

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAY 2024

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Reaffirm the ecumenical vision articulated in the Declaratory Act anent the Third Article Declaratory (2010), and instruct the unincorporated entities of the Church of Scotland to take account of this in their future work (*Sections 2.5, 2.6, 14.2*).
3. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee to report to the General Assembly of 2025 on its ongoing engagement with the Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland (*Section 5*).
4. Approve the form of the Scottish Christian Forum, and the participation of representatives of the Church of Scotland within it, and recognise it as the National Ecumenical Body within Scotland (*Appendix I*) (*Section 7.8*).
5. Welcome the renewal of the work of the Joint Commission on Doctrine of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland (*Section 8.7*).
6. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum to reflect on the contemporary significance of the Council of Nicaea, and to report to the General Assembly of 2025 (*Section 13.6*).
7. Approve the delegates to Assemblies, Synods and Conferences of other Churches, and the appointment of representatives to Ecumenical Bodies (*Appendix II*).

Executive Summary

The Report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee in 2024 focuses primarily on the future shape of the church in Scotland, with particular reference to the *Articles Declaratory* of the Church of Scotland. Affirming the ecumenical vision inherent in the *Articles Declaratory*, the Committee addresses the realisation of that vision with reference to Presbytery Mission Planning, engagement with the Presbyteries of the Church and the possibility of a wider national church conversation in relation to ministry and mission.

With respect to the creation of a national ecumenical body within Scotland, the Committee invites the General Assembly to recognise the Scottish Christian Forum as such a body and to approve the participation of representatives of the Church of Scotland within it.

The Committee notes the ongoing work in relation to the *Saint Margaret Declaration*, with the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland and, in particular, the proposal to renew the work of the Joint Commission on Doctrine. In relation to the *Saint Andrew Declaration*, with the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Committee notes the ongoing process within the Scottish Episcopal Church in relation to the amendment of their ecumenical Canon (Canon 15) and the potential for enabling shared ministry through this. In relation to the *Columba Declaration*, with the Church of England, the Committee places on record its thanks to the Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, for his commitment to the relationship between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, and highlights our ongoing commitment to the ecumenical, prayer initiative: *Thy Kingdom Come*.

The Committee highlights our ongoing engagement with the church in Europe through the Conference of European Churches and the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe. Further, it highlights our ongoing engagement with the church globally and notes the forthcoming 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in 2025.

In conclusion, the Committee invites the General Assembly to reaffirm the ecumenical vision inherent in the *Articles Declaratory*.

Report

1. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The future shape of the church in Scotland is a matter that concerns all who are involved in the life of the Church of Scotland. Equally, it is a matter that will concern those who share in the life of every other church within Scotland. It may also be a matter of concern for those of good will who note the contribution that the Church has made, and continues to make, to the wider society of which we are a part.

1.2 The Church of Scotland as we have known it is undoubtedly changing as a result of decisions taken within the Church in recent years. Equally, the impact of societal change, including that associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, continues to affect institutions and bodies which might once have been thought to be relatively unchanging features of our society. Indeed, in the present context, it might be thought that the only permanent element is change itself. To the extent that this is so, we acknowledge that discerning the contours of the future shape of the church is no easy task.

1.3 What then is the role of the Ecumenical Relations Committee within the life of the Church of Scotland at this time? In a formal sense, the role of the Committee is to serve the General Assembly by advising it in relation to the ecumenical implications of its work, 'with particular reference to Article VII of the *Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland*'.^[i] How might this role be further articulated? It may be said that the Committee understands its task to be that of calling the Church of Scotland to look beyond its present boundaries at a local, regional, national and international level, in order that it might discern that which God is doing beyond the boundaries of our particular embodiment of the Church of Jesus Christ.

1.4 In so discerning, we may reflect on that which we understand God to be doing within our church. Why is there value in so doing? As we within our church experience change and respond to the reality of societal change, we may be sure that we are not alone in this. The realities that are impacting upon us are the same realities that are impacting upon others. The outcomes may, or may not, be different, but the underlying reality of change is a shared feature of our common life. As the future shape of the church evolves within the Church of Scotland in response, so also does it evolve within other churches.

1.5 In an ideal world, the vision of the apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians would be integral to our shared experience as part of the Church of Jesus Christ within Scotland:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.^[ii]

1.6 In our shared suffering and in our shared rejoicing, we would experience together that which God is doing across the whole face of the church. Our response to the impact of change would be a mutually shared response and the evolution of the future shape of the church a mutually shared experience. To imagine that we could hermetically seal ourselves off from the wider experience of the church, and primarily focus only on that which is internal to us, would be to deny ourselves the wisdom, insight and opportunities which exist beyond our boundaries.

1.7 To seek to understand that which God is doing beyond the immediate boundaries of our church is not to undervalue what we understand God to have done within the Church of Scotland in times past. Rather, it is to be true to our vocation as an *ecclesia reformata sed semper reformanda*, a church reformed but always requiring to be reformed.^[iii] It is to be true to our vocation as a church that understands its present shape to be provisional and open to the reforming and renewing impulse of the Holy Spirit.

1.8 The present shape of the Church of Scotland is not, of course, coterminous with the present shape of the church in Scotland. Within Scotland, there are a variety of different traditions of the church, with each one embodying and giving expression to the rich diversity of the gifting of the Spirit. Many of these churches have been part of the ecclesial landscape of the country for centuries. Meanwhile, others have come to inhabit the landscape only in more recent times. We may be more, or less, familiar with certain of these traditions than others. What we can say of them collectively, and particularly, is that as they evolve, their future shape will differ from their present shape. The reforming and renewing impulse of the Spirit will ensure that this is so. Our vocation as an *ecclesia reformata sed semper reformanda* asks that we be open to the Spirit at work within, and beyond, the boundaries of our tradition, in order that we may discover the future shape of the church in Scotland.

2. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: ARTICLES DECLARATORY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

2.1 In recent years, the Committee has consistently referenced the *Articles Declaratory* in the course of its Reports, as evidenced in those of 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023. The *Articles Declaratory* may be said to have shaped the Church of Scotland from 1929 onwards and to continue to shape the life of the church at this present time.^[iv] From the perspective of the Committee, the principal focus of these Reports has been on Article VII upon which, as noted above, the work of the Committee is founded:

The Church of Scotland, believing it to be the will of Christ that His disciples should be all one in the Father and in Him, that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him, recognises the obligation to seek and promote union with other Churches in which it finds the Word to be purely preached, the sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance, and discipline rightly exercised; and it has the right to unite with any such Church without loss of its identity on terms which this Church finds to be consistent with these Articles.

2.2 How are we to understand the significance of Article VII today? The Report of the Committee in 2018, with reference to the great High Priestly Prayer of Jesus in John 17, stated:

The prayer of Jesus for the unity of the disciples ('that they may all be one') is in order to realise the mission of Jesus ('so that the world may believe that you have sent me'). Jesus prays for unity in order to enable that mission with unity itself understood as an expression of an integral relationship between the Father and the Son ('just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you'). The identity of the Church of Scotland, as expressed in the *Articles Declaratory*, is in this sense bound up with its understanding of what Jesus intends as he prays to the Father.^[vi]

2.3 That is, Article VII speaks of that which lies at the heart of the church and is integral to its identity: the mission of Jesus and the unity that enables it. At this juncture in the life of the Church of Scotland, we do well to ask: How seriously have we taken this insight into the nature of mission and to what extent has it given shape to the life of the church?

2.4 Alongside this, it should be stated that the Committee has always encouraged the Church of Scotland, and our partner churches in Scotland, to view Article VII in the context of the *Articles Declaratory* as a whole, believing that the Articles inform one another and ought not to be viewed in isolation. In particular, the Committee has consistently highlighted the relationship between Article VII and Article III:

As a national Church representative of the Christian Faith of the Scottish people it acknowledges its distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry.

2.5 The Report of the Committee in 2019 sought to highlight the relationship between Article III and Article VII with reference back to the General Assembly of 2010 and the Declaratory Act anent the Third Article Declaratory approved at that Assembly.^[vii] The Act states:

The Church of Scotland reaffirms the principles enshrined in the third Article Declaratory and declares anew its commitment to be a national church with a distinctive evangelical and pastoral concern for the people and nation of Scotland.

2.6 It then continues:

The Church of Scotland remains committed to the ecumenical vision set out in the seventh Article Declaratory and, in pursuit of that vision, stands eager to share with other churches in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland.^[viii]

2.7 The Report of the Committee in 2021 returned to the highlighting of this relationship and interpreted it in terms of a call to 'cooperative partnership' with other churches in Scotland in the following terms:

[T]he future shape of ministry and mission in Scotland ought to be undertaken on the basis of cooperative partnership as a response to the challenges facing the church...The vision embedded in the *Articles Declaratory* opens our horizons to the ever-present opportunity of sharing "in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland". In the times in which we live, the commitment to living out our response in cooperative partnership is an indispensable element in our response to the prayer of Jesus and to the challenges we face. There is no future for the Church of Scotland that does not embed cooperative partnership as an integral element of its ongoing identity.^[ix]

2.8 With respect to 'the future shape of ministry and mission in Scotland', the Committee reaffirms its view that: 'There is no future for the Church of Scotland that does not embed cooperative partnership as an integral element of its ongoing identity.'

2.9 This is not to suggest that the entirety of the issues we face can be addressed solely through this means. Rather, it is to say that we are not alone in addressing the challenges of 'ministry and mission in Scotland' and that we address them better when done in cooperative partnership with other churches.

2.10 The Report of the Committee in 2023 sought to place Article VII in the context of the *Articles Declaratory* as a whole and offered a brief commentary on the inter-relationship of the Articles, with reference to each of them.^[ix] It suggests that 'the purpose of the *Articles Declaratory*, in the first instance, is to affirm the nature and identity of the Church of Scotland' and its essential continuity with the Church of Scotland since the time of the Reformation in 1560. Further, it contends that if Article VII had been omitted and 'contained only Articles I-VI and VIII and IX':

We might say that this is the sole purpose of the *Articles* and that they are intended to describe what would be, in effect, a closed and essentially non-permeable ecclesiastical system.

2.11 Having offered a description of the *Articles Declaratory* without Article VII, it states:

However, Article VII is an integral part of the *Articles Declaratory* and we may deduce from this that the *Articles* are intended to describe that which the Church of Scotland is and has historically been whilst, at the same time, pointing to a future in which the Church lives out its response to the prayer of Jesus 'that they may all be one... that the world may believe'. (John 17: 21) and is reshaped by the ongoing call to renewal.

2.12 That is, the *Articles* are intended to encompass the Church of Scotland as it is and as it has been, and, crucially, as it will be in the future. Thus, the question of the future shape of the Church of Scotland, and of the church in Scotland, is embedded within the *Articles Declaratory* and it is incumbent upon us to reckon with it. The work that will shape the future of the Church in Scotland is ongoing and we, by the grace of God, act as participants in it and are witnesses to it.

3. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: REALISING THE VISION

3.1 As noted above, the Declaratory Act anent the Third Article Declaratory reaffirms 'the ecumenical vision' set out in the *Articles Declaratory* and affirms that the Church of Scotland 'in pursuit of that vision, stands eager to share with other churches in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland.'^[x]

3.2 Taking this as a given, the challenge is then to address the question of how we translate that vision in practical terms in order that we might see it realised in the shared life of the church in Scotland. To attempt to do so would be a considerable undertaking and one that would involve the contribution of many different churches in relation to a multiplicity of different matters. Nevertheless, it is better to make a beginning and trust that this might serve as a catalyst in the process. The following sections of the Report seek to make such a beginning and to offer such a catalyst.

4. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING

4.1 Under the Report of the Committee to the General Assembly of 2023, a deliverance was agreed which noted 'the ecumenical implications of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and the "Presbytery Mission Plan Act: Guidance and Code of Practice"', with reference to the ecumenical guidance in relation to planning dating from September 2021. Further, during the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum, the General Assembly agreed to update this guidance and 'instruct Presbyteries to consider this and articulate it more clearly in implementation and at the annual evaluation and development of Presbytery Mission Plans'.^[xi]

4.2 In order to assist in the development of this guidance, the Committee offered draft proposals to the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team for their consideration and look forward to its adoption, in amended form as required, and circulation to Presbyteries. The Committee stands ready to assist Presbyteries in relation to this and would welcome engagement with them in order to develop an ecumenical approach that takes account of the requirements of Presbytery mission planning and which, in turn, informs that planning process.

5. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: ENGAGEMENT WITH PRESBYTERIES

5.1 In the light of the fact that the future shape of the pattern of Presbyteries across Scotland is now in place, the Committee regard this as an opportune time to establish a corresponding pattern of engagement with them. To that end, the Committee has been in touch with each of the Presbyteries with a view to establishing such a relationship and to identify the best point of contact within the evolving structures of each Presbytery. This builds upon the engagement that already takes place and it is anticipated that this will better inform the Committee with respect to the challenges facing Presbyteries and the opportunities for cooperative engagement that we believe are present in many localities. An integral part of this approach will be to enable Presbyteries to better connect with the corresponding presbyteries, dioceses, synods and circuits of our partners and to enable the mutual realisation of these opportunities. There are, of course, many good examples of local cooperative working across Scotland and the opportunity to learn from them will potentially serve as an encouragement to others to embark on cooperative working in their own locality.

5.2 We judge that this pattern of engagement might best be undertaken on a three-year cycle, with the Committee proactively focussing on engaging with four Presbyteries in 2024/2025, then again in 2025/2026, *et cetera*. The Committee undertakes to report on progress in this matter to a future General Assembly.

6. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: NATIONAL CHURCH CONVERSATION

6.1 During the Report of the Committee to the General Assembly of 2023, a deliverance was agreed in the following terms:

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.

6.2 The Committee agreed that the most appropriate place to raise this matter in the first instance was within the context of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum, given that senior representatives of our partner churches are present within that body. Equally, it is the case that our partner churches inhabit exactly the same landscape as we do and are faced with identical, or very similar, challenges to the ones that we face. Further, our partner churches, each in accordance with its own tradition, have their own particular sense of vocation in terms of the call to provide ministry and mission within Scotland. The particular sense of vocation will be worked out in different ways within different churches, each according to the resources available to them. Nevertheless, there is a general communality of interest amongst our partner churches with reference to the provision of ministry and mission within Scotland. Given that there is such a general communality of interest, it would seem appropriate for partner churches in Scotland to share together in the addressing of the challenges we face. The Committee will continue to encourage the ongoing conversation within the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum.

7. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN FORUM

7.1 The Committee reported to the General Assembly of 2017 that a review of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) had been initiated and in the following year that the reception of the report of the review, undertaken by Theos, was ongoing.^[xii] Further, the Committee reported to the General Assembly of 2019 that it had been agreed to begin the transition from ACTS to a Scottish Christian Forum.^[xiii] Thereafter, the General Assembly of 2021 approved the following deliverance:

Agree to the participation of the Church of Scotland in the Scottish Christian Forum and recognise it as the national ecumenical body in Scotland and note the proposal to dissolve Action of Churches Together in Scotland once the Scottish Christian Forum has been formed.^[xiv]

7.2 It would be fair to say that since that point, the member churches of ACTS have struggled to reach a consensus as to the future shape of the ecumenical body in Scotland and to reach agreement on the form of the Scottish Christian Forum (SCF). At the same time, the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum, as two of the integral parts of the prospective SCF, had evolved and developed and were active and functioning in their own right.^[xv]

7.3 The Committee reported to the General Assembly of 2023 that a renewed effort to reach consensus and agreement had been initiated in January 2023 with a conference organised by the Ecumenical Officers' Forum: "The Future of Scottish Ecumenism".^[xvi] This saw the beginning of a fresh cycle of meetings and an agreement that the Ecumenical Officers' Forum be tasked with bringing proposals that would lead to the establishment of the SCF. In the course of this cycle, it became clear that a consensus would only be achievable with respect to a relatively modest proposal regarding the form of the SCF.^[xvii] This proposal was presented to a meeting initiated by the Ecumenical Officers' Forum, held on 6 February 2024, to which representatives of all of the member churches of ACTS, and others, were invited. The proposed form of the SCF was presented and discussed and a consensus reached that, in the present climate, the proposal represented a realistic and sustainable model which would give shape to the future of Scottish ecumenism. Something of the vision that animates the SCF proposal is expressed in the following:

The vision is inspired by a renewal of the call to prayer and our common witness to the Gospel. Embracing this vision will lead to the deepening of a shared spirituality; support for ecumenical initiatives at all levels; and the exploration of common challenges. It will foster ecumenical relationships which respect the variety of Christian life and witness in Scotland and encourage participation in the shared life of the Church. (Appendix I)

7.4 It should be noted, for the avoidance of doubt, that the proposal does not create a separate and discrete charity and that the General Assembly is not being invited to enter into any undertakings beyond the scope of the proposal set out in Appendix I. In the form proposed, the SCF would not be able to enter into any contracts or to take on any liabilities in its own right.

7.5 In reaching a decision in relation to this matter, the Committee wish to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the proposal being discussed at this point would fulfil the first part of the deliverance agreed at the General Assembly of 2021, that is:

Agree to the participation of the Church of Scotland in the Scottish Christian Forum and recognise it as the national ecumenical body in Scotland.

7.6 However, it should be noted that it would not lead to the fulfilment of the second part in relation to 'the proposal to dissolve Action of Churches Together in Scotland once the Scottish Christian Forum has been formed'.

7.7 As noted above, the member churches of ACTS have struggled to reach a consensus as to the future shape of the ecumenical body in Scotland, and the process that will lead to the eventual dissolution of ACTS has, in effect, been detached from the process that has led to the proposals with respect to the SCF. The former process is ongoing and its outcome will be reported to a future General Assembly. Whilst unsatisfactory in certain regards, it is judged that it is better to have reached a clear outcome, with respect to the designation of the national ecumenical body, and to establish the SCF, than to allow the lack of consensus in relation to the future of ACTS to delay matters further. The Church of Scotland will continue to be a member of ACTS until such time as a final decision is reached with respect to it, with such a decision being dependent on a consensus being reached. The Committee advises that no payments have been made to ACTS since the end of 2019, and in the event that the General Assembly approves the proposed form of the SCF, in concert with the other participating churches, ACTS will cease to be the national ecumenical body in Scotland.

7.8 The Committee invites the General Assembly to approve the form of the Scottish Christian Forum, and the participation of representatives of the Church of Scotland within it, and recognise it as the National Ecumenical Body within Scotland. (Appendix I) The work that will shape the future of the Church in Scotland is ongoing and we, by the grace of God, act as participants in it and are witnesses to it.

8. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: SAINT MARGARET DECLARATION

8.1 The *Saint Margaret Declaration*, agreed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2022 represents one of the most significant ecumenical developments realised within Scotland in recent years.^[xviii] The *Declaration* itself built upon a growing friendship between the two traditions at both local and national levels, with one of the most significant of the latter being the Joint Commission on Doctrine.

8.2 The Joint Commission on Doctrine (JCD) has a history that stretches back over nearly fifty years to 1977, and the growing cooperation between the two churches is reflected in the work undertaken within the JCD in the years since then. Equally, the origins of the JCD lie in the new atmosphere of more open friendliness between the two churches following the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).^[xix] Informal discussions between ministers and clergy began to take place subsequent to this, and these were followed by the establishing of a Commission for Christian Unity within the Bishops' Conference. Thereafter, the Commission began a more formal conversation with representatives of the then Inter-Church Relations Committee of the Church of Scotland, with this resulting in an invitation to the Bishops' Conference to be represented at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Further, work undertaken by the Panel on Doctrine of the Church of Scotland on shared and differentiated doctrinal understanding between the two traditions in the mid-1970's paved the way for the eventual establishment of the JCD.

8.3 The first meeting of the JCD took place in November 1977 and it continued the pattern previously established in the work of the Panel on Doctrine in seeking to articulate both shared, and differentiated, doctrinal understanding between the two traditions. That is, the JCD sought to clarify common ground and, in so doing, to establish mutually acknowledged differences. This approach is exemplified in Alistair Heron's *Agreement & Disagreement* which flowed out of the work of the Panel on Doctrine and into the ongoing work of the JCD.^[xxv]

8.4 The initial cycle of the work of the JCD focused on the doctrine of the Church and then thereafter on the understanding of marriage within the Christian tradition, with particular reference to Roman Catholic canon law and the *Code of Canon Law* published in 1983, with that cycle being completed in 1993. Thereafter, a pause in the work of the JCD was followed by a renewed cycle of work from 2000 onwards, with the particular catalyst for this being the publication of the Official Common Statement on the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic in 1999.^[xxvi] and the ongoing engagement between the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches on the doctrine of baptism.^[xxvii] The focus on the twin themes of baptism and the doctrine of justification resulted in the publication of *Baptism: Catholic and Reformed* (2007)^[xxviii] followed by a *Liturgy for the Re-affirmation of Baptismal Vows* (2010), an initiative in which the Scottish Episcopal Church participated.^[xxix]

8.5 During the course of these two cycles, there have been a series of four International Catholic-Reformed Dialogues and the JCD has engaged with these and drawn upon them in the course of its work.^[xxx] The work of the JCD may be said to mirror the international dialogues with the international informing the national and, with respect to *Baptism: Catholic and Reformed*, the national informing the international.^[xxxi] The JCD also responded to other international dialogues and, uniquely in a global context, made a joint response in 2016 to the convergence text offered by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches: *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2013).^[xxxii] At that point in time it was noted:

It is a testimony to the distance the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church have travelled in their relationship to one another that such an ecumenical response was possible.^[xxxiii]

8.6 Alongside this, the JCD organised a series of conferences focusing on, for example, the 500th Anniversary of the birth of John Calvin (2009), the 450th Anniversary of the Scottish Reformation (2010), the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II (2013) and *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2015).

8.7 The work of the JCD effectively reached a hiatus in 2020 with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is now proposed to renew the work of the JCD and to initiate a fresh cycle. Initial discussions have taken place in this regard and a report on the agreed basis of work within this cycle will be presented to the General Assembly of 2025. The renewal of this work is a further sign of the commitments made in the *Saint Margaret Declaration* and builds on the work undertaken in recent decades.

9. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND: SAINT ANDREW DECLARATION

9.1 The *Saint Andrew Declaration*, agreed by the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2021, affirms the relationship of two churches who share a call to provide a territorial ministry within Scotland.^[xxxiv] The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton was invited to address the General Synod in 2023 and was warmly received in so doing.

9.2 Under the Report of the Committee to the General Assembly of 2023, the Committee addressed the terms of the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000) and the granting, to ministers within different traditions of the Church, of permission to celebrate the Sacraments within the Church of Scotland on an occasional basis. In particular, the Committee sought to take account of the implications of the signing of the *Columba Declaration* with the Church of England (2016) and the *Saint Andrew Declaration* with the Scottish Episcopal Church (2021), as well the implications of our membership of particular ecumenical bodies.^[xxxv] The amended Act reflects the decision of the General Assembly in relation to this matter.^[xxxvi]

9.3 Parallel to the addressing of this matter in the context of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) began the first stage of the process within their tradition of potentially amending the Canon with respect to the relationship between the SEC and other churches, including those outwith the Anglican tradition, with respect to officiating at services of worship: Canon 15 "Of the Admission of Clergy of other Churches, Provinces and Dioceses to Officiate".^[xxxvii]

9.4 The proposed amendment to Canon 15 identifies the *Saint Andrew Declaration* as one of the ecumenical agreements entered into by the SEC whose implications are not covered by the present Canon, and notes that the *Declaration*:

[A]ffirms that "in our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion are faithfully administered," and commits the two Churches "to welcome one another's members to worship and participate in the congregational life of each other's churches."^[xxxviii]

9.5 Similarly, within the wider Scottish context, the amendment identifies the Episcopal-Methodist-United Reformed Church Partnership (2010) (EMU) as a further agreement whose implications are not covered.^[xxxix]

9.6 With respect, *inter alia*, to the *Saint Andrew Declaration* and the EMU Partnership, the amendment would, within the overall provisions of the Canon, create the basis for a 'limited exchange of ministries' in which:

Clergy or authorised lay people of these Churches may give addresses, lead prayers and worship and assist in the distribution of Holy Communion in services in the Scottish Episcopal Church, as authorised by their own Church...Clergy may preside at a service of Holy Communion in a charge in the Scottish Episcopal Church subject to the provisions...of this Canon and as authorised by their own Church.^[xxxv]

9.7 It should be noted that the amendment does not create a basis for the full interchangeability of ministries, and the terms of the 'limited exchange of ministries' should be observed. Nevertheless, the amendment recognises the potential implications of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* and seeks to build upon it in such a way as to enhance the mutual capacity of two churches who share a call to provide a territorial ministry within Scotland.

9.8 The proposed amendment was carried, in the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity respectively, in the first stage of the process within the tradition of the SEC. It was then referred to the Diocesan Synods, in a process analogous in certain respects to Barrier Act procedure within the Church of Scotland. It is expected that the amendment will be presented for a second time and be subject to approval at the General Synod in 2024.^[xxxvi] The Committee will report on the outcome of this process to the General Assembly of 2025.

10. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH: COLUMBA DECLARATION

10.1 The *Columba Declaration*, agreed by the General Synod of the Church of England and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2016 stands as the first in a series of bilateral Declarations through which the Church of Scotland and its partner churches have sought to give expression to that which they hold in common and seek to affirm together.^[xxxvii] The *Columba Declaration* is distinctive insofar as it gives such expression across a national border, whilst affirming the Christian faith that binds us together and enables us to face the common challenges which transcend borders. As national churches within our respective borders, those common challenges invite us to work together in our responses to them.

10.2 At this time, we wish to express our thanks to the retiring Joint Chairs of the *Columba Declaration* Contact Group: Rt Rev James Newcome, formerly Bishop of Carlisle and the Very Rev Russell Barr who have sought to carry forward the commitments undertaken in the *Declaration* particularly through the challenges of the post-pandemic period. We look forward to a fresh cycle of the work of the Contact Group as new Chairs are identified and a renewed agenda is identified. To this end, we welcome the appointment of the Rt Rev Rob Saner-Haigh, Bishop of Penrith in the Diocese of Carlisle as co-Chair on behalf of the Church of England.

10.3 An annual meeting between the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Archbishop of Canterbury has become an established feature of the engagement between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, with the meetings providing an opportunity for shared reflection on the common challenges before us. Further, the meetings have helped to establish a strong working relationship between Lambeth Palace and the Principal Clerk's Office.

10.4 We would place on record our thanks to the Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby GCVO for his commitment to this relationship and for his engagement with the Church of Scotland in the years since taking up the office of Archbishop of Canterbury in 2013. The relationship has proven to be of especial value in recent years in relation to, for example, the planning for the Ecumenical Pilgrimage to South Sudan in 2022; the marking of the passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 2022, and the arrangements for the Coronation of King Charles III in 2023. In all of these examples, the good working relationship established has enabled ready communication and mutual understanding.

10.5 *Thy Kingdom Come* is a global ecumenical prayer initiative, begun in May 2016 with the invitation of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to every parish in the Church of England to join in prayer from Ascension Day to Pentecost Sunday. In the following year, every diocese within the Church of England responded to the initiative and since then it has grown into an ecumenical movement which unites more than a million Christians in prayer, in nearly 90% of countries worldwide, across 85 different denominations and traditions.^[xxxviii] In 2024, *Thy Kingdom Come* takes place from 9-19 May, and the Church of Scotland has partnered in this initiative from 2018 onwards. An integral part of the annual resourcing of *Thy Kingdom Come* is the provision of a Prayer Journal to accompany the prayer journey made from Ascension Day to Pentecost Sunday. In 2024, a new provision has been added to the resources with a Scottish Prayer Journal included for the first time. The Scottish Prayer Journal has eleven representative voices drawn from across the church, primarily from within the membership of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum, as arranged by the Ecumenical Officer of the Church of Scotland. We thank Emma Buchan, Kemi Bamgbose and Revd Jean Kerr from the *Thy Kingdom Come* team for their support in this initiative.

10.6 The future shape of the church will surely be discerned as we pray together; 'thy kingdom come'. The work that will shape the future of the Church in Scotland is ongoing and we, by the grace of God, act as participants in it and are witnesses to it.

11. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH: CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

11.1 Christians from across Europe met in Tallinn, Estonia, for the General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) (14-20 June 2023) with the theme: "Under God's Blessing – Shaping the Future", with a strong representation from the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church as part of it. Since the previous General Assembly in 2018, much has happened in Europe and the General Assembly was deeply conscious of the significance of the invasion of Ukraine and what it could mean for other states bordering Russia, including Estonia, the host country. Delegates remained conscious throughout the Assembly of the fragility of the geo-political situation in that part of the world.

11.2 CEC was originally set up to create a space in which Europeans of diverse history, polity and ethnicity could meet together because of, and despite, differences of perspective and experience. In this space, Christians are understood to be united in Christ, enriched by diversity and called to witness to that unity in expressing in word and action their concern for those without power or who suffer injustice at the hands of others.

11.3 The four keynote speakers at the Assembly contributed much to reflect upon. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, from Belarus, spoke on the theme: “What can Churches offer in European society?” Following the Belarussian Presidential elections on 9 August 2020, she now lives in exile in Lithuania and as the leader of the Belarussian democratic movement has visited 28 countries, gathering support and advocating for the release of more than 1500 political prisoners and a peaceful transition of power through free and fair elections. Her speech to the Assembly called for religious communities and people of faith to ‘play a significant role in promoting peace in the society, maintaining hope under the yoke of tyranny, and contributing to democratic transformation. People whose faith teaches them not to kill, not to steal, not to bear false witness, who honour God more than political leaders, whose moral strength is empowered by their belief - are extremely dangerous for dictatorships and extremely needed in democracies’. She contrasted the language of brotherhood used by the Russians in describing their invasion of Ukraine with the experience of sisterhood amongst women involved in the attempted revolution in Belarus. She implored church leaders to use their power in supporting people in Belarus: to demand the release of political prisoners, especially those with pre-existing health conditions like cancer and diabetes, to demand access to worship sites, to hold public services and prayers for Belarus and to facilitate dialogue.^[xxxix]

11.4 Professor Dr Hartmut Rosa, Professor of Sociology at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, delivered a challenging and thought-provoking keynote speech, reflecting on the role of churches in offering a different model to Europe’s desire for permanent growth and acceleration. He began his speech by describing what he saw as two versions of Europe: 1. Dynamic Stabilisation, 2. Europe as a space of resonance. He said that European society is at a point of ‘breakneck standstill’, in which life is focused on destructive growth to maintain the status quo. On the macro level, this system creates pollution and environmental problems; on the micro level, aggression and burnout. Rosa referred to the increase of mental health problems and suicide rates among young people who are not able to take the stress of constant acceleration. In response, Rosa proposed an alternative model of ‘resonance’, with resonance described as a mode of listening and responding to each other and the offering of a different conception of the good life.^[xli]

11.5 Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury spoke on the theme: “Living theologically: what blessing does the church of Christ bring?” He explored the question of what it means to be blessed and how that question impacts the way churches relate to today’s world. His exploration was rooted in an understanding of theology which has its origins in liturgy. He stated: ‘Those who are not anxious about stockpiling their resources but acknowledge their dependence on mercy and gift; those who are hungry not for more security for themselves, but for a justice that is shared with all; those who are compassionate and without aggression, who are not afraid to be wounded, who labour for reconciliation – all these are people who have left behind the passion to be the possessors and managers of their destiny, people who know that it is only in relation to God, and to their brothers and sisters under God, that they will be fully human...Instead of an obsessive longing to define their world and secure their control, they listen for the call of God and look for the gift of God in the needs of the world, and they find the courage to embrace the risks that this looking and listening can bring.’ Williams also discussed practical priorities and engagement with Europe’s political future, with the environmental crisis overshadowing every other issue, Williams insisted: ‘The story here is of an insanely unbalanced account of human entitlement and human capacity that has consistently, in the last three centuries, ignored any sense of the interdependence of human life and the life of the organic order as a whole.’^[xlii]

11.6 His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in his keynote address, asked some challenging questions about the future of ecumenism in Europe. He recalled that the ecumenical movement gained momentum in the wake of the devastation of the two world wars in the last century. However, he noted that the ecumenical movement thrived in a very different Europe than that which we know and live in today: ‘As Christian churches, we can no longer take for granted that Europeans will identify with national churches or, indeed, with any particular form of belief.’ He then discussed the purpose or goal of the ecumenical movement in this kind of Europe and reflected on the possibility of a Christian Europe mirroring the openness and respect that we expect of one another in ecumenical circles, calling for all voices to be heard, including those that express disagreement and disbelief, through mutual respect and social justice.^[xliii]

11.7 The CEC General Assembly was not without discord and there clearly remain concerns over the strategy of the organisation, with some delegates continuing to express disagreement with CEC’s decision to withdraw funding from the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and from the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) in order to focus on building a platform for advocacy, primarily to European Union institutions and agencies, and on theological issues. The Committee undertakes to continue to monitor this matter and to report to a future General Assembly as necessary.

12. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH: COMMUNION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN EUROPE

12.1 The General Assembly of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) takes place from 27 August-2 September 2024 in Sibiu, Romania, on the theme: “In the Light of Christ: Called to Hope”. The membership of the CPCE is composed of some ninety-six churches from within the Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed and United Church traditions, as well as pre-Reformation bodies such as the Church of the Czech Brethren and the Waldensian Church, drawn from over thirty countries, primarily in Europe. The *Leuenberg Agreement* signed in 1973, with the Church of Scotland being a founding signatory, is the basis of the CPCE. The General Assembly is the principal decision-making body of the CPCE, with Assemblies taking place on a six-year cycle. Between Assemblies, the work of the CPCE is taken forward by a Council elected at each Assembly, which is itself led by a three-member Presidium, coordinated by the office of the CPCE in Vienna. The General Assembly receives the work undertaken as a consequence of the previous Assembly and, in turn, determines the work to be undertaken during the forthcoming cycle.^[xliiii] The current President of the CPCE Council is the Rev Dr John Bradbury, General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, and the Committee wish to place on record its thanks to him for representing the interests of the Church of Scotland in relation to the work of the CPCE.

12.2 In our engagement with the representative ecumenical bodies that are based in Europe, we recognise that the relative stability which obtained on continental Europe in recent generations has undergone considerable challenge, not least with respect to the war in Ukraine. Equally, the political relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union has itself also undergone a profound change. Notwithstanding the latter point and ever-conscious of the former, we ought to resist any tendency to view events on continental Europe in a detached manner. The future shape of the continent will, in part, impact upon our society as a whole and the Church requires to be responsive to any consequent changes in the wider landscape that we inhabit.

13. THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH: NICAEA 2025

13.1 The Committee wish to highlight the forthcoming 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in 2025. The Council came in time to be acknowledged as the first Ecumenical Council of the Church Catholic and its formulation of the relationship between the 'one God, the Father, the Almighty...[and the] one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God...of one Being with the Father', lies at the heart of the Nicene Creed, whose final form was developed in subsequent ecumenical councils.^[xiv]

13.2 The World Council of Churches intends to mark the Anniversary and to convene a World Conference on Faith and Order at the St Bishoy Monastery at Wadi El Natrun, Alexandria, Egypt from 25 to 28 October 2025, on the theme: "Where Now for Visible Unity?" In relation to this, it is stated that:

The first Ecumenical Council in 325 was a gathering of Christian bishops in Nicaea, now İznik in present-day Türkiye, as the first attempt to reach consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom, and to affirm the Christian faith in the triune God...Then, as now, the call to unity was heard within the context of a troubled, unequal, and divided world. The anniversary offers an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the affirmation of faith in the Nicene Creed, the mission of God's triune love and the implications this has for the common witness and service of the churches, and offers the opportunity to ask afresh with others what Nicaea means for churches and Christians today.^[xiv]

13.3 This World Conference on Faith and Order will be the sixth such conference, with the first having taken place at Lausanne in 1927 and the second in Edinburgh in 1937. In 1948, the World Conference on Faith and Order became a constituent part of the World Council of Churches and a third World Conference on Faith and Order took place in Lund in 1952, and thereafter in Montreal in 1963 and Santiago de Compostela in 1993.

13.4 The significance of the Ecumenical Council at Nicaea, as summoned by the Emperor Constantine, cannot be overstated in terms of its impact on the subsequent development of our understanding of the Christian faith, and on our understanding of the nature of the relationship between the Church and the prevailing political order. Without question, the Council of Nicaea shaped the future of the Church from AD 325 onwards.

13.5 In recalling the Council, it is important to seek to place it within its historical context and then to endeavour to understand the way in which it shaped the subsequent expression of the Christian faith. Our faith is always expressed within a specific social and cultural context and locality and the form in which it is expressed can never be divorced from that. Underlying this, the common confession of the substance of the ecumenical creeds binds the Church of Jesus Christ in order that it might believe within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It is within the context of this Church that we, within the Church of Scotland, consider the future shape of the Church in our own specific context.

13.6 In highlighting the forthcoming 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the Committee gives notice that it intends to shape its report to the General Assembly of 2025 around themes relating to the Council and to reflect upon its contemporary significance for the Church today. The Committee wishes to do so in partnership with the Theological Forum and invites the General Assembly to instruct the Committee and the Forum so to do.

14. CONCLUSION

14.1 A recurring coda throughout the Report affirms that: The work that will shape the future of the Church in Scotland is ongoing and we, by the grace of God, act as participants in it and are witnesses to it. This might be taken as a statement of that which is always true, and thus a truism. On the other hand, it may be taken as an invitation to seek to discern that which is the ongoing work of God and thereafter to intentionally affirm it in partnership with those who also discern the ways in the Church of the Jesus Christ is being shaped and remade in our times. Once more, we affirm: 'There is no future for the Church of Scotland that does not embed cooperative partnership as an integral element of its ongoing identity.'

14.2 The ecumenical vision which animates this Report is itself an attempt to articulate our response to the prayer of Jesus; 'that they may all be one...that the world may believe'. The prayer is itself woven into the *Articles Declaratory* which lie as the foundation of the church of which we are a part, and every part thereof. Those who first framed the *Articles Declaratory* were themselves deeply concerned for the future shape of the Church of Scotland and the church in Scotland. We, in turn, are no less so. In the midst of all the challenges we face, we reaffirm our commitment to the vision set out in the *Articles Declaratory* and, in a spirit of cooperative partnership, seek to live out our response to the prayer of Jesus.

In the name of the Committee

ROSS BLACKMAN, *Convener*
PAULINE WEIBYE, *Vice-Convener*
JOHN L MCPAKE, *Secretary*

Appendix I

Scottish Christian Forum

Vision:

1. The vision for the Scottish Christian Forum is rooted in the belief that the Holy Spirit is calling the churches, inter-church and Christian organisations in Scotland to a pilgrimage of greater unity, cooperation and common witness. The Forum will create an open space where respectful conversation between leaders and representatives from these bodies can take place.
2. The vision is inspired by a renewal of the call to prayer and our common witness to the Gospel. Embracing this vision will lead to the deepening of a shared spirituality; support for ecumenical initiatives at all levels; and the exploration of common challenges. It will foster ecumenical relationships which respect the variety of Christian life and witness in Scotland and encourage participation in the shared life of the Church.
3. The foundation of the Forum is mutual respect, acceptance and attentive listening, allied to the recognition of diversity among the participants. The Forum will seek to discern the work of the Holy Spirit and to respond in an ecumenism of action. Implicit in this is the recognition that participation will not require any church or organisation to abandon particular theological perspectives or traditional religious identities. Participation is to be understood theologically, whereby it is acknowledged that all participants are members of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

Constituent Elements:

The constituent elements of the Scottish Christian Forum, in the first instance, are the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum. As the Forum evolves it is anticipated that other forums will develop and become an integral part of the body.

National Ecumenical Body:

The Scottish Christian Forum will be designated the National Ecumenical Body, and will relate as such to the other ecumenical instruments within Britain and Ireland through the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum.

Scottish Church Leaders' Forum

Nature and Purpose:

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum is a forum in which designated senior leaders within particular churches in Scotland gather together for the purpose of sharing fellowship, information and insight. At present, the Forum offers a meeting place to the following churches and communities:

1. Church of Scotland
2. Catholic Church in Scotland
3. Scottish Episcopal Church
4. United Free Church of Scotland
5. United Reformed Church
6. Methodist Church in Scotland
7. Religious Society of Friends
8. Salvation Army
9. Congregational Federation
10. Baptist Union of Scotland
11. Free Church of Scotland
12. Redeemed Christian Church of God
13. Greek Orthodox Church
14. Ukrainian Catholic Church

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum is a participatory body and is, in nature, a voluntary association and its purpose, as stated, provides the basis on which the Forum is established. The Forum welcomes the participation of other churches within its life on the basis of agreement with the stated Nature, Purpose & Aims, and on the basis of the consensus of the Forum.

The Forum was initiated in March 2020 and the catalyst for its initiation and subsequent development was the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for a shared response to the challenges of the pandemic. Subsequent to this, the aims of the Forum have evolved in relation to the present context of the church in Scotland.

Aims:

The Forum seeks to:

1. Encourage the mission of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in Scotland;
2. Encourage the living out of our shared response to the prayer of Jesus that we may 'all be one' (John 17: 21);
3. Encourage the Church to share in the call to prayer;
4. Encourage a broad spectrum of churches to participate in its life;
5. Encourage the commissioning of research into areas of mutual interest;
6. Provide a platform for working cooperatively with other churches and ecumenical bodies within Scotland, and within Britain and Ireland.

Cooperation:

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum will work cooperatively with other church and ecumenical bodies, as appropriate, including:

1. Ecumenical Officers' Forum
2. Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office
3. Scottish Churches Committee
4. Scottish Church Planters' Network
5. Evangelical Alliance (Scotland)
6. Churches Together in Britain & Ireland
7. Churches Together in England
8. Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting
9. Churches Together in Wales (Cytûn)

Convener:

The Convener of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum shall be appointed from amongst the members of the Forum and shall serve at the pleasure of the Forum.

Secretary:

The Secretariat of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum shall be provided by the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum.

Annual Review:

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum shall conduct an annual review towards the end of each calendar year and set goals for the calendar year following.

Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum

Nature and Purpose:

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum is a forum in which designated Ecumenical Officers, and those with ecumenical responsibility within their church, gather together for the purpose of sharing fellowship, information and insight.

Further, the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum serves as the Secretariat of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and in that capacity shall record the Minute of meetings of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and, where appropriate, to forward initiatives agreed by the latter Forum.

The Forum offers a meeting place to the following churches and communities, and includes, where appropriate, representatives from the respective Committees of those churches and communities:

1. Church of Scotland (Ecumenical Relations Committee)
2. Catholic Church in Scotland (Bishops' Ecumenical Reference Group of the Scottish Catholic Bishops' Conference)
3. Scottish Episcopal Church (Inter-Church Relations Committee)
4. United Free Church of Scotland (Ecumenical Relations Working Group)
5. United Reformed Church (Ecumenical Relations Task Group of the National Synod of Scotland)
6. Salvation Army
7. The Redeemed Christian Church of God
8. Religious Society of Friends
9. Methodist Church in Scotland
10. Churches in Communities

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum is a participatory body and is, in nature, a voluntary association and its purpose, as stated, provides the basis on which the Forum is established. It was initiated in November 2019.

Aims:

The Forum seeks to:

1. Encourage the living out of our shared response to the prayer of Jesus that we may 'all be one' (John 17: 21);
2. Encourage the Church to share in the call to prayer;
3. Encourage a broad spectrum of churches to participate in its life;
4. Provide a platform for working cooperatively with other churches and ecumenical bodies within Scotland, and within Britain and Ireland.
5. Encourage the witness of the Church to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, by encouraging, enabling and supporting the formation, development and ongoing life of ecumenical partnerships at a local and national level.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships:

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum will seek to encourage and support new and innovative forms of local ecumenical partnership. Further, it will seek to fulfil the responsibilities of Oversight and Review which are written into the constitutions of established Local Ecumenical Partnerships, and will liaise with the parent bodies of the churches which are members of such Partnerships.

Cooperation:

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum will seek to work cooperatively with other church and ecumenical bodies, as appropriate, including:

1. Scottish Church Leaders' Forum
2. Ecumenical Committees of the Scottish churches
3. Local Ecumenical Partnerships and the governing bodies of the churches party to them
4. Churches Together in Britain & Ireland

Convener:

The Convener of the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum shall be appointed from amongst the members of the Forum and shall serve at the pleasure of the Forum.

Secretary:

The Secretary of the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum shall be appointed from amongst the members of the Forum and shall serve at the pleasure of the Forum.

Annual Review:

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum shall conduct an annual review towards the end of each calendar year and set goals for the calendar year following.

Appendix II

Delegates to other Churches

The following have been appointed as delegates to the Assemblies, Synods and Conferences of other Churches:

Presbyterian Church of Wales: Moderator

United Reformed Church: Moderator

Church of England: Rev Dr David Coulter

United Reformed Church (National Synod of Scotland): Rev Ross Blackman

Methodist Church in Scotland (Synod): Rev Dr John L McPake

Scottish Episcopal Church: Rev Ross Blackman

United Free Church of Scotland: Rev Dr John L McPake

Ecumenical Bodies

The following represent(-ed) the Church of Scotland on Assemblies and Committees of the ecumenical bodies of which the Church is a member:

World Council of Churches

Central Committee:

Ms Miriam Weibye

Conference of European Churches

General Assembly (June 2023):

Miss Gemma King, Mrs Pauline Weibye

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe

General Assembly (August 2024):

Rev Ian Alexander

Rev Tara Curlewis

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Board of Trustees:

Miss Gemma King

Action of Churches Together in Scotland

Members' Meeting:

Voting Member: Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee

Non-Voting Member: Vice Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee

Non-Voting Member: Ecumenical Officer

Trustee:

Columba Declaration Contact Group

Co-Chair:

Co-Secretary: Rev Dr John L McPake

Members: Rev Dr Peter McEnhill, Mrs Pauline Weibye

Saint Andrew Declaration Contact Group

Co-Chair: Rev Ross Blackman

Co-Secretary: Rev Dr John L McPake

Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald, Rev Eileen Miller

Scottish Church Leaders' Forum

Moderator, Principal Clerk, Ecumenical Officer

Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum

Ecumenical Officer

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- [ii] 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13a), 26.
- [iii] Weatherhead, JL, *The Constitution and Laws of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1997), 19.
- [iv] <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/church-law/church-constitution>
- [v] GA 2018 Reports, 12/10.
- [vi] GA 2019 Reports, 18/3.
- [vii] Act V (2010): <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/church-law/acts>
- [viii] GA Reports 2021, 6/2.
- [ix] GA Reports 2023, 4/1-2.
- [x] Act V (2010): <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/church-law/acts>
- [xi] GA 2023: '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 Action Programme Leadership Team 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.'
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- [xiv] GA Reports 2021, 6/1.
- [xv] GA Reports 2021, 6/3-4; GA Reports 2022, 5/9.
- [xvi] GA Reports 2023, 4/4-5.
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- [xxviii] GA Reports 2016, 12/4.
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- [xxxii] <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-General-Synod-Papers-2023.pdf>,
- [xxxiii] *Ibid.*, 158-159.
- [xxxiv] *Ibid.*, 158.
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