



The Church of Scotland

General Assembly
2021

REMITTS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021

REMITTS

CONTENTS

Section	Content	Page number
1	Instructions and Recommendations to Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Congregations and Individuals AND to GA Standing Committees and Trustee	3
2	Instructions and Recommendations to Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Congregations and Individuals	5
3	Instructions to GA Standing Committees and Trustees	11
4	Overtures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OVERTURE AMENDING THE CHURCH COURTS ACT (ACT III 2000)• SOLEMNISATION OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE OVERTURE	17

Note: *Congregational meeting Protocols can be found here:*

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/conducting-congregational-meetings>

Section 1: Instructions and Recommendations to Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Congregations and Individuals AND to GA Standing Committees and Trustees

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

6. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian to form the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian, as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.
7. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer, to form the Presbytery of the South West as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.
8. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark to form the Presbytery of Lanarkshire as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.
12. Instruct the Committee to continue its work on General Assembly reform, including engagement with the Legal Questions Committee's work on the Church Courts Act, reflection on the report of the Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Governance, and to share proposals with Presbyteries for early consultation, prior to reporting to the General Assembly of 2022.

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly:

4. Note the challenging financial situation facing the Church as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and, while acknowledging the necessity of setting a Covid-19 recovery budget for 2021, reaffirm the need for budgetary prudence and the priority of resourcing Presbytery reform and supporting the growth of the local Church.
5. Thank the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr and the Ministries and Mission Review Group for their work and approve Giving to Grow as the new Ministries and Mission Allocation scheme to replace the current Ministries and Mission scheme.
9. Note the work done in projecting both the future availability and affordability of ministries across the Church of Scotland and set as a realistic aim that Presbyteries should seek to implement by 2025 Presbytery Plans based around 600 fulltime equivalent ministries and a target of no more than 60 further charges vacant at any one time.
17. Given the urgency of the need to institute new forms of Church and to engage in pioneer mission:
 - (i) Instruct the Assembly Trustees to establish, as part of the Faith Action Plan, a Pioneer Mission Fund aimed at supporting local church growth, with a particular emphasis on church planting and the establishment of 100 new worshipping communities;
 - (ii) Encourage wide-ranging support for contributions to be made to this Fund, including contributions from individuals, businesses and outside bodies, and as soon as circumstances permit allocate central financial resources to this important work; and
 - (iii) Instruct the Assembly Trustees to make appropriate provision for the efficient management and evaluation of the Fund and the projects it supports.

23. Approve the total to be contributed by congregations in 2022 of £42,000,000 based on the projection of congregational income for 2022 and its disposition among local congregational expenditure, the Parish Ministries Fund and the Mission and Renewal Fund.

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The General Assembly:

4. Instruct the Assembly Trustees, the Assembly Trustees' Webinar Group and related stakeholders to host a national day webinar on the opportunities presented by the Report, inviting participation from all levels of church life, this event to take place before 30 November 2021.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly:

27. Instruct the Forum to ensure that Presbyteries receive adequate Guidance on the implementation and operation of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act to enable them to commence planning from 30 June 2021, and to consult the Presbytery Clerks' Forum before issuing further Guidance.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

The General Assembly:

5. (i) Instruct the Forum to work with the Trustees, the General Trustees, the Social Care Council, the Faith Nurture Forum, and others as appropriate, to use the "Net Zero by 2030" framework to develop plans and activities for the Church to work towards meeting this ambition, and to report annually to the General Assembly (ii) Urge all congregations and Presbyteries to consider the implications of Net Zero for their own buildings, activities, procurement and finances, and to start long-term planning for the changes that will be required, and (iii) Urge congregations and Presbyteries to join Eco-Congregation Scotland, and other ecumenical environment networks, so they may experience the benefits of expert advice and support, as well as the opportunity to join local and regional ecumenical networks to share information and ideas about how to reach Net Zero goals.
18. Urge congregations to support the Reset the Debt campaign; instruct the Forum to promote the campaign, and to call on the UK Government to establish a Jubilee Fund to provide grants to pay off and cancel unavoidable debt accrued by households because of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.
19. Instruct the Forum to promote the Meet Your MSP resources and encourage congregations to approach their MSPs, especially those newly elected to the Scottish Parliament, in order to establish and strengthen relations with elected representatives.
20. Commend the report on Artificial Intelligence; urge the Church to engage with the issues raised, especially in relation to pastoral care, worship and mission; and instruct the Forum to provide resources to support this engagement.

Section 2: INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRESBYTERIES, KIRK SESSIONS, CONGREGATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

9. Approve the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in Appendix C and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.
10. Pass as an Interim Act the text of the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in sections 1 and 2 only (but not section 3) of Appendix C.

SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY

17. Commend the Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members.

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly:

18. Encourage Kirk Sessions to participate in a National Gift Day during Harvest time in 2021, promoting the offering of thanksgiving gifts to God for sustaining the Church through these challenging times.
19. Urge congregations to engage with the National Stewardship Programme, using the Narrative of Generosity resource to embrace a whole life of stewardship.
25. Urge Presbyteries to prioritise the use of the 2022 Discretionary Allowance towards reducing the amounts of Ministries and Mission contributions payable by congregations which are struggling financially.

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The General Assembly:

2. Invite Kirk Sessions to study the Report, especially Section 2, and consider the questions raised as they apply to their own mission strategies, or as part of their process of developing mission strategies.
3. Instruct Presbyteries to study the Report, especially Section 3, and consider the questions raised alongside their plans for reshaping the newly formed Presbyteries and developing mission strategies.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

3. Note the intention of the Committee to bring a Church Courts Overture to the General Assembly of 2022 and encourage Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and others to engage with the Committee in the preceding consultation process.
5. Approve the Solemnisation of Same-Sex Marriage Overture as set out in Appendix A and transmit the same to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk by 31 December 2021.
8. Note that (1) the Vacancy Protocol and the arrangements for Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to meet and vote by video-conferencing or audioconferencing or a combination of the two, agreed by the Commission of Assembly on 7 July 2020, (2) the three Protocols agreed by the General Assembly of October 2020 (the Congregational Meetings on Bases of Adjustment Protocol, the Congregational Meetings for Adopting the Unitary Constitution Protocol and the Congregational Meetings on Sale or Disposal of Church Buildings Protocol) and (3) the arrangements for Financial Boards to meet and vote by videoconferencing or audio-conferencing or a combination of the two, have all proved useful and continue these arrangements until the General Assembly of 2022.
9. Instruct that while the Covid-19 pandemic regulations prevent an in person congregational meeting taking place:
 - (a) Kirk Session shall have power to appoint to the Congregational Board members of the congregation who are not members of the Kirk Session to fill vacancies which have arisen, which appointments shall last only until such time as the Stated Annual Meeting is next held in person; and
 - (b) if in the Committee's view, at any time before the next General Assembly, alternative arrangements become necessary to enable elections to take place to Congregational Boards, the Committee shall have power to produce a Protocol to enable elections to Congregational Boards.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly:

2. Note the work done on discipleship and urge Kirk Sessions to utilise the resources provided in order to respond to the clear call to refocus and reshape around the two-part call of discipleship, to follow Christ and to enable others to follow Christ.
9. Note the research project on Pioneer Ministry, and instruct Presbyteries to consider the findings as they engage in planning new ways of being church.
11. Note the work being done on developing intergenerational church life and instruct all Presbyteries to consider this in their planning.
14. Urge congregations to adopt the ACORN Programme as a means to help members practise mission at grass roots level, and through support in small groups, to gain confidence in effective discipleship.

26. Instruct Presbyteries to complete the process of developing and gaining final approval of their Presbytery Mission Plan by 31 December 2022 noting that Presbyteries which are in the process of union with other Presbyteries may seek to form a shared Presbytery Mission Plan with them as the fulfilment of this instruction.
28. Agree the number of ministry posts allocated to each Presbytery set out in Appendix 4 and instruct that this be the figure used in the forming of any Presbytery Mission Plan.
29. Instruct that all Presbytery Plans agreed and approved in terms of the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) be suspended from 1 June 2021.
31. Instruct that from 1 June 2021:
 - a) only vacancies and readjustments processed in terms of section 9(2) of Act VII 2003 (which require, for the avoidance of doubt, the approval of the Presbytery of the bounds and the concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum) may proceed, and
 - b) any vacancies and readjustments given permission to proceed through this exception shall be Reviewable Charges.
32. Pass an Act temporarily amending Act VIII 2003 as follows:
 ACT TEMPORARILY AMENDING THE VACANCY PROCEDURE ACT (ACT VIII 2003) (AS AMENDED)
Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []
 The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:
 1. Add the following words at the end of section 28: "Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, where permission to call in terms of section 8 of this Act has been given prior to 1 June 2021 the vacancy process in a charge may continue after 1 June 2021 but if that process has not led to the preaching of a nominee in terms of section 22 of this Act by 31 December 2021, such a vacancy process shall be discontinued at that date unless agreement is reached between the Presbytery of the bounds and the Faith Nurture Forum that the process may be continued thereafter in terms of this Act. For the avoidance of doubt the unamended provisions of this section shall once again apply when the Presbytery has gained final approval in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act ZZ 2021) for a Mission Plan covering the vacant charge."
 2. Delete the words "the Presbytery Plan in accordance with the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003)" where they appear in section 28 and substitute "the Mission Plan in accordance with the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act ZZ 2021)".
33. Instruct that as from 1 June 2021 no Presbytery shall grant permission to Call in terms of section 8 of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) unless agreement has been reached with the Forum.
35. Instruct that from 1 June 2021 all outstanding appeals under section 6 of Act VII 2003 related to Presbytery Plans shall be suspended, but that this shall be without prejudice to any right to initiate a review in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act in due course.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

The General Assembly:

2. Commend Section 3 “Being Confirmed, Professing the Faith, Sharing Communion” as an exploration of Profession of Faith/Confirmation and church membership.
3. Receive the report “Westminster, Confessions and the Church” (Appendix) as an interim response to the instruction given by the General Assembly of 2018.
5. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to discuss the questions laid out in Section 23 of “Westminster, Confessions and the Church” (Appendix), along with any further or additional comments, and respond to the Theological Forum by 31 December 2021.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

The General Assembly:

3. Recognise and give thanks for the critical role of the voices, concerns, and passion of young people involved in the life of the Church of Scotland who have campaigned for disinvestment from fossil fuels; and urge congregations to provide an opportunity to listen to young people in the congregation, or in the local community, to hear about their concerns.
4. Urge congregations to prepare for the COP26 UN Climate Summit due to take place in Glasgow in November 2021 by using the Climate Sunday prayer and worship resources (www.climatesunday.org); and consider how they can respond in prayer and action and to support congregations to sign the ‘Scottish Churches COP26 Pledge’.
7. Welcome the agreement with the Church of Scotland Trust that, as a matter of principle, the portfolios of investments managed should align with the UN Paris Agreement in pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.
8. Welcome the fact that no oil and gas company shares are currently held; and note that any future investment in oil and gas would only follow agreement between the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Faith Impact Forum that there was good evidence that its strategy and implementation was aligned with the stringent targets set by the Paris Agreement.
9. (i) Appoint a Special Committee of five persons to consult with the Faith Impact Forum, the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Assembly Trustees to consider the best framework for future recommendations about the ethics of investment practice being brought before the General Assembly, and report to the General Assembly in 2023.
11. Invite Kirk Sessions to arrange a public meeting to consider themes and ideas for a just and green future following the Covid-19 pandemic, and identify the implications for their parish, the wider community, for Scotland and the world, and instruct the Forum to support Kirk Sessions in this.
16. Urge Kirk Sessions to take part in the basic training provided by Integrity – the Church of Scotland’s Violence Against Women Task Group.
21. Urge all parts of the Church of Scotland to continue to support Christian Aid as an expression of the Church of Scotland’s solidarity and commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide.

22. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to seek ways to listen and learn from partner churches around the world in relation to issues such as poverty, climate change, migration, HIV, recovery from Covid-19 and interfaith activities, and to develop partner and twinning relationships.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

The General Assembly:

5. Endorse the efforts being made by CrossReach to keep 'The Promise' which has been made to children who have experience of the care system; infants, children, young people, adults and their families - 'that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential'; encourage Presbyteries, congregations and individuals in joining with CrossReach to commend this initiative and to do all they can to combat the discrimination and stigma which exists the current children's care system.
6. Note the significant financial challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the additional strain this has caused to CrossReach; celebrate the generous response to the Emergency Coronavirus Appeal from local and international partners without which the organisation would have struggled to offer all that it has to the people it cares for; and encourage Presbyteries, congregations and individual members to continue to offer support through proactive and tangible means.
9. Welcome the findings of the Scottish Parliament commissioned Independent Review into Adult Social Care and those of the Parliament's Health and Sport Committee; note the recommendations made which are needed to improve the current situation for supported people, the social care workforce and unpaid carers; urge Presbyteries, congregations and individuals to get involved in raising awareness of the inequalities in the current system by all possible means and to call for the necessary resources which will begin to address these.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

3. Encourage congregations to mark "Safeguarding Sunday" with those of other denominations on Sunday 10th October 2021 or on any other suitable day in October.
5. Direct that advice given by the Safeguarding Service, when framed as an instruction, must be followed by all Agencies of the General Assembly and by all Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Safeguarding Coordinators, office-holders, staff and volunteers involved in work with Vulnerable Groups (as defined in the Safeguarding Act), and pass an Act amending the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018) accordingly as set out in Appendix A.
10. Instruct Presbyteries to co-operate with the Safeguarding Service in a compliance audit of Safeguarding data in readiness for the implementation of the Disclosure Act.

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HER MAJESTY'S FORCES

The General Assembly:

4. Commend to the prayers of the Church all Chaplains, and all those whom they serve.
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.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

2. Thank those who responded to the call for nominations and encourage members, Elders, Deacons and Ministers to consider nomination for the 2021-22 process.

Section 3: INSTRUCTIONS TO GA STANDING COMMITTEES AND TRUSTEES

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

11. Instruct the Committee to develop the fast tracking of deliverance approval necessitated by online Assemblies and continue in future Assemblies.
13. Invite the Legal Questions Committee to prepare legislation enabling all or part of future General Assembly business to be conducted online, and report to a subsequent General Assembly.

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly:

6. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to report to the General Assembly of 2022 with further details in relation to:
 - (i) the funding models which will apply to the new Presbyteries;
 - (ii) the intended size, scope, terms and conditions of the proposed Transition Fund;
 - (iii) a comprehensive communication strategy for the implementation of Giving to Grow; and
 - (iv) the criteria and process for an annual review process for Giving to Grow.
7. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to present Regulations for Giving to Grow to the General Assembly of 2022 with a view to implementing Giving to Grow from 1 January 2023.
8. Lift the moratorium on increasing Ministries and Mission contributions imposed by the General Assembly of 2019.
10. Acknowledge that much has been learned through the consultations carried out on behalf of the Trustees by the Special Group (D10) which was exploring the most effective and efficient way of delivering the work of the Faith Action Plan and note that the Trustees, building on the lessons learned, will continue this work in a spirit of collaboration, bringing a final report to the General Assembly of 2022.
11. Note the recommendations contained in Appendix 2 and, for the time being, approve the placing of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and of the Theological Forum within the Office of the General Assembly.
12. Approve the placing of the Gaelic Group within the Faith Nurture Forum.
13. Approve the reduction in the number of members of the Nomination Committee from 24 to 18 in addition to the Convener and Vice-Convener.
14. Agree to increase the size of the Personnel Appeal Panel to twelve persons, each appointed to serve a four-year term with the option of appointment for a further four-year term and grant

powers to the Convener and Vice Convener of the Nomination Committee to approve the co-option of new members of the group.

16. Approve the decision of the Assembly Trustees to suspend the work on the future of the George Street buildings for two years whilst ensuring a basic maintenance programme commences.
21. Approve the amended remit of the Legal Questions Committee set out in Appendix 3.
22. Urge the Assembly Trustees, in consultation with all relevant bodies, to expedite the exploration into allowing the proceeds from the sale of redundant buildings to be used more widely than at present, especially for purposes of Ministry and Mission.

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The General Assembly:

5. Instruct the agencies of the General Assembly to study the Report, and consider the questions raised, particularly around how these will impact the shaping and functioning of the General Assembly and the agencies of the General Assembly and their developing mission strategies, and also the relationship these bodies will have with each other, Presbyteries and the local Church, and in particular instruct (1) the Legal Questions Committee to consider these matters when framing the new Church Courts Act, (2) the Assembly Business Committee to consider these matters when looking at questions of General Assembly reform, and (3) the Assembly Trustees to consider including appropriate reporting on these matters in their report to the General Assembly of 2022.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

6. Instruct the Committee, in consultation with others, to continue to develop a process of Presbytery Review and report to the General Assembly of 2024.
7. In relation to appeals:
 - (a) instruct the Faith Nurture Forum, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Presbytery Clerks' Forum, to prepare a manual of good practice for Presbyteries to follow in terms of Mission Plan procedures; and
 - (b) instruct the Committee to consider bringing proposed amendments to the Appeals Act to allow early consideration of the competency and relevancy of any Grounds of Appeal and to bring any proposals to the General Assembly of 2022.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

2. Instruct the Committee to engage with the reformed Presbyteries of the Church and report to a future General Assembly.

3. Instruct the Committee to facilitate a conference to explore the establishing of cooperative partnerships to enable Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland, taking heed amongst other possibilities of regional Covenant partnerships and local Mission Communities.
5.
 - a) Approve the Saint Andrew Declaration, consisting of mutual Acknowledgements and Commitments between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church.
 - b) Instruct the Committee, in partnership with the Inter-church Relations Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, to oversee the implementation of the Commitments in the Saint Andrew Declaration and to set up the Working Group proposed by it.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly:

3. Instruct the Forum to develop the first modules of a lay training programme, with a view to launching an entry level course in January 2022 and encourage the Assembly Trustees to explore with the Forum funding models for this training which would allow the training to be delivered at no cost to the participant or their congregation and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
4. Instruct the Forum to review the training expectations for Ordained Local Ministers.
5. Note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges and instruct the Forum to keep questions around call and tenure under review.
6. Note the work which has taken place to date on developing a Capability Procedure for Ministers and instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to bring detailed proposals for such a procedure to the General Assembly of 2022.
7. Instruct the Forum to bring a revised Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2022.
8.
 - (a) Affirm the commitment of the Church to place priority for the poorest at the heart of all that it does, recognising the mission of Priority Area congregations in this.
 - (b) Instruct the Forum to continue to develop and deliver this key priority – implementing the whole Church strategy of prioritising support for those living in poverty and at the margins – within the Faith Action Plan, through the Priority Areas Implementation Group and Priority Areas Team.
10. Note the insights gained from Path of Renewal and encourage the continuation of this project.
12. Instruct the Forum to consider how the voices and opinions of young people can be gathered on a range of topics and shared widely, following on from the success of the Listening Project carried out by the Assembly Trustees, and the lessons learned from the 2019 Youth Attitudes Survey, and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
13. Instruct the Forum to reassert the Church's commitment to young people by revisiting and acting upon the sections of deliverance from 2019 and 2020 concerning young people and young adults (of Mission and Discipleship Council in 2019 deliverances 7-13 and 18-20 and Faith

Nurture Forum in 2020 deliverance 15) with a view to being able to report actions taken to future General Assemblies.

15. a) Note that Heart and Soul will no longer be part of future General Assemblies and give thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by their involvement.
- b) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to report to a future General Assembly on how stories can be shared and lessons learned, having consulted with the Faith Impact Forum and the Assembly Trustees.
16. Instruct the Forum to work with the Diaconate Council, the Legal Questions Committee, and other stakeholders, to review the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010) and to bring to the General Assembly of 2022 a revised or, if appropriate, a new Act on Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland.
20. Instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to undertake a review of section 18 (Retirement of Ministers of Word and Sacrament) of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018) and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
21. Instruct the Forum to explore the possibilities of developing a 3 year Gaelic Language Plan [2022 – 2025] that includes a particular emphasis on Gaelic Ministry and Mission to children and young people and to bring a report to the General Assembly of 2022.
24. Instruct the Forum when developing principles for Presbytery Mission Planning, to include a principle of ecumenical working, bearing in mind the Lund Principle and the encouragement to form Local Mission Communities and regional Covenant Partnerships presented in the report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee.
25. Instruct the Forum to explore whether there may be some downward variance in the 0.25 FTE being allocated to every Guardianship in the provisions of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, whilst maintaining principles of mission and financial sustainability, and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
30. Instruct the Forum, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to provide appropriate financial and pastoral support to Graduate Candidates and those involved in the Familiarisation Programme who are adversely affected by the suspension of current Presbytery Plans, such provision to be reviewed at six-monthly intervals from this General Assembly, until all Presbytery Mission Plans have been approved.
34. Instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to carry out a review of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) in the light of the passing of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and report to the General Assembly of 2022.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

The General Assembly:

4. Invite the Theological Forum to facilitate knowledge of the Westminster Confession by producing video resources on the Confession to allow Church leaders and members to study the

Confession if they so wished; such material to assist the Church in gaining an understanding of its subordinate standard and thus allow engagement with the consultation which the Forum seeks.

6. Instruct the Theological Forum to bring firm proposals regarding the confessional standards of the Church to the General Assembly of 2022.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

The General Assembly:

6. Instruct the Forum to work with the General Trustees to negotiate a much improved Electricity Supply offer, given that many churches will need to move to electrical heating to meet the "Net Zero by 2030" requirement.
12. Instruct the Forum to call for the development of safe and legal routes for people desperately seeking sanctuary so that they can travel, live, work and contribute to our society with respect and dignity.
15. Welcome the cross-Church work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and of engaging with the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people within the Church of Scotland; and instruct the Forum, the Faith Nurture Forum and the Assembly Trustees to consider how best to ensure the necessary resources are available to act on the outcomes.
17. Instruct the Forum, in consultation with the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to renew and strengthen ecumenical dialogue, partnership and collaboration on public affairs with: (1) the Church of England; (2) through the new Scottish Christian Forum; and (3) within the Joint Public Issues Team.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

The General Assembly:

3. Express alarm at the high rate of drugs deaths in Scotland and instruct CrossReach to work in collaboration with the Faith Impact Forum to hold the Scottish Government to account on its promise to reduce drug deaths and to ensure that the appropriate resources are put in place.
10. (a) Note the human and financial impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on CrossReach and the steps being taken to recover;
(b) note too, the likely future impact of the recommendations of the recent reviews into the structure and funding of the adult social care sector in Scotland; and
(c) Instruct the Council to report to the General Assembly of 2022 outlining a way forward which takes account of both of these factors and which puts CrossReach on a sustainable footing.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

9. Instruct the Safeguarding Service in collaboration with the Faith Nurture Forum to undertake work to scope out a mandatory advanced safeguarding training programme for ministers, and report to the General Assembly of 2022. In the interim, instruct ministers to attend local Introductory Safeguarding Training and record attendance on the Presbytery Register if they have not attended such a course in the last three years.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

3. Invite each of the Standing Committees to reconsider its constitution and confirm the appropriate number of General Assembly appointed members which is required.
4. Urge the Nomination Committee to consider adding additional information to the form to ensure a diverse range of voices is facilitated and included on Committees; such as age brackets, previous experience, length of service on national committees, preferred method of attendance (in person or online) including hybrid option enabled for all to improve inclusion.

Section 4: OVERTURES

OVERTURE AMENDING THE CHURCH COURTS ACT (ACT III 2000)

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.

The General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of Presbyteries, hereby enact and ordain that the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *In section 2, delete the words “one in every four or part of four” where they appear in the second line and substitute “one in every five or part of five”.*
2. *In section 4, delete the words “one in every four, or part of four” where they appear in the second line and substitute “one in every five or part of five”.*
3. *Delete sections 6(c) and (d) and substitute:*

*“(c) The five most recent past Moderators who are (i) eligible to receive a Commission, and (ii) not members of the Assembly by virtue of section 6(b) or otherwise members *ex officiis*, shall be members of the General Assembly *ex officiis*. They shall be appointed in addition to their Presbytery’s number of Commissions in terms of section 2 but no equalizing minister or elder shall be appointed. Their Presbytery shall remain entitled to give Commissions from amongst their allocation in terms of section 2 above to any other former Moderators eligible to be commissioned.”*

SOLEMNISATION OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE OVERTURE

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.

The General Assembly, with consent of a majority of Presbyteries, hereby enact and ordain as follows:

Definitions and Interpretation

1. (a) "Parish Minister" shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018);
(b) "Minister of Word and Sacrament" shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018);
(b) "same sex marriage" shall mean the process described in the MSA;
(d) "the MSA" shall mean the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 as it exists at [] May 2021 *[if Overture is sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, that date]*;
(e) "Deacon" shall mean a person holding the office of Deacon in terms of the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010);
(f) "Authorised Celebrant" for the purposes of this Act means a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon who is empowered to solemnise same sex marriage in terms of the MSA;
(g) "Principal Clerk" includes a person deputising for the Principal Clerk.

General provisions

2. A Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon may apply in terms of this Act to become an Authorised Celebrant for same sex marriage.
3. No person shall be required by this Act to participate in the solemnisation of, or be involved in the arrangements for, a same sex marriage.
4. In all matters referred to in this Act, including but not limited to making application to become an Authorised Celebrant, permitting or granting consent for use of buildings, arranging for the participation of others in the solemnisation of a same sex marriage, and making practical arrangements for same sex weddings, a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon, as the case may be, shall take account of the peace and unity and pastoral needs of the congregation and of any parish or other grouping of which it is a part.

Becoming an Authorised Celebrant for same sex marriage

5. The process for becoming an Authorised Celebrant shall be:
 - (i) Application shall be made initially to the Principal Clerk's Office on a form prescribed by the Principal Clerk.
 - (ii) The Principal Clerk will make application to the Registrar General for Scotland on behalf of the Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon, as the case may be, in terms of section 9(1A) of the MSA.
 - (iii) The Principal Clerk will liaise with and advise the Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon, as the case may be, of the outcome of the application.
6. The Principal Clerk shall maintain an up to date record of Authorised Celebrants.
7. Authorised Celebrants shall be responsible for initiating their own three yearly renewal of their status in terms of the MSA, although the actual process will be administered through the Principal Clerk's Office.

Use of buildings

8. Only a Parish Minister who has become an Authorised Celebrant in terms of sections 5 to 7 above may, in accordance with and subject to the terms of sections 12 to 15 of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018):

- (i) permit the use of a Church building in their charge for the solemnisation of same sex marriage, and
- (ii) grant consent for other Authorised Celebrants to use such a building for the solemnisation of same sex marriage.

For the avoidance of doubt, any specific permission or consent for an individual same sex marriage granted by a Parish Minister in terms of this section 8 shall endure notwithstanding that such Parish Minister subsequently departs from the charge in respect of which such permission or consent was granted.

9. An Interim Moderator who is a Minister of Word and Sacrament shall, for the purposes of this Act, have the same rights and obligations as a Parish Minister under section 8 of this Act in relation to use of buildings.

Minister's or Deacon's discretion

10. Nothing in this Act shall contravene the general principle of Church law that any Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon has the right to determine at any time whether or not to conduct the marriage of any persons.

Territorial extent

11. This Act makes provision for same sex marriage conducted in accordance with the MSA.

Consequential amendments

12. The Recognition of Marriage Services Act (Act I 1977) shall be amended as follows:

- (i) *Section 2 shall be deleted and the following shall be substituted:*
"Solemnisation of marriage in the Church of Scotland is effected by an ordained minister or deacon in a religious ceremony wherein, before God, and in the presence of the minister or deacon and at least two competent witnesses, the parties covenant together to take each other in marriage as long as they both shall live, and the minister or deacon declares the parties to be married."
- (ii) *In section 3, the words "or deacon" shall be inserted after the word "minister".*
- (iii) *Section 4 shall be deleted.*

13. The Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018) shall be amended as follows:

Add a new sub-paragraph (5) as follows to section 4:

- (5) "where a Minister of Word and Sacrament who is an Authorised Celebrant in terms of the Solemnisation of Same Sex Marriage Act (Act []), enters the bounds of the Charge of an existing Parish Minister who is not such an Authorised Celebrant, to solemnise a same sex marriage."

Guidance

14. The Legal Questions Committee shall produce Guidance to accompany this Act, which Guidance shall be reviewed by it from time to time. Such Guidance shall be taken into account by all those using or affected by this Act.