delivery of mission and outreach work of the Church.
3. In the face of Brexit and ongoing rise of populism across Europe, urge Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and congregations to take up opportunities to forge links, cross-cultural learning and partnerships across Europe.
4. Commend the work of the Church of Scotland in Israel and Palestine, while regretting the withdrawal of Church of Scotland funds from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.
5. Welcome the proposal by Monica Lennon MSP for an Ecocide Prevention (Scotland) Bill in the Scottish Parliament which seeks to deter mass environmental damage and destruction taking place in Scotland, and aims to protect the environment, habitats, and natural resources by introducing the crime of ecocide into Scots Law; note the engagement by both members of the Iona Community Environment Common Concern Network and the Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group in the consultation about this proposal; note the involvement of the World Council of Churches in the Faith for Ecocide Law initiative, and support further development of legal protections of the environment both in Scotland and internationally.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND PENSION TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Pension Trustees, which, in the absence of the Convener, was given in by Miss Lin Macmillan, Vice-Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the appointment of Rosalind Scott-Douglas as an Employer Nominated Trustee of all three Schemes.

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 Mrs J McKeown, Mr J Millar and Mr R Nisbet as from 1 June 2024.
3. Approve the appointment of Mr S Anderson with effect from 1 June 2024.
4. Receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Investors Trust for 2023.

ETHICAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Ethical Oversight Committee, which was given in by Mrs Val Brown, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the Faith values aspirations or "Front Door Language" as set out in the Appendix and encourage the Church of Scotland Investors Trust to engage with these aspirations.

GENERAL TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary 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 and the Supplementary Report.
2. Note the work of the Manse Liaison Group (Standards) which was established to consider, on a practical basis, how manse standards may be improved, specifically looking at refurbishment proposals and manse replacement and welcome the requirement that all manses should have standards which are in excess of statutory tolerable standards.
3. Note the disappointing level of information on current manse condition which has been returned by Presbyteries.
4. Commend the report into provision of manses with specific reference to the question of ministers living in their own homes and accept the recommendation of the Manse Liaison Group (Provision) that the default position should continue to be that ministers live in manses and that for other circumstances the Manse Adjudication Committee may be utilised.
5. Approve the two proposals set out in section 7.1.4 of this Report as to permitting disbursement for non-fabric purposes from the Consolidated Fabric Fund.

6. Approve and adopt the amendments to the “Use of Monies in the Consolidated Fabric Fund” as set out in Appendix 5 to the Report.
7. Note the position in relation to Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 (Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land) Regulations 2021.
8. Appoint Mr Fraser Bews, Rev Dr David Coulter, Mr Tim Podger and Rev Nigel J Robb as members of the General Trustees.
9. Authorise the payment of £2,000 to each of Mr Alan Kennedy as Chair and Rev Scott Rennie as Vice-Chair for their services over the past year.
- 10 (2). Pass The Church of Scotland General Trustees (Properties, Funds and Endowments) Act 2024 as set out in the Appendix to this Supplementary Report.

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

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

4. Remind Kirk Sessions of their existing obligations under Church law to send manse condition schedules to Presbyteries by 31 May in each year and instruct the General Trustees to report back to the General Assembly in 2025 on the extent to which this is being done.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the proposed new section 4 of the Deliverance:

Insert after “manse condition schedules” the words “and Property Registers (for Churches and Halls)” and after “each year” the words “and remind Presbyteries to send the Returns Sheet to the General Trustees by 31 August in each year;”

The new section 4 of the Deliverance, as amended, was then agreed.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 3.48 pm until 4.08 pm.

SESSION 15

GENERAL TRUSTEES

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

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

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Affirm the important place of the arts in worship and mission, their contribution to knowledge and culture; recognise that our rich heritage results from many years of generous giving from forebears, congregations and benefactors; seek to protect this vital part of Scotland’s story for the future through consultation and collaboration with relevant bodies; acknowledge that the arts are a source of religious knowledge and experience; and urge the General Trustees to take all reasonable steps to safeguard this potential resource for worship in the future.

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

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Urge the General Trustees, in consultation with Presbyteries, to give urgent thought to how pipe organs in church buildings scheduled for closure might be widely publicised as available for relocation to churches (and other appropriate locations) continuing in use, and report on action taken to the General Assembly of 2025.

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

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

5. Urge Presbyteries to work collaboratively with congregations, the General Trustees and the Law Department so as to enable the strategic release of church buildings in accordance with the time-frame set out in the Presbytery Mission Plan, taking into account local sensitivities and including the possibility of community buyouts and a consequent delay in the sale process; urge the General Trustees, in consultation with the Law Department, to liaise with Presbyteries in accommodating these timeframes, without putting such congregations under undue time pressure; and encourage congregations not to close such buildings until such time as a sale has been effected.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 6 of the Deliverance:

Add at the end:

and further amend Appendix 5 by adding at the end of para 6(a) the words “or for non-fabric purposes aligned with the Five Marks of Mission”;

Section 6 as amended was then agreed.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOUSING AND LOAN FUND

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland 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. Note the new Constitution of the Fund as set out in Appendix 5.
3. Appoint Alison Fyfe as a Trustee of the Fund.

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.
2. Re-appoint Mr John Hodge and Mr Christopher Mackay as members of the Trust from 1 June 2024.

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM (CONTD.)

Main Report

The Moderator invited two Overseas Delegates to speak to the General Assembly. The Rev Jonathan Terino, Waldensian Church, Italy spoke about the 850th Anniversary of the Waldensian Church and the Rev Dr Mwawi Chilongozi, General Secretary, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Malawi, described the faithful witness of the CCAP.

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of sections 10-14 of the Proposed Deliverance of the Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

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

Add a new section 11 and renumber:

11. Encourage anyone who is in future planning a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine to seek out and meet with the contemporary Christian community – and their Muslim and Jewish neighbours – who seek justice and peace; listening to their concerns and experiences, and offering accompaniment and solidarity with those suffering under occupation and discrimination.

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

Add a new section 11 and renumber:

11. Encourage Church members to take note of the requests from the Palestinian Christian Communities for help in their non-violent struggle to bring peace with justice, including consideration of previous General Assembly statements to refrain from buying goods from illegal settlements.

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

Add a new section 12 and renumber:

12. Note the monthly Prayers for Peace in the Middle East being held online on the 24th of each month, jointly with Christian Aid Scotland, since the latter part of 2023, as an opportunity to join in such prayers together with Christians and Christian Aid partners in the Middle East, and express thanks for those involved.

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

Add a new section 12 and renumber:

12. Call on the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to publicly and explicitly call on the UK Government to call for an immediate and permanent Ceasefire in Gaza, to cease granting export licences for the sale of armaments to Israel and to reinstate UNRWA funding immediately.

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

Add a new section 12 and renumber:

12. Express our gratitude to Britain Yearly Meeting for its liberality in funding the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) UK and Ireland, and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to give prayerful consideration to reinstating the annual Church of Scotland grant to support the work of EAPPI UK and Ireland, at least to its previous level, and to report back to the General Assembly of 2025.

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

Delete "speaking out against this rhetoric" and substitute the words "challenging this rhetoric through advocacy, encounter and practical initiatives".

Section 12 in the print as amended was then agreed.

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

Add a new section 13 and renumber:

13. Give thanks for a century of faithful witness and service in the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCK), and commit to continuing accompaniment for the campaign for peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

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

Add a new section 13 and renumber:

13. Recognise and give thanks for Mediterranean Hope's ministry of 10 years in welcoming and supporting refugees and migrants, and commend their continued efforts to identify and develop models of best practice which can be shared.

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

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

15. As the UK General Election will take place during the Scottish School Holidays, encourage those who will be on holiday, to register for a postal vote.

The General Assembly agreed that consideration of the proposed Supplementary Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team be deferred until Thursday 23 May 2024, session 16.

The General Assembly adjourned at 6.34 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 2024, 6.34 pm

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 23 MAY 2024

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings on the 23rd day of May 2024, at 9.15 am.

SESSION 16

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

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, addressed the General Assembly and was thanked by the Moderator.

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 Michael Mair, Convener.

The Convener advised that the Report of Registration of Ministries Committee and the Supplementary Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team will be considered in Session 16 on Thursday 23 May 2024.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Nomination Committee which was given in by the Rev Dr Andrew Gardner, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the six areas of work of the Strategic Review Group as identified in section 3.2.2.
3. Note the compilation by the Nomination Committee of a handbook to simplify its work, as part of the ongoing Strategic Review.

4. Make appointments to the Standing Committees of the General Assembly as set out in section 5.
5. Appoint Michael Cantlay as Convener of the Social Care Council.
6. Appoint Sonia Blakesley as Convener of the Safeguarding Committee.
7. Reappoint James Stewart as Convener of the Life and Work Advisory Committee.
8. Appoint Robert Hamilton as Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee (with effect from May 2023).
9. Reappoint Philip Brodie as Convener of the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly.
10. Appoint Leslie Milton as Convener of the Ministries Appeal Panel.

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

“subject to the following alterations:

Assembly Business Committee

Minister Resigned John Ferguson (May 2024)

Audit Committee

Member Appointed Barbara Finlayson (Edinburgh: The New Town) (1yr)

Faith Action Programme

Leadership Team

Vice-Convener Appointed (and Mission Support Programme Group Leader) Jonathan Fleming (Dec 2023 – May 2025) (Greenock: Lyle Kirk)

Vice Convener Appointed (and Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group Programme Group Leader) Karen Campbell (Edinburgh: Marchmont St Giles’) (1 year)

Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group

Ministers Resigning Alan Hamilton, Katherine Taylor

Ministers Appointed Alistair May (Motherwell: Dalziel: St Andrews) (4 years), Lorna Tunstall (formerly Clyne l/w Kildonan & Loth Helmsdale) (3 years)

Members Appointed Barbara Finlayson (Edinburgh: New Town) (1 year), Dan Gunn (Dunblane St Blane’s) (2 years)”.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Selection Committee which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Derek Browning, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Appoint the following 13 persons to serve on the Presbytery Review Committee established in terms of section 3 of the Report of the Legal Questions Committee.

Ministers

Rev Andrea Boyes	(4 years)
Rev Dr Conor Fegan	(4 years)
Rev Peter Johnston	(3 years)
Rev Margaret Mateos, OLM	(2 years)
Rev Moira McDonald (<i>Convener</i>)	(4 years)
Rev Fraser Penny	(2 years)
Rev Jim Teasdale	(2 years)

Deacon

Ms Pat Munro DCS	(3 years)
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Elders

Miss Catherine Coull (<i>Vice-Convener</i>)	(3 years)
Mr Bill Duncan	(3 years)
Ms Sheila Nicoll	(2 years)
Mr Douglas Vallance	(2 years)
Mr Jim Watt	(3 years)

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of Registration of Ministries Committee, which was given in by the Rev Robert Hamilton, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Pass an Act amending the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017, as amended) as set out in Appendix I.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 2 of the Deliverance:

Amend section 2 by adding at the end "but further amended by the deletion of paragraphs 1, 2 & 3 of the proposed Amending Act".

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment of section 2, there voted For 128 and Against 162 and it carried Against.

The Deliverance as moved was then agreed.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 11.19 am until 11.37 am.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM

The General Assembly took up consideration of the Supplementary Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team which was given in by the Rev Thomas MacNeil, Convener.

The General Assembly agreed that under Standing Order 39, members or staff members of the Committee, not being a Member of Assembly, shall have an opportunity of addressing the Assembly in connection with the discussion of its Report.

It was moved and seconded:

18 (1). Receive the Supplementary Report.

APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE

- 19 (2). Approve the direction of travel offered by the Apprenticeship Route (*Context based Education and Training for the Church of Scotland Family of Ministries*) towards the rethinking of Initial Ministerial Education.
- 20 (3). Approve the introduction of a two-year foundational programme to provide a general qualification for ministry, equivalent to a Certificate level education of 120 credits.
- 21 (4). Approve the framework of the initial two-year foundational programme followed by one, two or three years of further training, as the normal route for ordination to Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate, subject to legislation being brought to the General Assembly of 2025.
- 22 (5). Approve the minimum educational requirement for ordination to Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate to be a Diploma in theology (240 credits), subject to legislation being brought to the General Assembly of 2025.
- 23 (6). Note that every encouragement will be given to Candidates for Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament to achieve the completion of a Degree in theology (360 credits) through their initial training or during their first five years in ministry.
- 24 (7). Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to bring such legislation to the General Assembly of 2025, to replace the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004) and the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010).
- 25 (8). Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to explore with the Registration of Ministries Committee, the principle of introducing compulsory continuing professional development for those ordained to Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and those ordained to the Diaconate, noting that Readers and OLM are already required to undertake such, post their Initial Ministerial Education.
- 26 (9). Instruct the Assembly Trustees to work with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to provide a budget to fund the new programme of Initial Ministerial Education.

The General Assembly agreed to receive the Supplementary Report.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance that the existing sections 2 to 9 of the Supplementary Report in the print be withdrawn and that new sections 2 to 10 be substituted for consideration by the General Assembly, these new sections 2 to 10 to be individually considered for approval or otherwise.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.29 pm until 12.36 pm.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM (CONTD)

The General Assembly resumed their consideration of the Supplementary Report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

It was moved and seconded:

APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE

2. Approve the direction of travel offered by the Apprenticeship Route (Context based Education and Training for the Church of Scotland Family of Ministries) and note its possibilities towards encouraging people to consider their calling to the various recognised ministries of the Church.
3. Approve the introduction of a two-year foundational programme to provide a general qualification for ministry, equivalent to a Certificate level education of 120 credits (Section 1.4.2).
4. Encourage the development of the Apprenticeship Route to provide a way of developing new forms of ministry required by the Presbytery Mission Planning Process, Team Ministry and the changing needs of the Church.

Initial Ministerial Education for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate

5. Approve the principle of context-based formation for Initial Ministerial Education for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate with a view to achieving a clearer integration of practice and theory.
6. Approve, as the normal model of training for ordination to full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate, a full-time formation process leading to a revised BD/ MDiv degree (of at least 360 SQA credits) combined with SQA credit-bearing ministry placements; reducing the current pattern of three years plus probation to three full years (which will include formative activity outwith academic semesters), with equality of time between study and placements.
7. Approve the development of a faster-track model, as an option for candidates for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate under listed criteria, of two years context-based education and training prior to ordination, involving a Diploma qualification (240 SQA credits) (or Graduate Diploma) combined with SQA credit-bearing ministry placements; with an equality of time between study and placements; listed criteria being, for example those with significant practical experience in ministry as a non-ordained worker; those with a prior degree in theology; those who are close to age restrictions in entering training.
8. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to enter into discussions with Academic Providers, the Theological Forum, the Assembly Trustees, the Diaconate Council, and other relevant parties to bring a set of proposals to the General Assembly 2025 together, if required, with legislation to replace Act X 2004 and Act VIII 2010.

Continuing Professional Development

9. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to explore with the Registration of Ministries Committee, the principle of introducing compulsory continuing professional development for those ordained to Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and those ordained to the Diaconate, noting that Readers and OLM are already required to undertake such, post their Initial Ministerial Education (Section 1.5.3.2).

Funding

10. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to work with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to provide a budget to fund the Apprenticeship Route and the new programme of Initial Ministerial Education (Section 1.5).

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Amend the new section 10 by deleting “provide a budget a budget to fund” and substituting “make provision in the 2025 budget for funding for”.

The new sections 2 to 10 as substituted and as amended were then agreed.

The Deliverance as a whole of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team was then agreed.

The General Assembly closed its session with prayer at 1.16 pm, subject to intimating that it will meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference this afternoon at 2.00 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 Sally Foster-Fulton, Convener, as follows:

DATE OF DEATH

2023

April	16	Catherine C Smith DCS, formerly of Sanwick, Cunningsburgh and Quarff linked with Dunrossness and Bigton in the south mainland of Shetland
	20	Agnes Tait DCS, formerly of East Kilbride: Greenhills
May	22	Professor Stuart McDonald, Dumfries: St Michael's and South
June	7	Rev John Leslie Goskirk, formerly of Lairg linked with Rogart
	12	Rev James P R Drysdale, formerly of Brechin Gardner Memorial
	19	Rev Ian Samuel Currie, formerly of The United Church of Bute
	22	Rev Neil Robert Combe, formerly of Hawick: St Mary's and Old linked with Hawick: Teviot
	22	Rev Antony E Watts, formerly of Glenmuick (Ballater)
24	Rev Douglas William Phenix, formerly of Cumbernauld: Abronhill	
July	2	Rev David Almond, formerly of Kirkmahoe
	7	Rev James Charles Gregory, formerly of Blantyre: St Andrew's
	9	Rev William Wallace Niven, formerly of Alness
	10	Rev George Stewart Birse, formerly of Ayr: Newton Wallacetown
	13	Rev Sydney Edwin Peebles Beveridge, formerly of Brydekirk linked with Hoddum
	14	Rev Douglas W Clark, formerly of Lenzie: Old
30	Dr Bryan Drever, formerly stationed in South Arabia	
August	30	Rev Angus H Haddow, formerly Methlick
September	7	Rev C Breda Ludik, formerly of St Andrew's Lhanbryd and Urquhart
	18	Helen Hughes DCS, formerly Glasgow: Springburn
	29	Rev Robert M Hetherington, formerly stationed in India and formerly Barrhead: South and Levern
October	5	Rev Robert Rae, formerly Edinburgh: Leith St Andrew's
	11	Rev W Douglas Lindsay, formerly Eaglesham
	16	Rev David J Torrance of Ormiston linked with Pencaitland
	16	Rev Ian Dryden, formerly New Machar
	28	Rev Alexander Buchan, formerly North Ronaldsay linked with Sanday
	30	Rev Mitchell Collins, formerly Creich, Flisk and Kilmany linked with Monimai
	31	Very Rev Dr Hugh R Wyllie, formerly Hamilton: Old
31	Rev Robert C Wotherspoon, formerly Corsock and Kirkpatrick Durham linked with Crossmichael and Parton	

November		George Thomas Inwood, formerly stationed in the Gold Coast
	1	Rev Alan A Ford, formerly Glasgow: Springburn
	13	Rev J (Ian) D Brady, formerly Edinburgh: Corstorphine Old
	14	Rev Alexander C Ryrie, formerly Industrial Chaplain, North Lanarkshire
	18	Molly Paton, formerly stationed in Ghana
	19	Thomas Brunton, formerly Foreign Missions: E. Himalaya
	24	Rev Ronald J McDowall, formerly Falkirk: Laurieston linked with Redding and Westquarter
	25	Rev Andrew M McPhail, formerly Ayr: Wallacetown
27	Rev Stuart D MacQuarrie, formerly Chaplain, University of Glasgow	
December	1	Very Rev Prof Alan Main, formerly Christ's College, Aberdeen University
	9	Rev Alan D Birss, formerly of Paisley: Abbey
	10	Rev Stuart D Rogerson, formerly of Strathaven: West
	10	Rev James H Wilson, formerly of Cleland
	12	Beryl S Malley, formerly stationed in Malawi
	13	Rev Dr Gilleasbuig I Macmillan, formerly Edinburgh: High (St Giles')
	17	Rev J Stanley Firth, formerly of Carluke: St John's
	21	Rev James L Templeton, formerly Innerleven: East
	26	Rev John McLeod, formerly Resolis and Urquhart
31	Rev James C Stewart, formerly Aberdeen: Kirk of St Nicholas	
2024		
January	1	Rev James L Wilkie, formerly stationed in Zambia and formerly Executive Secretary, Board of World Mission
	9	Rev Girvan C McKay, formerly Strath
	11	Rev Graham W Smith, formerly Livingston: Old
	15	Rev Ronald H Brown, formerly Musselburgh: Northesk
	21	Rev Ralph C P Smith, formerly Director, Audio-Visual Production, Department of Communications
	30	Rev Dr Cameron H Langlands, Head of Spiritual and Pastoral Care, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
February	2	Rev Riada M MacMillan, formerly Perth: Craigend Moncreiffe linked with Rhynd
	3	Rev J Ewen R Campbell, formerly stationed in South Africa and formerly Auchterderran: St Fothads with Kinglassie
	6	Rev George D Wilkie, formerly Kirkcaldy: Viewforth
	9	Rev William G Shannon, formerly Pitlochry
	12	Rev William W Clinkenbeard, formerly Edinburgh: Carrick Knowe
	13	Mary Louise Archibald, formerly Field Staff: Principal Teacher of Union Secondary School, Ibiaku, Nigeria
	16	Rev Dr Georgina M Baxendale, formerly Motherwell: South
	19	Rev Dr James S A Cunningham, formerly Glasgow: Barlanark Greyfriars
	20	Rev Douglas R Murray, formerly Lausanne: The Scots Kirk
	21	Rev Matthew A Rodger, formerly Ellon
22	Rev William L Armitage, formerly Edinburgh: London Road	
March	3	Rev Robert W Rentoul, formerly stationed in Eastern Himalayas

	4	Rev Robert M Kent, formerly Hamilton: St John's
	6	Rev Peter O Price, formerly Blantyre: Old
	12	Rev William S Whitson, formerly Birsay, Harray and Sandwick
	20	Rev Robert M Donald, formerly Kilmodan and Colintrave
	23	Dr Henry K Robertson, formerly stationed in South Arabia
	25	Rev James A Manson, formerly Glencorse linked with Roslin
April	4	Rev Dr H Dane Sherrard, formerly Arrochar linked with Luss
	9	Rev T Stewart McGregor, formerly Chaplain to Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh
	14	Rev Dr Andrew Munro, formerly Glencaple linked with Lowther
	16	Rev Kenneth C Lawson, formerly Director, Ecumenical Spirituality Programme, Scottish Churches Open College
	22	Rev Duncan Shaw, formerly Alves and Burghead linked with Kinloss and Findhorn
	24	Una M C Laidlay, formerly stationed in South Arabia
	28	Ian A Murray, formerly stationed in West Pakistan
May	1	Rev Douglas M Main, formerly Errol linked with Kilspindie and Rait
	3	Rev Gordon D Jamieson, formerly Head of Stewardship
	4	Rev Richard Smith, formerly Denny: Old
	4	Rev William Holland, formerly Lochend and New Abbey
	13	Rev Peter C Rae, formerly Beath and Cowdenbeath North

The General Assembly, upstanding, were led in prayer by the Very Rev Sally Foster-Fulton.

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 17 May 2025.

PRESENTATIONS TO THE MODERATOR

The following people were presented to the General Assembly:

ESTATES DEPARTMENT

New Staff Member:

Mercy-Esther Mhoja, Receptionist
Retiring Staff Member:
Joyce Anderson, Support Assistant

GENERAL TRUSTEES

New Staff Members:
Donald Forbes, Building Officer (Edinburgh and West Lothian)
Katharine Isherwood, Head of Buildings and Projects

LAW DEPARTMENT

New Staff Members:
Rachel Davies, Solicitor
Amy McIntosh, Property Marketing Assistant
Cecilia Miller, Solicitor

SAFEGUARDING OFFICE

New Staff Members:
Debs Blackhurst, Safeguarding Manager
Lindsey Mitchell, Safeguarding Officer

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME

New Staff Members:
Sarah Johnson, Mission Support Manager
Ruth Kennedy, Sanctuary First and Digital Ministries Adviser
Allan McCafferty, Ministries Support Operations Manager

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

Rev Lorna Fyfe, Moderator of Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale
Rev Kaye Gardiner, Assistant Minister at Bishopbriggs, Kenmure and Wallacewell
Rev Tim Linford, Assistant Minister, Gorebridge
Rev Everisto Musedza, Cowal Kirk
Rev Trudi Newton, Colonsay and Oronsay with Netherlorn
Rev Steven Saas, South Kintyre Parishes
Rev Hazel Shaw, Paisley: St George's
Rev David Sim, Fort William Kilmallie with Kilmonivaig

Ordained Local Ministers recently introduced to their first appointment:

Rev Iain Armstrong, Balfron linked with Fintry
Rev Cindy Campbell, Bermuda: Christ Church, Warwick
Rev Charlene Condeco, Falkirk: Trinity
Rev Susan Galloway, Edinburgh: Juniper Green
Rev Steven Henderson, Clydebank: Waterfront
Rev Anne-Marie Simpson, Lossiemouth Area Churches

Recently appointed Ministries Development Staff:

Lizzie Brayshaw, Presbytery Adviser (Under 40s), Clèir Eilean Ì: Highlands and Hebrides
Morag Ledgerwood, Ministerial Assistant, Brimmond
Meghann Hall, Parish Assistant, Campbeltown linked with Saddell and Carradale linked with Southend

Recently appointed Mission Partner:

Rev Tara Curlewis, Mission Partner, Rome

Admissions - Assistant Ministers recently introduced to their first appointment:

Rev Anne Fyffe, Clyde: Old Gourrock and Ashton linked with St Ninian's Parish Churches

Probationers - Assistant Ministers recently introduced to their first appointment:

Rev Jade MacLean, Assistant Minister, Acharacle and Ardnamurchan linked with Ardgour, Morvern and Strontian

Rev Ewan Ritchie, Assistant, Dunfermline: Abbey with Presbytery of Fife

Rev Jillian Storrie, Assistant, Hamilton: St John's

Recently Retired Ministers:

Rev Dr Christine Goldie, Bearsden: Westerton Fairlie Memorial

Rev Jack Holt, Edinburgh: Polwarth

Rev Margaret Johnston, Glasgow: Kinning Park

Rev David Mitchell, West Cowal

Rev Dr Ian McLean, Perth: Montrose Old and St Andrew's

Rev David Smith, Glenrothes: St Ninian's

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

New Staff Members:

Susan Anderson, Manager at Walter and Joan Gray

Emma Balinbing, Manager at Balmedie House

Agnieszka Chojnacka, Manager at The Elms

Feri Collins, Counselling Manager for CrossReach Counselling Inverness

Janet Drury, Managing Co-ordinator for Children with Disabilities

Anya Duffy, Project Manager at Rankeillor

Craig Hughes, Financial Controller

Jennifer MacDonald, Manager at Oversteps

Hazel Martin, Dementia Development Co-ordinator for Older People Services

Rachael McMurchy, Dementia Development Co-ordinator for Older People Services

Laura Sitt, Talent Attraction Advisor

Matthew Varty, Business Support Manager for Counselling Support East

Agnieszka Waszkiewicz, Counselling Manager at Bluebell Perinatal Service

Graeme Wetherill, Manager at Cunningham House

Retiring Staff Members:

Brenda Fraser, Head of Service for Older People Services East

Maureen Grier, Manager at South Beach House

Lynne Kerr, Credit Controller

Derek Meldrum, Support Worker at Threshold Edinburgh

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 Royal Highness 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 Royal Highness, 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 17th day of May 2025."

The members of the General Assembly, prior to lining the Black and White Corridor of the Assembly Hall as His Royal Highness passed from the Hall, concluded their Session at 3.10 pm with the Benediction pronounced by the Moderator.

ASSEMBLY HALL, EDINBURGH
and online via video-conference
23 May 2024, 3.10 pm