

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAY 2022

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*, the report of the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue, to the wider Church and, in particular, to the *Columba Declaration* Contact Group and the *Saint Andrew Declaration* Working Group (Section 2).
3. Approve the *Declaration of Friendship* between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland (Section 3, 3.5.2).
4. Welcome the participation of an increasing number of churches in the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and other ecumenical bodies in Scotland, and encourage the further development of an effective and coherent ecumenical network (Section 6).
5. Thank Mr Bob Fyffe, former General Secretary of CTBI, and Rev Dr Paul Goodliff, former General Secretary of CTE for their service, and welcome Dr Nicola Brady and Bishop Mike Royal as their respective successors (Sections 8 and 9).
6. Approve the delegates to Assemblies, Synods and Conferences of other Churches, and the appointment of representatives to Ecumenical Bodies, as detailed in Appendix 2.

Report

Executive Summary

The Ecumenical Relations Committee report builds on work done by the Committee over a number of years and, in particular, reports on progress made since the last General Assembly. Additionally, it gives an indication of future activity. It contains two principal elements and a number of shorter reports.

Principal elements:

1. A response to *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*, the report of the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue. This report sets out the theological concept of *koinonia* (encompassing fellowship, communion and partnership) as a foundation upon which to comprehend more fully what binds us together, and is particularly helpful to the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church as, together, we explore the opportunities opened up by the *Saint Andrew Declaration*;
2. The offering for approval by the General Assembly of the *Declaration of Friendship* between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland. This *Declaration*, inspired by the *Saint Andrew Declaration* but distinct from it, has been prepared by senior representatives of both Churches and is offered in the belief that it marks a decisive and irrevocable statement by both Churches of our friendship with one another, based on our shared faith in Christ.

Shorter reports:

3. A report on the signing of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* and an indication of the initial work of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* Working Group on shared liturgical resources; the concept of joint membership of both Churches; exploring how ministry and other resources could better be shared; and learning from the Cumbrian Covenant Partnership model;
4. A report on continued co-operation with the Church of England;
5. A report on the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and the emergence of an effective and coherent network of active, broadly-based ecumenical bodies in Scotland;
6. A report on Action of Churches Together in Scotland;
7. Updates on changes taking place within Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Churches Together in England and the Conference of European Churches;
8. A report on the World Council of Churches, including the involvement of Lord Wallace of Tankerness in COP26, facilitated by the WCC.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The work of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations is shaped by the Ecumenical Policy of the Church of Scotland agreed at the 2018 General Assembly. The Policy speaks of the:

Universal Church of which the Church of Scotland is a part and which is expressed in each Local Church. God calls the Church of Scotland to share in the mission of God and in the light of this to remove any obstacles that hinder our cooperation with our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Underlying the work of the Committee is:

[T]he principle that, at local, regional, national and international levels, churches ought to act together except where deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.^[i]

1.2 In 2021, the Committee placed before the General Assembly the terms of a bilateral agreement between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church, expressed in the *Saint Andrew Declaration*. In 2016, the terms of the bilateral agreement between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, expressed in the *Columba Declaration*, were similarly placed before the Assembly. In presenting these bilateral declarations, both of which are between churches of the Anglican Communion and a Reformed Church, the Committee sought to make good the vocation of the Church of Scotland 'to remove any obstacles that hinder our cooperation with our sisters and brothers in Christ'. The Committee does so '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'.^[ii]

1.3 In 2022, the Report of the Committee contains two principal elements. In the first instance, it is founded on the reception of a theological dialogue: *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*, published by the Anglican Consultative Council and the World Communion of Reformed Churches.^[iii] As we shall see, the biblical and theological concept of *koinonia* offers a foundation upon which to comprehend more fully that which binds us together as communions who share in the life of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and who are called to act together as one. In the second instance, the Committee seeks further 'to remove any obstacles that hinder our cooperation with our sisters and brothers in Christ' through the publication of a *Declaration of Friendship* between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland. In the former, the relationship between two communions is given theological expression. In the latter, the relationship between two Scottish churches is given a simple and practical expression. In the former, the primary focus is on the universal dimension of the identity of the Church. In the latter, the primary focus is on the local and national dimensions of the identity of the Church. In both cases, that which underlies is a shared concern to live out our response to the prayer of Jesus 'that they may all be one...that the world may believe'. (John 17: 21)

2. KOINONIA: GOD'S GIFT AND CALLING: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL REFORMED-ANGLICAN DIALOGUE

2.1 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling: Biblical and Theological*

2.1.1 The *Saint Andrew Declaration* offers the prospect of continuing theological discussions in order to enable a 'fuller communion' between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the practical outworking of that in local contexts. In similar fashion, the *Columba Declaration* states that: 'We commit ourselves to grow together in communion and to strengthen our partnership in mission.'^[iv]

2.1.2 The theme of 'communion', in its various expressions, is one that has informed the ongoing dialogue between the Church of Scotland and churches within the Anglican Communion in recent years. So, for example, it features as the cornerstone of *Our Fellowship in the Gospel* (2010), the report of the Church of England (Council for Christian Unity) and the Church of Scotland. The report took its 'cue from St Paul's words in Philippians 1.5, "your fellowship in the gospel", where Paul refers to the practical expression of the fellowship, communion or partnership (*koinonia*) that the Philippian Christians had given him in his work of spreading the gospel of Christ', and affirmed that:

[T]here is a real, God-given degree of communion between our two churches, one grounded in our confession of the apostolic faith, in a mutually recognised common baptism and in the long-standing practice of inviting each other's communicants to receive Holy Communion at our own eucharistic services.^[v]

2.1.3 We see that the scriptural term *koinonia* carries a variety of related connotations, including 'fellowship, communion or partnership'. Additionally, the developed theological use of the biblical concept of *koinonia* has been a feature of ecumenical dialogues, particularly from the latter part of the Twentieth Century onwards.^[vi] Within the context of such dialogues, it may be said to have acquired a "normative" status since 1993.^[vii]

2.2 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling: Anglican and Reformed*

2.2.1 The publication of *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*, the Hiroshima Report of the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue (IRAD) in 2020, sees the first joint Anglican-Reformed theological dialogue published since *God's Reign and our Unity* in 1984.^[viii] In light of the signing by the Church of Scotland of the *Columba Declaration* with the Church of England (2016) and the *Saint Andrew Declaration* with the Scottish Episcopal Church (2021), the IRAD report provides a potentially fruitful resource for further reflection on the significance of our relationships with partner churches representative of the Anglican Communion.

2.2.2 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* is set out in four principal sections:

- I. The Foundations of *Koinonia*
- II. *Koinonia* in the Church
- III. *Koinonia* in Mission
- IV. Summary of Our Findings for Use in Our Two Communions,

and seeks to build on *God's Reign and Our Unity*, 'particularly the implications of the claim that in our baptism we are already made one body in Christ'.^[ix]

2.3 The Foundations of *Koinonia*

2.3.1 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* opens by affirming that:

Koinonia finds its origin in the dynamism of the life of the Triune God. It comes to us as a gift. It overflows to us from the beautiful and holy truth of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—love and grace in relationship.

2.3.2 That is to say, *koinonia* is, in the first instance, to be understood as the gift of God and as an expression of the love and grace of God. Equally, it is to be understood as the calling of God and as 'disciples of Jesus, we continually grow into God's loving *koinonia*, bearing witness together as part of something larger than ourselves'.^[x] Further, *koinonia* is inherently relational in character and, in the action and self-revelation of God, we see the divine intention to establish a dynamic and living relationship with creation:

All creation is therefore in relationship with the divine life which brought it into being. Made in the image and likeness of God, humankind shares in this dynamic relationship [and this] pattern of receiving and sharing in God's own dynamic life is fundamental to the narrative of salvation history: it is the story of creation and redemption, of salvation and sanctification.^[xi]

2.3.3 Within the context of the act of creation, the Old Testament narrative of covenant and election shapes our understanding of divine and human interaction, and we see within this a God who is faithful to the divinely initiated covenant.^[xii]

2.3.4 In the New Testament, *koinonia* is expressed in a three-fold manner as 'a divine gift, given to the Church by the grace of the Holy Spirit; [as] a challenge that the Church is called to meet day by day; and [as] an eschatological reality that will be fulfilled completely in the world to come'.^[xiii] Alongside this, Scripture acknowledges the brokenness of our communion with God and the inadequacy of our reception of the gift of *koinonia*. Nevertheless, Scripture affirms that:

God's gift of *koinonia*, fundamentally given in creation and renewed uniquely in Christ, is a gift which is irreversible and unbreakable...[t]his communion is the irreversible achievement of Jesus's cross and resurrection, confirming the permanence of God's reign into which all are invited.^[xiv]

2.4 *Koinonia* in the Church

2.4.1 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* reaffirms, with *God's Reign and our Unity*, that 'our common baptism draws us into *koinonia* relationships with one another'. Baptism is 'the foundation of our *koinonia* in the Church' such that:

"The one baptism is therefore our common incorporation into Christ, into this common life of shared worship and mission in him. It is the visible and effective sign and seal of that gracious work of the Spirit by which the Church is constituted."^[xv]

2.4.2 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* then recalls *God's Reign and our Unity* once more, and highlights the striking claim made in 1984, namely, that:

"If we are as realistic about baptism as the apostolic writers are, then we are already by our baptism one body, and the continued separation of our two communions is a public denial of what we are already in Christ."^[xvi]

2.4.3 In so doing, *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* takes us to the heart of the matter addressed by the Report as a whole, namely: that our continued division and separation are, in truth, a denial of the *koinonia* that we share in Christ through baptism, and a public denial at that. The living out of our response to the prayer of Jesus that we 'may all be one' is not for the sake of ecclesiastical tidiness. Rather, it is 'so that the world may believe' and is missional in its intent. (John 17: 21)

2.4.4 In similar vein, *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* affirms that *koinonia* is a 'primary gift of God' and that 'it has the power to transform conflict'. It states:

We have considered in this dialogue whether *koinonia* can contain conflict so that conflict loses its power to divide. We are learning that difference and disagreement are not in opposition to the unity and catholicity of the Church. Even extremely demanding difference and conflict have the potential to teach us more fully about *koinonia* precisely because they demand empathy, deep listening, patience, and humility, which are also necessary for relationships that deepen and grow rather than fracture.^[xvii]

2.4.5 At this point, we come to what may be regarded as one of the principal insights of *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*. *Koinonia*, rooted in the life of the Triune God and gifted to the Church as the baptised community of God's people, has the capacity to contain the conflict and division that mar the face of the Church. The Church receives the gift of *koinonia* and is called to live out its response to that gift in anticipation of the eschatological reconciliation of all things in Christ. The gift that we receive establishes the basis of our unity, and thereafter we are called to realise that unity in the living out of our witness to the reconciling love of God. To the extent that we do so, we shall more fully realise the life of God within the Church. To the extent that we fail to do so, we impair the realisation of our mutual communion.^[xviii]

2.4.6 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* states:

We fail to receive the gift of *koinonia* when we do not rejoice in the fundamental and unbreakable unity we have with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Though we affirm that God has created and willed diversity, we often see variety and difference as sources of disagreement and conflict, and thus as a hindrance to *koinonia*.^[xix]

2.4.7 The challenge of this insight is one that Anglican and Reformed churches, who intend to grow in communion and partner in mission, require to address. The addressing of the challenge has the potential to produce a gain that will be of immeasurable mutual benefit and will profoundly enhance our fellowship in the Gospel.

2.5 Koinonia in Mission

2.5.1 The significance of this understanding of *koinonia* with respect to the challenge of mission is considerable. *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* states:

In baptism Christians are grafted into the *koinonia* of the Body of Christ ... and as a result, Christians are called to lives shaped by the invitation to and challenge of mission (Mt 28.16–20). The implications of *koinonia* are life-changing and profound; in *koinonia*, it is impossible to ignore responsibility to and for one other.^[xx]

2.5.2 The understanding of mission within *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* is informed by a concern for 'justice and peace' expressed in the 'proclamation in life and words of the love, hospitality, reconciliation, and justice that characterize the Triune God'. The Church is called to be a 'sign and servant of missional *koinonia*' and to seek 'the transformation of the world by proclaiming God's loving presence, witnessing to God's justice and reconciliation, and bringing new and abundant life'.^[xxi]

2.5.3 In terms of living out a missional *koinonia*, we are called to the practice of a 'radical hospitality' and, in so doing, to pattern our lives on 'the life and teaching of Christ himself':

Following the example of Jesus, missional communities will be characterized by openness to receiving the neighbour, the stranger, and those who are frequently excluded by church and wider society. In seeing the world from the perspective of the margins and acting in solidarity with them, the missional community has a chance to become a witness to the *koinonia* that surpasses the divisions of a world torn apart by division, conflict, and exploitation.^[xxii]

2.5.4 In practising this 'radical hospitality', the Church is called to embody and live out 'the justice and righteousness of God' and to be particularly conscious of those who are on the 'margins' of society. Insofar as 'any person or community would be relegated to [the] margins is itself an indication that *koinonia* is distorted and has yet to be fully received'.^[xxiii] This having been said, it is affirmed that:

[K]oinonia is not an expression of charity from the powerful to the powerless. It is a manifestation of communion with God, humanity, and all of creation. In contrast to prevailing social patterns, in life together in *koinonia* the experiences and perspectives of people on the margins are valued, lifted up, and considered transformational for the whole. This is a profoundly important theological insight; it is not simply an incorporation of marginalized persons into existing systems and structures. Those at the margins become witnessing agents of life-transforming *koinonia*.^[xxiv]

2.5.5 Woven throughout the theme of *koinonia* in mission is the affirmation of life whereby: 'Missional *koinonia* transcends false and life-restricting barriers and emphasizes the oneness of God's gift, which is a foretaste of the abundant life promised for all creation'.^[xxv]

2.5.6 The understanding of *koinonia* in mission at this point is shaped by recourse to the concept of the '*missio Dei*' in which the primacy of the "mission of God" shapes the mission of the Church. In this understanding, the mission of the Church is 'subserving' to the mission of God.^[xxvi]

2.6 Summary of Findings: Implications for Reformed-Anglican Relationships

2.6.1 In summarising the findings, *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* affirms that 'Anglicans and Reformed assert strongly that *koinonia* is a gift of God for the whole of creation...a participation in the divine life [and] God's gift uniquely renewed in Jesus Christ'.^[xxvii]

2.6.2 In relation to our shared life within the Church, *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* recognises 'the real pain of historical separation and manifold disagreement', and suggests that such is 'the nature of *koinonia*' as the gift of God that it 'was never ours to possess alone nor to deny to one another'. In the light of this:

There are profound implications for how we speak of one another, and of our Churches' sharing in the same *koinonia*. Thanks to the abundance of God's gift, it is inappropriate and inaccurate to speak of having been 'in or out' of communion with one other.^[xxviii]

2.6.3 In our reception of the gift of God, the Church is called 'to share the gift of *koinonia* in our mission to the world'. In so doing, we need to acknowledge 'the current incompleteness of the Church's life'. As churches who share together in the life of the body of Christ and who are 'united in the fundamentals of the Gospel', we 'need to be open to insights which emerge from the other for the integrity of the whole Body of Christ'.^[xxix]

2.6.4 *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* invites Anglican and Reformed churches to renew their commitment to the Lund Principle that:

'Churches ... should ... act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately'.^[xxx]

2.6.5 In conclusion, *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* recalls that which we have already affirmed together in *God's Reign and Our Unity*:

If we are as realistic about baptism as the apostolic writers, then we are already by our baptism one body, and the continued separation of our two Communion is a public denial of what we are already in Christ. Moreover, there are consequences beyond these ecclesiastical ones. In the one man Jesus we see our common humanity taken up, redeemed and given back to us so that we can share it together—Jew and Gentile, man and woman,

slave and free, rich and poor, white and black. Fidelity to our baptism commits us to affirm in word and practice the full, equal and God-given humanity of every person, to embody that affirmation in our public and political life, and to oppose and resist all that denies this shared humanity.^[xxxii]

2.6.6 The recollection of that which was affirmed in 1984 challenges us to resolve, once more, to live out more faithfully the implications of our shared baptismal identity. We commend *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* to the Church and highlight its principal insights as follows:

- 1) *Koinonia* is rooted in the life of the Triune God and is a primary gift of God to the Church as the community of God's people;
- 2) We are fully incorporated into the one body of Christ through the one baptism, and are called to 'grow into God's loving *koinonia*';
- 3) *Koinonia* has the capacity to contain and reconfigure conflict and division, and our continued separation 'is a public denial of what we are already in Christ';
- 4) The mission of God is primary and informs the mission of the Church which is fulfilled through working for the transformation of the world by proclaiming God's loving presence; baptising, teaching and nurturing new believers; practising radical hospitality; witnessing to God's justice and reconciliation; caring for creation, and bringing new and abundant life;
- 5) The reception of the gift of *koinonia* has profound implications for how we understand the nature of the communion we share as churches within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

2.7 The Challenge of *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*

2.7.1 The challenge posed by *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling* is as much to local congregations as it is to national churches and international communions. It has been said, echoing the words of Jesus, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there an ecumenical relationship is formed. All Christians, between denominations, within denominations and even within individual congregations, have different experiences of the divine and are therefore not necessarily in perfect agreement. This, indeed, is the nature of the Church and something to be cherished and celebrated, because God is so much greater than may be comprehended by any individual, community, church or communion.

2.7.2 When we start from the point of reception of *koinonia* as God's gift and calling, then we will find ourselves led into deeper and more fulfilling relationships with each other as fellow Christians, and recognise that, in a sense, unity is the starting point from which we have diverged, rather than the destination towards which we are trying to travel.

2.7.3 This is a different way of thinking from that with which we may be more familiar, namely seeing ourselves as truly one in Christ, and not just paying lip service to that idea. If we can embed this thinking in our lives and the lives of our congregations, the questions become not, what can we do together, but more: why are we doing things apart? This has the potential for profound benefits to our life of faith.

2.7.4 These are challenges for the whole Church of Scotland, for its members and congregations as well as for its national structures and presbyteries. It is the Committee's prayer that all congregations begin to acknowledge the 'incompleteness of our church life' caused by our divisions and that we increasingly become dissatisfied with that incompleteness; that all congregations intentionally practise 'radical hospitality', recognising all followers of Christ as fellow Christians and all people, no matter their faith and circumstances, as loved by Christ; that all congregations intentionally look on one another 'as sharing together in the life and body of Christ'; that all church members and congregations 'should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately'; and that all Christians should embrace what we are already in Christ through our baptism. Faithfulness to our baptism requires nothing less.

2.7.5 *Koinonia* already is. It is not something to be worked towards, to be created, or to be developed. Rather, it is to be received and not resisted. Upon receiving it, it changes our perception of the painful parts of our history, moving us to repentance and reconciliation. It moves us to 'empathy, deep listening, patience, and humility' and to the growth and deepening of relationships.^[xxxiii] None of how this is expressed practically can be prescribed. Rather a deeper understanding and appreciation of *koinonia* moves our primary focus from ourselves to God, enabling us more fully to understand the true nature of the body of Christ, in which all are incorporated.

3. A DECLARATION OF FRIENDSHIP: THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SCOTLAND

3.1 A Declaration of Friendship: A Gospel Commandment

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15: 12-14)

3.1.1 This passage of Scripture from the Gospel of John is familiar and often recalled. Within the passage, we see the interweaving of two themes; the commandment to love and that of friendship. Jesus calls upon his disciples to imitate the love that he has shown towards them and affirms that there is no 'greater love' than 'to lay down one's life for one's friends'. In turn, the disciples are called upon to fulfil the commandment to love and, in so doing, to demonstrate that they have understood what it is to be a friend of Jesus.

3.1.2 The simplicity that lies at the heart of this Gospel passage should not lead us to underestimate the profundity of the truth that is spoken. In a world of unremitting complexity, here is truth, simple and profound: We are made friends of Jesus by his laying down his life for us in love, and we respond in love and so demonstrate that we are his friends.

3.1.3 It is within the context of everyday life and in the unremitting complexity of the society that we inhabit that we are called to live out our response to the Gospel. In particular, we are called upon to fulfil the command to love and, in so doing, to demonstrate that we have understood what it is to be a friend of Jesus.

3.2 A Declaration of Friendship: That Which We Hold in Common

3.2.1 The immediate context within which the churches of our nation live out their response to the Gospel is a Scotland that has been much scarred by the trauma of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant impact upon our society. The full extent of that impact will only be fully comprehended in years to come. In the response of the Church in Scotland to the pandemic, especially in terms of interaction with the Scottish Government, one of the features was the realisation that we could best engage on a collective basis. Indeed, it is fair to say that it is only on a collective and ecumenical basis that we will be heard in certain contexts. In other words, the churches in Scotland recovered something that has not always been fully realised, namely a collective friendship, grounded in our fellowship with the One who laid down his life for his friends.

3.2.2 As previously noted, the General Assembly of 2021 saw the approval of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. The approval of the terms of the *Declaration* was, of course, of particular significance to the churches who were immediately party to it. However, the *Declaration* also had a resonance within the life of the Church in Scotland and may be said to have inspired a wider recognition of the value of such a style of *Declaration*. Thus, after the approval of the *Declaration*, conversations took place between the Moderator, Principal Clerk, Convener and Secretary of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and Archbishop Leo Cushley, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference's Ecumenical Commission, with a view to exploring the possibility of a *Declaration of Friendship* between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland. In due course, the text of the *Declaration* was examined in detail by both the Committee on Ecumenical Relations and the Catholic Bishops' Conference.

3.2.3 In the course of the conversations, it was recognised that the form and substance of any proposed *Declaration of Friendship* ought to reflect the specific relationship between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland. Thus, the terms of the *Declaration of Friendship* would be different in character from the *Saint Andrew Declaration*, albeit motivated by the same desire to express that which we hold in common. Alongside this, it was agreed that the focus of the *Declaration of Friendship* ought to be on that which we share, notwithstanding an honest recognition of matters awaiting fuller reconciliation. Equally, the shared sense was that the *Declaration of Friendship* ought to reflect that which binds us together in our desire to live out the Gospel in the context of the Scottish society that we mutually inhabit.

3.3 A Declaration of Friendship: A Shared Faith and a Common Home

3.3.1 The public 'recognition of each other as Christians, and as daughters and sons in the Son' with which the *Declaration* opens is to say that which has already been stated in formal and universal terms.^[xxxiii] Nevertheless, formal and universal statements require to acquire local context before they achieve the intended traction that will translate them into practice.^[xxxiv]

3.3.2 The primary context in which that translation takes place is the contemporary Scotland in which we seek to live out our calling to proclaim 'the kingdom of God in our land'.

3.3.3 That which we hold in common is that which binds us together in living out our calling, and to focus on that is to remind one another and ourselves that the substance of our faith is a common treasure:

We believe in one God, the Creator; we believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, true God and true man, fully divine and fully human, who died in the flesh and rose to save us from sin and death; and we believe in the Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Trinity, one God in three persons.

3.3.4 Our shared affirmation that 'the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic', and our acknowledgment of 'one baptism, for the forgiveness of sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit', grounds that which we hold in common in the divine initiative that brings the Church into being.

3.3.5 Our faith is 'rooted in that of the Apostles' and we receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments 'as God's revelation of His love for all humanity'. We recognise and hold in common the ecumenical councils, the Councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), that principally shape our understanding of the substance of the faith.

3.3.6 The reception of the faith in Scotland has created a 'common heritage' that recalls 'the earliest missionaries, ... our mothers and fathers in the faith, who lived and preached the Christian faith to our land...including St Ninian, St Columba and St Margaret'. Together we acknowledge those who shaped our understanding of the practice of the faith in ancient times and in the common home that we call Scotland.

3.4 Past Divisions and Challenges which Remain

3.4.1 In offering the *Declaration of Friendship*, we are mindful of the extent to which the relationship between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland has historically been perceived in negative terms. We are conscious of the past but are resolved not to be bound by it. We say that:

We recognise the hurt and the harm that our forebears did to each other in times past, and we repent and ask forgiveness of one other. We also recognise that, even in more recent times, much could have been said between us more kindly, written more magnanimously, and done more charitably, to promote pardon and healing and friendship among Christians in our land.

3.4.2 The challenges that remain to be addressed are not ones that we anticipate will be resolved in short order. Nevertheless, ‘we reaffirm that what we hold in common is often greater than what divides us’ and ‘we commit ourselves to continuing our pilgrimage towards greater unity, as we believe that it is the Lord’s will that we be one’ (John 17: 21). As time goes by, we trust that those matters not yet resolved will be seen in a different light as the journey draws us closer together.

3.5 Looking Towards the Future

3.5.1 The future that lies before us is a common future and is one shaped in the context of the Scottish society that we mutually inhabit. The Christian faith that we share, and which binds us together, is a faith that shall be better understood within our society when it is articulated in harmony. The text of the *Declaration of Friendship* reads:

3.5.2

A DECLARATION OF FRIENDSHIP

between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland

We, the undersigned, representing the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland, wish publicly to express our recognition of each other as Christians, and as children of God in Christ (Galatians 3: 25-28). We recognise each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and we wish to express our friendship and respect for one another as fellow Christians, citizens and partners in announcing the kingdom of God in our land.

Since the World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh, 1910), and the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) much has been done ecumenically to repair what was broken and to restore mutual respect and friendship.

A great deal has been achieved spiritually, practically and affectively, through joint prayer among our parishes, various joint commissions, and the growing knowledge and appreciation of each other as Christian friends and fellow pilgrims.

A SHARED FAITH

Progress has been made on that which we hold in common.

We believe in one God, the Creator; we believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, true God and true man, fully divine and fully human, who died in the flesh and rose to save us from sin and death; and we believe in the Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Trinity, one God in three persons. We believe that the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic; and we acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We believe our faith to be rooted in that of the Apostles, Christ’s first disciples, those who knew and followed our Lord in this life. We recognise and treasure the Sacred Scriptures, as God’s revelation of His love for all humanity. We recognise and hold in common the great ecumenical councils of the first five Christian centuries.

OUR COMMON HOME

We recognise, as our common heritage, the Gospel first brought to our shores so very long ago. We recall with gratitude to God the earliest missionaries, our forebears in the faith, who lived and preached the Christian faith to our land. We recall those from that time who led and formed the Church, nurturing a society inspired by Christian values, including St Ninian, St Columba and St Margaret.

PAST DIVISIONS

We recognise the hurt and the harm that our forebears did to each other in times past, and we repent and ask forgiveness of one other. We also recognise that, even in more recent times, much could have been said between us more kindly, written more magnanimously, and done more charitably, to promote pardon and healing and friendship among Christians in our land.

CHALLENGES WHICH REMAIN

There remain points at which we have not yet found a meeting place, and it is true that some questions still divide us.

Acknowledging what separates us still, we reaffirm that what we hold in common is often greater than what divides us. While recognising that unity does not mean uniformity, we commit ourselves to continuing our pilgrimage towards greater unity, as we believe that it is the Lord’s will that we be one (John 17: 21). We trust that such developing unity in Christ is the Lord’s work and the Spirit’s doing.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

We therefore pledge ourselves to live as sisters and brothers in Christ, in public and in private, in life and in mission; to pray with each other and for each other; to be good neighbours, both to each other and to all people among whom we live, of all faiths and none; and to work together for the common good of the nation, as it is given to us to see it.

May there be an ever more united Christian voice in the land, informed always by the charity and love of Christ and our call to participate in the mission of God. May we contribute to the good of society, while humbly learning from others and from our own mistakes. May our theological reflections and initiatives together thrive; and may our pilgrimage together in our dear land of Scotland bear much fruit to the good of all, and to the greater glory of God.

3.5.3 In commending the *Declaration of Friendship* to the General Assembly, we do so in order that we may better journey together towards the future God holds for us and in order that we might live out our response to the prayer of Jesus that we ‘may all be one...so that the world may believe’. (John 17: 21)

4. BILATERAL RELATIONS: SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

4.1 As previously described, on 24th May the 2021 General Assembly approved the Saint Andrew Declaration, consisting of mutual Acknowledgements and Commitments between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Saint Andrew Declaration then passed to the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church which, on 10th June 2021 also voted to approve it. This paved the way for the formal signing to take place, which happened during a special service held on St Andrew's Day, 30th November 2021, in St Mary's Scottish Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh. The Committee wishes to put on record its appreciation of the hospitality extended by the Provost, Vice-Provost, organists, choir and all the staff of the Cathedral. The service was led by Rev Canon Professor Charlotte Methuen, Convener of the Scottish Episcopal Church's Inter-Church Relations Committee, and Rev Alexander Horsburgh, Convener of the Church of Scotland's Ecumenical Relations Committee, with Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and Lord Wallace of Tankerness, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, signing the Declaration on behalf of our two Churches.

4.2 The service of signing was preceded by an online day conference attended by over fifty people from the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church of Scotland and other Churches. It was recognised that the *Saint Andrew Declaration* is a significant milestone in the relationship between our two Churches, celebrating and building on the already warm relationship we enjoy. Further, the *Declaration* challenges us to develop and deepen our relationship in practical ways that, together, we may better serve the people of Scotland in Christ's name.

4.3 Rev Canon Professor Charlotte Methuen led the conference in exploring some of our shared history, looking at some of the, perhaps surprising, points of historical convergence between the two churches as well as at some of the better-known times of conflict. The conference then heard about some emerging opportunities, particularly around ecumenical education and training, led by Rev Canon Dr Anne Tomlinson, Principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute, and Rev Dr Scott Shackleton, Head of the Church of Scotland's Faith Action Programme. The day concluded by hearing from two case studies where congregations of our two denominations are working together, one from Edinburgh: the tripartite partnership between St John's Scottish Episcopal Church and St Cuthbert's and St Andrew's & St George's West from the Church of Scotland; and one from the Scottish Episcopal Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness.

4.4 The Committee is aware that there is always a danger that events such as this can be seen as the conclusion of a process, but what comes after, as a result of agreements reached and declarations made, is much more important. Work has therefore begun in recent months to give practical expression to the commitments made to one another in the *Saint Andrew Declaration*.

4.5 The Ecumenical Relations Committee (Church of Scotland) and the Inter-Church Relations Committee (Scottish Episcopal Church) are now setting up the *Saint Andrew Declaration* Working Group, which takes over from the *Our Common Calling* Working Group. It is intended that the Working Group will, among other things, look at developing the *Declaration* as a liturgical text for use in local congregations where the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church are working closely together or intentionally developing closer links following on the success of using the text of the *Declaration* in the Signing Service in November 2021. In fulfilment of our commitment to welcome one another's members to worship and to participate in the congregational life of each other's churches, the Working Group will look at the possibility for recognising joint membership of both the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland. It is also beginning to explore how ministry can be more fully shared between the two Churches, building on some of the innovative arrangements already in use in parts of the United Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness and the Presbyteries which serve that area. The Working Group recognises that it has much to learn from the example of Covenant Partnership in Cumbria and the Mission Community model supported within it, and will be looking at how elements of that could be developed locally in Scotland. Further, it will study the IRAD report, *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*, and seek to be guided by its insights.

5. BILATERAL RELATIONS: CHURCH OF ENGLAND

5.1 In October 2021, the *Columba Declaration* Contact Group arranged the biennial meeting between senior representatives of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. Representation from the Church of England was provided by:

- the Most Rev and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York;
- Mr William Nye, Secretary General, Archbishops' Council;
- Rev Dr Malcom Brown, Director of Mission and Public Affairs;
- Rev Canon Dr Jamie Hawkey, Canon Theologian at Westminster Abbey;
- Rev Canon Dave Male, Director of Evangelism and Discipleship, Church of England;
- Rev Dr Gavin Wakefield, Director of Training, Mission and Ministry, Diocese of York;
- Very Rev Catherine Pickford, Archdeacon of Northolt
- Ven John Day, Adviser in Mission Strategy and Church Revitalisation and Assistant Chaplain to the Archbishop of York
- and Rev Prebendary Dr Isabelle Hamley,
- with the Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle, Co-Chair, *Columba Declaration* Contact Group
- and Rev Dr Matthias Grebe, Co-Secretary, *Columba Declaration* Contact Group.

Representation from the Church of Scotland was provided by:

- Lord Wallace of Tankerness, Moderator of the General Assembly;
- Rev Dr George Whyte, Principal Clerk;
- Mr Dave Kendall, Chief Officer;
- Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, Convener, Assembly Trustees;
- Rev Dr Scott Shackleton, Head of Faith Action Programme;
- Rev Dr Liam Fraser, Convener, Theological Forum;
- Rev Dr Peter Donald;
- Rev Eileen Miller, Vice Convener, Ecumenical Relations;
- Mr David Bradwell, Associate Secretary, Faith Action Programme, and Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer
- with Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, Co-Chair, Columba Declaration Contact Group
- and Rev Dr John L McPake, Co-Secretary, Columba Declaration Contact Group.

The Right Reverend Dr John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh, and Miriam Weibye, Church Relations Officer, attended as observers on behalf of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

5.2 Presentations were made with respect to:

- 1) The Strategic Visions of our Churches;
- 2) The Five Marks of Mission and the Emerging Church;
- 3) *Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling*, the report of the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue referred to above; and
- 4) Review of *Columba Declaration* and future working together.

5.3 The *Columba Declaration* Contact Group was tasked with discerning future areas of shared cooperative working and good progress has been made in relation to that.

5.4 Lord Wallace of Tankerness, as Moderator of the General Assembly, met with the Most Rev and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and other senior Church of England officials, in November 2021 and there was a continuation of the general discussion initiated at the Biennial.

5.5 The Church of Scotland is represented on the General Synod of the Church of England by Rev Dr David Coulter and we note the mutual benefit of this reciprocal representation.

6. SCOTTISH CHURCH LEADERS' FORUM

6.1 The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum (SCLF) was created in March 2020 in the context of the initial response of the churches to the Covid-19 pandemic and is composed of senior representatives of the Church of Scotland, the Catholic Church in Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the United Free Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Salvation Army, the Congregational Federation, the Baptist Union of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland and the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Participation within the SCLF has increased from ten to twelve churches and bodies in the past year. An agreed statement on the "Nature and Purpose" of the SCLF gives an indication of the scope and range of the work of the SCLF. (Appendix 1)

6.2 Although originally shaped by the context of the response to the pandemic, the SCLF has developed into an effective forum for engagement between participating churches, and as an effective collective forum for engaging with, *inter alia*, Scottish Government agencies and other churches and senior church leaders. So, for example, the SCLF has engaged with the recently established Faith and Belief team within the Scottish Government and was addressed by the Rt Rev James Newcome, Church of England Bishop of the Diocese of Carlisle, on the Covenant Partnership in Cumbria and the Mission Community model. ^[xxxv] ^[xxxvi]

6.3 The SCLF is part of an emerging network of ecumenically-configured bodies that share the space beyond the formal boundaries of the churches that inhabit the ecclesial landscape within Scotland, and who seek to establish and sustain the connections between the churches. Further, the network seeks to establish and sustain connections between the churches and those agencies which inhabit the wider public sphere. In establishing and sustaining those connections, the network offers the potential to create an effective and mutually beneficial synergy.

6.4 In particular, the SCLF, through its Secretary, has established a creative working relationship and synergy with the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO), and this has enhanced the work of the SCLF and the SCPO. We are indebted to Mr David Bradwell, Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer.

6.5 Further, the development of an expanding Ecumenical Officers' Forum contributes to the emerging network, with Church of Scotland, Catholic Church in Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church, United Free Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church, Methodist Church, Salvation Army, The Redeemed Christian Church of God and Congregational Federation representation on the Forum.

7. ACTION OF CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SCOTLAND (ACTS)

7.1 The SCLF has successfully brought together senior representatives of a growing number of Scottish churches and is now part of an emerging interconnected and cooperative ecumenical network with identity, coherence and direction. The Committee reported in 2021 that it expected ACTS to transition to a new ecumenical body, the Scottish Christian Forum (SCF) but this has not, in fact, taken place. Arguably, the moment for that has now passed and

a lighter touch network would be more in tune with the needs of our time. Furthermore, the growth of bilateral declarations and agreements as described elsewhere in this Report is an indication that these ways of promoting ecumenism are being embraced with more enthusiasm.

7.2 As of the end of June 2021, ACTS has had no staff and no physical office. The Committee wishes to put on record its profound thanks to all who worked for ACTS over the years, and in particular on this occasion to pay tribute to Shona Paterson, who served for more than thirty years as a Programme Officer and to Rev Ian Boa, who served as Assistant General Secretary for over ten years. Both of them continued to give selfless service to ACTS and ecumenism in Scotland, even in very difficult circumstances, and the General Assembly will wish to join the Committee in commending them for their service.

7.3 ACTS consists now solely of funds, administered by a board of Trustees, and, other than dealing with administrative matters, is effectively inactive. The Committee is working actively with other Member Churches to address this matter.

8. CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND (CTBI)

8.1 During the past year, CTBI has seen the retiral of Mr Bob Fyffe as General Secretary and the Committee would wish to place on record its thanks to him for his service to the churches over the past fifteen years. In particular, we note his valued contribution in relation to the coordination of the response of British and Irish churches to the Covid-19 pandemic since March 2020.

8.2 In January 2022, Dr Nicola Brady took up her post as successor, having previously served as General Secretary of the Irish Council of Churches since 2016. Prior to this, Dr Brady had served as Research Coordinator for the Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs, and was a member of the Management Committee of the Irish Churches' Peace Project, 2013–2015. Since March 2020, Dr Brady has played a significant role in the liaison between British and Irish churches and her appointment as General Secretary of CTBI is especially welcome in the light of this. In January 2022, the Committee met with Dr Brady and we look forward to working further with CTBI, and with the other Scottish churches which are members, in order to strengthen the Scottish dimension of its work.

9. CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND (CTE)

9.1 CTE has also seen the retirement of its General Secretary in the past year and the Committee would wish to place on record its thanks to Rev Dr Paul Goodliff for his service to the churches since his appointment in 2018. Once more, we note his valued contribution in relation to the coordination of the response of British and Irish churches to the Covid-19 pandemic since March 2020. In particular, his calling together and hosting of the Ecumenical Officers' Roundtable offered a valuable meeting place for the sharing of information and for reflection on the collective challenge faced by the churches.

9.2 In March 2022, Bishop Mike Royal, a bishop in the Apostolic Pastoral Congress, took up his post as successor. He is the Co-Chief Executive of The Cinnamon Network, a charity enabling British and Irish churches to engage in community and social action projects.

10. CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC)

10.1 In November 2021, the Governing Board of CEC agreed to make a number of significant changes to the shape of its future work and advised its member churches accordingly. In January 2022, the Committee met with Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen, General Secretary of CEC, who outlined the proposed changes and the rationale underlying them.

10.2 CEC was established in 1959 with the primary purpose of building bridges between the churches of eastern and western Europe. In recognition of the continuing need for such work, bridge-building is understood by CEC as a guiding principle. Alongside this, CEC articulated the need to express that principle in terms attuned to the reality of contemporary Europe. In offering a shared platform to member churches, CEC seeks to claim and safeguard a space for faith and to make visible the contribution of the churches in Europe. As a consequence, CEC is now seeking to effect a transition towards becoming a body with twin principal work streams, expressed as:

- 1) Theology and Studies Unit, and
- 2) Dialogue and Advocacy Unit.

10.3 The focus on theological reflection will inform, and be informed by, the focus on advocacy on behalf of the churches in Europe. In the light of this, CEC is reassessing its organisational profile in order to align it with these foci, and is concentrating its work in Brussels and closing its physical office in Strasbourg, though the work previously done from that office will be transferred to Brussels.^[xxxvii]

10.4 As a consequence of these changes and of reductions in its own funding, CEC will cease to finance a number of autonomous bodies that it previously supported in financial and administrative terms. Amongst others, this will impact on the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN). The Committee has received expressions of concern in relation to this decision. In noting these concerns, the Committee notes the corollary between the reduction in funding offered by the churches to sustain the work of CEC and the consequent need to focus the work of CEC on sustainable work streams. It is anticipated that further discussions will take place in this regard.

11. COMMUNION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN EUROPE (CPCE)

11.1 The CPCE is a small but important part of the Church of Scotland's ecumenical engagement and shares that engagement in partnership with the United Reformed Church. The current work of CPCE is expressed in *Being Church Together*, and the aims expressed there have been shaped by the Council of the CPCE on the basis of the resolutions of the CPCE General Assembly at Basel in 2018.^[xxxviii]

11.2 The CPCE has recently initiated a European Ecumenical Officers' Forum and this has provided the opportunity for fruitful engagement and the enhancing of mutual ties between the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of Europe.

12. WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

12.1 The contribution of the WCC to the work of the Church in Scotland was particularly evident during the period of COP26 (31st October-12th November 2021). We especially recognise the contribution of Rev Henrik Grape, Senior Adviser on Care for Creation, Sustainability, and Climate Justice for the WCC and are grateful to him for his insight and his skill in facilitating conversations between the delegations representative of particular traditions of the Christian faith.

12.2 Lord Wallace of Tankerness, as Moderator of the General Assembly, was a member of the WCC delegation and his participation in the formal and informal discussions which shaped COP26 ensured that a distinctively Scottish Christian voice, along with others, was heard in those discussions.^[xxxix]

12.3 In their "Statement on the outcome of COP26" in November 2021, the WCC Executive Committee noted that, whilst not all goals had been achieved, we should 'acknowledge the important new developments during COP26'. These include:

The increased global mobilization of young people...A commitment by over 120 countries, representing about 90% of the world's forests, to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030...A pledge by more than 100 countries, led by the United States and the European Union, to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030...An agreement by more than 40 countries – including major coal-users such as Poland, Vietnam and Chile – to shift away from coal, one of the biggest generators of CO₂ emissions...The inclusion of references – if not yet clear commitments or effective mechanisms – on loss and damage, fossil fuel subsidies, Indigenous Peoples, and a just transition; and, perhaps of greatest geo-political significance...The bilateral US-China agreement to work together on cutting greenhouse gas emissions in the next decade.^[xli]

12.4 The opportunity provided through our partnership with the WCC to engage in international discussions on matters of direct relevance to the people of Scotland is an important reminder of the need to retain our outward-facing engagement with agencies beyond our immediate circle.

12.5 Following a delay of one year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 11th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches will meet in Karlsruhe, Germany from 31st August to 8th September 2022 under the theme 'Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity'. The Church of Scotland will be represented by Rev Alexander Horsburgh, Ms Miriam Weibye, who will be jointly representing the Scottish Episcopal Church, and Rev Dr John L McPake. More than 4000 people are expected to participate.

12.6 The assembly will gather amidst perplexities, anxieties, and fundamental questions about the way we inhabit the earth, make sense of our lives, live in society, and accept responsibility for future generations. These questions have been amplified by the global Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences, the climate emergency, and manifestations of racism, structural economic inequality, gender discrimination, and other forms of injustice in our societies and in our world. The outbreak of war in Europe will give a particular urgency to the work of the General Assembly.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 The war in Ukraine, started on 24th February 2022, demonstrates that the need for unity, and especially Christian Unity, could not be clearer.

13.2 Within the Orthodox tradition in Eastern Europe, the baptism of the Kyivan Rus in 988AD is of especial significance. The event is marked on 28th July and celebrates the occasion when Volodymyr of the Rus summoned the people of the city to be baptised *en masse* in the Dnipro River (Дніпро (Ukrainian), Днепр (Russian)) at Kyiv. The event is understood as integral to the spread of Christianity, and in various countries in that region it is a fundamental part of the narrative of national identity, albeit that these narratives may differ.

13.3 The confession that there is 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' is integral to the faith we hold in common and the baptism through which we are made 'one in Christ Jesus' is a fundamental part of our shared Christian identity. The recollection of the 'one baptism' is the recollection of the Triune God in whose name we are baptised and of the One who breaks down the 'dividing wall' of hostility between peoples. (Ephesians 4: 5, Galatians 3: 28; Matthew 28: 18-19; Ephesians 2: 14) We appeal to all those who are baptised and who are made 'one in Christ Jesus' to walk in the way of peace.

13.4 On Ash Wednesday (2nd March 2022), Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, Acting General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and himself an Orthodox priest, wrote to Patriarch Kirill of Moscow to ask the patriarch to 'raise up [his] voice and speak on behalf of the suffering brothers and sisters' of Ukraine.^[xli] Christians of all traditions are called to unite to condemn the misuse of faith for violent ends, and witness to the truth that we are made 'one in Christ Jesus'.

13.5 On that same day, Christians from 80 countries around the globe joined in a prayer service of lament and solidarity with all those suffering from the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The online ecumenical service included participation by Ukrainian pastors and parishioners living in towns and cities that had been under attack by

Russian warplanes, tanks, and troops since 24th February. The service was jointly organized by the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, with participation from the World Methodist Council, the Mennonite World Conference, the Conference of European Churches, the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe, the Baptist World Alliance, and the Anglican Communion.^[xiii] In that service, the various traditions of the Christian faith united in their prayer for peace.

13.6 The foundation of our common prayer is the *koinonia* - the fellowship, communion and partnership - which we are given in Christ. We receive it in the knowledge that, on the night before he suffered and died, Jesus prayed that his people might be one, that the world might believe (John 17: 20-21). The idea of belief, of course, goes well beyond simply intellectual assent. It is to do with entering into a trusting relationship, and not merely on an individual basis between the believer and Jesus. It is about trusting in Christ's vision of a world in which God reigns, a world of justice, peace and love, in which the poor hear good news, captives are liberated, the blind see, and the oppressed go free. (Luke 4: 18) It is about doing all we can, as individuals, congregations, churches and communions of Churches, working together, to further the reign of God.

13.7 Ecumenism is, at its core, a concern for the whole inhabited earth. It is not simply a matter of occasional shared prayer, or of borrowing ideas from other churches, or of debating points of doctrine. A pandemic which is not yet over, and a war the course of which no one can predict, remind us how dangerous our world can be, and impel Christians to rediscover our essential calling to be salt and light, to be ambassadors of peace in a world of violence, to be agents of healing in a world diseased. To be effective, we need to know ourselves, our own histories and identities, and be confident in what we believe. We also need to learn to know one another well, to celebrate what we share, and understand and respect where we differ. We are called to affirm our deep friendship with and Christian love for one another, perhaps especially with those with whom we share difficult history, but also with those with whom we rarely have contact, for in truth, we are all 'one in Christ Jesus'.

13.8 It is the prayer of the Committee that our Report, and all our work, may contribute, in some small way, to the peace and unity of the world Christ so loves, and in which he became incarnate that we might be in God and God might be in us.

In the name of the Committee

ALEXANDER G HORSBURGH, *Convener*
EILEEN MILLER, *Vice Convener*
JOHN L MCPAKE, *Secretary*

Addendum

Rev Alexander G Horsburgh

Rev Sandy Horsburgh became Convener of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations at the General Assembly in May 2018 and the Committee is indebted to him for his service throughout the years since. This is especially so in the period since March 2020, and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and his astute leadership, gentle humour and unifying vision have sustained the integrity of the Committee in the era of online meetings and virtual engagement. The Ecumenical Strategy, at local, national and international levels, agreed at the General Assembly of 2019, set out the anticipated pattern of the period of his Convener-ship, alongside a focus on the continuing bilateral engagement with the Scottish Episcopal Church through the "Our Common Calling" process first begun in 2016. It is to his immense credit that the Ecumenical Strategy continued to guide the work of the Committee throughout this time and that the bilateral process was brought to fruition in the terms of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* as agreed by the General Assembly and the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church in 2021. The culmination of the "Our Common Calling" process in the signing of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* on 30th November 2021 is, we are sure, the highlight of his time as Convener. As will be seen in this year's Report, the call to engage with the wider Church in Scotland continues to yield new fruit and we trust that this will be a fitting tribute to Sandy's faithful articulation of the ecumenical vision for the Church of Scotland and of the wider Church in Scotland.

EILEEN MILLER, *Vice Convener*
JOHN L MCPAKE, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

Scottish Church Leaders' Forum

Nature and Purpose:

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum is a forum in which designated senior leaders within particular Scottish Churches 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
7. Quakers
8. Salvation Army
9. Congregational Federation
10. Baptist Union of Scotland
11. Free Church of Scotland
12. Redeemed Christian Church of God

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum is a participatory body and is, in nature, a voluntary association with no separate legal personality and its purpose, as stated, provides the basis on which the Forum is established.

The Scottish Church Leaders' 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.

Aims:

The Forum seeks to:

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

Cooperation:

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

1. Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office
2. Scottish Churches Committee
3. Ecumenical Officers Forum
4. Ecumenical representative bodies within particular churches
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.

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.

JOHN L MCPAKE
Secretary

Appendix 2

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 Alexander Horsburgh

Methodist Church Conference –

Scottish Episcopal Church – Rev Ross Blackman

United Free Church of Scotland – Rev Dr John L McPake

Ecumenical Bodies

The following serve on Assemblies and Committees of the ecumenical bodies of which the Church is a member:

World Council of Churches

General Assembly (September 2022)

Rev Alexander Horsburgh, Ms Miriam Weibye (Delegates), Rev Dr John L McPake (Adviser)

World Communion of Reformed Churches

General Council (June-July 2017)

Rev Ian A Alexander, Rev Alison P McDonald, Mr Andrew MacPherson, Rev Anikó Schuetz Bradwell

Conference of European Churches

General Assembly (May-June 2018)

Rev Dr Richard Frazer, Rev Alison P McDonald

Governing Board

Rev Alison P McDonald

Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Church Fellowship)

General Assembly (September 2018)

Rev Andrea Price

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Board of Trustees

Rev Kevin Mackenzie

Action of Churches Together in Scotland

Members' Meeting

Voting Member: Convener of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations

Non-Voting Member: Ecumenical Officer

Trustee

Miss Carole Hope

Columba Declaration Contact Group

Co-Convener: Rev Dr Russell Barr

Co-Secretary: Rev Dr John L McPake

Members: Rev Eileen Miller

Saint Andrew Declaration Working Group

Co-Convener: Convener of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations

Co-Secretary: Ecumenical Officer

Scottish Church Leaders' Forum

Moderator, Principal Clerk, Ecumenical Officer

Ecumenical Officers' Forum

Ecumenical Officer

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- [iv] <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/work-other-christian-churches/working-together-nationally#na>; https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/31675/Report_of_the_CofS-CofE_Joint_study_group.pdf, 18.
- [v] <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/gs1792-our%20fellowship%20in%20the%20gospel%3A%20summary%20report%20of%20joint%20study%20group.pdf>, 3.
- [vi] By way of contrast, we may note the virtual absence of any such usage in earlier dialogues between the Church of Scotland and churches within the Anglican Communion. See, for example: *Relations between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1957) and: *The Anglican-Presbyterian Conversations* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press/London: SPCK, 1966).
- [vii] Such a status may be said to be linked to the publication of: World Council of Churches, *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993):
- Message from the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, 1993 | World Council of Churches (oikoumene.org)**
- As noted, the theological use of the biblical concept of *koinonia* has been a significant feature of ecumenical dialogues since the latter part of the Twentieth Century. The value of the theological usage of any biblical concept is best maintained insofar as that usage observes the boundaries within which the original biblical concept is used. We require to ask of any such usage as to whether, or not, it is asking the original biblical concept to bear a load that exceeds those boundaries.
- [viii] https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/104250/1984_aco_warc_gods_reign_our_unity.pdf
- [ix] <http://wrc.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IRAD-Koinonia-Gods-Gift-and-Calling.pdf>, Introduction, referencing: *God's Reign and Our Unity*, para.47-61.
- [x] <http://wrc.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IRAD-Koinonia-Gods-Gift-and-Calling.pdf>, para.1.
- [xi] *Ibid.*, para.4.
- [xii] *Ibid.*, paras 5-6.
- [xiii] *Ibid.*, para. 7.
- [xiv] *Ibid.*, para.11.
- [xv] *Ibid.*, para.21.
- [xvi] *Ibid.*, para.22, citing: *God's Reign and Our Unity*, para.61.
- [xvii] *Ibid.*, para.32.
- [xviii] *Ibid.*, para's 33-39.
- [xix] *Ibid.*, para.35.
- [xx] *Ibid.*, para.40.
- [xxi] *Ibid.*, para's 41-42.
- [xxii] *Ibid.*, 43.
- [xxiii] *Ibid.*, 45-47.
- [xxiv] *Ibid.*, 47.
- [xxv] *Ibid.*, 53.
- [xxvi] *Ibid.*, para.52 and fn.25.
- [xxvii] *Ibid.*, para's 57-58.
- [xxviii] *Ibid.*, para.60.
- [xxix] *Ibid.*, para.61.
- [xxx] *Ibid.*, para.63, citing: *Report of the Third World Conference on Faith and Order* (Faith and Order Commission, 1952), p. 6.
- [xxxii] *Ibid.*, para.64, citing: *God's Reign and Our Unity*, para.61.
- [xxxiii] *Ibid.*, para.32.

- [xxxiii] See, for example:
Unitatis Redintegratio (Vatican Council II (1964)):
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html
The Ecumenical Directory (1993)
<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/documenti/testo-in-inglese.html>
Ut Unum Sint (1995)
https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html
See also the fruit of International Catholic-Reformed Dialogues (1977, 1990, 2005, 2015):
<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/alleanza-mondiale-delle-chiese-riformate/dialogo-internazionale-cattolico-riformato.html>
- [xxxiv] For an example of such a translation, and the fruit of Catholic-Reformed Dialogue in Scotland, see:
https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/3115/baptism_document.pdf
https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/3116/baptism_liturgy.pdf
- [xxxv] **Participation Faith and belief engagement - Participation (blogs.gov.scot)**
- [xxxvi] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/80299/06-Ecumenical-Relations-Committee.pdf, Section 4.
- [xxxvii] <https://www.ceceurope.org/cec-to-enhance-church-voices-in-european-institutions-through-advocacy/>
- [xxxviii] <https://www.leuenberg.eu/documents/>
- [xxxix] <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/articles/church-of-scotland-marks-cop26-weekend-with-special-services-and-activism>
<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/articles/after-cop26-moderator-says-god-is-with-us-so-we-have-hope>
- [xl] <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/statement-on-the-outcome-of-cop26>
- [xli] <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-acting-general-secretary-to-patriarch-kirill-of-moscow-raise-up-your-voice-so-that-the-war-can-be-stopped>
- [xlii] <http://wcrc.ch/news/a-pall-of-ashes-covers-ukraine-christians-join-prayer-for-peace>