



The Church of Scotland

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

Do this in remembrance of me
Luke 22:19

REMITTS BOOKLET

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND 2023

Remits booklet for General Assembly 2023

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GENERAL INFORMATION

NEW PRESBYTERY

The General Assembly has approved the creation of the following new Presbytery:

- The **Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: The Church of Scotland in the Highlands & Hebrides**, formed from the Presbyteries of Argyll, Abernethy, Inverness, Lochaber, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Lochcarron-Skye and Uist, to take effect from 1 January 2024.

NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The next General Assembly will meet from Saturday 18 May 2024 in Edinburgh in person and online.

SELECTED REMITS FOR INFORMATION

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly:

6. Agree with the decision of the Assembly Trustees in respect of the following areas as priorities:
 - (i) the growth and development of the Church through the new Presbyteries working closely with the local congregations;
 - (ii) the work of the national on the local need with a particular emphasis on recruiting and equipping our future leaders in ministries of the Church; and
 - (iii) the modernisation and simplification of our governance structure.
14. Welcome the launch of the Seeds for Growth Fund as of 1st June 2023 recognising that it is an investment in the future of mission and growth within the local church that will draw on our reserves.
16. Celebrate the work of CrossReach and note that it accounts for approximately half of the Church of Scotland's total income and expenditure.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

7. Welcome the Signing of the Saint Margaret Declaration between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland on 16th November 2022 in Dunfermline Abbey.
8. Commend the Saint Margaret Declaration Liturgy, as set out in Appendix 3, and encourage its use within the parish as an expression of that which the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland hold in common.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

The General Assembly:

2. Approve the Confessions of Faith Overture as set out in Appendix 1 and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2023 and noting for the avoidance of doubt that the Book of Confessions referred to in the Overture will contain the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the 1992 Statement of Faith.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

The General Assembly:

7. *South Sudan – section 5.2.1*
Give thanks for the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan and encourage ongoing contact with the Anglican Communion, the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) to continue to support local and international efforts in peace-making and reconciliation, and commend the shared pilgrimage as a model of cooperative working.
18. *The Jewish-Christian Glossary project -Supplementary Report*
Welcome the work of the Jewish-Christian Glossary project, noting that the Glossary aims to improve mutual understanding; encourage Ministers in particular to study and engage with it in a way that will inform local, national and international relationship with Jewish communities.

Note: The Glossary can be found at this link:

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/108745/ocr23-01_a-jewish-christian-glossary_a4_v4.pdf

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

The General Assembly:

4. Deplore the continued escalation of war in Ukraine and in other parts of the world, and the use of language that dehumanises victims and distances us from the horror of war.

INFORMATION FOR PRESBYTERIES AND KIRK SESSIONS

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

7. Approve the sale of the Moderator's Residence at 2 Rothesay Terrace and the investment of the proceeds.
8. Approve the acquisition of a replacement residence, preferably by the repurposing of a property already owned by the Church.
14. Thank Ms Laura Dunlop KC for her many years of outstanding service as Procurator, note her resignation with effect from 31 May 2023 and appoint Jonathan Brodie KC as the Procurator with effect from 1 June 2023.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ETHICS OF INVESTMENT PRACTICE

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

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

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

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

2. Agree the total number of planned ministry posts for 2024 remains at 600 plus 60 vacancies and for this to be the basis for the next five years, subject to annual reporting and agreement of the General Assembly.
12. Agree to the funding arrangements for the Presbytery of International Charges and Presbytery of England.
17. Approve the merger of the work of the Faith Nurture Forum with the work of the Faith Impact Forum to become the work of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, as prioritised and shaped in anticipation by the Forums, to take effect on 1 June 2023, with the structure, remit and membership set out in Appendix 3 of this Report, and to note the involvement of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum in the membership of the Leadership Team,.....

24. Agree the decision of the Assembly Trustees in respect of the George Street Building in terms of an income generation strategy for the next five years.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

9. Approve the allocation of the total number of planned ministry posts among the Presbyteries as contained in Appendix iii for 2024.

Note: the following section of deliverance was also agreed on the Report of the Special Committee on Gordon Presbytery:

4. *Agree that any future changes in the basis on which ministries weightings are determined should be reported to the General Assembly and clearly communicated to any Presbyteries for whom specific changes are envisaged.*
13. Note the introduction from 1 January 2024 of an integrated support allowance of £250 per year for those in fulltime ministry.
18. Agree that the pulpit supply fee (and the fee where congregations have to pay for funerals) should be raised from £60 to £100, and any additional service raised from £30 to £50.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

7. Commend Guilds in Forth Valley and Clydesdale for piloting a new way of working together and recommend to other Presbyteries and Guilds Together Groups that they explore new ways in which they can work together to support the greater involvement of Guilds in the mission of the Church.
8. Welcome the establishment of the Young Adults Guild and encourage congregations and Presbyteries to promote this group to their young adults.
10. Give thanks for the vibrant life that the Guild brings to the Christian witness of local congregations.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

5. Instruct the Committee to consider bringing forward proposals to a Commission of Assembly, to be held in any format permitted under section 4(2) of the Commission of Assembly Act (Act VI 1997) before 30 November 2023, to enable congregational meetings convened for any purpose to be held, in addition to wholly in person, online or by a combination of in-person and online (ie in hybrid format) with voting and thus decision-making similarly taking place simultaneously in person and/or online, such proposals to be contained in a new Protocol to be passed for that purpose.
9. Approve the principles for Presbytery Review set out in Appendix E to the Report.

Note: the Ministers and Deacons in Same Sex Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015) was amended so as to provide for one vote on whether or not to depart, rather than two.

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES

3. Recognise the contribution of our Chaplains in supporting our personnel who are deployed following the invasion of Ukraine.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

- 2. *Legacies of Slavery – section 3*
 - (a) Commend the report on ‘the Church of Scotland and the legacies of slavery’ for study and action and reaffirm the Church of Scotland’s teaching and action for racial justice.

- 14. *Refugees – section 9*

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

- 15. *Assisted Dying – section 10.4*

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

- 16. *Constitutional issues – section 10.1*

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

GENERAL TRUSTEES

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

- 4. Affirm that, as a national Church, the Church of Scotland seeks to have adequate spaces in as many places as are properly affordable,.....

- 8. *Manses*
 - (d) Establish a Manse Liaison Group to present a proposal on manse provision to the General Assembly of 2024 with the involvement of the General Trustees, the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, the Assembly Trustees, Presbyteries, Presbytery Buildings Officers and the Law Department; in presenting its proposal on future manse provision, the Manse Liaison Group will review the reasons behind the current manse provision rules and assess their ongoing suitability as well as consider alternatives such as the possibility of ministers living in their own home and being paid a housing allowance for its use as a manse.

9. *Property Disposals*

- (a) Remind all Congregations and Presbyteries about how funds in the Consolidated Fabric Fund can be utilised.
- (c) Instruct the General Trustees to produce a professional communication electronically and in print to Ministers, Session Clerks and Congregational Treasurers which sets out clearly and straightforwardly the respective purposes of the Consolidated Fabric Fund and the Central Fabric Fund and specifically how congregations can utilise the Consolidated Fabric Fund; also urge congregations with substantial funds in the Consolidated Fabric Fund to consider donating a proportion of their holdings to financially less well-off congregations in neighbouring parishes, for fabric purposes.
- (f) Permit congregations attempting to sell historic or listed church buildings to keep using them until such time as a sale has been agreed to facilitate their care and limit costs.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

- 3. Urge the Church at all levels to remain informed, vigilant and engaged with issues of justice and peace for Israelis and Palestinians, and to use its voice to condemn illegality and violence wherever these are apparent.
- 5. Commend the Iona Community for its development work with young people, in particular the focus on environmental issues, and look forward with interest to the creative use of the MacLeod Centre on Iona.

CHALMERS LECTURESHIP TRUST

- 4. Welcome the appointment of the Rev Professor John Swinton and Dr Katie Cross as the joint Chalmers Lecturers for the cycle 2022-26 and note that the Trustees will bring to the General Assembly 2024 detailed proposals for this Lectureship cycle.

INSTRUCTIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRESBYTERIES

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

10. Instruct Presbyteries to work with the Assembly Business Committee and others to formulate and implement terms and conditions of employment for all Presbytery staff to ensure coherent terms and conditions across the Presbyteries in Scotland; such terms and conditions to be compatible with Church and civil law.

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

5. Note that under Giving to Grow congregational contributions will reduce from a total of £47.7 million in 2020 to £38.9 million in 2023 and:
 - (i) urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to engage with the National Stewardship Team and the range of its resources to develop new streams of income and generous giving, and
 - (ii) urge congregations and Presbyteries to consider making voluntary contributions towards our ministries during the transition phase as the scheme is implemented and to develop Giving Agreements in the longer term.
21. Urge all congregations, Presbyteries and national entities to engage with the work of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group, in particular the research outcomes of the Research Group on Ethnic Minorities and the work of the Disability Inclusion Working Group.
22. Note with alarm the research which reports that Black ministers, ministers of colour and ministers from an ethnic minority are being overlooked or asked not to officiate at funerals but to give way to a White Scottish minister: instruct the Assembly Trustees through the work of the EDI Group to highlight this issue; urge the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to liaise with relevant public bodies and funeral directors to invite their intervention; and encourage Presbytery Clerks to raise awareness of this issue in every parish.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

2. Approve the Confessions of Faith Overture as set out in Appendix 1 and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2023 and noting for the avoidance of doubt that the Book of Confessions referred to in the Overture will contain the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the 1992 Statement of Faith.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

3. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to support congregations' and Presbyteries' engagement with response to poverty.
5. Urge Presbyteries to recognise their Local Education Representatives' contributions to Local Authority policy and the welfare and holistic development of young people generally by encouraging networking across the Local Authority boundaries.

6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to welcome new Gaelic-medium resources for children from Scottish Bible Society and the Gaelic Committee of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to be alert to opportunities for mission with Gaelic-speaking communities and schools, and to make use of the Gaelic-medium resources now available.

10. Reaffirm the ecumenical aspect of the secondary principles and existing guidance relating to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), and
 - (a) instruct the Faith 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.

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

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

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

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

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

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

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD)

Workforce Matters

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

Presbytery Promise And Support From Congregations

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

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

3. Encourage men across the church to consider joining the Guild.
6. Encourage uniting congregations to ensure that the Guild is involved in discussions and enabled to explore ways in which Guilds merge or work in new ways.
7. Commend Guilds in Forth Valley and Clydesdale for piloting a new way of working together and recommend to other Presbyteries and Guilds Together Groups that they explore new ways in which they can work together to support the greater involvement of Guilds in the mission of the Church.
8. Welcome the establishment of the Young Adults Guild and encourage congregations and Presbyteries to promote this group to their young adults.

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES

5. Encourage eligible ministers of the Church to consider service as a Chaplain to HM Forces, Regular or Reservist.
6. Encourage those eligible to consider service as Chaplains in any of the Cadet organisations and thank all serving Cadet Chaplains.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

3. *Net Zero – section 4.3*
Urge Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and national committees and agencies to note and consider ways of taking forward the outcomes of the 'Net Zero Strategic Outline', and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in partnership with the Assembly Trustees, General Trustees, CrossReach and Eco Congregation Scotland to continue to develop plans and activities to encourage and enable all parts of the Church to work towards the target of Net Zero by 2030.
4. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to follow the Net Zero Pathway and use the Energy Footprint Tool (both of which are to be published by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team) to help them measure and reduce their emissions in line with the Net Zero 2030 target.
8. *Earthquake in Syria – section 5.3.4*
Encourage Presbyteries and congregations to offer prayerful and financial support to the rebuilding of lives and churches in Syria and Lebanon through 'Standing Firm – Rebuilding lives in Syria'.

GENERAL TRUSTEES

7. Welcome the appointment of further Presbytery Buildings Officers and encourage other new reformed Presbyteries to take advantage of this offer.
8. *Manses*
 - (a) Instruct Congregations to ensure that all retained Manses are fully wind and water tight and meet the Repairing Standard as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 by 31 December 2024.
 - (b) Instruct Congregations to provide a valid Energy Performance Certificate and a report on compliance with the Repairing Standard along with the next Manse Condition Schedule sent to Presbyteries.

- (c) Remind Presbyteries of their oversight obligations in regard to each of the above.
9. *Property Disposals*
- (h) Instruct the General Trustees and Assembly Trustees, in consultation with Presbyteries, to consider ways of generating income for the work of the Church through the creative use and development of land and buildings where retention may make a more positive economic case than disposal.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

- 3. Remind every Kirk Session, Presbytery, Employing Agency and department of the National Office, that no person may be employed or appointed to undertake or carry out regulated work unless that person is a member of the PVG Scheme, or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or has provided the Safeguarding Service with an appropriate overseas check and has been cleared by the Safeguarding Service.
- 6. Authorise the Safeguarding Service to audit periodically congregational safeguarding records and practice and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to facilitate and co-operate with such audits.
- 8. Note the availability of the new revised Safeguarding Handbook which can be found on the Safeguarding Service area of the Church's public website and:
 - (a) Encourage congregations, Presbyteries and staff of the National Office to become familiar with the revised Handbook; and
 - (b) Encourage congregations to provide a link to the Handbook on their own Church website.
- 9. Encourage all those in congregations and Presbyteries who are no longer undertaking regulated work for the Church to contact Disclosure Scotland and the Safeguarding Service as soon as possible so that their records can be brought up to date.

INSTRUCTIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO KIRK SESSIONS AND CONGREGATIONS

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Scottish Bible Society

16. Commend the Scottish Bible Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members, and support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to encourage confidence in the gospel and in sharing the Bible.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

8. Commend the Saint Margaret Declaration Liturgy, as set out in Appendix 3, and encourage its use within the parish as an expression of that which the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland hold in common.

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

5. Note that under Giving to Grow congregational contributions will reduce from a total of £47.7 million in 2020 to £38.9 million in 2023 and:
 - (i) urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to engage with the National Stewardship Team and the range of its resources to develop new streams of income and generous giving, and
 - (ii) urge congregations and Presbyteries to consider making voluntary contributions towards our ministries during the transition phase as the scheme is implemented and to develop Giving Agreements in the longer term.
13. Encourage Kirk Sessions to engage with the rescheduled Christian Aid and ecumenical partners' legacy giving initiative, *Faith Will...*, around Harvest 2023 in order to encourage giving to the Church including CrossReach.
21. Urge all congregations, Presbyteries and national entities to engage with the work of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group, in particular the research outcomes of the Research Group on Ethnic Minorities and the work of the Disability Inclusion Working Group.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

2. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to work with Priority Area Congregations and the supplementary network of congregations to ensure their stories, including the learning and experience from their mission are shared with the wider church via the Church's website and other platforms.
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to welcome new Gaelic-medium resources for children from Scottish Bible Society and the Gaelic Committee of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to be alert to opportunities for mission with Gaelic-speaking communities and schools, and to make use of the Gaelic-medium resources now available.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD)

Dementia Strategy

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

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

3. Encourage men across the church to consider joining the Guild.
6. Encourage uniting congregations to ensure that the Guild is involved in discussions and enabled to explore ways in which Guilds merge or work in new ways.

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES

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

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

2. *Legacies of Slavery – section 3*
 - (d) Encourage congregations to research the history of slavery and its connections in their local areas, and to continue to celebrate Racial Justice Sunday to challenge racism and speak out against racial injustice.
3. *Net Zero – section 4.3*

Urge Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and national committees and agencies to note and consider ways of taking forward the outcomes of the 'Net Zero Strategic Outline', and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in partnership with the Assembly Trustees, General Trustees, CrossReach and Eco Congregation Scotland to continue to develop plans and activities to encourage and enable all parts of the Church to work towards the target of Net Zero by 2030.
4. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to follow the Net Zero Pathway and use the Energy Footprint Tool (both of which are to be published by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team) to help them measure and reduce their emissions in line with the Net Zero 2030 target.
8. *Earthquake in Syria – section 5.3.4*

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

GENERAL TRUSTEES

8. *Manses*
 - (a) Instruct Congregations to ensure that all retained Manses are fully wind and water tight and meet the Repairing Standard as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 by 31 December 2024.
 - (b) Instruct Congregations to provide a valid Energy Performance Certificate and a report on compliance with the Repairing Standard along with the next Manse Condition Schedule sent to Presbyteries.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

2. Commend the Assembly Trustees for the work being done on issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, and the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team for its research into the Historic Legacy of Slavery, and urge all Church people to continue to take appropriate action on these issues at a local, regional and national level.
3. Urge the Church at all levels to remain informed, vigilant and engaged with issues of justice and peace for Israelis and Palestinians, and to use its voice to condemn illegality and violence wherever these are apparent.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

3. Remind every Kirk Session, Presbytery, Employing Agency and department of the National Office, that no person may be employed or appointed to undertake or carry out regulated work unless that person is a member of the PVG Scheme, or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or has provided the Safeguarding Service with an appropriate overseas check and has been cleared by the Safeguarding Service.
6. Authorise the Safeguarding Service to audit periodically congregational safeguarding records and practice and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to facilitate and co-operate with such audits.
8. Note the availability of the new revised Safeguarding Handbook which can be found on the Safeguarding Service area of the Church's public website and:
 - (a) Encourage congregations, Presbyteries and staff of the National Office to become familiar with the revised Handbook; and
 - (b) Encourage congregations to provide a link to the Handbook on their own Church website.
9. Encourage all those in congregations and Presbyteries who are no longer undertaking regulated work for the Church to contact Disclosure Scotland and the Safeguarding Service as soon as possible so that their records can be brought up to date.

INSTRUCTIONS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEES AND TRUSTS

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

9. Note the work undertaken to date by the Presbytery Development Group in implementation of sections 12, 13 and 14 of the Committee's deliverance at the General Assembly of 2022 and instruct the Assembly Business Committee to bring a further report to the General Assembly of 2024.
10. Instruct Presbyteries to work with the Assembly Business Committee and others to formulate and implement terms and conditions of employment for all Presbytery staff to ensure coherent terms and conditions across the Presbyteries in Scotland; such terms and conditions to be compatible with Church and civil law.
11. Approve the recommendations contained in section 9.5 of the Report in regard to the role of the Moderator of the General Assembly.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

4. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee urgently to initiate a conversation across the whole Church with our sister Churches in Scotland about cooperation in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland.
6. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee, in consultation with the Theological Forum, to explore the ecumenical implications of a theology of friendship, and report to a future General Assembly.

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

3. Note that 600 plus 60 vacancies has been used as a base for planned ministry in 2024 but, instruct the Trustees to explore:
 - (a) A new approach to sustainable planning for ministry posts which ensures local charges (single or linked) which meet a quota for ministry costs, presbytery dues and national contributions retain a right to call a minister (subject to the call being upheld by presbytery);
 - (b) a new approach to sustainable planning for ministry posts which ensures local charges (single or linked) which meet presbytery dues and national contributions, but cannot meet a full quota for ministry costs retain the right to offer a call to ministry on a 'house for duty' or appropriate fractional basis (subject to the call being upheld by presbytery);
 - (c) New solidarity mechanisms for augmenting the resources of local charges, which ensure that all priority charges meet the quota required to call a minister and that all charges not meeting quota can apply for augmentation to reach quota or fractions of a quota;and instruct the Trustees to continue to maintain focus on increasing vocations to stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries as a strategic priority in the next five years.
4. Instruct the Theological Forum jointly with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to reflect on the decline of the Church of Scotland in regard to membership and ministry candidates and to offer guidance on what steps should be taken to address it, reporting by 2024 failing which by 2025.
7. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to identify and deliver further savings in line with the deficit reduction plan which will impact on all areas other than the agreed priorities (deliverance 4).

8. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to provide a five-year rolling budget plan to the General Assembly on an annual basis, noting that in future the current budget will be set by the Assembly Trustees in the previous Autumn.
9. Instruct the Trustees to carry out a review of the Giving to Grow Scheme and bring any modifications to the regulations to the 2024 General Assembly.
11. Instruct the Assembly Trustees, in consultation with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, to:
 - (i) Report to the General Assembly 2024 on the broad expectations of those in ministries;
 - (ii) Review stipends and detail the system how these are to be determined, including all factors taken into account;
 - (iii) Provide details of support available to those in ministries and what may be required going forward as they meet the challenges of change and radical reform.
22. Note with alarm the research which reports that Black ministers, ministers of colour and ministers from an ethnic minority are being overlooked or asked not to officiate at funerals but to give way to a White Scottish minister: instruct the Assembly Trustees through the work of the EDI Group to highlight this issue; urge the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to liaise with relevant public bodies and funeral directors to invite their intervention; and encourage Presbytery Clerks to raise awareness of this issue in every parish.
23. Commend the work of Assembly Trustees and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDI) and (1) request that Assembly Trustees encourage the Conduct and Culture Group of the EDI to collaborate with the Theological Forum on projects of a theological nature; (2) instruct the Assembly Trustees to report to the 2024 General Assembly.
27. In order to achieve Net Zero by 2030, instruct the Assembly Trustees to assess carbon emissions from national Church travel (both international and national), determine options to reduce this, agree an annual carbon budget for the national Church and report to General Assembly in 2024.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

3.
 - (a) Receive the Report “The Calling of the Church” as a response to the instruction given by the General Assembly of 2022.
 - (b) Approve and adopt this Report as an expression of the Church’s calling and purpose.
 - (c) Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to raise awareness of the calling and purpose of the Church.
 - (d) Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to provide resources to enable every member of the Church to discover and develop their giftings and callings.
 - (e) Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to introduce training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament in recognising, developing, and deploying the gifts of members and Elders.
 - (f) Instruct the Theological Forum, the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, and the Ecumenical Relations Committee to explore options for widening access to ordained sacramental ministries within the Church in light of the principles contained in the 2019 Report of the Sacramental Ministry Working Group, and report to the General Assembly of 2024.

- (g) Instruct the Theological Forum and the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to investigate the production of pastoral guidance on situations where a minister or congregation's sense of call is not affirmed by the Presbytery during its planning processes.
 - (h) Instruct the Theological Forum, Assembly Trustees, Ecumenical Relations Committee and Legal Questions Committee jointly to reconsider the Third Article Declaratory and how this may be interpreted given the radically changed landscape of the Church and of Scotland as a whole since this was last considered and, specifically, if the commitment to a territorial ministry can realistically be maintained and report to a future General Assembly.
4. Instruct the Theological Forum to explore the theology of transgender identities within the context of the Church's life and ministry, and report to the General Assembly of 2024.
 5. Instruct the Theological Forum to: (1) study the Scottish Government's Independent Report entitled, 'Ending Conversion Practices: Report and Recommendations'; (2) collaborate with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to review previous General Assembly Reports and decisions on the matter of conversion therapy, and (3) report findings back to the 2024 General Assembly.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

2. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to work with Priority Area Congregations and the supplementary network of congregations to ensure their stories, including the learning and experience from their mission are shared with the wider church via the Church's website and other platforms.
3. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to support congregations' and Presbyteries' engagement with response to poverty.
4. Commend the work of the Education and Schools Group and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to support Ministers, paid workers and volunteers in their ministry to schools.
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to welcome new Gaelic-medium resources for children from Scottish Bible Society and the Gaelic Committee of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to be alert to opportunities for mission with Gaelic-speaking communities and schools, and to make use of the Gaelic-medium resources now available.
10. Reaffirm the ecumenical aspect of the secondary principles and existing guidance relating to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), and
 - (a) instruct the Faith 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.
11. Note the proposal from the Diaconate Council to use endowment funds to create a part-time Development Worker post to research and shape proposals for the future of the Diaconate and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to bring a report to a future General Assembly.

14. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to commission or otherwise conduct a comprehensive independent survey of ministerial well-being with the aim of deepening understanding of the causes of work-related ministerial stress and developing strategies to reduce it.
16. Encourage the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to develop work on an Apprenticeship Route with hope to pilot in 2024, subject to further General Assembly approval.
17. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (1) to create an apprenticeship programme for those seeking to serve young people and youth; and (2) Enable local congregations to resource Youth Ministry through grant making bodies of the Church and congregational funds; being an important next and vital step once the Apprenticeship route is established.
20. Noting that the General Assembly has backed the call for frontline social care workers to be paid a minimum of £12 per hour, instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to review the pay and conditions of those who serve as Locums, giving consideration to the provision of written employment contracts, and report to the General Assembly of 2024.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD)

National Care Service

2. Note the report which has been published by the Archbishop's Commission and instruct the Social Care Council, in partnership with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, to continue to engage with the Scottish Government in the development of a National Care Service, and urge the Scottish Government to respect the views of care service providers and service users and their families for the implementation and delivery of a National Care Service which:
 - (a) Promotes co-design and co-production of services between commissioners, service providers and service users.
 - (b) Makes Scottish Government ministerial accountability clear and transparent.
 - (c) Makes sure that the principles of a National Care Service are based on values which protect and uphold human rights and dignity.
 - (d) Respects the Fair Work Convention recommendation for Fair Pay across the whole sector.

Drug Deaths

4. Instruct CrossReach to work alongside the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and give advice on the information being developed to support the work of local congregations in order to reduce stigma in relation to those affected by alcohol and drug use.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

3. Instruct the Assembly Business Committee in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consider the issue of representation within the General Assembly, of Candidates in Training and Probationers, including the possibility of voting rights and to report to the General Assembly of 2024.
4. Instruct the Assembly Business Committee in consultation with Legal Questions Committee and the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consider the issue of youth representation within the General Assembly, including the possibility of voting rights and to report to the General Assembly of 2024.

5. Instruct the Committee to consider bringing forward proposals to a Commission of Assembly, to be held in any format permitted under section 4(2) of the Commission of Assembly Act (Act VI 1997) before 30 November 2023, to enable congregational meetings convened for any purpose to be held, in addition to wholly in person, online or by a combination of in-person and online (ie in hybrid format) with voting and thus decision-making similarly taking place simultaneously in person and/or online, such proposals to be contained in a new Protocol to be passed for that purpose.
8. Instruct the Committee to consider what revisions to Church law might be required in light of the introduction of Team Ministry in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and report, with proposed legislation if applicable, to the General Assembly of 2024.
11. Instruct the Committee collaboratively to review the Complaints process, seeking views of Presbyteries and congregations to find ways of alleviating the stress, strain and hurt of those involved in the process and report to the General Assembly of 2025.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

2. *Legacies of Slavery – section 3*
 - (b) Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consider ways to support the delivery of the recommendations set out in the report.
 - (c) Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in partnership with the Theological Forum and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group to prepare a statement of acknowledgment and apology for the Church’s involvement with and connection to historic chattel slavery, to be considered for adoption at a future General Assembly.
3. *Net Zero – section 4.3*

Urge Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and national committees and agencies to note and consider ways of taking forward the outcomes of the ‘Net Zero Strategic Outline’, and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in partnership with the Assembly Trustees, General Trustees, CrossReach and Eco Congregation Scotland to continue to develop plans and activities to encourage and enable all parts of the Church to work towards the target of Net Zero by 2030.
4. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to follow the Net Zero Pathway and use the Energy Footprint Tool (both of which are to be published by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team) to help them measure and reduce their emissions in line with the Net Zero 2030 target.
5. Encourage the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to explore partnerships and opportunities that will enable the Church to contribute to wildlife and biodiversity restoration and call upon the Scottish Government to do more in their efforts to improve national biodiversity for the wellbeing of both people and wildlife.
6. Welcome the decision at COP27 to establish a Loss and Damage Fund, and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to work with Christian Aid and other ecumenical partners to call on the UK Government to pledge a fair and reasonable contribution to the Loss and Damage Fund and call on the Scottish Government to deliver its existing promises and funding pledges.
9. *Pakistan – section 5.4.1*

Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to continue to engage with ecumenical and international partners on the misuse of the blasphemy law and forced conversion and forced marriage in Pakistan.

10. *Sri Lanka – section 5.4.3*
Commend the Debt Justice for Sri Lanka campaign; instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to work with Jubilee Scotland to provide information to congregations and Presbyteries about the campaign.
11. *Integrity: Violence Against Women Task Group – section 7*
Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in collaboration with Integrity to develop the Violence Against Women Charter as a resource to build a network of congregations, supported and equipped to help respond to and prevent this form of violence.
12. *Cost of Living – section 8*
Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to share the Church’s practical experiences and policy ideas in relation to tackling poverty and helping people with the cost of living with the Scottish and UK Governments, and to report to the General Assembly of 2024.
13. Note with regret the reduction of Scottish Government funding to third sector organisations and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to enter into a dialogue, on behalf of organisations affected, with the Government expressing the Church’s concerns about the reduction and the Government's practices around funding.
14. *Refugees – section 9*
Urge the UK Government to revise the Illegal Migration Bill in alignment with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and (1) instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to continue to advocate for refugees and immigration policy; (2) commend those congregations which have worked to welcome those forcibly displaced from their homes, and; (3) promote the engagement of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees in its ongoing efforts to co-ordinate the Church’s mission to support and care for asylum-seekers and refugees.
15. *Assisted Dying – section 10.4*
Noting that the historical decisions of the General Assembly have been to support current civil law as to assisted dying, but now recognising that there exists a range of theological views and ethical opinions on assisted dying within the Church, instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, the Theological Forum and other relevant parties to explore such views and opinions and report to a future General Assembly.
17. *Addictions/substance use – section 11*
Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to research and develop thinking on the policy, ethical, spiritual and theological issues arising from Scotland’s current crisis with regards to addictions and substance use, including producing advice and information to support the work of local congregations.

GENERAL TRUSTEES

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

5. Commend the thorough analyses used by the General Trustees in Presbytery Mission Planning, and instruct the General Trustees to continue their theological reflection on buildings classification, in particular with respect to geographical presence and liturgical diversity.
6. Instruct the General Trustees to explore alternatives for buildings categorisation (alongside the current system) and report to the General Assembly of 2025.
8. *Manses*
 - (d) Establish a Manse Liaison Group to present a proposal on manse provision to the General Assembly of 2024 with the involvement of the General Trustees, the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, the Assembly Trustees, Presbyteries, Presbytery Buildings Officers and the Law Department; in presenting its proposal on future manse provision, the Manse Liaison Group will review the reasons behind the current manse provision rules and assess their ongoing suitability as well as consider alternatives such as the possibility of ministers living in their own home and being paid a housing allowance for its use as a manse.
9. *Property Disposals*
 - (b) Instruct the General Trustees to explore bringing to the General Assembly of 2024 a process for expanding the use of Consolidated Fabric Fund monies to include projects and programmes which fulfil the 5 Marks of Mission.
 - (c) Instruct the General Trustees to produce a professional communication electronically and in print to Ministers, Session Clerks and Congregational Treasurers which sets out clearly and straightforwardly the respective purposes of the Consolidated Fabric Fund and the Central Fabric Fund and specifically how congregations can utilise the Consolidated Fabric Fund; also urge congregations with substantial funds in the Consolidated Fabric Fund to consider donating a proportion of their holdings to financially less well-off congregations in neighbouring parishes, for fabric purposes.
 - (g) Note the continuing shortage of affordable housing, and the projected disposal of many church buildings under the agreed Presbytery Mission Plans, and urge the General Trustees, in cooperation with Presbyteries and congregations, to look at creative ways in which any such disposals might consider affordable housing and other social aims as part of the sale process, noting the charitable purpose of the Church of Scotland is the furtherance of religion.
 - (h) Instruct the General Trustees and Assembly Trustees, in consultation with Presbyteries, to consider ways of generating income for the work of the Church through the creative use and development of land and buildings where retention may make a more positive economic case than disposal.
14. Request that the General Trustees assess climate risks to assets and function of the Church, then prepare guidance to congregations on how to mitigate these risks to their buildings and report to the General Assembly in 2025.
15. Instruct the Trustees to investigate possible innovative uses of glebe land which could provide new recurring income streams to resource local mission and congregational financial resilience and report back to the General Assembly of 2024.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

2. Instruct the Nomination Committee to carry out a strategic review of the General Assembly's nomination process and put forward proposals for reform to the General Assembly in 2024.
12. Instruct that the Structure and Remit for the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team as set out in Appendix 3 to the Report of the Assembly Trustees shall be amended by deleting the first and second bullet point entries in section 4 and substituting the following:
 - a Convener appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee;
 - four Vice Conveners, appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, to deputise for the Convener when unavailable and lead Programme Groups (with one of the Vice Conveners to be designated, on the recommendation of the Nomination Committee, as Depute Convener).

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

3. Remind every Kirk Session, Presbytery, Employing Agency and department of the National Office, that no person may be employed or appointed to undertake or carry out regulated work unless that person is a member of the PVG Scheme, or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or has provided the Safeguarding Service with an appropriate overseas check and has been cleared by the Safeguarding Service.
4. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to amend the Ministers Learning Pathway for all those who are currently in role, to enable them to complete their safeguarding training requirements as soon as reasonably practical, whilst retaining the mandatory requirement that training be undertaken within the last five-year period.
5. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to develop and roll out refresher trainings for volunteers and trustees who have previously completed the introductory or trustee training within the last five-year period; to amend the Learning Pathway for other Church roles to reflect available refresher trainings; to consider making such trainings available as online resources to allow individuals to complete them independently; and report progress to the General Assembly of 2024.
6. Authorise the Safeguarding Service to audit periodically congregational safeguarding records and practice and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to facilitate and co-operate with such audits.
7. Instruct the Safeguarding Service to begin work to update the 2009 report 'For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven' and report back to the General Assembly of 2024.

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2023.

The General Assembly, with consent of not less than two-thirds of the whole of the Presbyteries of the Church obtained in two immediately successive years, enact, ordain and declare that Articles II and V of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921) enacted by the General Assembly of 1926 and the Preamble, Questions and Formula authorised by the General Assembly of 1929 shall be amended as follows:

1. Articles Declaratory

1.1 Change Article II from:

II. The principal subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland is the Westminster Confession of Faith approved by the General Assembly of 1647, containing the sum and substance of the Faith of the Reformed Church. Its government is Presbyterian, and is exercised through Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and General Assemblies. Its system and principles of worship, orders, and discipline are in accordance with “The Directory for the Public Worship of God,” “The Form of Presbyterial Church Government” and “The Form of Process,” as these have been or may hereafter be interpreted or modified by Acts of the General Assembly or by consuetude.

To:

II. The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions. Its government is Presbyterian, and is exercised through Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and General Assemblies. Its system and principles of worship, orders, and discipline are in accordance with “The Directory for the Public Worship of God,” “The Form of Presbyterial Church Government” and “The Form of Process,” as these have been or may hereafter be interpreted or modified by Acts of the General Assembly or by consuetude.

1.2 Also remove references to “confession” in Article V and replace with “Book of Confessions”.

2. Ordination and Induction Vows

2..1 Change the vow:

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church?

To

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith **expressed in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds?**

2.2 Also create a new vow after the aforementioned one:

Do you confess the Catholic and Reformed Faith of the Church as contained in its Book of Confessions, and promise to be guided by the said Book in your life and doctrine?

3. Formula of Subscription

3.1 Change the first paragraph of the Formula from:

I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church.

To

I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith **expressed in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. I promise to be guided in my life and doctrine by the Book of Confessions of this Church.**

4. Preamble

4.1 Change the last paragraph of the Preamble from:

The Church of Scotland holds as its subordinate standard the Westminster Confession of Faith, recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the substance of the Faith, and claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret or modify its

subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained in the said Confession – of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

To:

The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions, recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the **fundamental doctrines** of the Faith, and claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret or modify its subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith **expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds** – of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.