

14 June 2023

To all attendees of General Assembly

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I write now to give you further information about the meeting of General Assembly 2023. Please read this letter carefully as it includes a link to the pre-assembly Church Life Review Webinar, a call for volunteers and important and useful information for new and online attendees and much more.

1. **Agenda**

Please find a copy of the agenda for General Assembly 2023 attached.

2. **Reports to General Assembly**

All the papers for the meeting have now been uploaded to the URC website:

<https://urc.org.uk/general-assembly-papers> If you have requested a paper or large print copy, it will be available for collection at the registration desk at the venue.

3. **Paper N3, Church Life Review Group**

The final version of Paper N3 is now available on-line at www.urc.org.uk/clrg. If you downloaded an earlier version, please disregard, and delete it now.

4. **En Bloc**

At General Assembly we take certain business *En Bloc*. These are items which the Moderator thinks that decisions might be reached responsibly without further discussion. I suggest you read the *En Bloc* papers first. This will give you time to contact the author of a paper if you have questions. Author 'names and e-mail addresses are noted on the cover sheets of the reports.

If you think any paper in *En Bloc* needs discussion at General Assembly, particularly if you disagree with a proposed resolution, you may ask that it be removed from *En Bloc*. You must put that request to the Clerk (michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk) by **12noon on Wednesday 28 June**. If three or more people ask to remove an item, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda.

You are reminded that we rely on every member of Assembly to read the papers and take note of information to relay back to their Synods. In using the *En Bloc* method of decision-making there is no wish to bury information or to avoid discussions which Assembly ought to have. We must all ensure the appropriate flow of information from General Assembly to the Synods.

Below are the papers that the Moderator currently anticipates taking in *En Bloc*:

A1 – Business Committee: MIND remit and name

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- A2** - Business Committee: Changes moving to one Moderator of GA
- A3** - Business Committee: General Assembly and URC Trust
- A4** - Business Committee: Synod Moderator appointments
- A5** - Business Committee: Mediation and Reconciliation Resource
- D1** - Education and Learning: Recruitment of a Westminster College Principal
- G2** - Finance Committee: URC Trust Accounts 2022
- G4** - Finance Committee: Churches 'Energy Crisis Fund
- G5** - Finance and Ministries: Stipendiary Ministers Target Numbers
- G6** - Finance Committee: URC Legacy Fund
- H2** – Ministries Committee: Core Competences for CRCW
- H3** – Ministries Committee: Pastoral Supervision Policy
- H4** - Ministries Committee: Extension of Retirement Age
- J1** - Nominations Committee: Report 2023
- P1** - Law and Polity: Simplifying Processes
- R1** - MIND: Redrafting Section O 5.2
- R2** - MIND: Amendment to Section O Appendix J
- R3** - MIND: Monitoring Cautions and Warnings
- R4** - MIND: Disciplinary Investigation Panel Increase
- R5** - MIND: Removal of Section P from The Manual
- T2** - Safeguarding Committee: Whistleblowing Policy
- X5** - South Western Synod: Bristol Korean Church
- X2** - North West Synod: YOURChurch
- X4** - North Western and Mersey Synods: Synod changes

5. **New Members of Assembly and on-line attendees**

The Assembly Clerk will lead an introductory session for new attendees of Assembly and those attending on-line on **Thursday 29 July at 7:30pm via Zoom**. Those who have been to Assembly before are also very welcome to attend. Please use the Zoom link below: <https://affinityevents-co-uk.zoom.us/j/87994468214?pwd=bmtrSjVPdmdNUUhoNOFWU0FDZnIYQT09>

6. **Online attendees**

If you are attending online, you will be contacted by the technical team with log in details nearer to the start date of the Assembly.

7. **Church Life Review Webinar**

This Webinar will be held on the morning of **Wednesday 21st June between 10am and 11am** to give members of General Assembly the opportunity to hear more about the forensic accounting work carried out as part of the Church Life Review and to ask any questions they may have. The webinar which will be recorded and available on line will be led by Mark Salway and Marcus Lees-Millais from MKS.

Please find the details for joining the webinar below:

MKS Zoom is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Please join:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89593523304?pwd=M3lhRWpsK25CT25Ec0g0ZWZZZ2JoQT09>.

Meeting ID: 895 9352 3304

Passcode: 141629

8. **Standing Orders**

A full version of our rules for doing business is in the 'Standing Orders'. These can be found at: <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/standing-order-physical-virtual-meetings.pdf>

9. **Election of Moderator of General Assembly 2024-2025**

Because we are running a paper ballot for this election, the vote will take place immediately after the presentation from the candidates, and then closes for counting.

10. **Minutes**

Minutes will be posted on the website at some point after the close of business each evening, and will be presented for approval the next day.

11. **Order Paper**

Please notify all matters relating to the business, such as changes, proposed amendments where these are known in advance, and so on, to the Clerk by email at michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk earliest opportunity. The order paper for the following day will be published on the website at some point after the close of business each day.

12. **Important message from the chaplain**

If you would like to share in leading our worship at General Assembly, the Moderator's Chaplain, Revd. Lindsey Sanderson, would be pleased to hear from you. She is looking for volunteers to serve Communion, read Scripture passages and play the digital piano. You can contact her at minister.ekhamiltonurc@gmail.com.

The words we use in our worship will be projected onto screens. If you would find it more accessible to have these in a printed format, or emailed directly to you so you may read them on your own device please don't hesitate to be in touch using the email address above.

13. **Volunteers**

Volunteers are still needed to steward and assist at General Assembly. If you are able to help, please contact Sam Bircham by email at samantha.bircham@urc.org.uk

14. **Breakout Groups**

We have included a list of Breakout Groups and the location these groups are to meet. There may be occasions during assembly when a topic needs group discussion and these groups will be utilised. Those attending on-line will be included in one on-line break-out group because there are so few attending on-line this year.

15. **Parallel Sessions**

You will see on the Agenda that on Saturday evening after dinner we will have the opportunity to choose to join a parallel session. Parallel sessions offer an opportunity for members of Assembly to engage with the work of the Assembly's committees in a more intimate and less formal setting. There will be four parallel sessions as follows:

One - Paper I1 – Mission Committee Report

Two - Paper G1 – Finance Committee Report

Three - Paper H1 – Ministries Committee Report
& Paper K1 – PRWC Report

Four - Paper E1 – Equalities Committee Report
& Paper T1 – Safeguarding Committee Report

16. **Praying with GEAR**

The Group for Evangelism and Renewal within the United Reformed Church will be facilitating

early morning prayers on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday during Assembly. More details will be available at The Hayes.

17. **Live streaming**

The business sessions of General Assembly, as well as the Sunday morning worship at 11:30am, will be live streamed on the URC website, YouTube channel and Facebook page. **Please note Sunday morning worship will be live streamed at 11:30am.**

18. **Social Media**

We should not post to social media sites during business sessions. This restriction only applies when Assembly is in session. As ever, everything shared on these sites is the responsibility of the author and subject to the same defamation laws as any other written communication.

The report of the business will appear on the URC website and social media channels throughout the day.

Thank you for your commitment to Assembly. I look forward to seeing you.

Yours in Christ,

John Bradbury
General Secretary