

# Synod Summary

... highlights of General Synod 2011



## ‘A Loaves and Fishes Church’

General Synod 2011 was constituted at the opening Eucharist, during which the Most Rev David Chillingworth, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) delivered his Charge to Synod. As it was St Columba’s Day, the Primus reminded Synod of the strand of the SEC’s faith story which was rooted in the Celtic tradition, in its spirituality and energy for mission. Other strands included the Scottish Reformation, the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of which had been marked in 2010 at a service of renewal of baptismal vows in which the Primus, the Moderator and the Cardinal had all participated. Two weeks previously, the Primus had been in America and had experienced the strand of the SEC’s heritage which was rooted in the consecration of Bishop Samuel Seabury. That root of Anglicanism placed the SEC at the centre of what the Primus believed needed to be a growing search for a post-colonial Anglican Communion. Moving from the past to the present the Primus said “times are changing in Scotland and the SEC is called to

play its part, along with ecumenical and interfaith partners, in shaping whatever new national identity might emerge from the current independence debate. We need to draw on all the strands which have enriched our past and made us what we are in the present if we are to respond to the challenges and opportunities which face us.”

In anticipating the agenda for Synod, the Primus explained that the Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy would invite Synod to consider how the SEC lived the gospel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how it addressed current society, suggesting that the policy invites a more measured, holistic and strategic response to the life of the Church, and spoke of the SEC being ‘a loaves and fishes Church’ – people doing miracles with small resources. Another characteristic of a Church involved in mission was that of death-defying joy. “We are Easter people who know death and yet address with world with joy; this means we are very realistic about our life – and yet bring to our mission buoyancy, resilience, energy and

the joy which enables others to recognise the attractiveness of the God we worship and proclaim.”

The Primus went on to explain that as a representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church it had been a great privilege for him to begin to experience the life of the wider Anglican Communion and the challenge it offers of living with, and being enriched by, diversity, saying “we owe it to our internal diversity that we should give measured and serious consideration to the Anglican Covenant. We prize our Anglicanism and have a sense of having participated as ‘midwives’ of the Anglican Communion. The discussion about the Covenant - whether or not we adopt it – is about our part in bringing to birth a new expression of the Anglican Communion.”

The Primus concluded his Charge by saying “to discuss our mission and to explore the shape of our future relationship with the World Church is an appropriate pairing for a Church which offers itself to be an instrument of God’s purposes in this time and this place.”

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**During the opening Eucharist an offering was taken to support the work of the Anglican Church in Japan (Nippon Sei Ko Kai) following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan earlier in the year. The offering amounted to £1363 (including tax reclaims).**

# Standing Committee

Mr David Palmer, Convener of the Standing Committee, presented the Annual Review and Accounts for the General Synod for the year ended 31 December 2010, and the Budget and Quota for 2012. He also presented background to a motion regarding Standing Committee membership which would amend the Digest of Resolutions of the Code of Canons to allow elected members of the Standing Committee to remain on the Committee for a whole term even when their term of office on the General Synod ended. This would ensure that Standing Committee would benefit from the experience gained by those elected members over the full four year period rather than having constant changes in membership. Standing Committee considered a wide range of issues during 2010. These included:

Financial planning, Completion of the sale of St Serf's Care Home, Review of the Grants for Ministry Fund, Format of General Synod, Detailed review of the Risk Register, Following up the Gender Audit carried out in 2010

## Annual Review and Accounts

- There are indications of some worrying trends in falling membership numbers in several dioceses.
- Over recent years Boards have been asked to review their budgets on a regular basis and to keep expenditure as tight as possible. Boards were asked again last year to review their budgets, this work is still ongoing
- The careful management of budgets by Boards, and opportunities to make further savings, resulted in a larger than planned surplus.
- The General Fund income totalled £1.65m. This mainly comprised investment income and interest of £962,249 and quota payments by dioceses of £585,368.
- The slight increase in income and decrease in expenditure produced a surplus of £148,000 – the main reasons for this were an increase in income from additional interest and higher levels of donations and legacies and unused buildings grants and grants for ministry. The surplus was timely as it helped fund the £2m payment to the Pension Fund.
- Although the overall financial position is reasonably healthy there is still a need to budget carefully over future years
- Key focus over the coming year will be the funding consequences of the new Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy.

## Budget

In considering budget proposals from the Boards, Standing Committee had in mind two underlying principles:

- Budgets should be set with a view to achieving a breakdown position on the General Fund
- Large one off receipts (such as legacies) should be capitalised to provide future income rather than used to fund current operating costs.
- During 2009 investment income fell dramatically and pension costs increased. As a result significant savings for 2010 and 2011 had to be found. A major part of the cost reductions were achieved by a 2 year moratorium on building grants and staff reductions in the General Synod Office. As a result of these and other savings a surplus of £65,731 is now budgeted for 2011. The Standing Committee considered the possibility of funding a small number of specific one off projects during 2011, but felt that given the uncertainty with future years' budgets it was better to boost the reserves to provide some additional protection.
- There are, however, still significant projected deficits for 2012 and 2013 of £116,886 and £131,715 respectively.
- While investment income is unlikely to return to previous levels, it is anticipated that there will be some increase which will help to reduce deficit.
- As far as expenditure is concerned the Finance Committee and the Administration Board have already agreed that future budget requests will reflect a phased reintroduction of the building grants programme. The Standing Committee will consider their proposals in November 2011.

## Quota

Quota for 2012 to be increased by 3% to £621,017. This compares with current inflation levels in the Retail Prices Index of 5.2% and in the Consumer Prices Index of 4.5%.

## Elections

### **Standing Committee membership – clerical representatives**

Very Rev Richard Kilgour, Rev Canon Malcolm Round

### **Clergy Discipline Tribunal**

#### **Practising lawyers:**

Lord Bannatyne, Lord McEwan, Sheriff Margaret Gimblett

#### **Clerics:**

Rev Dr Anne Tomlinson, Rev Canon Professor John Richardson

#### **Lay members:**

Mr Fraser Falconer, Mrs Sue Horne, Mr John Whittall

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## Anglican Covenant and Indaba

Synod 2010 passed a motion to request the Faith and Order Board to advise General Synod 2011 on what processes might be followed to enable due consideration of the Anglican Covenant. A paper from the Faith and Order Board was therefore prepared for Synod 2011 which set the contextual issues, legal process and suggested process for consideration of the Covenant. Following an explanation by the Rt Rev Dr Gregor Duncan (Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway) of the processes the motion to approve the process was passed by majority.

- The first stage of the suggested process was to discuss the Covenant at Synod 2011 using an indaba style of meeting. In explaining the process of indaba meetings The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson, Bishop of Argyll & The Isles reminded Synod that there were three basic principles: *I am here for the common good; I speak for the common good; There will be no winners or losers in this meeting.*
- A replication of the indaba process will be carried out at diocesan synods between 2011 and 2012
- Adoption of the Covenant in principle will be debated at General Synod 2012.
- Subject to the passing of such a motion in 2012, formal adoption would require canonical legislation which would be

presented to GS 2013 for first reading, then discussed at diocesan synods between 2013 and 2014 and then a second reading at GS 2014.

In introducing the context for consideration of the Anglican Covenant, the Most Rev David Chillingworth (Primus) said that the Scottish Episcopal Church remained deeply involved in Communion life through the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primus' membership of the Anglican Communion Standing Committee. At more informal levels, there were diocesan companionship links, the work of the Provincial Overseas Committee and much more. The intention of the Covenant was that it would lead the member churches into deeper communion. The question was whether the Scottish Episcopal Church considered that the Covenant was a reasonable and proper step to safeguard and enrich the life of an ever more diverse Communion – to be part of a new starting point – or whether it made less likely the very quality of communion life which The Scottish Episcopal Church sought.

The Primus considered that it was not unreasonable that there should be a Covenant which set out what it meant to be part of the Anglican Communion. Formerly, 'bonds of affection' had held the Communion together but times had changed. As a missional world faith, Anglicanism

had been extraordinarily successful and so it now held within its life a rich diversity of people and cultures.

The Rev Canon Dr Michael Fuller (Theological Institute of the Scottish Episcopal Church) then spoke about the content of the Covenant, reminding Synod that the Covenant was the product of a lengthy period of prayer and consultation in which the SEC had played a full part through its submissions to the Anglican Communion Covenant Drafting Group. The intention behind the Covenant was that it was not something to be viewed as imposed from above, constraining and limiting individuals or churches, but that it was something to give support from underneath, encouraging and freeing individuals and churches in lives of service. In conclusion, Dr Fuller drew attention to the wording of the declaration at the end of the Covenant: 'With joy and with firm resolve, we declare our churches to be partakers in this Anglican Communion Covenant, offering ourselves for fruitful service and binding ourselves more closely in the truth and love of Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever.'

Synod then divided into indaba groups for discussion on the Covenant; and in the plenary following the group discussions a wide range of views were expressed from the floor of Synod.

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## Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults

In her final presentation to General Synod as Convener of the Committee for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, Ms Lexy Plumtree explained that a significant amount of time in the previous 12 months had been devoted to the implementation of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. The Act had come into force at the end of February 2011. Prior to implementation, there had been considerable discussion regarding the kinds of activity which were to be defined as 'regulated work'. Recent discussions with the Central Registered Body for Scotland had resulted in confirmation that all of the applications for entry to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme which the Church wished to submit would be accepted. Consequently, it was hoped that the delays which had been experienced would soon be addressed. Ms Plumtree asked congregations for their patience since the delay was not within the control of the Church.

Ms Plumtree then turned to address the proposed changes to Canon 65 *Of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults* and Canon 54 *Of Offences and Trials* which were being brought to Synod for a first reading. In relation to Canon 65 Ms Plumtree explained that the change was to focus on the work for which the Committee was responsible rather than on the Committee itself. Ms Plumtree then introduced the proposed first reading of Canon 54, section 18 which extended the grounds for automatic suspension of a cleric from abuse of children or vulnerable adults to include conduct that might render a cleric unsuitable for working with such individuals. Both motions were carried by majority in all three houses of Bishops, Clergy, Laity.

The Primus thanked Ms Plumtree for the considerable expertise she had shared with the Church in her convenership of the Committee. Ms Plumtree announced that her successor is to be Mr Hugh Donald.

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## Canons

The Very Rev Jeremy Auld (Convener, Committee on Canons) introduced the background to the second reading of Canon 62 – *Of Retirement of Clergy*, saying that the reference to retirement age for pension purposes was being removed from the Canon as the place for such provision was not in the Canons themselves but in the Pension Fund rules. The main change to the Canon was to place non-stipendiary and stipendiary office holders on the same footing so that all office holders would retire at 70.

The Canons for First Reading included :

*Canon 63, Section 2 - Of the Office of Lay Representative* - to enable the appointment of a lay representative from religious communities with less than 30 lay communicant members. The motion was put to the vote in houses and passed by majority.

*Canon 66 – Of the Authorising of Lay Ministries* – to enable bishops to authorise Church Army officers and to provide for further lay ministries to be added to the proposed schedule to Canon 66 in future as the need might arise. The motion was put to the vote in houses and passed unanimously.

*Canon 13, Section 9 - Of the Conditions and Mode of Institution to and the Resignation and Vacation of, an Incumbency* - to enable bishops to have more flexibility and more time to deal with situations where stipend could no longer be afforded. As Canon 13 was the only mechanism which could 'buy some time' for a congregation's finances to be stabilised before the appointment of an incumbent, the proposed change to Canon 13 would remove the limitation on the period during which rights of presentation to an incumbency could be suspended in situations where it might be necessary to have more than the time periods currently permitted by the Canon. The motion was put to the vote in houses and passed unanimously.

## Pension Fund

Mr Simon Mackintosh (Chair, Pension Fund Trustees) reported that it had been another busy year for the Pension Fund Trustees and expressed his thanks to them. The Pension Fund was now in the second year of the recovery plan which had been agreed at General Synod 2009 and had subsequently been approved by the Pensions Regulator and which had been implemented from 1 January 2010. At 31 December 2007, the assets of the Pension Fund had been valued at approximately £32m but by 31 December 2008 they had dropped to £23.85m. It had been on that latter value that the 2008 actuarial valuation had proceeded. A recovery plan had been created and implemented which involved a substantial transfer of cash to the Pension Scheme from the Church and an increase in the employer's contribution to 34.9%. Those measures, coupled with good investment returns in 2009 and 2010, had put the Fund in a better financial position. At the end of 2010, Pension Fund assets stood at about £35.5m but continuing good financial returns were necessary for its continuing financial health.

As to future plans, Mr Mackintosh said that the Trustees also plan to

- carry out a review of actuarial services in advance of the next valuation
- clarify the future working relationship between the Church's Investment Committee and the Trustees
- continue the stabilisation of the scheme's finances

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## Whole Church Mission and Ministry

In inviting Synod to welcome the Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy paper prepared by the Mission and Ministry Board, The Most Rev David Chillingworth (Convener, Mission and Ministry Board) said the attempt to shape a Whole Church Policy meant taking a holistic view and adopting a measured approach to policy making at a time of diminishing resources and also taking stock of the changing nature of the Church and of the new energy which was so clearly visible in the life of the dioceses. He explained that the policy was 'Whole Church' because, in the complexity of any Church, the potential to take decisions which impacted on mission and ministry was spread across a number of bodies.

The Rev Dr Anne Tomlinson (Glasgow and Galloway) then explained that the policy described ways in which the province could act as a supporter and resourcer of the dioceses in the way in which it allocated money targeted at missional endeavours and encouraged greater inter-diocesan collaboration. The policy sought to find ways in which provincial-diocesan consultation and inter-diocesan cooperation could be fostered and promoted, so that best practice could be shared more widely to the benefit of all.

The Rt Rev Mark Strange (Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness) indicated that in his diocese journey times were more important than the mileage covered. He was aware of one individual who took 2½ hours to travel to church. If the Policy were to be 'Whole Church' it needed to take seriously the fact that there were parts of the Scottish Episcopal Church where there was equally as much missional energy but because of where they were located, there were increased difficulties in sustaining that energy.

Synod then divided in to indaba groups to discuss the paper, and a wide variety of views were then shared in a plenary session from the floor of Synod before the motion to welcome the paper and encourage the Mission and Ministry Board in implementing the next steps envisaged in the paper was put to the vote and passed.

## Overseas Committee

The Rev Canon Duncan McCosh (Convener, Overseas Committee) presented the report of his committee and advised that in the previous year it had awarded 37 grants for a wide range of projects across a number of Provinces in the Anglican Communion.

Canon McCosh then introduced Mr James Picardo, the Campaign Director of Jubilee Scotland who addressed Synod on the work of Jubilee Scotland and expressed thanks to The Scottish Episcopal Church for the massive contribution which it had made to its work. The current campaign 'Defuse the Debt Crisis' asked the Government to make this available not just for business but also for the poorest countries in the world so that they had a forum in which they could plead their case. The intention was to position Scotland as not just open for business but also open for justice. Information regarding the campaign could be obtained from Jubilee Scotland, who could also provide speakers for local meetings. He urged Synod members to make use of International Debt Week in October 2011 to draw attention to these issues. Grass roots support was essential and without the commitment of individuals, the campaign would not succeed.

As Canon McCosh was stepping down as Convener of the Overseas Committee he was thanked for all the work he had carried out on behalf of the Committee.

## Church in Society

The Very Rev Ian Barcroft (Convener, Church in Society Committee) announced that the Committee intended to issue, in the year ahead, a refreshed edition of the Prayer and Action booklet which had been produced a number of years previously. Issues which had been considered by the Committee included the euthanasia debate, trafficking and domestic abuse, faith in older people, sustainable living, homelessness, family support, Afghanistan and the issue of the Just War, the Scottish Parliamentary Elections, the effects of the internet on society and issues concerning the travelling community and their relationship with the churches. In the coming year, it would turn some of its attention to the issue of ethical banking. The Committee was pleased to be able to engage in debate ecumenically, and had welcomed Dr Bill Reid and the Rev Mitchell Bunting from the Methodist and United Reformed Churches respectively onto the Committee.

Before considering the principles for sustainable development which the Committee brought to Synod, Dean Barcroft emphasised that environmental sustainability was not simply about using low energy light bulbs, but was about engaging in practical ways that cohere with the values of the Christian faith. Dr Richard Crockett then gave a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the seven Principles of Sustainability which the Committee commended to Synod:

- *Our daily thanksgiving, prayer life, and worship should acknowledge the wealth and beauty of God's creation.*
- *Sustainability has to be applied to an environment that is constantly shaped by the forces of a dynamic earth.*
- *Pressure on sustainability from economic expansion and an increasing human carbon footprint cannot be ignored.*
- *Exploitation of human and material resources, the global energy demand, and uncontrolled consumerism undermine the basis for sustainable living in Scotland.*
- *A dialogue with modern science and technology is required to address global sustainability issues.*
- *Understanding the systems that sustain life as a whole should shape our responses and actions for sustainable living.*
- *Natural biodiversity of the land mass and its surrounding seas is a precious resource which we lose at our peril.*

Synod then passed motions to accept the Statement of Principles on environmental sustainability, to encourage dioceses to conduct their own environmental sustainability audit to identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption and to request diocesan bodies responsible for the care of church property to consider that the recording, monitoring and encouragement of energy use improvement is an integral part of the environmental sustainability audit.

## A Church for All

The Rev Annalu Waller (Chair, Church for All Working Group) spoke about the work of the Group whose key focus was to explore issues of accessibility and inclusion and to consider ways in which congregations could be supported in thinking about how to extend the diversity in the Scottish Episcopal Church in terms of ability and disability. The group was aware of resources already in existence – for example, ideas to make liturgy accessible to people with intellectual disabilities and to increase the awareness of inclusive language.

Dr Waller highlighted that Synod had been reminded in its Opening Eucharist that Christians were an Easter people who were called to share in the heavenly banquet. The motivation of the group was to ask why, in general, the Church's weekly Sunday banquets did not include a large part of society. Without realising it, people who ought to be at the centre of the banquet were in fact excluded. The reasons for this were complex, historical and attitudinal but it was necessary to ask why. Physical access was just one reason. There was also a question of making worship accessible to people with sensory impairments and literacy problems.

Most accessibility issues were not physical but were about information. There was already much good practice in place: using a microphone even where the speaker had a booming voice; having a copy of a Braille hymn book available; having a variety of wheelchair spaces available to give choice. Some dioceses already had accessibility audits and it was necessary to share this expertise. Dr Waller concluded her presentation by reiterating the plea for education, education, education!

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## Administration Board

Mr Michael Lugton (Convener, Administration Board) outlined the work of each of the Board's pendant committees before introducing each of the committee conveners to speak.

- The Investment Committee – chaired by Jeremy Burchill – continued to operate in challenging market conditions but the return on the Unit Trust portfolio for year end 2010 had been impressive and well above the benchmark set for the investment managers. Mr Burchill reported that the Committee had approved a move from having a segregated bond portfolio, in which the Fund directly held individual bonds, to a holding in a collective investment scheme. The Committee considered this was appropriate in order to deliver the objective for the Unit Trust Pool and it had been carried out in a very cost effective manner
- The Finance Committee – chaired by John Ferguson-Smith – had made a substantial contribution to the Standing Committee review of the Grants for Ministry Fund
- The Buildings Committee – chaired by Alex Stewart – had considered the proposed changes to Canon 35 and had circulated a list of works not requiring consent consequent upon those changes. It had also made useful contributions in relation to green energy issues
- The Retirement Welfare Committee – chaired by Graeme Stirling – had continued to manage the church's properties for retired clergy with care and compassion
- The Personnel Committee – chaired by Nick Bowry – had begun work on some aspects of gender audit matters which it was remitted to do following the Gender Audit report at General Synod 2010

The Rev Canon Ian Pallett had represented the Board at a conference entitled *Banking on Justice*. Canon Pallett had suggested that the fundamental question for the Church to address was the extent to which it wished to look more closely at the relationship between discipleship and finance. The Board had not felt able to make any specific recommendations on banking practice to the Standing Committee but recognised the need for further examination of the matter, in consultation with the Mission and Ministry Board and the Church in Society Committee.

## College of Bishops

The Rt Rev Brian Smith (Bishop of Edinburgh) and the Rt Rev Dr Gregor Duncan (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) engaged in a conversation on the subject of how bishops approached the question of the study and the practice of theology. Both reflected on the importance of a bishop being well grounded and up-to-date in theology and what was meant by this.

The Bishop of Edinburgh suggested theology was a multi-faceted discipline and it was impossible for one individual to be up to date in all branches of it. However, theology could also refer simply to the study of God rather than being broken down into narrow doctrinal aspects. The doctrinal aspects were important but he considered it was more important to be able to respond to theological issues as and when they arose in the public sphere and cited the recent comments by the Archbishop of Canterbury in *The New Statesman* regarding the current Westminster Coalition Government. The Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway agreed. It was essential to be grounded with a traditional capacity for prayer and to have sufficient facility to 'think on your feet' in relation to issues as they arose.

### *Primus inter pares*

The Primus followed this dialogue by reporting on his attendance at the Anglican Primates' Meeting which had taken place in Dublin in January 2011, explaining that the Primates' Meeting was one of the four Instruments of Communion in the Anglican Communion and had been established for Primates to meet for 'leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation'. The important issue which he had taken away from the meeting was that of the polity of Anglican Churches. In the difficulties of recent years, the Primates' Meeting appeared to have allowed itself to be drawn towards a way of working in which it had begun to aspire to a measure of executive authority in decision-making. The 2011 meeting had conducted a searching exploration of the role and authority of bishops and primates.

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## Ministry Development

Dr Peter Smart (Convener, Ministry Development Committee) had prepared a scoping report outlining the main items which the Committee was addressing and offered a flavour of that report to Synod by referring to the following five items:-

### **Initial Ministerial Education:**

- the relationship between central and dispersed TISEC was working better than it had ever worked
- the curriculum generally met the requirements of the Church although it was necessary to keep it and its delivery under constant review

**Equipping for Rural Ministry:** Following a commitment given during the debate the previous year on the Report of the Rural Commission, an optional additional IME residential weekend on rural ministry would be piloted in the autumn of 2011.

**Continuing Ministerial Development 1-3:** The Committee continued to assess how proposals from the Curriculum Review Working Party in 2009 might best be implemented as well as the potential level of take-up and the resources required.

**Forthcoming Changes to the Ministry Division Validation Process:** Potentially this was the biggest development facing the Committee at the current time. The emphasis would be on internal self-assessment supported by three and six yearly inspections. Planning for the transition of a new regime, involving both central and dispersed TISEC, was underway and a special workshop to draft the first self-assessment submission was scheduled for November 2011.

**Lay Learning:** The future of lay learning had occupied a substantial amount of the Committee's time in the preceding months. The Committee had agreed to recommend the cessation of the Church's partnership with York St John University for its validated delivery of the Certificate in Christian Studies. Alongside that decision, the Committee agreed not to seek an extension of the post of Lifelong Lay Learning Project Officer and paid tribute to the work which had been undertaken by Mr David Liddle in that post. Dr Smart then said that the Committee looked forward to being guided on the lay learning requirements arising from the implementation of the Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy.

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## Liturgy

The Rev Darren McFarland (Convener, Liturgy Committee) presented his final report as Convener of the Liturgy Committee. He explained that The Service of the Word had now reached the stage where it could be released to congregations and explained that:

- The College of Bishops would be invited to approve the Service of the Word for an experimental period of two years from 2011 to 2013 with comments to be received by the Faith and Order Board by the end of 2012 ; and would approve a focussed experimental use with at least two selected congregations in each diocese and encourage the use of the liturgy at clergy conferences, TISEC events, the Glenalmond Summer Camp and lay training events.
- Following the completion of the experimental period and final approval of the text, the Faith and Order Board would ask General Synod 2013 to add the Service to the schedule to Canon 22.

The second major project of the Committee had been work on the content of a proposed new Eucharistic Rite. This had not progressed as far as the Liturgy Committee had hoped because of the need to devote time to the development of the Service of the Word. The Committee had, however, met with a couple of the Church's liturgical scholars and had come to the view that what was required was additional text rather than completely new text, whilst at the same time encouraging creativity within the existing texts. It was also considered that issues such as Scottish Episcopal Church identity and shifts in theological understanding needed to be examined more deeply before reaching a conclusion on the best way to proceed.

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***“Synod is something that I look forward to attending. When asked why I come “again” my usual response is that I meet some lovely Christian people. For me the joy of Synod isn't the debates (helpful and informative as they are) it's getting to know more of God's family.”***

**Major Alan Dixon, The Salvation Army**

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## Inter Faith Relations

The Rev John Conway (Convener, Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths) expressed thanks to dioceses for participating in the inter faith activities mapping process which had been requested by General Synod in 2010. He said inter faith activity tended mainly to occur in the larger urban areas of Scotland of which the Festival of Spirituality and Peace was an example but there were exceptions to this such as inter-faith groups in Dumfries and Galloway and also Falkirk where there was significant Scottish Episcopal Church input. The presence of other faiths in Scottish society was something with which everyone could engage. The audit had highlighted new contacts and questions as well as news of interesting local initiatives.

## Doctrine

The Rev Professor David Jasper (Convener, Doctrine Committee) introduced the seventh Grosvenor Essay, being the second in the series *Thinking the Nicene Creed* on the subject of incarnation. It was designed to be theological but also included discussion of liturgical and sacramental aspects. The Committee was now also in the course of preparing a study guide for the Grosvenor Essays as a whole.

Professor Jasper also advised that the Committee was preparing a paper for the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway to take to a consultation on marriage being organised within the Porvoo Communion, which would take place in Finland later in 2011. The task of the Doctrine Committee was not in any way to be prescriptive but it hoped to put forward various points of view for thought and discussion. The Committee sought to clarify for the future the Church's understanding of marriage theologically, liturgically, and in terms of pastoral care. Professor Jasper hoped that by the end of the year a further Grosvenor Essay would be produced which would be an expanded version of the Committee's thinking on marriage.

## Inter Church Relations

In her last presentation as Convener of the Inter-Church Committee, Norma Higgott reported that the Inter-Church Relations Committee had sent out a questionnaire to all Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) congregations asking for information in order to assess the scope of ecumenical involvement. She expressed thanks to the many who had already responded to the questionnaire and encouraged those who had not yet done so to send their responses to the Church Relations Officer.

Significant time during the year had been spent within Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) discussing matters relating to Scottish Churches House following the decision to close the House as a result of a downturn in business over the course of the previous few years. Mrs Higgott invited the Primus to speak on this subject. The Primus explained that decisions regarding Scottish Churches House were made by the ACTS Trustees. There had previously been a process under way with a view to transferring Scottish Churches House as a going concern to a new management body. However, it had become clear that owing to economic circumstances, such a transfer would no longer be viable. A series of decisions had resulted from that including a proposal to the ACTS membership by the Trustees that Scottish Churches House should be sold. The proposal to sell had not been adopted and, in the light of this, the Trustees had decided to engage in a bidding process using the lease which had originally been proposed for granting to the new management company.

Mrs Higgott continued with her report and referred to the work of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, highlighting a new web-based information source [www.churchestogetherconnect.org](http://www.churchestogetherconnect.org) and invited Synod to vote on an amendment to Canon 15 *Of Admission of Clergy Of Other Churches, Provinces and Diocese to Officiate* in recognition that the SEC is now in communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark which recently signed the Porvoo Agreement.

## Diaconate Working Group

The Very Rev Dr John Armes (Convener, Diaconate Working Group) explained that the diaconate was one of the three orders of clergy and historically within the life of the Church the diaconate had played a very significant role. In 1994, the Scottish Episcopal Church had been the first Anglican Church to approve the Porvoo Common Statement which included a commitment to work towards a common understanding of the diaconal ministry. Since then, there had been two consultations on diakonia in London in 2006 and in Oslo in 2009. The Working Group had been set up by the Faith and Order Board in order to respond to the recommendations emanating from the Oslo consultation. Those recommendations required the Scottish Episcopal Church to consider not only the ordained diaconate but also the question of what diakonia meant for the Church.

The Rt Rev Mark Strange (Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness) explained that within his diocese a series of days had been held to look at the history of the diaconate, the concept of the deacon working alongside the bishop and the concept of diocesan deacons as well as charge deacons. There had also been extensive discussion to ensure that any developments did not diminish the role of lay readers.

Dr Armes then concluded that the impetus for consideration of the diaconate was stimulated by fruitful discussion with ecumenical partners. It was also a response to the growing number of individuals who discerned a calling to a ministry which was diaconal rather than priestly.

## Information & Communication

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Convener, Information and Communication Board) highlighted the Board's intention to develop a template for congregational websites during the coming year which would support the missional endeavours of the Church. Provost Holdsworth noted the absence in the Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy of any reference to online content. He concluded his presentation by indicating that the Standing Committee had asked the Information and Communication Board to produce a protocol regarding the use of PowerPoint presentations at Synod.

Summaries of each day's proceedings and Twitter postings were available on the SEC website [www.scotland.anglican.org](http://www.scotland.anglican.org) throughout the meeting of General Synod.

The meeting was also audio-streamed.

## Synod Fringe Events

A wide variety of stalls were on display in Annan House, adjacent to Palmerston Place and which were visited by Synod members during coffee and lunch breaks. The stalls included:

*Bethany Christian Trust*  
*Christian Aid*  
*Cursillo*  
*Mission to Seafarers*  
*Mothers Union*  
*Scottish Episcopal Church Mission Association*  
*Scotland4Peace*

Demand was again high for the lunchtime meetings, which were introduced a few years ago to allow Synod members opportunity to hear about the wider work of Boards and Committees of the Church and topics relating to them. This year the meetings focussed on social media and using online video as part of the church's mission; a presentation on behalf of Bethany Christian Trust on the churches' role in building relational focussed communities; the work of Christian Aid; Scotland4Peace's work in peace and reconciliation issues; a Mothers Union presentation of 'The Empty Chair' – a drama highlighting the issues of domestic abuse, and update on the work of Eco-Congregation Scotland.

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***"For me, Synod was a worthwhile and enjoyable experience. The well-oiled machine that is General Synod started in an appropriately worshipful way with the Eucharist and purred along efficiently. The range of topics for discussion was wide but the supporting paperwork was helpful and comprehensive. The addition of the indaba approach allowed many more voices to be heard. Strong affection for our own Scottish Episcopal Church and its unique identity was tangible during sessions on the Anglican Covenant. My personal highlight was being able to see and meet many of those who were formerly just names to me in Inspires and other publications. I came away a lot wiser about our Church and with a real sense of peace: the Scottish Episcopal Church is in safe (God inspired) hands!"***

**Jane Ross, Fresher (Aberdeen & Orkney)**

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**General Synod 2012**  
**will take place**  
**7-9 June**