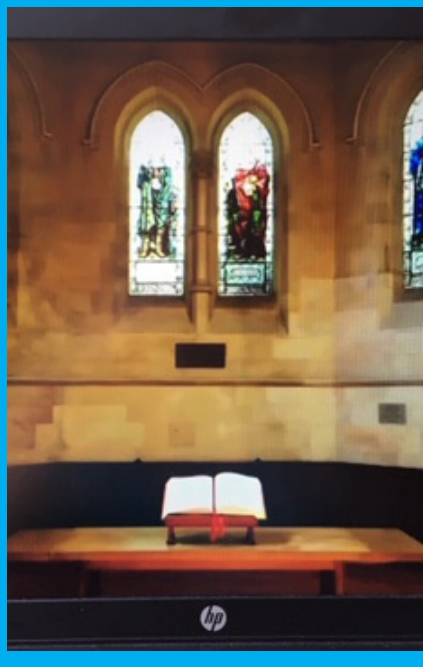
# Record of Assembly 2021

The United Reformed Church



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# Matters for consideration and action from General Assembly 2021

The list of General Assembly resolutions below are of particular relevance to Local Churches, Synods and Ministers, and ought to be taken note of and where necessary acted upon.

**Local Churches**
The following resolutions are particularly relevant:
10-12 Committees and on-line meetings
23 Disciplinary process for Office Holders
26-34 Israel Palestine
44 Safeguarding Constitutional Changes – local churches are invited to respond by 31 March 2022.
45- Safeguarding Rules of Procedure
47 Safeguarding Policy Statement
48 Safeguarding Training Framework
49 Safeguarding – Updates matrix of roles eligible for a criminal record check

**Synods**
The following resolutions are particularly relevant:
10-12 Committees and on-line meetings
14 Digital Charter and Social Media Guidelines
23 Disciplinary process for Office Holders
26-34 Israel Palestine
39 Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline – Synods are invited to respond by 31st March 2022
44 Safeguarding Constitutional Changes – local churches are invited to respond by 31 March 2022.
45- Safeguarding Rules of Procedure
47 Safeguarding Policy Statement
48 Safeguarding Training Framework
49 Safeguarding - Updates matrix of roles eligible for a criminal record check

**Ministers**
The following resolutions are particularly relevant:
14 Digital Charter and Social Media Guidelines
19-21 Pensions
23 Disciplinary process for Office Holders
39 Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline – Synods are invited to respond by 31st March 2022.
47 Safeguarding Policy Statement
48 Safeguarding Training Framework
49 Safeguarding – Updates matrix of roles eligible for a criminal record check

# Minutes of a meeting of the United Reformed Church General Assembly

## on Friday 9 July 2021 by video conference

## Session One

The General Secretary, the Revd Dr John Bradbury, welcomed members, laid the Roll of Assembly on the table and invited the Moderator to constitute the Assembly with prayer. The Moderator, Mr Peter Pay, duly constituted Assembly.

### Roll of Assembly 2021

**Moderators**
1. The Revd Clare Downing
2. Mr Peter Pay

**Clerk**
3. The Revd Michael Hopkins

**Assistant Clerk**
4. The Revd Sarah Moore

**General Secretary**
5. The Revd Dr John Bradbury

**Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)**
6. Mrs Jane Baird

**Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)**
7. Vacant

**Deputy General Secretary (Mission)**
8. Ms Francis Brienen

**Conveners of General Assembly Standing Committeees, except the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee**
9. Business Committee – The Revd Adrian Bulley
10. Children's and Youth Work – The Revd Paul Robinson
11. Communications – The Revd Dr Peter Stevenson
12. Education and Learning – Mr Alan Yates
13. Equalities – The Revd Anne Lewitt
14. Faith and Order – The Revd Dr Robert Pope
15. Finance – Mr Ian Hardie (Treasurer)
16. The Deptuty Treasurer – The Revd John Piper
17. Ministries – The Revd Paul Whittle
18. Mission – Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte
19. Nominations – The Revd Ray Adams

**Convener of the United Reformed Church Trust**
20. Mrs Val Morrison

**Immediate past Moderators**
21. Mr Derek Estill
22. The Revd Nigel Uden

**Former Moderators (two places)**
23. The Revd John Marsh
24. The Revd Professor David Thompson

**Resource Centres for Learning**
25. Northern College staff – The Revd Alison Davis
26. Northern College Student – Ms Felicity (Fliss) Tunnard
27. Scottish College Staff – The Revd Lindsey Sanderson
28. Scottish College Student – Mrs Louise Sanders
29. Westminster College Staff – The Revd Samantha White
30. Westminster College student – Mrs Ruth Dewis

**United Reformed Church Youth (three places)**
31. Mr Reuben Watt
32. Miss Jo Harris
33. Miss Victoria Turner

**United Reformed Church Chaplain to HM Forces (one place)**
34. Vacant

**Northern Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

35. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Dave Herbert
36. The Synod Clerk - Ms Melanie Campbell
37. Mr Andrew Atkinson
38. The Revd Stuart Brock
39. Mrs Daphne Clarke
40. Dr Peter Clarke
41. Mrs Alison Dalton
42. The Revd Joan Grindod-Helmn
43. The Revd Marcus Hargis
44. Mrs Margaret Humberston
45. The Revd Trevor Jamison
46. Dr Donna Moore
47. Mrs Maureen Shepherd
48. Vacant
49. Vacant
50. Vacant

**North Western Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

51. The Synod Clerk – Tim Hopley
52. The Revd Martin Whiffen
53. The Revd Martyn Coe

54. The Revd Jacky Embrey
55. The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby
56. The Revd Mike Walsh
57. Mr Mal Breeze
58. Mr Mike Hart
59. Mrs Marilyn Piper
60. Mr Lawence Moore
61. Miss Denise Fitzpatrick
62. Ms Pauline Taylor
63. Miss Holly Clancy*
64. The Revd Ruth Watson
65. Vacant
66. Vacant

**Mersey Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

67. The Synod Clerk – Mrs Rita Griffiths
68. Mr Paul Franklin
69. The Revd Dr Nick Jones
70. The Revd Ceri Gardner
71. The Revd Jenny Travis
72. The Revd Cath Atkinson
73. The Revd Ruth Wilson
74. The Revd Catherine McFie
75. Ms Emily Dudley*
76. Ms Megan Wilson*
77. Mrs Barbara Ellis
78. Mrs Doris Rimmer
79. Mr Keith Reading
80. Ms Jenny Lamb
81. Mrs Lisa Spencer
82. Professor Bill Gould

**Yorkshire Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

83. The Synod Moderator -–The Revd Jamie Kissack
84. The Synod Clerk – Mr Tim Crossley
85. The Revd Fran Kissack
86. The Revd Alex Clare-Young
87. The Revd Jo Clare-Young
88. The Revd Clare Davison
89. Mrs Terasa (Terri) Raddings
90. Miss Lydia Raddings*
91. Mr Alex Walker
92. Mr Jacob Lowe*
93. Mr Modecai Weynberg*
94. Miss Megan Westgarth*
95. Mr Aaron Wood*

96. Mr Dan Morrell*
97. Mrs Jane Bunyan-Murray
98. The Revd Sarah Fitton

**East Midlands Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

99. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Geoffrey Clarke
100. The Synod Clerk – The Revd Camilla Veitch
101. The Synod Treasurer – Mr David Greatorex
102. The Revd Amanda Linney
103. The Revd Andrew Mudharara
104. The Revd Colin Bones
105. The Revd Matt Rigden
106. The Revd Jane Wade
107. The Revd Graham Maskery
108. Mr Sam Goodman
109. Mrs Lindsey Cole
110. Mr Derek Graham
111. Mrs Barbara Turner
112. Miss Eleanor Rice
113. Miss Ella Lemon*
114. Mr Charles Leggat*

**West Midlands Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

115. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Steve Faber
116. The Synod Clerk – Mr Richard Lockley
117. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Steve Powell
118. The Revd Fiona Elvins
119. The Revd Elaine Hutchinson
120. The Revd Carole Marsden
121. Ms Kirsty Mabott
122. Miss Elinor Davies
123. Mrs Clare Nutbrown-Hughes
124. Dr Peter Horrocks
125. Mr Johnny O'Hanlon
126. Mr Edward Lyne
127. The Revd Graham Sweeney
128. Mr Mervyn Davies
129. The Revd James Hamilton
130. Vacant

**Eastern Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

131. The Synod Moderator – Vacant
132. The Synod Clerk – Mr Keir Hounsome
133. The Revd Dr Catherine Ball
134. Mr Shannon Craig
135. Mrs Ruth Dixon
136. The Revd Paul Ellis
137. Ms Helen Glasse*
138. Mr Gil Heathcote
139. Ms Lindsey Brown
140. Ms Maria Lee
141. The Revd Barnabas Shin
142. Mr Brandon Stein*
143. The Revd Paul Stein
144. The Revd Gillian Thomson
145. The Revd Naomi Young-Rodas
146. The Revd Charles Mather
147. Ms Jo Patel

**South Western Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

148. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Ruth Whitehead
149. The Synod Treasurer – The Revd Richard Gray
150. The Synod Clerk – Mrs Gwen Jennings
151. The Revd Sue Cossey
152. The Revd Tracey Lewis
153. The Revd Gerald England
154. The Revd Robert Jordan
155. The Revd Mark Woodhouse
156. Dr Charles Stockley
157. Mrs Beverley Stockley
158. Mrs Beverley Wride
159. The Revd Lythan Nevard
160. Mrs Maria Mills
161. Truida Mutare
162. Ms Mollie Wells*
163. Vacant

**Wessex Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

164. The Synod Clerk – Miss Karen Bell
165. Mr Scott Wheeler
166. Mr Edward Burr
167. Mr Andrew Gibb
168. Ms Becca Lees
169. Mr Clive Snashall
170. Mrs Louise Shroubsole
171. The Revd Brian Harley
172. The Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson

173. The Revd Graham Hoslett
174. The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem
175. The Revd Mary Thomas
176. The Revd David Downing
177. The Revd Josh Thomas
178. Miss Laura Everard*
179. Miss Naomi Baldwin*

**Thames North Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

180. The Synod Moderator – The Revd George Watt
181. The Synod Clerk – Mr Simon Fairnington
182. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Anthony Obi-Ezekpazu
183. The Revd June Colley
184. The Revd Sue McCoan
185. The Revd Andrew McLuskey
186. Mr John Mitchell
187. Mrs Heather Puglsey
188. Mrs Olaoluwa (Ola) Omolayo Lawal
189. Ms Philippa Osei*
190. The Revd Sally Thomas
191. Mr Nick Booth*
192. Mrs Kate Yates
193. Mr Martyn Macphee
194. Mr Tony Corfe
195. Mrs Bim (Yetunde) Oniwinde

**Southern Synod**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

196. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Bridget Banks
197. The Synod Clerk – The Revd Russell Furley-Smith
198. The Synod Treasurer – Mr John Denison
199. The Revd Jacob Bali
200. The Revd Prince Brown-Engmann
201. Mrs Marie Jackson
202. The Revd Terry (Yeong-Jong) Jin
203. Mr Alan Kirby
204. The Revd Hilary Nabarro
205. The Revd Kim Plumpton
206. Mrs Sue Knight
207. Mr Mark Rigby
208. Ms Hannah Jones*
209. The Revd Wendy Swan
210. Ms Pam Tolhurst
211. Mr Zeerak Shahbaz*

**National Synod of Wales**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

212. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Simon Walkling
213. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Chris Atherton
214. The Revd Dr Jason Askew
215. The Revd Julia Bartholomew
216. Ms Tia Breese*
217. Mrs Judy Harris
218. The Revd Julie Kirby
219. The Revd Martha McInnes
220. The Revd Dr Kathryn Price
221. Mrs Adella Pritchard
222. Mr Korey Randall*
223. Mr David Turner*
224. Mr Ben Walkling*
225. The Revd Dr Phil Wall
226. Mrs Kate Wolsey
227. Miss Sandra Wallace

**National Synod of Scotland**
*(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).*

228. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Paul Whittle
229. The Synod Clerk – Mr William Robson
230. The Revd Andy Braunston
231. The Revd Steven Manders
232. The Revd John Sanderson
233. The Revd Susan Henderson
234. The Revd Fiona Bennett
235. Ms Morag Donaldson
236. Ms Myra Rose
237. Ms Rose Kumbanga
238. The Revd Sue Kirkbride
239. Mr Mark Kirkbride
240. Miss Hannah Sanderson*
241. Miss Morven Sanderson*
242. Mr Bob Christie
243. Ms Marie Trubic

**British and Irish Ecumenical representatives (five places)**
244. The Right Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness (Church of Scotland)
245. The Revd Dr David Chapman (Methodist Church of Great Britain)
246. The Venerable Vernon Ross (Church of England)
247. Father Dominic Robinson (Roman Catholic Church)
248. Major David Evans (Salvation Army)

**International Ecumenical representatives (five places)**
249. The Revd Najla Kassab – National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), President of the World Communion of Reformed Churches

250. The Revd. Lydia Neshangwe - Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) – Moderator of the Council for World Mission (CWM)
251. Pfarrer Martin Henninger, Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz
252. The Revd Dr Munther Isaac, Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem
253. Vacant

**Council for World Mission (one place)**
254. Vacant

*indicates those Synod representatives aged 25 or under at the time of their appointment.

*+indicates those appointed to a vacant place from another synod under Rule 1.5.*

**Worship**
Opening worship was led by the Moderators' Chaplain, the Revd Helen Everard, and included Bible Study led the by the Revd Barrie Cheetham, and an Act of Commemoration for ministers, missionaries, Church Related Community Workers, former Moderators and Clerks who have died since the last Assembly:

Amanda Julie Harper
Ann Maureen Cole
Anne Hunt
Anthony R Ashcroft
Anthony John Bradshaw
Antony Richard Cottam
Anthony James Wilkinson
Barrie Wilson Saunders
Betty Florence Williams
Bernard Grimsey
Brian Hudson Bailey OBE
Brian John Stops
David Armstrong Brown
David Charles Macara Gardner
David James Hudston
David Mather
David John Wilkinson
Denis Harold Newman
Derek Nuttall
Derrick Parkinson
Edward Walton
Egland Graham
Frank Robert Cochrane
Glyn Eatock
Graham Ellis Henry Long
Graham John Spicer
Hazel Day
James Garrow
Jeffrey James Armitstead
Jennifer Marsh
John Derek Salsbury
Kathleen Bennett
Kenneth Hall
Kenneth Newborough
Malcolm Alan William Deacon
Michael John Pevy
Michael John Davies
Noel Stancliff
Norman Edsall
Peter Russell MacKenzie
Peter Ernest McIntosh
Peter Henry Newell
Ralph Leonard Eveleigh
Rhona Mitchell Jones
Richard Vivian Buddle
Robert Waters
Ronald Reginald Prestoe Smith
Rosemary Dorothy Humphrey
Ruth Kathleen Clarke
M Ruth Hendry Roy Arthur James Eames
Sidney Bindemann
Samuel Eric Rogers
Thomas Edward Charles Bush
Thomas Ellison
Tom Patrick Grant

**Greeting of Ecumenical and International guests**
Ecumenical and International guests were welcomed, and Assembly was addressed, via pre-recorded video, by Father Dominic Robinson (Roman Catholic Church), and the Revd Dr Munther Isaac, (Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem).

**En bloc Resolutions**
Following notices and technical advice given by the General Secretary, the Assembly Clerk, the Revd Michael Hopkins, presented the following papers with their Resolutions En bloc:

A1 Mission Council Advisory Groups (resolution 06).

## Resolution 06
**General Assembly resolves that from the close of General Assembly 2021, all Mission Council Advisory Groups shall become Advisory Groups of the General Assembly, and instructs the Business Committee to reflect further on whether further work and / or greater clarity is needed on the differences between Standing Committees and Advisory Groups.**

D1 Education and Learning: new URC Learning Hub
D2 Education and Learning: The Way Forward - one year on
D-H1 E&L/Ministries: Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders
H1 Ministries Committee Report
H4 Ministries: Changes to Schedule E (resolution 25)

## Resolution 25
**General Assembly makes the changes to Schedule E as outlined in Appendix 1 of this paper.**

J1 Nominations: General Report (resolution 37)

## Resolution 37
**General Assembly appoints committees and representatives of the Church as set out on page 175 of the Book of Reports, subject to the additions and corrections contained in the supplementary report to Assembly.**

J3 Nominations: Supplementary Report
K1 Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee Report
T1 Safeguarding Advisory Group: Annual Safeguarding Report
T5 Safeguarding: Safeguarding Training Framework (resolution 48)

## Resolution 48
**a) General Assembly adopts the Safeguarding Training Framework for use across the United Reformed Church.**
**b) General Assembly instructs synods to oversee the implementation of the framework.**

T6 Safeguarding: URC roles eligible for Criminal Records Bureau checks (resolution 49)

## Resolution 49
**General Assembly approves the updated matrix of roles eligible for a criminal record check (as outlined on pages 255 and 256).**

Assembly *agreed.*

**Mission Council**
The Assembly Clerk moved Resolutions 1 and 2, remaindered from the General Assembly of 2020, and responded to a number of questions.

## Resolution 01

**General Assembly gives final approval to the proposal that: There shall be one Moderator of General Assembly, serving for one year. This Moderator may be a minister (of word and sacraments or CRCW) or an elder. Each synod may nominate one minister and one elder each year, but only one Moderator will be elected.**

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 02

**General Assembly gives final approval to the proposal that: The name of Mission Council shall be changed to Assembly Executive.**

Assembly *agreed.*

**Church Life Review**
The General Secretary reported on the initial work of the Church Life Review Group. He presented statistics relating to trends in membership and ministry, and reflected upon the finances of the URC.

Assembly was invited to meet in groups to discuss the issues raised in the presentation.

Assembly adjourned.

# Session Two

Assembly resumed at 13:30. The Moderator, Mr Peter Pay, was in the Chair.

Finance Committee
The Treasurer, Mr Ian Hardie, presented the report of the Finance Committee.

The Deputy Treasurer, the Revd John Piper, outlined the challenges facing the URC pension schemes, and moved adoption of Resolution 19.

Following discussion, Resolution 19 was put:

## Resolution 19

**The General Assembly, being representative of Local Churches, Synods and the whole Church, confirms the Church's commitment to the pensions promises already made, and wishes any consideration of future pension arrangements for the Church's Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers, missionaries and staff to keep clearly in mind:**

**a) The Church's warm gratitude for the commitment, gifts and service of those who work among us and serve in our name**

**b) The Church's desire to deal with these people honourably in their retirement**

**c) The Church's desire to act as a responsible employer, for the people we employ and for our stipendiary office-holders.**

Assembly *agreed*.

Mr Piper described possible future options for URC pension provision, which Assembly met in groups to discuss.

Matters reported from groups included:
- Potential unintended discrimination against financially vulnerable groups.
- The necessity for independent financial advice to be available for members.

Mr Piper responded to a number of questions, and proposed Resolutions 20 and 21:

## Resolution 20

General Assembly, recognising that the significant changes to the legal and regulatory framework for defined benefit pension schemes are making the two current URC pension schemes disproportionately expensive for the benefits they deliver, agrees in principle to the closure to future accruals of both the Ministers' Pension Fund and the Final Salary Pension Scheme.

## Resolution 21

General Assembly acknowledges the careful work that has already been done on these complex and sensitive matters, authorises further work to be done on developing new pensions arrangements for office holders and staff, with the aim of presenting detailed options to Assembly Executive in November 2021, and then final proposals to General Assembly 2022, for implementation no sooner than January 2023.

The Revd Alex Alex Clare-Young proposed an amendment to Resolution 21:

**General Assembly acknowledges the careful work that has already been done on these complex and sensitive matters, authorises further work to be done on developing new pensions arrangements for office holders and staff, and requests that, as a part of this work, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) specialists are consulted, with the aim of presenting detailed options to Assembly Executive in November 2021, and then final proposals to General Assembly 2022, for implementation no sooner than January 2023.**

The proposer indicated his willingness to accept the amendment.

The amendment was *carried*.

Because of time constraint, the Moderator suspended discussion on this matter until a later time.

Assembly adjourned.

## Session Three

Assembly resumed at 15:30. The immediate past Moderator, the Revd Nigel Uden, was in the Chair.

Election of Moderator of General Assembly 2022-2023.

On behalf of the Business Committee, the Assembly Clerk moved adoption of the Resolution:

General Assembly appoints the Revd Adrian Bulley and the Revd Michael Hopkins as tellers for the election of the Moderator of General Assembly at this meeting.

Assembly *agreed*.

Each of the candidates briefly addressed Assembly, and responded to a question put by the Moderator.

The Clerk explained the procedure for the election.

The Moderator led Assembly in prayer.

The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing took the chair.

**Mission Committee**
The Convener, of the Mission Committee, Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, presented the report of the Mission Committee.

**Israel-Palestine Report**
There being no discussion on the report, Mrs Lane Cawte presented the Israel-Palestine Report, and moved adoption of Resolutions 26-35.

### Resolution 26

**General Assembly instructs the Mission Committee to raise awareness about Holy Land pilgrimage amongst synods, local churches, ecumenical partners and individuals, underlining the importance of taking time to engage with Christian Palestinian communities and members of the local Christian churches in Israel and Palestine.**

Following questions and discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

### Resolution 27

**General Assembly affirms that Israel is a country which is recognised within the international community of States, with all the rights and responsibilities attendant on that status.**

Assembly *agreed.*

### Resolution 28

**General Assembly affirms the United Nations commitment to a State of Palestine which**

**is recognised within the international community of States, with all the rights and responsibilities attendant on that status.**

Following questions and discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 29

**General Assembly condemns all acts of violence in the region of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.**

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 30

**General Assembly expresses its deep concern over the worsening situation for the Palestinian people since Resolution 37 was passed in 2016, as evidenced by the subsequent work undertaken by the URC in response to that resolution. All Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, forced house demolitions and the acquisition of land by coercion, are breaches of international law. General Assembly, therefore, urges the Israeli Government to abide by international law and reverse its de facto annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories.**

Following questions, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 31

**General Assembly requests local churches and members to contact their constituency MPs to express concerns about the actions of the Israeli Government with respect to settlement expansion and house demolitions, and to ask what the UK is doing in response.**

Following questions, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 32

**General Assembly recognises the ethical principles-based approach of the URC Trusts and Pension Funds to investing and commends them in this long-established commitment, so that they can continue to avoid investing in any international company which facilitates the following activities in the occupied Palestinian territories:**

- **construction, production and services for the illegal settlements**
- **the economic exploitation of labour and the captive Palestinian market**
- **the illegal extraction and procurement of natural resources**
- **population control through private security and surveillance where it contravenes international law**
- **provision of specialised equipment for the forced demolition of Palestinian homes and structures**

- **building and servicing of the separation wall / barrier and its checkpoints on Palestinian land**
- **and any other breaches of international law.**

Following questions and discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem proposed an amendment to resolution 33, and a number of members of Assembly indicated their willingness to second the amendment:

Replace ‘requests them to ensure that they do not invest in’ with ‘requests them to avoid knowingly investing directly in...”

The proposer indicated willingness to accept the amendment:

## Resolution 33

**General Assembly affirms the ethical values of URC Synod Trusts and in this principled commitment requests them to avoid knowingly investing directly in any international company which facilitates the following activities in the occupied Palestinian territories:**

- **construction, production and services for the illegal settlements**
- **the economic exploitation of labour and the captive Palestinian market**
- **the illegal extraction and procurement of natural resources**
- **population control through private security and surveillance where it contravenes international law**
- **provision of specialised equipment for the forced demolition of Palestinian homes and structures**
- **building and servicing of the separation wall / barrier and its checkpoints on Palestinian land**
- **and any other breaches of international law as researched and listed by respected agencies such as the United Nations, the Who Profits Research Center (Israel), Investigate (The American Friends Service Committee).**

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 34

**General Assembly requests local churches and members to be aware of EU guidelines on the labelling of products produced in Israeli settlements, and to consider not purchasing these from UK retailers.**

The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem proposed an amendment to include the word ‘illegal’ before ‘Israeli settlements’. During discussion, the Revd Steve Faber suggested that the words ‘in the occupied Palestinian territories’ might be appropriate. Dr Micklem agreed and the amendment was put:

The amendment was *carried.*

Because of time constraint, the Moderator suspended discussion, before the substantive resolution was put to the vote, until a later time.

# Saturday 10 July 2021

## Session Four

Assembly resumed at 09:30. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

**Worship**
Opening worship was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Helen Everard, and included Bible Study led by the Revd David Coleman.

Following notices by the Convener of Business and the Assembly Clerk, the Moderator read the names of those ministers of Word and Sacrament ordained since February 2020, and Jubilee ministers:

**Ordained Ministers**
Stephen Manyeh Ansa-Addo
Lee Barbara Battle
Sarah Louise Fitton
Ceri Ann Gardner
Susan Henderson
Aiyana Aurora Gardner-Houghton
James Hamilton
Daniel Rawdon Harris
Matthew James Rigden

Jubilee Ministers
Celebrating 70 years of ordained ministry in 2021:
Basil Ernest Bridge.

Celebrating 60 years of ordained ministry in 2021:
Derrick Peter Ackling
Kenneth Douglas Alway-Jones
Marjorie Ayton
Arthur Jack Beeson
Anthony Gerald Burnham
David Vandepeer Clarke
Wilfred Kievill Gathercole
Michael Edmund Heard
Adrian John Wells
Max Armstrong Moore
David Cranford Morgan
Barry Richard Parker
Roger Kaye Scopes
Brian John Slater
John Malcolm Smith
Harold Robert Tonks
Alan David Trinder

Celebrating 50 years of ordained ministry in 2021:
Anthony John Addy-Papelitzky
John Colbeck Durell
Graham Beresford Edwards
Anthony James Lawford Jones
Barbara Meachin
Michael John Wear
Terry Oakley
Michael John Bemrose Spencer
Brian Sadler Stone
Alan Edward Thomasson
Colin Peter Thompson

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayers of thanksgiving.

**Ministries: Disciplinary Policy for Office Holders**
The Convener of Ministries, the Revd Paul Whittle, presented the paper and moved Resolution 23:

Following questions and discussion, the Revd Sally Thomas proposed that the Resolution be withdrawn and referred back to the Ministries Committee for further work; which was seconded by Mr Steve Powell.

Upon being put to the vote, the proposal fell.

The Revd Alex Clare-Young proposed the inclusion of 'age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation' in the policy document at 12.2.14. The amended clause would thus read:

*Harassment of, or discrimination against, employees, contractors, or members of the public, related to age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.*

Mr Whittle accepted this alteration, and the Assembly agreed.

The Resolution was put:

## Resolution 23

**General Assembly adopts the Disciplinary policy for Office Holders as outlined in Appendix One on this paper.**

Assembly *agreed*.

## Session Five

The Moderator, Mr Peter Pay, was in the Chair.

Safeguarding Advisory Group: Additions to URC Structure and Rules of Procedure

The Revd Adrian Bulley introduced and proposed Resolutions 44 and 45.

## Resolution 44

General Assembly resolves to make the following additions to the Structure:

Functions of Church Meeting: [numbering to be determined]

a) To appoint a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

b) To adopt and promote implementation of safeguarding policy in line with General Assembly recommendations.

c) To receive regular safeguarding reports from the church safeguarding co-ordinator.

Functions of Elders' Meeting: [numbering to be determined]

a) To satisfy themselves that all necessary procedures are in place to achieve the aims of the church's safeguarding policy.

b) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all church activities.

c) To report to Church Meeting and to synod.

d) To report to the building trustees, charity regulators and insurers when advised to do so by the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

Functions of synod: [numbering to be determined]

a) To appoint a Synod Safeguarding Officer or equivalent.

b) To have oversight of, and to support, monitor and report safeguarding related activities and issues within local churches, and amongst ministers, officers and staff of the synod.

c) To take all necessary powers and actions positively to promote implementation of good practice in accordance with the safeguarding policy statement adopted by the General Assembly.

d) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.

Functions of General Assembly: [numbering to be determined]

a) To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

b) To have oversight of local churches and synods, monitoring practice.

c) To adopt a safeguarding policy statement and procedures for use throughout the whole United Reformed Church.

d) To advise on all matters of safeguarding throughout the church.

e) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.

The Revd Paul Ellis proposed an amendment under 'functions of a church meeting (b)':

To adopt and promote implementation of safeguarding policy in line with General Assembly recommendations **or those of another denomination with whom it is in a formal partnership.'**

Seconded by Mr Keir Hounsome

The amendment was *carried.*

The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem proposed an amendment under 'Functions of Elders Meeting':

c) To report to Church Meeting and to Synod **on matters arising under the church's safeguarding policy.**

Seconded by the General Secretary.

The amendment was *carried.*

The amended Resolution now read:

## Resolution 44

**General Assembly resolves to make the following additions to the Structure:**

**Functions of Church Meeting: [numbering to be determined]**

**a) To appoint a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.**

**b) To adopt and promote implementation of safeguarding policy in line with General Assembly recommendations or those of another denomination with whom it is in a formal partnership**

**c) To receive regular safeguarding reports from the church safeguarding co-ordinator.**

**Functions of Elders' Meeting: [numbering to be determined]**

**a) To satisfy themselves that all necessary procedures are in place to achieve the aims of the church's safeguarding policy.**

**b) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all church activities.**

**c) To report to Church Meeting and to synod on matters arising under the church's safeguarding policy.**

**d) To report to the building trustees, charity regulators and insurers when advised to do so by the Synod Safeguarding Officer.**

**Functions of synod: [numbering to be determined]**

**a) To appoint a Synod Safeguarding Officer or equivalent.**

**b) To have oversight of, and to support, monitor and report safeguarding related activities and issues within local churches, and amongst ministers, officers and staff of the synod.**

**c) To take all necessary powers and actions positively to promote implementation of good practice in accordance with the safeguarding policy statement adopted by the General Assembly.**

**d) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.**

**Functions of General Assembly: [numbering to be determined]**

**a) To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead.**

**b) To have oversight of local churches and synods, monitoring practice.**

**c) To adopt a safeguarding policy statement and procedures for use throughout the**

**whole United Reformed Church.**

**d) To advise on all matters of safeguarding throughout the church.**

**e) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.**

The amended Resolution was put:

Assembly agreed.

Mr Bulley moved Resolution 45:

## Resolution 45

**General Assembly resolves to make the following additions to the Rules of Procedure:**

**Safeguarding Implementation:** [numbering to be determined]

**1. Church Meeting:**

**a) To appoint a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is cognisant of current safeguarding policy, practice and procedure.**

**b) To receive regular – at least annual – safeguarding reports from the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.**

**2. Elders' Meeting:**

**a) To present an annual safeguarding report to Church Meeting and an annual safeguarding return to synod.**

**3. Synod:**

**a) To appoint a Synod Safeguarding Officer with the necessary experience, qualifications and current knowledge.**

**b) To arrange for safeguarding training as appropriate.**

**c) To collate church safeguarding returns and forward them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.**

**4. General Assembly:**

**To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead with the necessary experience, qualifications and current knowledge.**

Following questions and discussion, Resolution 45 was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

The General Secretary moved that 'General Assembly refers this constitutional change to

synods and local churches and asks for response by 31st March 2022'.

Assembly *agreed.*

**Community Awards Presentations**
Assembly viewed a video on the Congregational Insurance Community Project Awards, and celebrated the 2020-21 award-winning projects:
Spire Café, Farnham
Chorley Repair Café
Sanctuary Café, Lymm
Messy Vintage, Shrewsbury URC
Lea Road URC Food Project

**West Midlands Synod: Modern Day Slavery**
The Revd Steve Faber, on behalf of West Midlands Synod, presented the paper and moved Resolution 50:

## Resolution 50

**General Assembly expresses its wish that there be a statement of URC policy on modern-day slavery, and directs the General Secretariat to undertake the research and preparation of such a proposed policy for Church House and Assembly business, consulting with other officers and committees as necessary. The draft policy is to be proposed to Mission Council / the Assembly Executive or General Assembly no later than the Assembly meeting in 2023.**

Seconded by Mr Mervyn Davies.

Assembly *agreed.*

Mr Faber moved Resolution 51.

## Resolution 51

**General Assembly directs the Safeguarding Advisory Group / the Safeguarding Committee to draft, in consultation with others as necessary, clear guidance, including any necessary amendments to Good Practice 5 and Safeguarding training, that will help churches and individuals identify those subject to this form of abuse and how to take steps to prevent it.**

Seconded by Mr Mervyn Davies.

Assembly *agreed.*

**Safeguarding**
The Revd Adrian Bulley moved Resolution 46:

## Resolution 46

**General Assembly resolves that, effective from the close of General Assembly 2022**

**a) The Mission Council's Safeguarding Advisory Group be disbanded, with thanks for all those who have given so generously of their time and expertise over the years, and**

**b) A Safeguarding Committee be established as a standing committee of the General Assembly with the membership and terms of reference as described.**

The Revd Paul Whittle moved the addition of a representative of the National Synod of Scotland to the Committee membership, in view of that Synod's different safeguarding context. This addition was welcomed by Mr Bulley, and Assembly agreed.

Mr Bulley moved resolution 47:

## Resolution 47

**General Assembly adopts the safeguarding policy statement outlined in this report and commends it to church meetings, elders' meetings and synods for consideration and implementation.**

Assembly *agreed.*

Finance and Ministries Committees: Stipendiary Ministry Target Numbers

Mr Ian Hardie presented the report and moved Resolution 22:

## Resolution 22

**In view of both the uncertain future impact of the ongoing coronavirus restrictions on the finances of the Church and the likely impact of unprecedented additional pension contributions on the direct cost of stipendiary ministry, General Assembly directs that**

- **in preparing the 2022 and 2023 budgets for the Church the Finance Committee and the URC Trust disregard resolution 19 of the 2012 General Assembly; and**
- **the Finance and Ministries Committees bring their suggested replacement for the 2012 resolution to the 2023 General Assembly.**

Following questions and discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

Assembly adjourned.

# Session Six

Assembly resumed at 14:00. the Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

Assembly received notice of the closure of the local churches listed below:

## Synod 1 – Northern Synod

Berwick-upon-Tweed United Reformed Church, 1 December 2020
Crookham United Reformed Church, Cornhill-on-Tweed, 29 November 2020

## Synod 3 – Mersey Synod

St. Andrew's United Reformed Church, Handbridge, Chester, 31 August 2020
St. George's United Reformed Church, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, 31 August 2020
Stoneycroft United Reformed Church, Stoneycroft, Liverpool, 19 July 2020

## Synod 4 – Yorkshire Synod
East Hull United Reformed Church, Hull, 20 September 2020
Greasbrough United Church, Rotherham, 4 February 2021

## Synod 5 – East Midlands Synod
Lutterworth United Reformed Church, Lutterworth, Leics., 31 March 2021

## Synod 6 – West Midlands Synod
Church of St Nicholas, Warndon, Worcester, 30 September 2020
Dudley United Reformed Church, 31 December 2020
St. Columba's United Reformed Church, Coventry, 31 December 2020

## Synod 7 – Eastern Synod
David Livingstone United Reformed Church, Harlow, 10 May 2020
Great Baddow United Reformed Church, Chelmsford, 31 July 2020
Long Melford United Reformed Church, Suffolk, 20 March 2021
Princes Street United Reformed Church, Norwich, 25 October 2020
Wickhambrook United Reformed Church, Suffolk, 1 February 2021

## Synod 8 – South Western Synod
Christchurch, Estover, 31 March 2021
Kingskerswell United Reformed Church, Kingskerswell, 14 November 2020
Lakeway United Church, North Tawton, 31 March 2021

## Synod 9 – Wessex Synod
Worplesdon United Reformed Church, Rickford, Worplesdon, 14 November 2020

## Synod 10 – Thames North Synod
Christchurch at Whetstone United Reformed Church, Whetstone, 31 July 2020
Regent Square at Lumen United Reformed Church, London, 10 July 2020
St Anne's and St Andrew's, West Kilburn, London, 19 July 2020
Colnbrook and Poyle United Church, Colnbrook, 30 March 2021

## Synod 11 – Southern Synod
Gomshall United Reformed Church, Dorking, Surrey, 27 September 2020
St Mark's United Reformed Church, Hastings, 26 July 2020

## Synod 12 – Synod of Wales
The Church in the Park, Old Colwyn, 12 April 2020
Cefn-y-bedd United Reformed Church, Cilmery, Builth Wells, 28 July 2020

## Synod 13 – Synod of Scotland
Avonbridge United Reformed Church, Wallacestone, Falkirk, 1 October 2020

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayer.

**Equalities Committee**
The Convener of the Equalities Committee, the Revd Anne Lewitt, presented the committee's report.

**Equalities Committee: Affirmative action towards an anti-racist Church**
Ms Lewitt moved resolutions 15-18 as printed, which it was agreed would form a composite resolution.

General Assembly instructs the Equalities Committee to form a small group to:

## Resolution 15
**Explore how the URC might implement a policy of 'affirmative action' to address the persistent underrepresentation of Black and ethnic minority people in Assembly-appointed posts (see table in appendix one).**

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 16
Specifically explore the possibilities and practicalities of a recruitment policy which actively engages with, and addresses, the current racial imbalance in Assembly-appointed posts.

The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem proposed an amendment to replace 'addresses' with 'seeks to correct'.

Seconded by the Revd Andrew Mudharara.

The amendment was put, and was *carried.*

## Resolution 16 (as amended)
**Specifically explore the possibilities and practicalities of a recruitment policy which actively engages with, and seeks to correct, the current racial imbalance in Assembly-appointed posts.**

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 17
Explore the possibilities and practicalities, including any related costs, of an experience and skills development programme equipping participants for Assembly-appointed posts.

Mr Anthony Obi-Ezekpazu proposed an amendment deleting all words after 'programme'.

Seconded by Mrs Jane Bunyan-Murray.

Following discussion, the amendment *fell.*

Following further discussion, the proposers withdrew Resolution 17.

## Resolution 18
**To bring recommendations arising from the work of the small group to General Assembly 2022.**

Assembly *agreed.*

For clarity, and on the advice of the Assembly Clerk, the agreed parts of Resolutions 15-18 will be recorded as a single resolution as follows:

## Resolution 15

**General Assembly instructs the Equalities Committee to form a small group to:**

- **Explore how the URC might implement a policy of 'affirmative action' to address the persistent underrepresentation of Black and ethnic minority people in Assembly-appointed posts (see table in appendix one).**

- **Specifically explore the possibilities and practicalities of a recruitment policy which actively engages with, and seeks to correct, the current racial imbalance in Assembly-appointed posts.**

- **Bring recommendations arising from the work of the small group to General Assembly 2022.**

For the avoidance of doubt, the above composite resolution includes all the text agreed by General Assembly in resolutions 15, 16 and 18, resolution 17 having been withdrawn.

Assembly adjourned.

## Session Seven

Assembly resumed at 16:00. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

The Clerk moved adoption of the minutes of Friday's sessions.

Assembly *agreed.*

**Israel Palestine Report**
Mr Dan Morrell presented a revised Resolution 34, with the agreement of the Mission Committee.

## Resolution 34

**General Assembly requests the Mission Committee to find ways to help educate and resource Synods, local churches and members to become aware of EU guidelines on the labelling of products produced in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territories and to strongly consider not purchasing these from retailers.**

Mr Morrell then proposed the amendment:

The Mission Committee will initially report back on this to General Assembly 2022.

Seconded by Mr Brandon Stein

The amendment *fell.*

Following questions and discussion, Resolution 34 was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

The Convener of the Mission Committee, Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, moved Resolution 35:

## Resolution 35

General Assembly encourages local churches and members to actively play a part in supporting the Palestinian economy through the purchasing of Palestinian products available in the UK. These include but are not restricted to: Palestinian olive oil and food products, embroidery and olive wood carvings, cards, books, clothes and health / beauty products.

The Revd Steve Faber proposed an amendment to remove 'actively play' and replace with 'actively to consider playing'.

Seconded by the Revd Josh Thomas.

The amendment was *carried* and the amended resolution was put:

## Resolution 35

**General Assembly encourages local churches and members actively to consider playing a part in supporting the Palestinian economy through the purchasing of Palestinian products available in the UK. These include but are not restricted to: Palestinian olive oil and food products, embroidery and olive wood carvings, cards, books, clothes and health / beauty products.**

Assembly *agreed.*

**Parallel Sessions**
Assembly divided into groups as follows:

A: Mission Committee and Nominations Committee

B: Ministries Committee and Faith and Order Committee

C: Equalities Committee and Communications Committee

D: Children's and Youth Work Committee and Finance Committee

E: Education and Learning and Business Committee

Assembly adjourned.

# Session Eight

Assembly resumed at 18.30. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

**Stepwise**
Assembly viewed a video update on the progress of the Stepwise programme.

**Communications Committee**
The Convener of the Communications Committee, the Revd Dr Peter Stevenson, was on sabbatical and unable to be present. In his absence, the Secretary, Mr Andy Jackson, presented the report of the Communications Committee, along with a video presentation of the Committee's work.

Mr Jackson responded to a number of questions and comments.

**Communications Committee: Digital Charter and Social Media Guidelines**
Mr Jackson moved Resolution 14:

## Resolution 14

**General Assembly commends the new Digital Charter and updated Social Media Guidelines to all who engage with the Church digitally.**

Following questions and discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

**URC 50th Jubilee**
Assembly viewed a video outlining plans for celebrating the 50th anniversary of the formation of the United Reformed Church.

Three initiatives were particularly highlighted:
- resource pack for local churches
- service of thanksgiving at Methodist Central Hall on Saturday 1st October 2022
- worship resources competition.

**Worship**
The Chaplain led Assembly in worship.

Assembly adjourned.

# Sunday 11 July 2021

# Session Nine

Assembly resumed at 09:30. The Moderator, Mr Peter Pay, was in the Chair.

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayer.

Following announcements, the Convener of the Business Committee, the Revd Adrian Bulley, announced that the Revd Fiona Bennett has been duly elected as Moderator of General Assembly 2022-2023.

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayer.

**Mission Council**
The General Secretary presented the report of Mission Council, and moved Resolutions 03 and 04:

## Resolution 03

**General Assembly resolves to create a General Assembly 'Minister for Digital Worship' post, full-time, for an ordained minister of Word and Sacraments under the terms of the Plan for Partnership and to fund appropriate administrative and digital editing support. As a General Assembly post it will be for an initial term of seven years, with the possibility of renewal.**

In discussion, the Revd Alex Clare-Young raised a concern about the ongoing funding and ministry provision for Churspacious, which is a digital expression of church. The General Secretary undertook to consult widely, including with the Revd Alex Clare-Young the General Secretariat, the Secretary for Ministries, and the Yorkshire Synod as a matter of urgency, to seek ways to secure the future of the Churspacious before the current funding ends.

Mr Lawrence Moore proposed the amendment:

General Assembly also directs the General Secretariat to explore the creation of a role within the United Reformed Church that most effectively embraces: the development of hybrid church;

the incorporation of online congregations into our church structure; and maximising the opportunities afforded by virtual forms of church for mission, outreach, evangelism, and the development of discipleship.

This was seconded by the Revd Fran Kissack.

The amendment was *carried.*

Assembly adjourned.

## Session Ten

Assembly resumed at 11:00.

Sunday Morning Worship was led by the Chaplain. The preacher was the Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing.

Assembly adjourned.

## Session Eleven

Assembly resumed at 13:30. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

The Assembly Clerk moved adoption of the minutes of Saturday's sessions.

Assembly *agreed.*

**MIND**
Because of the cancellation of the 2020 General Assembly, and MIND's existing relationship as a creature of Mission Council, the resolutions were all formally proposed and seconded by the Clerk and the General Secretary, who invited the Revd Dr Janet Tollington and Dr Augur Pearce, on behalf of the Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Group, to present the group's Report, responded to a number of questions and comments, and moved Resolutions 39-43:

## Resolution 39

**1. General Assembly adopts the following amendments to the Basis of Union and Structure of the URC:**

**Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church**
**Schedule E, Paragraph 4 – delete the word 'ministerial' before 'rights of membership'.**

**The Structure of the United Reformed Church**
**Paragraph 1(4) – Add heading 'Definitions' and reword:**

**1.(4) Unless otherwise expressly stated or clearly excluded by the context, a) the expressions 'minister', 'ministers', 'ministry' and 'ministerial' when used in the Structure shall refer to the ministry of Word and Sacrament;**

**b) the expression 'the Disciplinary Process' shall refer to the Process established by the General Assembly under paragraph 2(6)(xxi), but includes any process so established for similar purposes before the adoption of that provision;**

**c) the expression 'the Incapacity Procedure' shall refer to the Procedure established by the General Assembly under paragraph 2(6)(xxiii), but includes any process so established for similar purposes before the adoption of that provision.**

**Paragraph 2(1) – in function (ix), insert '(subject to paragraph 2(7)(ii))' before 'to suspend or remove names'.**

**In the Functions of Synods, delete the initial 'A' and the words in brackets.**

**Function (xvii) – delete existing text and replace with the following:**

**'To discharge the functions required under the Disciplinary Process to be exercised by the synod, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Process may provide'.**

**Function (xviii) – delete existing text and replace with the following:**

**'To discharge the functions required under the Incapacity Procedure to be exercised by the synod, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Procedure may provide'.**

**Function (xxi) after 'Disciplinary Process' delete 'contained in Section O'.**

**Delete section (B) of the Functions of Synods.**

**Paragraph 2.(5) – In sub-paragraph (A), after 'the following functions', delete the words in brackets.**

**In the Functions of Ecumenical Area Meetings, Function (viii), delete 'contained**

**In 'Section O' and the cross-reference in brackets.**

**Function (xviii) - delete existing text and replace with the following:**

**'To discharge, concurrently with the synod, such of the functions and duties conferred or imposed by the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure upon the synod in respect of a minister or Church Related Community Worker (or former holder of either office) serving or resident within the Ecumenical Area, after proceedings involving that person are concluded, as the synod may from time to time request'. Paragraph 2.(6) –**

**After 'General Assembly is responsible for exercising the following Functions' delete the words in brackets.**
**In the Functions of the General Assembly, Function (xviii), delete the words in brackets.**

**Functions (xxi) to (xxvii) – delete existing text and replace with the following:**

**(xxi) to establish, and from time to time to review, amend or replace a Process for dealing with cases of Discipline involving ministers or Church Related Community Workers;.**

**(xxii) to discharge the functions required under the Disciplinary Process to be exercised by the Assembly, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Process may provide;**

**(xxiii) to establish, and from time to time to review, amend or replace a Procedure for dealing with cases of Incapacity involving ministers or Church Related Community Workers;**

**(xxiv) to discharge the functions required under the Incapacity Procedure to be exercised by the Assembly, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Procedure may provide.**

**Renumber the last two functions (xxv) and (xxvi).**

**Insert new paragraph 2(7) as follows:**

**'Restriction on exercise of conciliar functions**

**2(7)(i) As soon as any minister or Church Related Community Worker becomes the subject of a case under the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure, no council of the Church shall exercise any of its functions in respect of that person in such a manner as to affect, compromise or interfere with the conduct of that case, save as provided for by the Process or Procedure itself.**

**(ii) The function of the Church Meeting to maintain standards of membership shall not be exercised in a disciplinary context in respect of any member of the local church who is at that time a minister or Church Related Community Worker; nor shall any such member be removed from the Roll of Members or the membership of that person be suspended by the Church Meeting for disciplinary reasons.**

**(iii) The decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) under the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding, and once so initiated that case shall be resolved only by the steps for which that Process or Procedure provides.'**

**Paragraph 5 - delete existing opening text and replace with the following:**

**5. The procedure for dealing with references and appeals not concerned with the Incapacity Procedure or the Disciplinary Process is as follows:**

**Paragraph 5.4 – delete final sentence and replace with the following:**

**No procedure governed by this paragraph shall be used to review or appeal against decisions reached under the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure. Delete paragraphs 6 and 7 in their entirety.**

Following questions, Resolution 39 was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 40

**General Assembly adopts the 'Process for dealing with cases of discipline involving ministers and church related community workers' ('Disciplinary Process') accompanying this Resolution in place of the existing Process.**

Following questions and discussion, Resolution 40 was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 41

General Assembly makes the amendments accompanying this Resolution to the 'Procedure for dealing with cases of incapacity involving ministers and Church Related Community Workers' ('Incapacity Procedure').

Assembly agreed.

**Revision of Resolution 42 (b)**

The proposers offered a slightly revised version of resolution 42 (b). This requests Synods to make their appointments to the new standing panels by 31st March 2022, rather than at the rather vague 'at the earliest opportunity', recognising that until the Nominations Committee has completed its work by November 2021, it may not be fully clear who is in a General Assembly role within the process, for Synods to be able to make appropriate appointments for standing panels. These can then be made at Spring Synods.

Assembly accepted this revision.

## Resolution 42

**a) The provisions of the new Disciplinary Process concerning appointments to The Assembly and Synod Standing Panels for Discipline, the Disciplinary Investigation and Commission Panels, the Appeal Commissions List and the posts of Assembly Representative for Discipline, Secretary to Assembly Commissions for Discipline and to Disciplinary Appeal Commissions are to come into force at the close of this session of the General Assembly.**

**b) Assembly instructs Nominations Committee to bring nominations for Assembly appointees under the new Process to the Assembly Executive in November 2021, and synods to make their appointments to Standing Panels by March 31st 2022, so that all those appointed can receive initial training in the new procedures before the remainder of the Process comes into force.**

**c) The new Process is to come fully into force at the close of the meeting of Assembly in 2022 and govern cases coming to the notice of Moderators of synods or the Assembly Representative for Discipline on or after that date, provided that the amendments to the Basis and Structure mentioned in Resolution 1 have by hen been ratified. Cases pending under the current Process at that date are to be dealt with as the transitional provisions of the new Process provide.**

**d) The amendments to the Incapacity Procedure are to take effect at the close of the meeting of Assembly in 2022, provided that the amendments to the Basis and Structure mentioned in Resolution 39 have by then been ratified.**

Following questions, Resolution 42 was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 43

**The Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group to the Assembly Executive (MIND) is instructed to make arrangements to offer the training mentioned in Resolution 42.**

Assembly *agreed.*

The General Secretary moved that 'General Assembly refers this constitutional change to synods and asks for response by 31st March 2022'.

Assembly *agreed.*

**Mission Council**
The General Secretary, on behalf of Mission Council, moved Resolution 05:

## Resolution 05

**General Assembly gives final approval to its resolution to add a further question to Schedule B [of the Basis of Union] for elders as follows:**

**Q: Do you promise as an elder of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, unity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always so far as you are able to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?**

**A: By the grace of God I do, and all these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Assembly *agreed.* Resolution 5 comes into effect immediately.

Assembly adjourned.

# Session Twelve

Assembly resumed at 15:30. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

**Listening for the Voices of Children**
Dr Sam Richards introduced a video highlighting children's experiences of church during lockdown.

Assembly met in groups to reflect on the content of the video and address the following:
- what most struck you from the video?
- how are children connecting to church and how might we support this going forwards?

Members were invited to send their responses directly to Dr Richards.

Assembly viewed a video: Hearing from Children and Pilots.

**Children's and Youth Work Committee: URC Children and the future of Pilots**
The Revd Paul Robinson presented the Report of the Children's and Youth Work Committee, and moved Resolutions 7-9:

## Resolution 07
**General Assembly celebrates the work of Pilots over the past 85 years, its association with URC, and affirms our current local Pilots Companies.**

Following discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 08
**General Assembly approves and encourages Children's and Youth Work Committee in the creation of 'URC Children' as an umbrella to support the rich diversity of Pilots and all other expressions of children's work in local churches.**

Following discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 09
**General Assembly instructs Children's and Youth Work Committee to cease using staff time and funding on work exclusively for Pilots, and instructs the committee to support Pilots sub-committee to explore options for the future, including the care of local Companies and Friends On Faith Adventures Groups, in the light of this.**

Following questions the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayer.

**Children's and Youth Work Committee: URC Committees and Online Meetings**
Mr Reuben Watt presented the report and moved Resolutions 10-12:

## Resolution 10
**General Assembly requests all General Assembly committees and task groups to have**

**at least one meeting each year entirely online and not during normal working hours (9-5 Monday to Friday).**

Following questions, the Revd Michael Hopkins proposed that the Resolution be now put, which was seconded by the Revd Adrian Bulley.

Assembly agreed and the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 11

General Assembly also encourages all General Assembly committees and task groups to have the ability for people to join online for all meetings, with 50% of meetings each year to be held outside of normal working hours (9-5 Monday to Friday).

Mr Dan Morrell proposed an amendment, to substitute 'encourages' with 'requests' Seconded by Miss Victoria Turner.

The amendment was carried.

## Resolution 11

**General Assembly also requests all General Assembly committees and task groups to have the ability for people to join online for all meetings, with 50% of meetings each year to be held outside of normal working hours (9-5 Monday to Friday).**

Following discussion, the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

**Finance Committee (from Session Two)**

Assembly returned to discussion of Resolutions 20 and 21:

## Resolution 20

**General Assembly, recognising that the significant changes to the legal and regulatory framework for defined benefit pension schemes are making the two current URC pension schemes disproportionately expensive for the benefits they deliver, agrees in principle to the closure to future accruals of both the Ministers' Pension Fund and the Final Salary Pension Scheme.**

Following brief discussion, the Revd Ruth Whitehead proposed that the Resolution be now put, and this was seconded by the Revd Dr Romilly Micklem.

Assembly *agreed,* and the Resolution was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

## Resolution 21

**General Assembly acknowledges the careful work that has already been done on these complex and sensitive matters, authorises further work to be done on developing new pensions arrangements for office holders and staff, and requests that, as a part of this**

[1] It was understood by all parties that in this resolution equity means fair and just treatment of people, but does not relate to stocks and shares or to mortgages.

**work, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) specialists are consulted[1], with the aim of presenting detailed options to Assembly Executive in November 2021, and then final proposals to General Assembly 2022, for implementation no sooner than January 2023. Following questions and discussion, the resolution was put.**

Assembly *agreed.*

The Chaplain led assembly in worship.

Assembly adjourned.

## Monday 12th July 2021

## Session Thirteen

Assembly resumed at 09:30. The Moderator, Mr Peter Pay, was in the Chair.

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayer.

The Clerk moved the Resolution, formally seconded by the General Secretary:

As the new disciplinary process will not be ready until at least this time next year, General Assembly re-appoints Morag McLintock as General Assembly Representative in the Ministerial Disciplinary Process for a further year until the end of General Assembly 2022.

Assembly agreed.

**Synod Moderators' Report**
The Revd Ruth Whitehead presented the report of the Synod Moderators.

A number of members responded to the report, and the Moderator thanked the Synod Moderators for their insight and wisdom, and for their continuing leadership and pastoral care.

**Walking the Way**
Ms Francis Brienen presented the report of the Walking the Way Steering Group, and moved Resolution 36:

## Resolution 36

In affirming that whole-of-life discipleship is the primary long-term focus of the United Reformed Church, General Assembly:

a) requests that those reviewing the future of the URC, as agreed by Mission Council in March 2021, take full account of the importance of whole-of-life discipleship.

b) instructs the Walking the Way Steering Group to continue its work until the end of the calendar year 2022, whereupon the work of the group in supporting the embedding of whole-of-life discipleship across the denomination will be continued by the Deputy General Secretaries for Discipleship and Mission.

c) asks those responsible for the finances of the Church to find ways to continue the role of Walking the Way Project Manager until the end of the calendar year 2022. The Project

Manager should focus firmly on embedding the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the denomination, working closely with the Deputy General Secretaries for Discipleship and Mission in collaboration with the Walking the Way Steering Group, whilst it is in place.

d) invites all committees and groups connected with the life of the United Reformed Church to hold the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way at the heart of their work.

e) instructs the Walking the Way Steering Group, through the Project Manager, and in collaboration with other Church House staff, to develop a range of resources to better embed the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the Church.

f) welcomes collaborative work across the Church to facilitate and resource the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the Church's life, work and witness.

The Revd Simon Walkling proposed an amendment, seconded by the Revd Paul Robinson:

Line 36 e) after 'range of resources' add ', 'and relationships'.

The amendment was carried.

The amended resolution reads:

## Resolution 36

**In affirming that whole-of-life discipleship is the primary long-term focus of the United Reformed Church, General Assembly:**

**a) requests that those reviewing the future of the URC, as agreed by Mission Council in March 2021, take full account of the importance of whole-of-life discipleship.**

**b) instructs the Walking the Way Steering Group to continue its work until the end of the calendar year 2022, whereupon the work of the group in supporting the embedding of whole-of-life discipleship across the denomination will be continued by the Deputy General Secretaries for Discipleship and Mission.**

**c) asks those responsible for the finances of the Church to find ways to continue the role of Walking the Way Project Manager until the end of the calendar year 2022. The Project Manager should focus firmly on embedding the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the denomination, working closely with the Deputy General Secretaries for Discipleship and Mission in collaboration with the Walking the Way Steering Group, whilst it is in place.**

**d) invites all committees and groups connected with the life of the United Reformed Church to hold the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way at the heart of their work.**

**e) instructs the Walking the Way Steering Group, through the Project Manager, and in collaboration with other Church House staff, to develop a range of resources and relationships to better embed the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the Church.**

**f) welcomes collaborative work across the Church to facilitate and resource the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the Church's life, work and witness.**

Following questions and discussion, and on the advice of the Assembly Clerk, each clause of the Resolution was put separately:

Clause a) including the preamble was put: Assembly *agreed.*
Clause b) was put: Assembly *agreed.*
Clause c) was put: Assembly *agreed.*
Clause d) was put: Assembly *agreed.*
Clause e) as amended was put: Assembly *agreed.*
Clause f) was put: Assembly *agreed.*

**Ministries Committee**
The Convener of the Ministries Committee, the Revd Paul Whittle, sought the permission of Assembly to withdraw paper H3.

Assembly *agreed.*

Mr Whittle moved the Resolution:

**General Assembly requests the Ministries Committee, in consultation with the Clerk, to consider whether the policy for the discipline of office-holders as adopted requires any updating to section 4 of the Rules of Procedure "Suspension and removal of volunteers serving at denominational level", and, if so, bring a relevant proposal to the November 2021 meeting of Assembly Executive.**

Assembly *agreed.*

Assembly adjourned.

## Session Fourteen

Assembly resumed at 11:30. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

**Nominations Committee**
The Convener of the Nominations Committee, the Revd Ray Adams, moved Resolutions 38 and 52:

### Resolution 38
**General Assembly appoints the Revd Lythan Nevard to be Moderator of Eastern Synod from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2028.**

Assembly *agreed.*

### Resolution 52
**General Assembly extends the appointment of the Revd Steven Mark Faber as Moderator of West Midlands Synod from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2027.**

Assembly *agreed.*

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayer.

**Finance**
The Treasurer, Mr Ian Hardie, moved the Resolution:

**General Assembly notes the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020.**

Assembly *agreed.*

**Digital Ministry (from session Nine)**
Resolution 3, having been divided into two Resolutions 3a and 3b following its amendment in session Nine, was before Assembly.

## Resolution 03a

a) **General Assembly resolves to create a General Assembly 'Minister for Digital Worship' post, full-time, for an ordained minister of Word and Sacraments under the terms of the Plan for Partnership and to fund appropriate administrative and digital editing support. As General Assembly post it will be for an initial term of seven years, with the possibility of renewal.**

## Resolution 03b

**b) General Assembly also directs the General Secretariat to explore the creation of a role within the United Reformed Church that most effectively embraces:**
**The development of hybrid church**
**The incorporation of online congregations into our church structure**
**Maximising the opportunities afforded by virtual forms of church for mission, outreach, evangelism and the development of discipleship.**

Mr Mordecai Weynberg moved an amendment, to substitute three for seven years in clause a), and several members of Assembly indicated their willingness to second.

Following discussion, the Revd Martyn Coe proposed that the amendment be now put, and Assembly agreed.

The amendment *fell.*

The Revd Jackie Embrey proposed that the resolution be not put, seconded by the Revd Paul Robinson.

The proposal *fell.*

Following much discussion, to which the General Secretary responded, Resolution 3a was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

Resolution 3b was put:

Assembly *agreed.*

**Digital Ministry**
The General Secretary moved Resolution 4:

## Resolution 04

**General Assembly instructs the General Secretariat, through consultation with the Human Resource Advisory Group, to finalise a Job Description and Person Specification for the Minister for Digital Worship.**

Assembly *agreed.*

Assembly adjourned.

## Session Fifteen

Assembly resumed at 14:00. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, was in the Chair.

The Clerk moved adoption of the minutes of Sunday's sessions.

Assembly agreed.

The Clerk asked that the remaining business be inserted into the full minutes of the Assembly after review and any necessary correction by the Officers of the Assembly.

Assembly agreed.

**Children's and Youth Work Committee: URC Committees and Online Meetings**
(continued from session Twelve, when Mr Rueben Watt had moved Resolution 12)

## Resolution 12

**General Assembly also invites all councils of the Church at a Synod and local church level to consider Resolutions 10 and 11 to see where they can implement them into their structures.**

Assembly *agreed.*

**Disciplinary Cases**
The General Secretary reported that two disciplinary cases had concluded since Assembly last met, costing a total of £XX, and the name of Hugh Fraser Graham had been deleted from the Roll of Ministers.

**Moderator-Elect**
The Moderator-elect for 2022-23, the Revd Fiona Bennett, addressed Assembly.

**Address to the Throne**
The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, presented the Address to the Throne.

The Assembly approved the Address.

**Vote of Thanks**
The Moderator, Mr Peter Pay, thanked the Convener of the Business Committee, the Assembly Clerk and Assistant Clerk, the General Secretary, the Chaplain and Bible Study leaders, the Minute Secretary, Samantha Bircham, Westminster College staff, the Technical Support team, the reporting team, the Zoom co-hosts, and all those who had contributed to the smooth running of Assembly.

The General Secretary thanked the Moderators for their leadership of Assembly and for their work throughout the year.

**Worship**
The Chaplain led the Assembly in closing worship, which included Bible study led by the Revd Paul Holmes and the induction of the Revd Adrian Bulley as Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship).

**Close**
The General Secretary formally announced that the Assembly had completed its business and would adjourn to meet as agreed at The Hayes conference centre, Swanwick, on 8th – 11th July 2022, or at such other place or on such other date as shall be determined.

The Moderator, Mr Peter Pay, pronounced the Benediction.

Assembly adjourned.

# Church closures

## Northern Synod

### Berwick United Reformed Church
No report received

### Crookham United Reformed Church
“For the fire of the Reformers whose love of God and God’s world gave birth to our tradition
For the vision of a few and the resources of many that built this place to God’s glory”. These quotes are from the inspiring psalm of thanksgiving and praise written by Carla A Grosch -Miller, for the closing service of Crookham United Reformed Church.

In 1732, the original Presbyterian congregation of Crookham – a beautiful village in Northumberland – worshipped in a simple building beside the River Till. In 1745, a church was built on the site of the current one and served until 1932, when the ‘new church’ was built. “For the vision that was born here, of costly peace and a reconciling hand outstretched – a garden to tell the story and make a place for children’s laughter and learning”. In May 2013, to mark the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Flodden, a peace and reconciliation garden was constructed beside the church. Flodden Peace Centre at Crookham United Reformed Church became an international partner of the Community of the Cross of Nails, linked to Coventry Cathedral in 2018.

The church was closed due to lack of capacity in 2020. The closing service is available at the Wooler United Reformed Church’s website.
“For the courage to recognise when a job is done, a mission completed
For the wisdom to celebrate and cherish the accomplishments of the past
For the kindness to lay down the mantle, not knowing what may grow from seeds planted
For the faith that nothing is lost and everything is held in the heart of God”.

## Mersey Synod

### St Andrew’s United Reformed Church, Handbridge
Handbridge Congregational Church was founded in 1876, with a membership of 30 people meeting in premises on Greenway Street. When they became too small, the present building was erected in 1881, on a site donated by the Duke of Westminster, who in 1892 also donated land behind the church for the building of a Sunday School. The church became part of the URC in 1972, and was established as a joint pastorate with St Andrew’s Newgate Street in 1985, under the ministry of the Revd Geoffrey Farrand. It held weekly coffee mornings, had a Womens Fellowship group and ran a mother and toddler group.

St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church was founded in 1845, meeting in a disused Baptist chapel on Volunteer Street. The congregation grew steadily, partly due to the number of Scottish people employed on the railways, which came to Chester in the 1840’s. As the congregation grew, a site was bought on Newgate Street, and a church was built and opened for worship in March 1860. Following the Union of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in 1972, the church was renamed St Andrew’s URC. It had a Young Wives group and a Women’s Guild. They also ran a weekly luncheon club for the elderly.

With falling numbers, the church closed in May 2005, and it joined with the congregational church in Handbridge, with whom it was in a joint pastorate. That church was renamed St Andrew’s Handbridge URC, with a membership of some 50 adults and about 15 children. The church

enjoyed a positive relationship with the neighbouring St Mary's Church of England, being the venue for the annual summer fair and sharing Good Friday services. On St Andrew's Day, the congregation was joined for worship by members of the St Andrew Society and the Caledonian Association.

Numbers have fallen steadily over the last few years, and it was with some sadness that the decision was taken by a church meeting on 19 July, 2020 that the church would close for worship on the 31 August, 2020.

### St George's United Reformed Church, Little Sutton

St George's URC in Little Sutton started as a village day and Sunday school around 1836; the present building opened as a Congregational Church in 1840, then Presbyterian in 1851, and became URC in 1972. The original hall (used as a 'British Restaurant' during the second world war) was demolished in the 1970's to make way for shops; the church was altered to include meeting rooms, toilets and kitchens. Attempts to relocate to a new site were frustrated by planning objections.

The congregation was never very large, but for many years it ran an annual flower festival, a weekly coffee-and-chat, and a monthly charity coffee morning. St George's started the local Lent charity lunches. Women's and toddler groups, Girl Guides, Boys' Brigade, Pilots, and Badminton Club all made a contribution to village life. We shared with other URCs and local churches in prayer and learning, together within an ecumenical covenant.

Recent problems with the building, poor accessibility and parking made it too difficult for the older congregation to make good use of the premises. At our AGM in February, we decided that it was time to close, and for our congregation to move elsewhere. Our last service was on 15 March, then the lockdown prevented us from continuing or holding a planned closing service; we 'dissolved' with effect from 31 August, 2020.

We hope that we have been able to share something of the love of Jesus over the last 174 years. Thanks to everyone who has supported us.

### Stoneycroft United Reformed Church, Liverpool

Stoneycroft United Reformed Church was inaugurated and named on 8 October, 1989. Situated at Lister Drive and Green Lane in Liverpool's Stoneycroft borough, this congregation has evolved over 123 years. The congregation began as a church plant by the Liverpool Presbytery in West Derby District, with eleven members in 1897.

The building opened in 1900, being born out of the support of the Church Extension Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England. Renamed in 1909, Green Lane Presbyterian Church later peaked in 1933 at 172 members. The longest serving minister was the Revd TC Chestnutt (1949-1971). Members from Stanley Congregational Church merged with Green Lane in 1965.

Remaining members from Knotty Ash Congregational Church on Thomas Road joined in 1989, inaugurating a new identity. Stoneycroft United Reformed Church celebrated and gave thanks for a strong community based ministry over the years. Closing in the time of Covid-19, the remaining six members concluded with a service of prayer.

## Yorkshire Synod

### East Hull United Reformed Church, Hull

East Hull United Reformed Church sat at the North-West corner of James Reckitt Avenue and Clifford Avenue junction in Sutton Ings, near to East Park, Hull.

In the 1930's, Congregationalists from central Hull canvassed 1,000 houses in and around the newly built Reckitt estate in East Hull, and found sufficient interest to open a church on Summergangs Road in 1937. After this, the nearby Wescott Street Chapel was damaged by bombing in 1944, so the congregations met in the Reckitt Garden Village Hall. After the second world war, moves were made to acquire a new site, and in 1953, the Clifford Avenue building was completed to a design by AP Taylor.

The church then began to successfully serve a large residential area to the east of Hull, from the 1950's through to the beginning of the current century. Amongst many other activities this involved hosting the 11th Hull Company of the Boys Brigade to latterly being the centre of an active knit and natter group.

Sadly, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the changes in the local demographic has brought the witness of this church to an end, but their mission and legacy will be passed onto the other churches in the Hull and Holderness areas.

### Greasbrough United Reformed Church, Rotherham

No report received.

## East Midlands Synod

### Lutterworth United Reformed Church

In 1689, some known dissenters (including William Frome, John Foxton and Thomas Gilbert) decided 'to become Congregated', and became the first Trustees of the newly acquired former farmyard land, in what is now George Street, on which the first church building was erected. It was known as 'The Church of Christ in Lutterworth'.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the congregation had split, and the breakaway group were worshipping in Ely Lane. Under the ministry of the Revd Thomas Grundy, the George Street premises were rebuilt with the building that still exists today, and the two congregations soon came back together.

In 1819, the Schoolroom was built, and Sunday School flourished throughout the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. The Manse was completed in 1850, and gaslighting was installed in 1851.

New 'comfortable' open deal pews were purchased in 1877, and a locally built Alexander pipe organ in 1909. Roof repairs and re-ordering carried on until the present day.

Records show that the congregation which became Lutterworth URC was never a large one, and that financial and fabric concerns were ever present throughout its long history. Eventually, low numbers began to impact the ability to call ordained leadership, despite various solutions being tried. The congregation and its local leadership continued to get older and frailer, and outreach became ever more difficult.

A quinquennial Buildings Survey completed in July 2020 pointed to the need for considerable future work and expenditure, both of which seemed hard to justify. In February 2021, the Membership voted by post to close, and that closure formally took place on 31 March.

# West Midlands Synod

## Church of St Nicholas, Warnden, Worcester

No report received.

## Dudley United Reformed Church

From 1849, the Presbyterian fellowship worshipped in Trinity Road, Dudley. Sadly, the building was destroyed by fire in 1945. In 1949, a new building was erected on the site, leaving a car park on either side. From 1840, the Congregational fellowship (which derived from the Countess of Huntingdon connection) worshipped in King Street, Dudley. This was a large building, which over time became a liability, in terms of repair and maintenance. So, in the late 1960s, the two congregations came together for a time of worshipping in King Street, and holding social events in Trinity Road.

During this time, the two churches agreed to join, and because of a more modern building and less of a financial burden, Trinity was chosen as the most suitable church. Funds from the sale of Christ Church were used to renovate Trinity, which included new furnishings and a sanctuary. Therefore, in 1972, Dudley URC was born, bringing together the two denominations. Later, funds from King Street building enabled a new hall to be built. The church and hall continued to be a faithful witness in Dudley until the present day.

Over the years, we were blessed by a number of ministers. We give thanks for their faith and vision. We recall the Revd GH Morgan, the Revd I Howells, the Revd S Sawyer, the Revd R Landon, the Revd C Morrison, and the Revd P Christie, who served part time, was our last minister. The Revd B Welch, the Area Minister supported us during the vacancy. During I Howells' ministry, we formed a union with Langley Green church, sharing the minister. A shared manse was purchased in Dudley, having sold the two former manses. We shared many ecumenical and social events together. Our church hall has been used by different organisations; Guides, Brownies, Dance Academy etc, which provided much needed funding during last few years. During interregnums, we were deeply grateful for lay speakers – people of faith, integrity and love from both inside and outside of our church, who kept the Christian message alive. Sadly, our numbers declined seriously over the last five years. Age, infirmity, deaths and a lack of youth took its toll. The Covid-19 pandemic made things difficult for us in 2020.

It was with great sadness that the decision was made to close our church. The Revd P Christie conducted our final service in the car park (guidelines observed) on Sunday 27 December, 2020.

## St Columba's United Reformed Church, Coventry

In 1926, a group of Scots discussed forming a Presbyterian church in Coventry. With help from Birmingham Presbytery, a service was held in St. Mary's Mediaeval Guild Hall in March, attended by 80 people.

By January 1927, a Preaching Station was established, to be known as St Columba's, Coventry. Monthly services were held until November, when the Revd Norman Robinson MA was inducted as the first Minister, then weekly services were held in the Liberal Assembly rooms. Thornbank, the grounds and house on Radford Road, were bought as the site for St. Columba's.

On 2 May, 1931, The Foundation stone was laid by the Moderator, the Revd Lewis Robertson MA DD. The faith, prayers and courage of nearly 100 people enabled this to happen. On 10 October, 1931. St Columba's Prebyterian Church was dedicated to the Glory of God by the Revd Principal John Oman DD.

During the second world war, the Sunday after Coventry was bombed in November 1940, only seven members attended church. Premises were undamaged. A harmonium provided the music

until an Aeolian pipe organ was bought, third hand, around 1950. Sunday school children saved halfpennies towards the fund.

By the early 1960's, church groups included Drama, Choir, Scouts, Cubs, Guides, Brownies, Bible class, youth club, Mum/children, Women's Fellowship, Men's Guild and Work-party. Members were from different nationalities. An upstairs extension was built in 1961. Membership was at 400 people. Talks between the Congregational and Presbyterian churches about merging began, and by the early 1970's, the motion was passed.

From 1927-1972, there were six Presbyterian ministers, the Revd's Robinson, Frazer, Martin, Balsilli, Cressey and Hughes-Edwards, who oversaw the transition to the United Reformed Church.

The Revd Brian Nuttall became the first United Reformed Church minister. Later, his wife Susan trained for the Ministry and was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister in 1981, which was also our golden anniversary year. Celebrations included a garden party, thanksgiving service and dedicating a bench-seat, for public use, at the rear of the Church premises (still in use). Monthly Healing Prayer services were started.

1991 was a diamond jubilee year. Commemorative events included a Thanksgiving service for 60 years of worship and witness, communal renewal of wedding vows, social events, and a dinner at St. Mary's Hall, where the first Presbyterian Service in Coventry was held.
St Columba's day nursery was opened.

1994-1995, we went on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and a went on a shared weekend at Swanage, with friends from our Sister Church, at Keresley.

During the new millennium, many events were held, including Easter day breakfast and service of witness and thanksgiving, Songs of Praise, Commitment for Life, mission services and meals, and a Queen's Jubilee tea in 2012.

A new Viscount electronic organ was donated; Friends from Coventry Homes, caring for adults with learning difficulties, (now LifePath Trust), joined weekly worship, and enjoyed social functions. On the first Thursday of December, each year their families joined us for their annual carol service.

In recent years, St Columba's has hosted a Community Nursery, LifePath's Day Centre, Coventry Winter Night Shelter, Wednesday Welcome Kitchen, Refugee Centre's Men's Group, AA and Coventry Comfort Carers.

Since the Presbyterian days, World Mission was supported, and later Leprosy, Deep Sea Fishermen, Christian Aid, and local charities.

New ventures were investigated to enable viability, including an extension to include social housing. Decreasing finances, declining active membership and Covid-19 restrictions caused the reluctant decision to close on 31 December 2020.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, a final Thanksgiving service to the Glory of God couldn't be held within St. Columba's. It is planned to hold a service, at our sister church, Ansty Road URC, for St Columba's Day celebrations in June, giving thanks for our predecessors and ministers over the years, who in faith, worked ceaselessly to spread the Good News of Our Lord. There were seven URC Ministers: the Revd's B Nuttall, S Nuttall, Stops, Newborough, Beglin, Muir and Mabbott (CRCWM).

# Eastern Synod

## David Livingstone United Reformed Church, Harlow

In December 1954, Mr ED Miller wrote to the local press about his interest in starting a Congregational Church in this part of the new town. As a result of this letter, five founder members got together and the first service was held in the Dashes Common Room in March 1955. In October 1955, the first covenant service and the induction of the First Minister – the Revd GW Satchell took place.

The five founder members were: Mr and Mrs Miller, Mr and Mrs Quinn and Mr H Dunn. By 1958 the Church had grown, and had a congregational family of 50 members and up to 100 children. Harlow at that time had a reputation as a Pram Town, due to the number of young families moving into the area.

In the original plans for the church, there was a hope to have a manse on the same site, and the original estimate for the planned building was £30,000. The manse was not built. Instead, the minister was housed in a house provided by the Harlow Development Agency. The actual cost of the church building was £11,500, and was raised by the members with valuable help from the Essex Congregational Union, David Livingstone Stanford Rivers Church, (where David Livingstone started his ministry), the Raynor Bequest and the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Over the years, the Church had a turbulent history, with suggestions of closure, fluctuating numbers of worshippers, leaking roofs, break-ins and vandalism etc. Many attempts were made to obtain groups to share the building, which had become costly to maintain, to help with finances. By the late 1990's, the vandals appeared to be winning the fight, and the building took on an appearance of a second world war bombsite. The minister, John Wheaton, and the Elders entered into negotiations with the Methodist Housing Association (Springboard) to take over the land, build flats to let and provide a new smaller church on the site. After extremely long and complex negotiations with the English Partnership, Harlow Council, the trustees and the local MP, the scheme got the go ahead. Whilst the building work was being carried out, the members spent a very happy time sharing worship with Trinity United Reformed Church.

The patient, faithful congregation eventually moved into the present building in 2002. We have had many lettings over the years including the Inner Wheel and a group from Grays periodically. The Aspire Support Learning group have hired our building for five days each week. This has been a good outreach to the community, as they provided lunches on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Sadly, numbers have fluctuated, and we elected to having services only every other week. This has continued over the last 18 months with much discussion at each church meeting, but with the remaining members unable to attend regularly, the decision to close was finally taken. Our final (socially distanced) service was held on 13 September, 2020.

## Great Baddow United Reformed Church, Chelmsford

A Congregational Church had been in existence for about a century on Baddow Road, Chelmsford, and later the London Road Congregational Church was built.

A group of non-conformists began meeting in Great Baddow in 1814. A small building was erected in the village in 1848, to seat about 60, under a trust deed with the London Road Church. In the main, they provided the preachers for the chapel at Great Baddow, but otherwise the local deacons managed the chapel's affairs.

Later, a small lean-to extension to form a vestry / kitchen, was added to the back, together with a small separate WC and a store shed. Many years later, additional land was purchased for a 'new'

church. Just after the second world war, the chapel became a church (Congregational, and with a diaconate serving in its own right), but in conjunction with the Baddow Road Congregational Church. The Revd Robert Roope, the first minister (part-time), started in 1950. The church building was extended in 1951, by the provision of a red brick and flat roofed hall. Severe floods in 1958 caused severe damage, but an appeal for help allowed the church to recover.
In late 1961, an army hut was purchased and erected on the adjoining land, and a car park also provided. The hut was used for many years for social activities, Sunday School and youth work and, being larger than the church, sometimes for special services.

Towards the end of the 1960's, it became necessary for smaller churches such as Great Baddow to share ministers, and in 1966, the Revd Gilbert Nunn was inducted to Great Baddow and Writtle. In 1968, further improvements were started, comprising of a new building to join the existing brick hall in order to provide a committee room, Minister's vestry and toilets.

The church continued to grow, and in 1971 the old lean-to vestry and toilet were demolished, linking up the newer block to the rear of the church and adding a side entrance and lobby to the front of the church. In June 1971, the altered church was re-dedicated. The Revd Kenneth Prior was called to serve as minister in 1973, and he was responsible for Great Baddow (and Writtle) becoming part of the Team Ministry of United Reformed Churches in Chelmsford.

A weekly coffee morning started in 1971, and in April 1977 a weekly Luncheon Club for the elderly began. This grew from about 16 people to about 30. 1977 also saw the original hall being extended, together with the provision of a new vestry and fitted kitchen. This facilitated more room for Junior Church, toddlers and various children's and young people's groups, a Women's Friendship group and other church associations.

1979 saw the grouping of the URC churches within the Chelmsford Group Ministry. This was a good period, with Sunday congregations growing and all activities well supported. The church became too small, and the hall (that is, the old army hut) came to the end of its useful life, which led to ambitious alteration plans, involving the removal of the hut in 1985-1986, the demolition of the church's side wall and the building of a 'new' church.

The 'new' church was dedicated in April 1986, with room to seat 150 or more if necessary. The church was blessed with very a good congregations for a few years, with thriving children's and associated groups.

In April 1989, the Revd Roger Cornish led a party from the group on a tour of the Holy Land, a visit that lives on in people's memories. But as the size of the congregation fell away, the decision was taken in 2020 to close, with the final service in September 2020.

## Long Melford United Reformed Church, Suffolk

The chapel in Long Melford stands prominently — yet suitably set back — on the main road through the village. Although the chapel dates back to 1712, the life of the congregation began in 1662, with the Great Ejectment. It is not definitely known if it was the Revd John Wood, who was ejected from the living in Melford, who gathered like-minded folk to worship in a barn on the Kentwell Estate, but there are records stating that a 'group of pious people' had established themselves as a 'separate people', who eventually became the congregation we now know as Long Melford United Reformed Church. The separation that the Act of Uniformity caused, and the later animosity experience is borne witness to by the chapel housing graves of those who were barred from burial in the village cemetery, which was then, and still is, the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church.

It's location on Hall Street has meant despite the reasons for why the chapel came to be, it has been a real meeting place for people in the village over the years. For over 40 years, closing in

2014, the church was the home of a vibrant playgroup that many families used, and through which the church made regular contact with parents, as well as children.

The village library has been housed within the old school room since the 1950's, bringing people in and out of the building on an almost daily basis. And then there have been the church's monthly coffee mornings, where villagers and visitors alike have stopped by for a welcomed natter. It has been a true hub of community.

That community building has not only had the focus on village life. Despite the separation that is still felt over 350 years on, the hosting of a monthly Fellowship group by the church, which in recent times has been led by the minister, has become a place where ecumenical bridges have been rebuilt. Meeting together with brothers and sisters from Holy Trinity and St Catherine's to read scripture and pray has been a real blessing, and led to folk who worship at St Catherine's joining the United Reformed Church on Communion Sundays.

Upon the closure of Sudbury United Reformed Church in 2018, Long Melford were pleased to welcome members from Sudbury to join them. And although getting on in years, there has been a faithful congregation Sunday by Sunday until we had to close the buildings in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before we were forced to close the doors, the running and maintenance of the complex of buildings was becoming a burden. Even with money in the bank, maintaining a listed building is not an easy thing, especially when significant projects need to be undertaken. At this point, we would like extend thanks to Ronia Deeks and Nita Palmer-Randal, who have been the Church Secretary and Treasurer for the past 16 years. They took on these roles when the church was in need of caring leadership, and have worked tirelessly since to keep the 'body and soul' of Long Melford United Reformed Church together. With Eileen Parker, the other serving Elder in the church, they have been true and faithful servants to God, as well as the United Reformed Church.

It is, therefore, with a heavy heart that the resolution for closure is before synod. However, the custodianship of such buildings is now beyond the few who have worked and cared hard for people and place for many years. We do so, giving thanks to God for all that has been achieved in God's name over 350 years of witnesses.

## Princes Street United Reformed Church, Norwich

The Revd John Alexander first came to Norwich as a student from Hoxton Theological College in 1817. He so impressed a breakaway group from the Bishopgate Street Tabernacle that he was invited to become the first pastor of a proposed new Congregational Church, when it opened in 1819.

In March 1819, the Revd Alexander laid the foundation stone for the new Chapel in Princes Street. On 1 December 1819, the first service was held, and the young pastor attracted a large following. The site for the church was on Hungate (now Princes Street), where a group of tenement houses were situated round a courtyard. His preaching was regarded as inspirational, and attracted a full house at every service. He formed strong friendships with the Bishops of Norwich, and earned respect from the whole community.

In 1820, the church issued this declaration:
*"We consider a Christian Church to be a congregation of believers voluntarily assembling together and submitting in all things to Jesus Christ their only Lord and Master.*
*Such a Church we desire to become, recognising a Pastor and deacons as our only officers and asserting our exclusive right to make our own independent choice of minister to watch over us in the Lord and of deacons to attend to our temporal concerns."*

The original building of 1819 was a simple, non-conformist style, and cost £4,800. In 1820, a Sunday school was established, teaching the '3R's' on two evenings a week in the church. After a short time, the flat roof of the original church building was found to be unsafe, so alterations were carried out in 1828. Funding for the repairs was assisted by donations from the Baptists at St. Mary's Chapel and the Congregationalists at the Old Meeting House.
In 1861, a further building was built to the east for use as a school room.

The Revd Alexander was minister for 47 years, until the appointment of the Revd George Slatyer Barrett as minister in 1866. He continued to attract large congregations, and served at Princes Street until 1911. The popularity of the church continued, with large numbers attending, and overcrowding becoming a problem for the 1,000 worshippers. A decision was taken in 1868 to undertake a major rebuild, and extension of the church sanctuary.

The new neo-classical frontage was built three metres in front of the original, with the door flanked by columns of polished Aberdeen marble. The principle material for the frontage is moulded brick with some stone elements, including the carved text over the front door. The quality reflected the increasing prosperity and influence of many in the congregation. There is spectacular plasterwork on the ceiling, and bold, decorative ironwork round the balcony in an otherwise simple interior. In 1881, the Sunday school building (known as Boardman House after the renowned Norwich architect, Edward Boardman who designed it) was erected beside the chapel, and built to accommodate 1,000 children.

During the 19th century, Princes Street established a number of 'outposts' within or immediately outside Norwich, as part of their missional work, at Pockthorrpe (Silver Road), Mariners Lane, Thorpe (Thunder Lane) and Trowse. Later still, they planted churches at Arminghall, Old Lakenham, Whittlingham, Kirby Bedon and Eaton (now Ipswich Road URC).

The church was also influential within the city, attracting people from all walks of life and a strong liberal membership, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Jeremiah Colman of the mustard family worshipped there from the 1870's. Wider afield, the church strongly supported overseas missionary work with meetings and financial contributions.

The pews inside the church were previously traditional box pews constructed for those who could afford to pay. There were basic benches at the rear of the church for other members of the congregation. Over time, these were replaced with pitch pine pews with umbrella racks, and in 1927, payment for pews was replaced by the freewill offering. In 1969, a new link was created between the church and the lower floor of Boardman House, with doors and staircase providing access to the Church Rooms. 1977 saw the removal of some of the rear pews, and the erection of a glass and timber screen to create a space called the Conversation Area.

The millennium project in 2000 installed glass doors at the entrance to the church, enabling passers-by to see the interior of the church and allowing the congregation to be reminded of the world outside. The original oak doors were retained, and stand in a permanently open position. And with changing styles of worship and a different relationship between preacher and congregation, the platform area was extended and the pulpit removed. The panelling installed across the platform provides an appropriate background for worship, concerts and other activities.

The lower floor of Boardman House consisted of several rooms, which by the later part of the 20th century, were used seven days a week for a wide range of community support, educational and recreational activities. The upper floors were used as office space. However, in 2013, when faced with an irreparable heating system in the Church, along with expensive maintenance and repair bills for Boardman House, it was decided to sell this building. The proceeds could then help finance much needed renovation of the church building, to create a more comfortable and

flexible area. The church building closed to enable the renovations to take place. The pews were removed together, and the condemned pew heating system replaced with underfloor heating and new flooring. A new kitchen was built at the side of the sanctuary. Church Cottage was re-incorporated into the main building to provide two meeting rooms.

The church building reopened in March 2015, and was soon in full use for church and community activities, especially as a music venue for choirs and concerts. In June 2019, a survey of the property discovered some serious issues, including that the slate roof needed to be replaced. Such a large project was deemed to be too great an undertaking for the congregation at the time. After a series of Church Meetings, at which all possibilities were thoroughly discussed, the formal resolution to close was taken on 29 September, 2020, and the final service held on 25 October, 2020.

## Wickhambrook United Reformed Church, Suffolk

The life of a worship congregation meeting on Meeting Green in Wickhambrook is a long one, which speaks of great faith and hard work. In 1662, the Revd Samuel Cradock resigned his living from North Cradbury, Somerset, as he could not, 'in all conscience', conform with beliefs and practices required in the Act of Uniformity (1662). Instead of being reduced to adject poverty, like many of the clergy who found themselves without a living at that time, he was fortunate to inherit a valuable estate in Wickhambrook, Suffolk. This is where the story of Wickhambrook United Reformed Church begins, as Cradock opened his house every Sunday for divine worship.

As the congregation grew, they moved to worshipping in the barn on the Badmondisfield Hall Estate with the permission of the then owner, Andrew Warner. It is recorded that the congregation recognised themselves as a church from 1670, and the barn was licensed as a place of worship in 1695 after the Act of Toleration.
The congregation continued to meet in the barn until the ministry of the Revd Thomas Priest, who was invited to lead the church in 1726. After being in the village a few years, Priest set about raising the funds to build a chapel that would accommodate 300 people. It was built on a site known as Moore Green, which then became 'Meeting House Green', and is now simply 'Meeting Green'.

In 1813, the Revd Stephen Johnson began his ministry in Wickhambrook, and the church grew further, requiring side galleries to be added and the addition of a school room which could be opened up into chapel to accommodate more hearers on occasions. Johnson's passion for the spiritual welfare and teaching of the people went far beyond his flock in Wickhambrook. He realised that, apart from in the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket and a small chapel in Clare, there was no evangelical preaching in the villages that surrounded Wickhambrook. He, therefore, set out to 'trumpet salvation' in at least 15 villages, which led to mission stations being established in Lidgate, Cowlinge and Stradishall. Lidgate and Cowlinge became Congregational Chapels in their own right, Lidgate closed in 1971 and Cowlinge in 2005.

Well into the middle / late 20th century, the chapel had a large Sunday School and Youth Fellowship that are remembered fondly by locals, and has led to many in recent years seeing it as 'their church' when passing through that final rite of passage.
For a number of years, the congregation has been in decline. It has been the stalwart of a few who have kept the church running. We would like to extend particular thanks to Mr Peter Lister, who has acted as Church Secretary and Treasurer for the past two and half years, so that the small congregation could continue to meet on a weekly basis.

It is, therefore, with great sadness that after being such a beacon, the time has come to turn out the lights for the final time in the chapel on Meeting Green. However, we do so with thankfulness for all those who have gone before us and for all that has been achieved in God's name over 350 years of witness.

# South Western Synod

## Christchurch, Estover, Plymouth

Christ Church was established as a four denominational LEP in 1980, the only one of its kind in the south west, to serve a new development of four out of town estates. The URC joined the LEP around ten years later.

In the 1990's, with the support of the URC we welcomed the Revd Andrew Midian and his family from Papua New Guinea to work with us for three years. We all benefitted from his enthusiasm and musical talents, as he brought a whole new perspective to worship from his home country. In 2020, following a review, and with much prayer and discussion with the congregation, it was decided that to enable the church to continue, radical changes had to be made.

The church will continue as a worshipping, serving Christian community within the Church of England as part of the local parish. Despite no longer being an ecumenical partnership, we will set up a declaration of ecumenical welcome so that Christians of all denominations will know they are welcome.

We give thanks to God for the years we have been able to witness together as a congregation of mixed Christian backgrounds and place the future in His hands, trusting that He will show us new and innovative ways to show His love in our community, through service and witness.

## Kingskerswell United Reformed Church

The first stone was laid on 30 January 1854, and the first service taken by Francis Man in June, who paid for the construction and its later enlargement, and continued to take the services free. The land cost £52 and building £165. The 'room' was registered as a 'place of meeting for religious worship.'

On 26 August 1860, Naomi Man, now the widow of Francis, gave the Chapel with adjoining land in trust, a freehold for ever for the use of the Chapel and its congregation.
It was called Union Chapel because the donor wished it to belong to no particular sect.
In 1866, the Chapel was registered for the solemnisation of marriage. The congregation were described as 'Evangelical Protestant Dissenters.' During the decade that followed, many were received into membership. An active Sunday School continued, and in March 1911, the Union Chapel became Kingskerswell Congregational Church.

In 1917, high vent windows were installed, and a stained glass in the main window proposed. In 1923, water and drainage were installed to a new toilet and vestry washbasin, and in 1927, electricity and lighting were added. On 22 November 1971, the union of Presbyterian and Congregational churches resulted in it becoming a United Reformed Church, and the deeds were transferred to URC Offices at Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton.

It was on 24 January 1989 that the building was registered as a Grade 2 listed building.
By March 2020, the average age of a 15 strong congregation had climbed to 85, and it was this, and the Covid-19 pandemic that led to the Church being closed down.

## Lakeway United Church, North Tawton

Non-conformist worship has been taking place on the site of North Tawton: Lakeway United Church since the early 19th century, the present building having been constructed in 1833-1834. Schoolrooms were added in 1863, and extended in 1878 – a reflection perhaps of the part that this building has played over the years in the lives of many young people in the community.

Sunday School and Pilots were both well supported and more recently the church has provided a rehearsal space for the junior branch of the local amateur dramatics group.

When the local Methodist Church closed in the 1990's, the congregation joined their friends at the URC, and Lakeway United Church was born. The 'new' congregation have continued to share with the Parish Church and the Gospel Hall in united services, including the annual outdoor service and Remembrance Day services.

People throughout the town of North Tawton are aware of the hospitality that has been offered by the members of Lakeway United Church. Wonderful Harvest and Christmas Carol Service suppers have been enjoyed by folk from across the county, not to mention the fellowship that has been shared at Tea and Praise worship and the many fund-raising coffee mornings.

The worship space at Lakeway has always had a sense of tranquility, and many people have found peace and solace there at times of need in their lives. However, the few remaining members recognise that their work is done and the mission and purpose of this building has been fulfilled. 'Well done you good and faithful servants.'

## Wessex Synod

### Worplesdon United Reformed Church

Perry Hill Chapel was founded in 1822 by the Surrey Missionary Society, becoming part of the Revd John Hart's scheme of 'Congregational Episcopacy', with Guildford Congregation Church supporting the encircling village congregations as part of one united fellowship. After John Hart moved, tensions arose over who made decisions on local mission, and in 1890 we became independent as Perry Hill Congregational Church with 22 members, a pastor of our own and a vision for expanding activities. Membership was 44 in 1901, but has generally been 20-30. A small church, but not less valuable for that. For some, it was literally their family chapel – our last organist played next to a photograph of her great aunt playing the same organ – but our strong sense of church as family went beyond blood relations, and was warm and open in its hospitality and care. It was a congregation in which worship was heartfelt.

In 1963, Walter Ebrecht, who preached in much greater places during his visit from the Palatinate, wrote in 'World Congregationalism' that his visit to us was the culmination of his stay, because all felt Christ's presence. Much church life revolved around food, from the early 'Annual Church Tea and Meeting', to the Lunch Club sustained weekly since 1982, through the remarkable commitment of a small band. We have experienced a great privilege in serving God in the village and beyond, for over 198 years we feel that we have been a beacon of God's light and love. Recognising our task was complete there, we have dispersed to serve God in other places among other company.

## Thames North Synod

### Christchurch at Whetstone United Reformed Church

Christchurch at Whetstone has a long and interesting history, dating back to about 1788, when it is recorded that the first minister, the Revd James Matthews baptised infant Eliza Reynolds on 7 December, 1788. This was at the first building used by the fellowship, which was called the Independent Meeting House, a converted barn at the top of Totteridge Lane. The Revd Matthews died in 1804, but the Fellowship continued worshipping until 1817, when they

removed to a second building, Totteridge Congregation Church, largely funded by the Puget family, who were part of the large number of dissenting Free Church thinkers who lived in the then rural areas of Totteridge and Whetstone.

The first 30 years in Totteridge were fruitful for this Congregational Church, as there were no other alternatives to the Anglican Church between Barnet and Highgate. However, things changed in the 1880's when new housing developments in North Finchley and New Barnet were developed, with new churches being built. Membership declined at Totteridge as folk joined more local places.

The fellowship decided to re-locate to a site in Whetstone as more folk attended from Whetstone than Totteridge and to build a new church - Whetstone Congregational Church. In January 1900, the building was gutted by fire, and in June 1901 the present building was opened. The original building was re-instated to serve as the Church Halls, until it was demolished as part of the re-modelling of all the Church premises, to reflect the declining number of worshippers in the late 1970's. By this time, the name of the fellowship had changed for the fourth time to Christchurch at Whetstone URC, due to the denominational union of the Congregation and Presbyterian Churches, to form The United Reformed Church in 1972.

Worship, fellowship and activity was maintained at Christchurch over many years, with a sizeable congregation well led by a succession of loving, faithful ministers, supported by a strong Eldership.

However, in more recent years, social changes and various other factors have led to a deep decline in the membership, and with heavy hearts the Church Meeting voted to close Christchurch at the end of July 2020 after over 230 years of life and witness in the area.

## Regent Square and Lumen United Reformed Church, London

In 212 years, our church had three different buildings, belonged to four different denominations, had five different names and 18 ministers. It started life as the Gaelic chapel in what is now Hatton Place. The building next to Church House was opened on 11 May, 1827, in order to accommodate the huge congregations, including nobility and gentry of the day, attracted by the fiery preaching of Edward Irving.

In 1945, when the penultimate V2 rocket fell on London, destroying the Presbyterian Church House next door, the church building was so badly damaged that it had to be demolished. The church was rebuilt in a much plainer style on the same site, and opened in 1966. The main decorative feature of the building was the stained glass window by Pierre Fourmaintraux, through which, on some Sundays, the sun still shines.

In 2006, the decision was taken to remodel the building. Maggie Hindley spearheaded this project, and in 2008 the building re-opened under the new name of Lumen United Reformed Church. The remodelled building featured a cafe, clearly visible from the street, and three community spaces. The cafe attracted people into the building, and also provided refreshments for the many organisations who hired the community spaces for meetings or training.

The appointment of Higher Education chaplains attracted students from overseas and the last of these chaplains, John McNeill Scott, fostered the formation of the London Taiwanese Fellowship. During the first six years in the remodelled building preaching was delivered by John Scott and Geoffrey Roper thus ensuring a sense of continuity of worship.

The church supported Euston Food Bank and, with the help of Black Olive Cooks who ran the cafe, was able to host monthly dementia-friendly classical concerts, and to provide space for events during the annual Bloomsbury Festival.

More recently, the ageing congregation has been unable to find members able to fulfil the increasingly demanding role of Elder, and sadly, on 10 July 2020, a virtual Church Meeting voted to close the church. In these exceptional circumstances, it was decided that synod be given time to envisage a new future of this beautiful building.

## St Anne's and St Andrew's United Reformed Church, West Kilburn, London

St Andrew's, West Kilburn, United Reformed Church is actually found in the Queen's Park area of the London Borough of Brent. Queen's Park itself was opened in 1879. That 30 acre space was originally part of an agricultural showground much of which was later built upon by 'the Artizans', Labourers' and General Dwellings Company as a grid of terraced cottages for the respectable working classes.' With that in mind, a meeting of Presbyterian Church of England's North London Presbytery on 11 February 1896 agreed that session members be put in charge of a Salusbury Road Preaching Station. Just one month later, St John's Wood Presbyterian Church approved the appointment of the Revd Findlayson Darroch to take charge of the congregation, which met for worship with the Canterbury Road Baptist Church until the building was completed and opened on 8 November, 1896. As time went on, the congregation attracted fellow Presbyterians mainly, but not exclusively, from Ghana.

The area, like Kilburn, attracted the essentially Roman Catholic, London Irish community. Housing was relatively inexpensive. Over the years, the demographic was to change, and by the time of the 2011 census, 36 percent of Queen's Park's residents were white British. There were also significant minorities of Caribbean, African, Indian and Bangladeshi birth or descent. Recognition of this multicultural environment was to give rise to the establishment of the congregation's most remarkable contribution to the Church's witness in Mission, that is, the London Inter Faith Centre.

This was an initiative taken by both the congregation at St Andrew's, together with the Anglican congregation of St Anne's, whose building was beginning to show signs of disrepair.
The latter congregation worshipped at St Andrew's whilst their building was being demolished. The Revd Barrie Scopes of the URC and the Revd Fergus Kapie brought the two congregations together in an ecumenical partnership, which was later to share a new building, opened in 1998, housing not only the Inter Faith centre but a space for Christian worship also. Over the last 20 years, the centre has enabled people of many faiths to come together, enabling mutual understanding and respect. Its closure has been regretted by many, but its influence lives on through the work of many who have participated in courses and conferences organised by the centre's directors.

We give thanks to God for the witness that has been made through the congregation at St Andrew's and ask God's blessing on our Anglican sister congregation, St Anne's.

## Colnbrook and Poyle United Church, Colnbrook

No report received.

# Southern Synod

## Gomshall United Reformed Church, Dorking

No report received.

## St Mark's United Reformed Church, Hastings

St Mark's - Mount Pleasant United Reformed Church came into being following the demolition of Mount Pleasant Congregational Church (1879 – 1972), and was opened for worship on 1 October 1975.

Situated under a block of 46 flats, many who lived there worshipped and joined in social events and the sanctuary which seated 85 was often full. The stained-glass windows of St Clements, St Paul, St Peter and St Ignatius, the centre panel, conveying 'Christ in Glory' with a descending dove and two cherubim in the rays of the sun, came from a demolished Church in another part of town. Also in the sanctuary is an illuminated panel preserved from Mount Pleasant Congregational Church, and shows Our Lord Blessing the Children.

Many annual events, together with monthly sales and coffee mornings took place, and in the Mount Pleasant area of Hastings, provided a much-needed community resource. Throughout the years, young people have met regularly as part of the Church family, whether members of the Boys or Girls Brigade, Scouts, or Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.  Indeed, the Guide Unit of 80+ girls, was meeting until the closure.

Over the 141 years of being a lively Christian witness in this part of town, very sadly the St Mark's story has had to end in spite of many huge efforts to attract others, as only five members remained in 2020.

However, the contribution to the life, work and witness of St Mark's, of Ministers, Secretaries, Treasurers, Elders, Organists and all members and friends who have worked so diligently week by week, month by month and year by year has been enormous and we trust pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.

# Synod of Wales

## The Church in the Park, Old Colwyn

In early 2020, the congregation felt it was time to call it a day. 'The burdens of responsibility for management, finance, care for the building and TAPE and ministerial restructuring are too much for us.'
Following the development of new housing in Min-y-Don estates, an English Congregational Church began in the Welsh Congregational Chapel in 1898. After a few false starts and the first world war, the church purchased land in the park, and in 1925, Berthes Road Church was opened. Its organ is believed in a former life to have accompanied the contralto Kathleen Ferrier CBE. The plot behind the church, once a croquet lawn, became the site for the 'round room' and later in 1937, the large flat roofed hall with stage.

Services with a choir were held twice on a Sunday. The church was also a social hub, well known for its badminton groups and pantomimes. The park and seaside location were a great asset with the church hosting many children's events including Sunday school, play groups, children's clubs and Pilots. Brownies, Boys Brigades and Girls Brigades came from all over the

country in the holidays, sleeping in the hall and enjoying the park and beach below. There were also coffee mornings and fetes, along with Women's Fellowship and Ladies Circle.

The congregation, very committed to Churches Together, joined the United Reformed Church in 1973, participating over the years in different local URC pastorates. Never standing still, in 2011 a kitchen and patio was built, and a snack bar overlooking the park was opened and thriving lunches and worship were hosted for retired folk. 20 years ago, with guidance from Elder, the Revd Keith Forecast, the hall was renovated. It remains leased to TAPE, a state of the arts film and recording centre supporting award winning, inclusive projects for all the community.

Church members remained linked with Rhos in the Pastorate during the Covid pandemic, through mailings, Zoom, phone calls and emails.

'We will not lose our faith. We have all our memories. It will be a time of new beginnings.'
The church was finally and formally closed on 12 April, 2020.

### Cefyn-y-bedd United Reformed Church, Cilmery, Builth Wells

No report received.

## Synod of Scotland

### Avonbridge United Reformed Church, Wallacestone, Falkirk

Avonbridge Evangelical Union Church was formed in 1844 by members of the Secession Church, who broke away following 'The Atonement Controversy' of 1843. Following visits by Evangelical Union preachers from Falkirk and Bathgate, a minister, Robert Anderson, was called to Avonbridge in 1846. Originally, the congregation met in a cottage on the edge of the village; in 1860 a building was erected in the main street, but the congregation was unable to support a minister, and in 1869 Avonbridge was linked to the Bathgate church, whose minister at the time was AM Fairbairn.

From then until its closure in 2020, the church alternated between calling its own ministers (a manse was built beside the church in 1890) and sharing in joint pastorates – usually with Bathgate, but latterly also with the congregations in Falkirk and Cumbernauld.
In 1896, the vast majority of the Evangelical Union churches, including Avonbridge, voted to join the Congregational Union of Scotland, and some 104 years later the congregation became part of the United Reformed Church.

The 'E.U.' was for many years at the heart of village life, but from around 1960 onwards the congregation's membership was in continual decline. To the end, the dwindling congregation hosted the village's Lunch Club and Credit Union, and refurbishment of the building was suggested in 2010. Ambitious plans were drawn up in 2013, but by the time enough finances were raised to start work it was too late; and with the treasurer being among the victims of Covid, the remaining members reluctantly voted to close the Church at the beginning of October 2020.

# Jubilee Ministers, 2020 and 2021

| Years of service | Name | Synod | Date of ordination |
|---|---|---|---|
| 70 | Basil Ernest Bridge | Eastern | 12 September 1951 |
| 60 | Derrick Peter Ackling | Wessex | 7 July 1961 |
| 60 | Kenneth Alway-Jones | West Midlands | 1 October 1961 |
| 60 | Marjorie Ayton | North Western | 1 July 1961 |
| 60 | Arthur Jack Beeson | Southern | 1 July 1961 |
| 60 | Anthony Gerald Burnham | North Western | 17 August 1961 |
| 60 | David Vandepeer Clarke | West Midlands | 1 September 1961 |
| 60 | Wilfred Kievill Gathercole | Yorkshire | 9 October 1961 |
| 60 | Michael Edmund Heard | Yorkshire | 14 October 1961 |
| 60 | Max Armstrong Moore | Yorkshire | 8 July 1961 |
| 60 | David Cranford Morgan | Wales | 1 July 1961 |
| 60 | Barry Richard Parker | Yorkshire | 13 January 1961 |
| 60 | Roger Kaye Scopes | Wessex | 7 October 1961 |
| 60 | Brian John Slater | Wessex | 22 July 1961 |
| 60 | John Malcolm Smith | Northern | 1 July 1961 |
| 60 | Harold Robert Tonks | West Midlands | 1 July 1961 |
| 60 | Alan David Trinder | Scotland | 21 July 1961 |
| 60 | Adrian John Wells | Yorkshire | 1 September 1961 |
| 50 | Anthony Addy-Papelitzky | Thames North | 17 October 1971 |
| 50 | John Colbeck Durell | Northern | 30 December 1971 |
| 50 | Graham Beresford Edwards | Eastern | 1 January 1971 |
| 50 | Anthony Lawford Jones | East Midlands | 11 September 1971 |
| 50 | Barbara Meachin | Wessex | 1 July 1971 |
| 50 | Terry Oakley | Thames North | 9 July 1971 |
| 50 | Michael Bemrose Spencer | West Midlands | 17 July 1971 |
| 50 | Brian Sadler Stone | Southern | 1 July 1971 |
| 50 | Alan Edward Thomasson | South Western | 1 July 1971 |
| 50 | Colin Peter Thompson | Wessex | 1 July 1971 |
| 50 | Michael John Wear | Yorkshire | 1 July 1971 |
| 50 | Anthony Spring | Eastern | 4 July 1970 |
| 50 | Dean Tapley | Southern | 1 July 1970 |
| 50 | Eric Waugh | Scotland | 1 July 1970 |

# Nominations

## Assembly committees and other appointments

Notes:

1. General Assembly Moderators, Assembly Moderator-elect, the Immediate-past Assembly Moderators and the General Secretary are members ex officio of every standing committee. Deputy General Secretaries are members ex officio of every standing committee within their department. Any ex officio member may arrange for an appropriate deputy, such as any Deputy General Secretary or an officer of Assembly, to attend on their behalf. Any committee may invite other Assembly officers (or their deputies) or staff members to attend in a non-voting capacity where the business so requires.

2. Symbols have been used as follows: ** denotes those whom General Assembly is invited to appoint for the first time; † denotes those who have been invited to extend their periods of service; †† denotes those returning after a break.

3. Numbers in round brackets following names indicate the member's synod: (1) Northern, (2) North Western, (3) Mersey, (4) Yorkshire, (5) East Midlands, (6) West Midlands, (7) Eastern, (8) South Western, (9) Wessex, (10) Thames North, (11) Southern, (12) Wales, (13) Scotland. This numbering is not shown where it is not relevant.

4. When a member of a committee is there as a representative of another body or a particular category this is indicated in round brackets following the name.

5. Committee membership is normally for a period of four years, though this may sometimes exceptionally be renewable. Committee convenors serve an additional preliminary year as convenor-elect. In sections one to five of the report, appointments with a different term are noted.

6. Dates in square brackets following names indicate the date of retirement, assuming a full term.

7. In accordance with the decision of General Assembly 2000, some nominations are made directly by the National Synods of Wales and Scotland.

8. New committee members normally take up their roles at the conclusion of General Assembly.

9. Nominations to Assembly committees and their subcommittees, and to advisory and task groups serving Assembly and Assembly Executive, should be of members of the United Reformed Church, or youth representatives who meet the criteria for membership of Assembly. A term of service may normally be completed if someone ceases to be a member of the URC during their term.

10. Nominations of URC representatives to external bodies should either be URC members, or youth representatives who meet the criteria for membership of Assembly, or URC staff who have relevant expertise. The nomination of a staff

member would automatically lapse if the person concerned ceased to hold a URC post.

## 1. Assembly Executive

Assembly Executive acts on behalf of General Assembly. It consists of the officers of Assembly, the immediate past and elect Assembly Moderators, the deputies to the General Secretary and treasurer, the assistant clerk, four representatives from each synod, normally, but not necessarily, including the moderator and the synod clerk, together with the convenors of Assembly committees, the chair of the United Reformed Church Trust and three members for URC Youth, including the URC Youth Moderator. In attendance are staff secretaries, Assembly Moderators' chaplain and others as appropriate.

### 1.1 Human resources advisory group

Convenor: Mr Geoff Shaw [2023]
General Secretary
Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
Nominated members:
Mrs Bridget Fosten [2022]
Mrs Barbara Ellis [2024]
Vacancy

### 1.2 Law and polity advisory group

Convenor: Ms Morag McLintock [2024]
Secretary: Mr Neil Mackenzie [2022]
General Secretary
Clerk of General Assembly Assistant Clerk of General Assembly
Synod Clerk representative: Mrs Melanie Campbell [2025]**
Property, legal and trust officers' representative: Ms Muna Levan-Harris**
Nominated members:
Ms Denise FitzPatrick [2022]
The Revd Steven Manders [2025]
In attendance: Legal Adviser

### 1.3 Listed buildings advisory group

Convenor: The Revd Dr James Mather [2022] (nominated by the group)
Secretary: Mr Geoff Milnes [2022] (nominated by the group)
General Secretary
Vacancy (1)
Mr Michael Williams (2)
Ms Alison Lee (3)
Mr David Figures (4)
Mrs Judith Booth (5)
Mrs Rachel Wakeman (6)
Mr Peter West (7)
Mr Roger James (8)
Mr Gerry Prosser (9)
Mr Christopher Buckwell (10)
Mr Guy Morfett (11)

### 1.4 Resource sharing task group

Convenor: The Revd Steve Faber [2024] (Synod Moderator)
Secretary: Mr Chris Atherton
Treasurer: The Revd Dick Gray
Miss Margaret Atkinson
Mr Mike Gould
URC Treasurer

**1.5 Environmental task group**
Convenor: The Revd Rob Weston
The Revd David Coleman
The Revd Trevor Jamison
The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby
Ms Alison Greaves
Mr Tom Veitch

**1.6 Review of Church Life Group**
The Revd Dr John Bradbury
Mrs Melanie Campbell
The Revd Steve Faber
The Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson
Mrs Muna Levan-Harris
The Revd Lindsey Sanderson
Ms Victoria Turner
The Revd Dr Phil Wall
Dr Gordon Woods

## 2. General Secretariat

**2.1 Faith and order committee**
The convenor and nominated members normally serve for six years.
Convenor: The Revd Dr Robert Pope [2026]
Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
General Secretary
Nominated members:
The Revd Samuel Silungwe [2023]
Ms Diana Paulding [2026]
The Revd Tessa Henry-Robinson [2027]
The Revd Sue McCoan [2026]
The Revd Kristin Ofstad [2026]

**2.2 Nominations committee**
Synods appoint and decide terms for their representation.
Convenor: Mrs Helen Lidgett [2025]
Secretary: Mr George Faris [2022]
Mrs Melanie Campbell (1)
Mrs Rita Griffiths (3)
The Revd Camilla Veitch (5)
Mr Keir Hounsome (7)
Ms Karen Bell (9)
The Revd Russell Furley-Smith (11)
Mr John Collings (13)**
A past Moderator of General Assembly
General Secretary
In attendance:
Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries
Equalities Committee representative
The Revd Brian Jolly (2)
Mr Tim Crossley (4)
Mr Richard Lockley (6)
The Revd Dougie Burnett (8)
Mr Simon Fairnington (10)
The Revd Adrian Bulley (12)

**2.2.1 Panel for General Assembly appointments**
Members usually serve for five years as training is required.

**Retiring 2022**
Mr John Ellis (11)
The Revd Mary Irish (7)

**Retiring 2023**
Mrs Barbara Ellis (3)
Mrs Helen Lidgett (5)
The Revd Alison Hall (3)
Dr Jim Merrilees (13)

Ms Helen Stenson (12)
Mrs Sheila Davies (3)
The Revd Ruth Whitehead (8)

**Retiring 2024**
The Revd Jan Adamson (13)
Dr Paul Ashitey (10)
Mr Matthew Barkley (9)
The Revd Lucy Brierley (9)
Mr David Gartside (3)
Ms Pippa Hodgson (5)
The Revd Paul Robinson (12)
Mr Alex Walker (4)
The Revd Tessa Henry-Robinson (9)
Ms Victoria Paulding (5)
Mr Reuben Watt (11)
The Revd Sal Bateman (10)
The Revd Peter Henderson (8)
The Revd George Mwaura (5)
Mr Patrick Sheard (1)

**Retiring 2026**
The Revd Reginald Mudenda (11)**
Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reid (10)**
The Revd Mark Robinson (9)**
Mrs Pat Poinen (1)**

**2.3 Ministerial incapacity and discipline (Mind) advisory group**
Convenor: Ms Michelle Howard [2024]
Secretary: The Revd Chris Copley [2022]
Synod Moderator: The Revd Clare Downing [2023]†
Convenor of the Assembly commission
Secretary of the Assembly commission
Convenor of the review commission of the incapacity procedure
Secretary of the review commission of the incapacity procedure
Consultant for ministers and CRCWs: The Revd Dominic Grant [2024]
Consultant for mandated groups: The Revd Ian Kirby [2023]
Training coordinator: The Revd Andy Braunston [2024]
General Secretary; Clerk of General Assembly; Secretary for Ministries; legal adviser

**2.4 Disciplinary process – commission panel**
Members serve for five years as regular training is required. They may be invited to continue serving beyond this as experience is especially valuable on this panel.
Convenor: The Revd Dr Janet Tollington (7) [2025]
Deputy convenor: Dr David N Jones [2026]†
Secretary: Mr Philip Laws [2022]
Members:

**Retiring 2022**
Mr Alan Kirby (11)
Mrs Cathy Glazier (11)
The Revd Craig Muir (6)
Mr Alastair Forsyth (4)
The Revd Ian Kirby (12)
Mrs Mary Kelly (1)
The Revd Jane Campbell (13)

**Retiring 2023**
Mrs Wendy Dunnett (9)
The Revd Alan McGougan (13)
Ms Mary Slater (11)
The Revd Bill Bowman (11)

**Retiring 2024**
The Revd Debbie Brown (3)
Mrs Barbara Goom (8)
The Revd Peter Flint (11)
The Revd Naison Hove (11)

The Revd Sue McCoan (6)
The Revd Sarah Moore (2)
The Revd Wendy Swan (11)
The Revd Deborah McVey (7)
Mrs Pat Poinen (1)

**Retiring 2025**
The Revd Martha McInnes (12)
The Revd Wilbert Sayimani (9)
The Revd Dr Janet Tollington (7)
The Revd Andy Braunston (13)
The Revd Rachel Poolman (1)
The Revd Dr Peter Stevenson (5)
Mrs Vivien Andrew (10)

**Retiring 2026**
The Revd Nigel Adkinson (5)†
Dr David N Jones (5)†
The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe (2)†
Mr Ian Corless (9)†
The Revd David M Miller (6)†
Mrs Janet Virr (4)†

**2.5 Standing panel for the incapacity procedure**
This panel is normally convened by the member with legal experience.
Members serve one or two five-year terms.
Secretary: Dr Augur Pearce [2022]
Synod Moderator: The Revd Simon Walkling [2023]
Past Moderator of General Assembly: The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2022]
Commission officer for the incapacity procedure: The Revd Roy Lowes [2023]
Mr David Nash (legal experience) [2023]
Dr Ewen Harley (GP) [2023]

**2.6 Pastoral reference and welfare committee**
Convenor: The Revd David Grosch-Miller [2023]
Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Synod Moderator: The Revd Brian Jolly [2024]
The Revd Dr Irene John [2024]
Professor Malcolm Johnson [2022]
The Revd Bridget Powell [2023]
URC Deputy Treasurer General Secretary

**2.7 Safeguarding advisory group**
Convenor: Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Secretary: URC Safeguarding Adviser
Head of Children's and Youth Work Secretary for Ministries
Nominated Members – maximum of three, serving one or two three-year terms:
Vacancy Mr Paul Smillie [2022]
Mrs Jane Dowdell [2023]
Mr Alex Walker [2024]**
Co-opted members – maximum of two, co-opted for appropriate terms of service:
Education and Learning Programme Officer

## 3. Mission department

**3.1 Mission committee**
Convenor: Sarah Lane Cawte [2024]
Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Mission)
Vacancy (1) Mrs Angela Bogg (2) [2022]
The Revd Murray George (3) [2024]
The Revd Clare Davison (4) [2024]
The Revd Robert Bushby (5) [2023]
Mr John Davey (6) [2022]
Ms Lindsey Brown (7) [2022]
The Revd Robert Jordan (8) [2022]

The Revd Ray Stanyon (9) [2025]† Mr Simon Fairnington (10) [2023]
Vacancy (11) The Revd Branwen Rees (12) [2022]
Mr John Collings (13) [2023]†

**3.1.1 International exchange reference group**
Convenor: The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale [2024]
Synod Moderator: The Revd Paul Whittle [2022]
Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries
Nominated member:
The Revd Ros Lyle [2023]

**3.1.2 Commitment for Life (CfL) reference group**
Convenor: Mr Richard Lewney [2024]
At least two CfL advocates Representative of mission team
Representative of mission committee Representative from Christian Aid
Representative of Global Justice Now
Programme Officer for Global Justice and Partnerships

**3.1.3 Interfaith enabling group**
Convenor: The Revd Tracey Lewis [2023]
Secretary: The Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Scotland
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Wales
Nominated members:
Ms Victoria Turner [2025] Mr Andy Lie [2023]
Co-opted members:
The Revd Dr Graham Adams [2024] The Revd Dr Mark Godin [2024]
The Revd Dr John Parry

**3.1.4 Joint Public Issues Team strategy and policy group**
Deputy General Secretary (Mission) The Revd Steve Faber

**3.1.5 Rural strategy group (United Reformed Church/Methodist)**
Co-chair: The Revd Steve Faber (Synod Moderator) [2022]
2 vacancies

## 4. Discipleship department

**4.1 Ministries committee**
Acting Convenor: The Revd Paul Whittle†
Secretary: Secretary for Ministries
Leadership in worship advocate: Vacancy
Synod Moderator: The Revd Jamie Kissack [2024]
Convenors of the Accreditations (CRCW and SCM), Maintenance of Ministry and Retired Ministers' Housing subcommittees
Convenor of the Assessment Board
Nominated members:
The Revd Stuart Scott [2023] The Revd Sally Willett [2023]
Mrs Gill Bates [2024] Chris Kellett [2025]**
The Revd Lesley Moseley [2025]**

**4.1.1 Accreditations (CRCW and SCM) Subcommittee**
Convenor: The Revd Dr Paul Dean [2025]
Joint Secretaries:
Secretary for Ministries [2022]
Development Worker (CRCW & SCM) [2022]
Convenor of the Assessment Board
Representatives:
Synod moderators: The Revd David Herbert [2024]
SCMs: The Revd Tim Clarke [2024]
CRCWs: Ms Ann Honey [2022]
Nominated Members:
Mr Rob Moverley [2022] 2 vacancies
Co-opted CRCW: Ms Marie Trubic [2022] (not to be replaced)

**4.1.2 Ministries – maintenance of ministry subcommittee**
Convenor: The Revd David Coote [2022]
Mr David Gartside [2022] Mrs Jean Wyber [2022]
The Revd Dr George Kalu [2025]** Vacancy
Pensions committee convenor

**4.1.3 Ministries – retired ministers' housing subcommittee – under review**
Members normally serve four years, but appointments may be extended for two more years.
Convenor: The Revd Anne Bedford
Secretary: Secretary of Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd
Mr Peter West Mr Malcolm Lindo
The Revd Ken Summers
The Revd Simon Walkling (Synod Moderator)
ex-officio: URC Treasurer
Properties are managed by a company, Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd.
Details of the members of its board etc may be obtained from the Company Secretary at Church House.

**4.1.4 Assessment board**
Members usually serve for five years as training is required.
Convenor: Professor Bill Gould [2024]

**Retiring 2022**
Mrs Bridget Akinyombo (10) The Revd Jamie Kissack (4)
The Revd Lis Mullen (2) Mr Keith Reading (3)

**Retiring 2023**
The Revd John Danso (10) Mr Dan Morrell (4)
Retiring 2024
The Revd Jan Adamson (13) The Revd Gerald England (8)
Mr Mark Tubby (7)

**Retiring 2025**
Ms Mercy Nimako Ms Liz Sharples
The Revd Samuel Silungwe

**4.2 Education and learning committee**
Convenor: Mr Alan Yates [2023]
Secretary: Secretary for Education and Learning
Nominated Members: (nominated by the Nominations Committee)
Ms Adella Pritchard [2022]
Mrs Margaret Marshall [2024]
The Revd Martin Truscott [2022]
The Revd Tim Meachin [2024]
Ex-officio members:
a General Assembly moderator (current, past or elect)
General Secretary
Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Representative Members: (nominated by the appropriate group)
RCL Principals: The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby [2022]
Synod Training & Development Officers: The Revd Mary Thomas
CYDOs and other Children and Youth Work officers
EM1 students
Non-voting members: (nominated by the appropriate group)
Synod Moderator: The Revd David Herbert [2022]
RCL Principals: The Revd Samantha White
The Revd Dr John McNeil Scott
Secretary for Ministries Methodist Church Representative

**4.2.1 Education and learning finance subcommittee**
Chair: Mr Alan Yates
Minutes Secretary: Secretary for Education and Learning
Co-opted Member: The Revd Edward Sanniez
Ex-officio: URC Treasurer, Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship),
Convenor of the education and learning committee
Staff in attendance: Chief Finance Officer
The chair and member are appointed by the Education and Learning Committee.

**4.2.2 Stepwise development group**
Convenor: The Revd Alison Davis**
Administrator: Stepwise Programme Assistant
Secretary for Education and Learning Stepwise Programme Manager
Education and Learning Instructional Designer Project Manager for Walking the Way
Education and Learning Programme Officer (by invitation)
Convenor of the Stepwise Learning Standards Board**
Representatives – serving appropriate terms of service:
Children's and Youth Work Committee: Mr Leo Roberts
Synod mission enablers network: The Revd Stuart Radcliffe
Synod training and development officers:Vacancy
Resource Centres for Learning: a tutor
Together Ethnic and Minority URC: The Revd Zaidie Orr
Co-opted Members:
The Revd Simon Goddard (Fresh Expressions)**
The Revd Peter Henderson**
Mr Iain Johnston (Faith in Community Scotland)
The convenor and the co-opted members are appointed by the education and learning committee.

**4.3 Children's and Youth Work Committee**
Convenor: The Revd Paul Robinson [2024]
Secretary: Head of Children's and Youth Work
URC Youth Moderator URC Youth Moderator-elect
Convenor of the pilots subcommittee Pilots representative
Nominated members:
Mr Matthew Barkley [2023]
The Revd Janine Atkinson [2024]
The Reverend Julian Sanders [2025]**
Mr Reuben Watt [2023]
The Revd Samantha Sheehan [2024]
Ms Caroline Akinyele [2025]**

**4.3.1 Pilots subcommittee**
Convenor: Mr Derek Goodyear
Members:
Resources: Ms Liz Harrison**
Synod Pilot officers: Mr Alan Kendall**
vacancy
Representatives:
Children and Youth Development Officer and team: Ms Lorraine Downer [2023]**
URC Youth Pilots: Vacancy
Pilots company/Friends On Faith Adventures group: 2 to 4 vacancies
Co-opted:
Resources: Ms Sandra Ackroyd
Members are nominated by the Children's and Youth Work Committee and serve 1 or 2 2-year terms.

**4.4 Walking the Way steering group**
Co-Chairs: Deputy General Secretary (Mission) and Deputy General Secretary (Disc)
Secretary: Project Manager for Walking the Way
Stepwise Programme Manager Head of Communications
Communications Officer
Representatives:
Children's and Youth Work: Ms Ruth White
Global and Intercultural Ministries: Revd Bachelard Kaze Yemtsa [2023]
Education and Learning Committee: Mr Alan Yates
Resource Centres for Learning: The Revd Peter Ball
Training and Development Officers: The Revd Dr Jim Coleman
Mission Committee: Mr John Collings
Mission Enablers: Mr Martin Hayward
General Members:
The Revd Colin Bones [2023]
The Revd Caroline Andrews [2024]

**4.5 Worship Reference Group**
Convenor: The Revd Sam Silungwe [2024]
Secretary: The Revd Elizabeth Gray-King [2024]
Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Nominated Members:
The Revd Dr Anna Gobledale [2024] The Revd Dr Matthew Prevett [2024]

**5. Administration and resources department**
5.1 Business Committee
Convenor: The Revd Mark Robinson [2025]**

Secretary: General Secretary
Moderators of General Assembly
Moderator-elect and Immediate-past Moderators of General Assembly
Clerk of General Assembly Assistant Clerk of General Assembly
URC Treasurer
Nominated members:
Ms Ella Lemon [2022] Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reid [2025]

**5.2 Communications**
Convenor: The Revd Dr Peter Stevenson [2023]
Secretary: Head of Communications
Mr Stan Hazell [2022]
The Revd Tim Lowe [2023]
The Revd Heather Whyte [2023]
The Revd Ian Fosten [2022]
Mr Dan Morell [2023]
Ms Joy Aldred [2024]

**5.3 Equalities committee**
Convenor: The Revd Anne Lewitt [2022]
Convenor-Elect: The Revd Naison Hove [2022] [to serve as convenor 2022-26]**
Secretary: The Revd David Salsbury [2023]†
URC Youth representative: URC Youth Equalities and Diversity Representative
Nominated members:
The Revd Naison Hove [2023]
The Revd Jo Clare-Young [2024]
The Revd Mhari McLintock [2024]
Dr Ruth Shepherd [2024]
The Revd Jayne Taylor [2023]
Mrs Rosie Martin [2024]
Ms Judy Rogers [2024]

**5.4 Finance committee**
Convenor: URC Treasurer
Deputy Treasurer: Mr Vaughan Griffiths [2025]**
Chief Finance Officer
Chair of the URC Trust
Nominated members:
Mr Frank Liddell [2022]
Ms Joana Marfoh [2023]
Ms Denise Harman [2024]
Mr Gordon Wanless [2025]††
Mrs Jane Humphreys [2023]
The Revd Wilbert Sayimani [2023]
The Revd Simon Copley [2025]**

**5.4.1 Pensions committee**
Convenor: Mr Richard Nunn [2022]
Secretary: Pensions Manager
Nominated Members:
Ms Joana Marfoh [2024]
The Revd John Piper [2023]**
Co-opted members, maximum of three:
Mr David Martin
Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer Convenor of the Investment Committee
Convenor of the Maintenance of Ministry Subcommittee
Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
In attendance:
Chief Finance Officer
Secretary for Ministries (for Ministers' Pension Fund matters)

**5.5 United Reformed Church Trust**
Members normally serve for four years and may only serve a maximum of two terms (eight years). The directors of the Trust appoint new directors from those appointed as members. The members of the Trust elect the chair from among their own number and appoint a secretary and deputy secretary.
Chair: Mrs Val Morrison
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
Deputy Secretary: Mr John Samson
Members:
Group one (synods 1, 2, 3, 4, 13):
The Revd Nick Mark (13) [2024]
Mrs Val Morrison (4) [2022]
Group two (synods 5, 6, 7, 8, 12):
Ms Catriona Wheeler (5) [2022]
Mr David Lathbury (6) [2022]
Mrs Margaret Thompson (7) [2022]
Mr Clifford Patten (7) [2024]
Mr David Greatorex (5) [2024]
The Revd James Breslin (5) [2024]
Group three (synods 9,10,11): None
Vacancy (to be filled from any synod)
URC Youth appointee: vacancy
Moderators of General Assembly, Clerk of General Assembly, URC Treasurer
General Secretary
In attendance:
Convenor of the investment committee minute secretary
Chief Finance Officer

**5.5.1 Church House management group**
Convenor: Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
General Secretary Chief Finance Officer
Nominated members:
Mr Robert Buss [2022]
Dr Ian Harrison [2024]
Mr Adam Lester [2024]
vacancy

**5.5.2 Remuneration committee**
Convenor: Mr William McVey
Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
Ms Sushila Jetha (Methodist HR) URC Treasurer
In attendance: Chief Finance Officer

**5.6 The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd**
Terms run until the AGM in September. The directors of the Trust appoint new directors from those appointed as members. The board members elect the chair from among their own number and appoint the company secretary.
Chair: Mrs Bridget Micklem [2023]
Deputy chair: Mr Richard Nunn [2022]
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
URC Deputy Treasurer
Convenor of the maintenance of ministry subcommittee
Convenor of the investment committee
Members of the URC:
Mr Lyndon Thomas [2022]
Mr Colin MacBean [2024]
Members of fund appointed by members of fund:

The Revd Dr Janet Tollington [2023]
The Revd Caroline Vodden [2022]
The Revd Paul Bedford [2022]
The Revd Daniel Cheyne [2022]

**5.7 Investment committee**
Convenor: The Revd Dick Gray [2022]
Convenor-Elect: Mr Richard Nunn [2022] [to serve as convenor 2022-26]**
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
Members:
Mrs Jean Hudson [2023]
Mr David Martin [2022]
Mr Lyndon Thomas [2024]
Dame Katharine Barker [2023]
URC Treasurer convenor, pensions committee
chair of United Reformed Church Trust or another director
chair of United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust or another director
Treasurer, Westminster College
In attendance: Chief Finance Officer

**6. Representatives to meetings of sister Churches**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6.1 General Synod of Church of England | The Revd Tim Meadows |
| 6.2 Methodist Conference | The Revd Roy Fowler |
| 6.3 Congregational Federation Mission Committee | Nomination |
| 6.4 Church of Scotland | Assembly Moderator and synod representative |
| 6.5 United Free Church of Scotland | Synod nomination |
| 6.6 Scottish Assembly of the Congregational Federation | Synod nomination |
| 6.7 Scottish Episcopal Church | Synod nomination |
| 6.8 Methodist Church in Scotland | Synod nomination |
| 6.9 Baptist Union of Scotland | Synod nomination |
| 6.10 Presbyterian Church of Wales | Assembly Moderator |
| 6.11 Union of Welsh Independents | Synod nomination |
| 6.12 Covenanted Baptists | Synod nomination |
| 6.13 Church in Wales Governing Board | Synod nomination |
| 6.14 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church | Mission Committee Nomination |

**7. Representatives on ecumenical Church bodies**
The following have been nominated as United Reformed Church representatives at the major gatherings of the ecumenical bodies listed.

**7.1 World Council of Churches 2022 Assembly**
Delegate: The Revd Sarah Moore

**7.2 Council for World Mission Assembly**
Representatives will be appointed in 2023 for the 2024 CWM Assembly.

**7.3 World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) General Council**
Representatives are appointed for each meeting of the Council.

**7.4 Conference of European Churches Assembly**
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and one other

**7.5 The Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council**
The Revd Rowena Francis The Revd Professor David Thompson
Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries

**7.6 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)**

**7.6.1 CTBI Church leaders' meeting**
General Secretary

**7.6.2 CTBI senior representatives' forum**
General Secretary
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

**7.6.3 CTBI environmental issues network**
The Revd Mike Shrubsole

**7.6.4 CTBI stewardship network**
Mrs Faith Paulding

**7.6.5 CTBI consultative group on ministry amongst children (CGMC)**
Head of Children's and Youth Work and one other

**7.6.6 CTBI interreligious network**
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

**7.6.7 CTBI China forum**
The Revd John Scott

**7.6.8 CTBI Korea group**
The Revd David Grosch-Miller

**7.6.9 CTBI Middle East contact group**
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

**7.6.10 CTBI Churches' refugee network**
The Revd Fleur Houston

**7.7 Churches Together in England (CTE)**
7.7.1 CTE enabling group
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

**7.7.2 CTE group for evangelisation**
Deputy General Secretary (Mission)

**7.8 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (Acts) members meeting**
Appointed by the National Synod of Scotland

**7.9 National Sponsoring Body for Scotland**
Appointed by the National Synod of Scotland

**7.10 Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN)**
Appointed by the National Synod of Wales

**7.11 Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales**
Appointed by the National Synod of Wales

**7.12 Free Church education committee**
Professor Graham Handscomb Mrs Gillian Kingston

**7.13 European Churches' environmental network**
The Revd David Coleman

**7.14 Churches' committee on funerals and crematoria**
The Revd Sally Thomas

**7.15 Churches' forum for safeguarding**
URC Safeguarding Adviser

**7.16 Churches' network for nonviolence**
Head of Children's and Youth Work

**7.17 Churches Visitor and Tourism Association**
Mrs Valerie Jenkins

**7.18 Joint liturgical group**
The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale

**8. Representatives on formal bilateral and multilateral committees**

**8.1 Methodist/United Reformed Church liaison group**
Co-convenor: The Revd Geoffrey Clarke (Synod Moderator) (five-year term) [2026]**
Co-secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Scotland
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Wales
Nominated Members – serving one or two four-year terms:
The Revd Tim Richards [2024] Mr Tim Hopley [2025]**

**8.1.1 Methodist/ United Reformed Church strategic oversight group**
General Secretary A General Assembly Moderator
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

**8.2 Church of England - United Reformed Church Contact Group**
Co-Chair: The Revd Ruth Whitehead [2024]
Co-Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
The Revd Dr Susan Durber [2024] Mr John Ellis [2024]
The Revd Tim Meadows [2024]

**8.3 EMU Partnership (Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church in Scotland and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland)** [see note 7]
Appointed by the National Synod of Scotland

**8.4 Conversations between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the Anglican Communion**
The Revd Julian Templeton

**8.5 Roman Catholic/United Reformed Church Dialogue Group**
Co-chair: The Revd Dr John Bradbury
Co-secretary: The Revd Philip Brooks
Members:
Mr John Cornell
The Revd Dr Sarah Hall
The Revd Jason McCullagh
The Revd Lindsey Sanderson

**9. Representatives on governing bodies of theological colleges, etc**

**9.1 Northern College**
The Revd Mark Bates [2022]
Mrs Rosie Buxton [2022]
The Revd Raymond Singh [2023]
Mrs Margaret Marshall [2024]**
Mr Willie Duncan [2025]†
The Revd John Grundy [2025]**
In attendance: Secretary for Education and Learning

**9.2 Westminster College: board of governors**
Governors serve six-year terms, which may be renewed.
Convenor: The Revd Nigel Uden [2026]
Clerk to the governors: Mr Chris Wright [2022]
Honorary treasurer (Westminster College): Mr Andrew Grimwade [2022]
Principal: The Revd Samantha White
Mr Mark Hayes [2022]
Mr John Ellis [2023]
The Revd Jan Adamson [2024]
Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reid [2025]
The Revd Stuart Scott from 1 Sep 2020 to 31 Aug 2021
Note 1: A further six governors are appointed by the Cambridge Theological Federation, the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University, the college's teaching staff, its students and the Cheshunt Foundation.
Note 2: The Secretary for Education and Learning and the URC Treasurer are normally in attendance.

**9.2.1 The Cheshunt Foundation**
Mr Guy Morfett

**9.2.2 Cambridge Theological Federation**
Convenor, Westminster College governors

**10. Governors of colleges and schools with which the United Reformed Church is associated**

**10.1 Caterham School Southern Synod Moderator**

**10.2 Eltham College Mr Martin Fosten**

**10.3 Walthamstow Hall Mrs Isabel Heald**

**10.4 Milton Mount Foundation**
Mr Ray Dunnett [2024]
The Revd Kevin Swaine [2024]

The Revd June Colley [2022] The Revd Carole Elphick [2022]
The Revd Derek Lindfield [2022] Mrs Daphne Bembridge [2023]
Governors serve four-year terms, which may be renewed.

**10.5 Silcoates School**
The Revd Jason McCullagh [2024] Vacancy
Governors serve three-year terms.

**10.6 Taunton School Baptist governor at present**

**10.7 Bishops Stortford College Mr Richard Harrison**

**11. Miscellaneous**
The United Reformed Church is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

**11.1 Arthur Rank Centre**
The Revd Elizabeth Caswell

**11.2 Churches Legislation Advisory Service**
Ms Muna Levan Harris [2023] General Secretary

**11.3 Congregational Fund Board**
Mr Anthony Bayley [2023] The Revd Geoffrey Roper [2023]
The Revd Janine Atkinson [2023] Mrs Mary Steele [2023]
Mr Mike Hart [2024]

**11.4 Congregational Memorial Hall Trust**
Mr John Ellis [2023] Mr Simon Fairnington [2023]
The Revd Melanie Smith [2023] Mrs Margaret Thompson [2024]
Mr Philip Bonnier [2025]† The Revd Derek Wales [2025]†
Representatives serve four-year terms which may be renewed.

**11.5 Historic England Places of Worship Forum**
Convenor of the listed buildings advisory group

**11.6 Lord Wharton's Charity**
The Revd Derek Lindfield

**11.7 Retired ministers' and widows' fund**
The Revd Julian Macro Mr Anthony Bayley
Ms Liz Sharples

**11.8 Roots for Churches Ltd**
The Revd Nicola Furley-Smith [2024]

**11.9 Samuel Robinson's Charities**
Mr Tony Alderman

**11.10 Scout Association – URC faith adviser**
The Revd David Marshall-Jones

**11.11 United Reformed Church History Society**
The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar [2024] Mrs Jean Wyber [2022]
The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2023]
Council Members serve five-year terms which may be renewed.

**11.12 World Day of Prayer**
England, Wales and Northern Ireland: vacancy
Scotland: Synod appointment.

**11.13 Westhill Endowment Trust**
Mrs Julie Grove MBE [2022]
The Revd Leonora Jagessar-Visser 't Hooft [2023]
Updated on 19 July 2021 by the secretary of the nominations committee (**nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk**) to incorporate:

- changes approved by General Assembly on 9 July 2021 (resolution 37) and the renaming of 1.1 Mission Council as Assembly Executive (resolution 02)
- additional changes:

1.3 Listed Buildings Advisory Group – there is a vacancy for a Northern Synod representative following the resignation of the Revd Ray Anglesea.

11.12 World Day of Prayer – the Revd Dr Ana Gobledale has resigned from the England, Wales and Northern Ireland National Committee.

# Address to the Throne

## United Reformed Church
## General Assembly, July 2021

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty:

The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church sends loyal greetings to Your Majesty. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

We extend our condolences to you following the death of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, after a life of dedicated service to nation and commonwealth. His championing of causes such as wildlife conservation and outdoor activities for young people have left a lasting legacy. We pray that you may know God's comfort in your grief.

This has been an extraordinary year in which many have had cause to mourn. The pandemic has wreaked a trail of loss – not only due to the many lives cut short by the virus, but because of missed opportunities, disrupted plans, limitations on contact, the impact of unavoidable debts, and in so many other ways.

We need to recognise the collective grief and trauma that has been experienced, and also that the burden of loss has fallen particularly heavily on certain groups in our communities and our world. Our churches will continue to play their part in responding, offering healing and hope through worship and pastoral care, acts of practical service, and challenging injustice.

We rejoice that through the efforts of scientists and the NHS, the vaccine rollout is now bringing hopes of a lifting of many of the restrictions we have learned to live with in this country.

However, we are very conscious that many of our sisters and brothers in other parts of the world have not been so privileged and are greatly pained that access to vaccines and treatment globally is so inequitable.

We stand in solidarity with them and have added our voice to the call for vaccines to be made available to all people as a global common good, as well as for the restoration of your Government's international development budget.

We believe that a commitment to the poorest in the world should not be an optional extra but at the heart of our country's responsibilities.

The General Assembly also responded to a particular plea to stand more resolutely in solidarity with the Palestinian people whose already deteriorating living conditions have been made worse by the pandemic.

We expressed our deep concern about the growth of illegal Israeli settlements and enforced house demolitions, urged for international law to be upheld, and pledged to use our influence and our resources in pursuit of justice and peace in the land we call holy.

As we emerge from this time of loss, we long to see the flourishing of all people as well as of the planet where we live. The forthcoming United Nations climate summit in Glasgow offers a real opportunity for leadership and progress in tackling the climate emergency.

Ahead of that event, many of our churches have been holding special services and deepening their own environmental commitments. We pray that those with power will rise to the moment.

We pray too that God will strengthen, sustain and guide Your Majesty as you continue to lead and serve.

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