

**Minutes of a meeting of the United Reformed Church General Assembly  
On Friday 30 June 2023**

***The Assembly met through a hybrid arrangement of an in-person meeting at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire and by video conferencing.***

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, the Revd Fiona Bennett, duly constituted Assembly.

Opening Worship was led by the Moderator's Chaplain, the Revd Lindsey Sanderson, and included the sacrament of Holy Communion and the commissioning of Victoria James as United Reformed Church Chief Operating Officer.



**ROLL OF ASSEMBLY 2023**

**Moderator**

1. The Revd Fiona Bennett

**Clerk**

2. The Revd Dr Michael Hopkins

**Assistant Clerk**

3. The Revd Sarah Moore

**General Secretary**

4. The Revd Dr John Bradbury

**Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)**

5. The Revd Adrian Bulley

**Deputy General Secretary (Mission)**

6. The Revd Philip Brooks

**Chief Operating Officer**

7. Mrs Victoria James

**Moderator-elect of the General Assembly**

8. The Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson

**Convenors of General Assembly Standing Committees, except the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee**

9. Business Committee – The Revd Mark Robinson

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 Jo Clare-Young

14. Faith and Order – The Revd Dr Robert Pope

15. Finance – Mr Ian Hardie (Treasurer)

16. The Deputy Treasurer – Mr Vaughan Griffiths

17. Ministries – The Revd Mary Thomas

18. Mission – Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte

19. Nominations – Mrs Helen Lidgett

20. Safeguarding – The Revd Roger Jones

**Convenor of the United Reformed Church Trust**

21. Ms Catriona Wheeler

**Two most recent former Moderators**

22. The Revd Clare Downing

*Mr Peter Pay died in office.*

**Former Moderators (2 places)**

23. The Revd John Marsh

24. The Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch

**Resource Centres for Learning**

25. Northern College Staff – The Revd Dr Adam Scott

26. Northern College Student – Mrs Carol Clack

27. Scottish College Staff – The Revd Dr John McNeil Scott

28. Scottish College Student – Mr David Townsend

29. Westminster College Staff – The Revd Peter Ball

30. Westminster College Student – Miss Abigail Perrow

**United Reformed Church Youth (3 places)**

31. Youth Assembly Moderator – Miss Philippa Osei

32. Youth Assembly Moderator Elect – Miss Heather Moore

33. Youth Assembly GA/AE rep – Miss Laura Everard

**United Reformed Church Chaplain to HM Forces (1 place)**

34. Vacant

**Northern Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

35. The Synod Moderator – The Revd David Herbert

36. The Synod Clerk - The Revd Dr Trevor Jamison

37. The Revd Kim Plumpton

38. The Revd Sally Bateman

39. The Revd Philip Gray

40. The Revd David Grosch-Miller

41. Revd Joan Grindrod Helmn

42. Ms Lisa McAvoy

43. Mr Sean Bell\*

44. Mrs Sheila Duncan

45. Mr Willie Duncan

46. Dr Donna Moore

47. Mrs Pippa Hodgson+ ^

48. Vacant

49. Vacant

50. Vacant

**North Western Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

51. The Synod Clerk – Mr Tim Hopley
52. The Revd Michael Aspinall
53. The Revd Martyn Coe
54. The Revd Jonnie Hill
55. The Revd Sheila Coop
56. The Revd Mike Walsh
57. The Revd Ruth Watson
58. The Revd Lisa Wilson
59. The Revd Martin Whiffen
60. Mrs Fozia Aftab
61. Mrs Barbara Aspinall
62. Ms Elizabeth Hall
63. Mr Aftab Mughal
64. Mr John Skipworth
65. Mr Damian Tipler\*
66. Miss Jadan Turner\*

### **Mersey Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

67. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Geoff Felton
68. The Synod Clerk – Ms Rita Griffiths
69. The Revd Murray George
70. The Revd Dr Nick Jones
71. The Revd Ronald Reid
72. The Revd Ruth Wilson
73. Mrs Patricia Cansfield
74. Mrs Hazel Davies
75. Mrs Barbara Ellis
76. Mr Paul Franklin
77. Ms Emma Jackson\*
78. Ms Patricia Reilly
79. Ms Charlotte Samson\*
80. Mrs Jean Taylor
81. Dr Ruth Winterburn
82. Vacant

### **Yorkshire Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives 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 Kissak
86. The Revd Steven Knapton
87. The Revd Zaidie Orr

88. The Revd Dr Nicola Robinson
89. Miss Katherine Buckland
90. Mrs Gillian Chapman
91. Mrs Margaret Knapton
92. Mr Dan Morrell
93. Mr Daniel Raddings\*
94. Miss Lydia Raddings\*
95. Mrs Teresa Raddings
96. Mrs Clare Westgarth
97. Ms Megan Westgarth\*
98. Vacant

### **East Midlands Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

99. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Geoffrey Clarke
100. The Synod Treasurer – Mr David Greatorex
101. The Revd Ruth Allen
102. The Revd Solomon Aryee-Brown
103. The Revd Clare Davison
104. The Revd Craig Muir
105. The Revd Professor Stephen Orchard
106. The Revd Jane Wade
107. Mr Luke Framji
108. Mr Derek Graham
109. Mr Charles Leggat\*
110. Mrs Ann Lockett
111. Mrs Barbara Moses
112. Mrs Isabel Plaatjies
113. Miss Rebecca Smith\*
114. Mrs Ruth Tompsett

### **West Midlands Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

115. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Steve Faber
116. The Synod Clerk – Mrs Rachel Wakeman
117. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Steve Powell
118. The Revd Debbie Brown
119. The Revd James Hamilton
120. The Revd Andrew Mann-Ray
121. The Revd Graham Sweeney
122. The Revd Chris Watson
123. Mr John Fletcher
124. Mrs Julie Jefferies
125. Ms Kirsty Mabbott
126. Mr Mervyn Davies ^
127. Miss Kati Waynes

128. The Revd Tim Meadows+
129. Vacant
130. Vacant

### **Eastern Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

131. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Lythan Nevard
132. The Synod Clerk – The Revd David Coaker
133. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Gilbert Heathcote
134. The Revd Dr Catherine Ball
135. The Revd Adam Earle
136. The Revd Sohail Ejaz
137. The Revd Mark Hayes
138. The Revd Joshua Norris
139. The Revd Anne Sardeson
140. The Revd Dr Janet Tollington
141. The Revd Nigel Uden
142. Mrs Claire Coster
143. Miss Chloe Elmer\*
144. Mr Richard Lewney
145. Mrs Joan Smith
146. Mr Brandon Stein\*

### **South Western Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

147. The Synod Clerk – Mrs Rachel Leach
148. The Synod Treasurer – The Revd Richard Gray
149. The Revd Dougie Burnett
150. The Revd Aiyana Gardner-Houghton
151. The Revd Tracey Lewis
152. The Revd Dr Peggy Mulambya-Kabonde
153. The Revd Stephen Newell
154. The Revd Jayne Taylor
155. The Revd Neil Thorogood
156. Mrs Janet Gray
157. Mr Alex Mabbott
158. Mr Paul Winter
159. Ms Marie Trubic
160. Vacant
161. Vacant
162. Vacant

### **Wessex Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

163. The Synod Clerk – Miss Karen Bell
164. The Revd Stephen Ansa-Addo
165. The Revd Tim Clarke
166. The Revd Wayne Hawkins
167. The Revd Glyn Millington
168. The Revd Wilbert Sayimani
169. The Revd Wendy White
170. Mrs Jill Abrahams
171. Mrs Sheilagh Courtnage
172. Mr George Farris
173. Mrs Linda Jackson
174. Mr David North
175. Ms Pat Oliver
176. Mr Clive Snashall
177. Miss Maya Withall\*
178. Miss Eden Withall\*

### **Thames North Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

179. The Synod Moderator – The Revd George Watt
180. The Synod Clerk – Ms Nneoma Chima
181. The Revd Margaret Ali
182. The Revd Brian Busckill
183. The Revd Yufen Chen
184. The Revd Dominic Grant
185. The Revd John Hardakar
186. The Revd John Macaulay
187. The Revd Noble Samuel
188. The Revd Sally Thomas
189. Ms Hilda Darkwah
190. Mrs Jane Fredjohn
191. Mr Peter Knowles
192. Mrs Muna Levan-Harris ^
193. Ms Aaliyah Stewart\*
194. Vacant

### **Southern Synod**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

195. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Bridget Banks
196. The Synod Clerk – The Revd Russell Furley-Smith
197. The Synod Treasurer – Mr John Denison
198. The Revd Ruth Armstrong
199. The Revd John Grundy
200. The Revd Dr George Kalu
201. The Revd Martin Knight
202. The Revd Nadene Snyman

- 203. Mrs Rita Brown
- 204. Dr Joyce Edeki
- 205. Mrs Nnenna Kalu
- 206. Mr Alan Kirby
- 207. Miss Mercy Nimako
- 208. Miss Zara Shahbaz\*
- 209. Mr Zeerak Shahbaz\*
- 210. Miss Pamela Tolhurst

### **National Synod of Wales**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

- 211. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Simon Walkling
- 212. The Synod Clerk –Ms Megan Price
- 213. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Chris Atherton
- 214. The Revd John Hayton
- 215. The Revd Stella Hayton
- 216. The Revd Martha McInnes
- 217. The Revd Branwen Rees
- 218. The Revd David Salsbury
- 219. Mrs Bethan Trott
- 220. Miss Joanna Harris\*
- 221. Mr Mike Ricketts Hein
- 222. Miss Ore Kassim\*
- 223. Ms Maggie Kirkbride
- 224. Mx Isla Munnik\*
- 225. Mrs Kate Wolsey
- 226. Vacant

### **National Synod of Scotland**

*(16 places – at least 5 of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least 5 of which shall be Elders or “lay”. Any 2 within the 16 places are reserved for representatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)*

- 227. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Paul Whittle
- 228. The Synod Clerk - Revd Jan Adamson
- 229. The Revd Stewart Cutler ^
- 230. The Revd Susan Henderson
- 231. Mrs Margaret Fairgrieve
- 232. The Revd Nick Mark
- 233. The Revd Helen Mee
- 234. Dr Ewen Harley
- 235. Ms Morag McLintock
- 236. Mr Duncan Walker ^
- 237. Miss Myra Rose
- 238. Mrs Lesley Thomson
- 239. Miss Victoria Turner
- 240. Vacant
- 241. Vacant
- 242. Vacant

**British and Irish Ecumenical representatives (5 places)**

- 243. The Rt Revd Sally Foster-Fulton (*Church of Scotland*)
- 244. Mr Christopher Webb (*Church of England*)
- 245. The Revd Dr Reynaldo F. Leão-Neto (*Methodist Church of Great Britain*)
- 246. Dr Nicola Brady (*Churches Together Britain and Ireland*)
- 247. Dr Anna Krauss (*Council of Lutheran Churches*)

**International Ecumenical representatives (5 places)**

- 248. Pfarrer Martin Henninger (*Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz*)
- 249. The Revd Najla Kassab ^ (*The World Communion of Reformed Churches*)
- 250. The Revd Dr Gordon Cowans ^ (*The United Church in Jamaica & Cayman Islands*)
- 251. The Revd Bohyun Kim ^ (*The Presbyterian Church of Korea*)
- 252. Mrs Nancy Lin^ (*The Presybyerian Church of Taiwan*)

**Council for World Mission (1 place)**

- 253. The Revd Dr Graham McGeoch

*\*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.*

*^indicates those attending online.*

**Session one**

The Moderator introduced the platform party to Assembly, and demonstrated the process of decision-making by consensus.

The Assembly Clerk moved the following Resolutions:

**Resolution 79**

**General Assembly appoints Ms Nneoma Chimea (Convener), Mrs Linda Jackson, and the Revd Nick Mark as tellers for the election of the Moderator of the General Assembly 2024-2025.**

*Agreed*

**Resolution 80**

**General Assembly appoints Ms Morag McLintock as Convener of Tellers for any counted votes at this meeting of General Assembly.**

*Agreed*

**Resolution 81**

**General Assembly appoints the following to form any facilitation groups that may be needed:**

**The Revd Stephen Ansa-Addo, the Revd Tracey Lewis, the Revd Zaidie Orr, the Revd Branwen Rees, the Revd Wilbert Sayimani, the Revd Dr Adam Scott, the Revd Dr John McNeil Scott, the Revd Sally Thomas, and the Revd Neil Thorogood.**

*Agreed*



The Northern Synod Moderator, the Revd David Herbert, presented the report of the Synod Moderators. Assembly discussed aspects of the report informally in small groups. Assembly thanked the Synod Moderators for their report.

**East Midlands Synod 2023 Resolutions for Ukraine**

**Paper X1**

Mr Derek Graham, on behalf of the East Midlands Synod, presented paper X1, and moved **Resolution 71:**

**a) Out of its concern for its brothers and sisters in the Churches in Ukraine which are members with us in the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (the United Methodist Church in Ukraine, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ukraine and in particular the Transcarpathian Reformed Church, the Reformed Church of Ukraine), the United Reformed Church sends greetings to the respective Conference and Synods of the three Churches.**

**b) General Assembly instructs the Mission and Finance Committees in conjunction with Synods and working with ecumenical partners to determine what help might appropriately be offered to our sisters and brothers in the Transcarpathian Reformed Church as a result of the Russian invasion and the ongoing consequences of the war in Ukraine.**

Following discussion, *Assembly agreed*

**Illegal Migration Bill**

**Paper X3**

Mr John Skipworth, on behalf of the North Western Synod, moved Resolutions 73-76.

After discussion, the resolutions were remitted to a Facilitation Group

**Session two**

**South Western Synod**

**Paper X5**

The Revd Dougie Burnett, on behalf of the South Western synod, moved resolution 78:

**Resolution 78**

**General Assembly receives The Bristol Korean Church as a local church of the United Reformed Church.**

*Agreed*

The Revd Yohan Song was warmly welcomed to Assembly.

The General Secretary introduced Paper N1 – Church Life Review.

Dr Nathan Mladin, of *Theos*, outlined the process and some of the most striking results of the review, and responded to a number of questions.

The Revd Steve Faber introduced Paper N4, outlining the legal and financial obligations of local churches and synods.

The Chaplain led Assembly in prayer, which included the commemoration of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Church Related Community Workers, Missionaries, Clerks of General Assembly and Moderators of General Assembly who have died, and congregations which have closed since the last meeting of the General Assembly:

**Ministers and CRCW:**

|                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| David Bernard Brown     | Roderick MacFarlane         |
| John Donald Waller      | Mark George Westerman       |
| Peter Ward Beaman MBE   | Richard Johnson Wiggins     |
| Thomas Lowe             | Peter David Bellamy         |
| Brian David Treharne    | Gillian Brown               |
| Angus William Duncan    | Christina Margaret Copley   |
| Marjorie Ayton          | Aileen D Walker             |
| David Bending           | Norman George               |
| Arthur Baker            | Nina Mead                   |
| Gordon Palmer           | Peter Wright                |
| Harold Dixon            | Douglas Greig Watson        |
| Derek Gill              | Betty Reta Chadwick         |
| Alan Smith              | Jessie Clare                |
| Susan Elizabeth Roberts | Pamela Constance Lewis      |
| Margaret Tilley         | William Graham              |
| Donald Trevor Woffenden | Marion Joyce Thomas         |
| Alan Johnson            | Eric Ripplingham            |
| Joyce Eleanor Yates     | Stanley Crane               |
| Jean Sydney Wilkinson   | Jennifer Yule               |
| Michael Lindsay Forster | Anthony James Lawford Jones |
| Alexander Mailer        | Janet Loveitt               |
| Emily Constance Browne  | Charles E L Price           |
| John Ewart Francis      | Rosemary Buxton (CRCW)      |

**Former Moderator:**

Peter Pay

**Church Closures:**

Blyth United Reformed Church  
Halton United Reformed Church  
Harrington United Reformed Church  
Penrith and Penruddock United Reformed Church  
Sale United Reformed Church  
The Church in Cottingley, Leeds  
Trinity Church, Keighley  
Wesley Road Chappel, Leeds  
Burton Joyce Community Church, Nottingham  
Friary United Reformed Church, Nottingham  
Rothwell United Reformed Church  
Christ Church Ross-on-Wye  
Hatherton United Reformed Church  
Potters Green United Reformed Church  
Wollerton United Reformed Church  
United Church Kingswood, Bristol  
Sarisbury Green United Reformed Church  
Summertown United Reformed Church, Oxford  
Woodford Green United Reformed Church  
Beckenham United Reformed Church  
Christchurch United Reformed Church, Walton-on-the-Hill  
Trinity Bromley United Reformed Church  
Aberdw United Reformed Church, Builth Wells  
Castle Square United Reformed Church, Pontypridd  
Central Ecumenical Church, Maesteg  
East Mains United Reformed Church, East Kilbride

Assembly adjourned at 2127