

Scottish Episcopal Church

General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church
Scottish Charity No SC015962

General Synod Office
21 Grosvenor Crescent
Edinburgh EH12 5EE
Tel: 0131 225 6357
email: office@scotland.anglican.
website: www.scotland.anglican.



15 May 2024

To: All Members of General Synod
Alternate Members
Ecumenical and Interfaith Guests
Committee Conveners
Diocesan Secretaries (information only)

email: secgen@scotland.anglican.org

Dear Synod Member

GENERAL SYNOD 13-15 JUNE 2024

Thank you for participating in the life of the Province by serving on General Synod. I look forward to welcoming you to this year's meeting and to the contribution you will make to the Synod's discussions and decisions.

As previously advised, this year's meeting of General Synod will be held "in person" from 13-15 June 2024. It will take place at St Paul's & St George's Church, York Place, Edinburgh. (A map showing the location of the venue is reproduced in *A Guide to the General Synod 2024* – see below.)

ATTENDANCE

This mailing is being sent to all members of General Synod, alternate members, ecumenical and interfaith guests, and Committee Conveners. (It is not being sent in hard copy to those who have previously indicated that they wish only digital versions. We encourage those using the digital versions to download them in advance of Synod.) If you are an ordinary member and are not able to attend Synod, you should inform your Diocesan Office without delay if you have not already done so. Non-attending members and non-attending alternates are sent the Synod papers for information only. If you are an alternate member, you should only attend Synod if you have been advised by your Diocesan Office that you are to take the place of a member (but the Synod papers are enclosed for your information anyway).

ENCLOSURES

I enclose the following in connection with the meeting:

1. The agenda and papers for General Synod. (In order to reduce the length of the papers, last year's minutes have been produced in small type. If you would like to receive a larger print version by email, please contact Donna Glass on donnag@scotland.anglican.org). They are also available at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/boards-and-committees/the-general-synod/general-synod-2023/>

2. The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023.
3. A Guide to the General Synod 2024.
4. A paper regarding the Scottish Episcopal Church Pension Fund with proposals about the future contribution rate and Pensionable Stipend/Salary. The preliminary results of the Actuarial Valuation of the Fund were received by the Pension Trustees and Standing Committee in early May too late for the paper to be included in the bound volume of Synod papers. The motions contained in the paper will be dealt with during Session 2 at Synod.
5. A paper about the *Thursdays in Black* initiative.
6. **For members of General Synod only**, a list of Synod Members. Previously, the list of Synod members has been reproduced in the Synod Papers, which are made available on the provincial website. The names of those who had not given consent were removed from the list. However, it is unsatisfactory that the identity of some Synod members should not be available to the Synod membership as a whole. We have been advised that the full list of Synod members' names may be disclosed to the Synod membership as a whole, in compliance with data protection rules, provided that distribution of the list is restricted to members of Synod. **The list is, therefore, provided to you for your personal use only and should not be passed on or disclosed to any other person.** It will not be published on the website.
7. A paper about Safety and Security Arrangements for General Synod 2024, from which you will see we are introducing certain new safety and security measures in the light of legislation expected to come into force next year.
8. A leaflet about the Pantonian Professor of Divinity Lecture 2024 to be given by the Rev Canon Professor Michael Hull, Principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute on Wednesday 12 June 2024, at 5pm in St Vincent's Chapel, Edinburgh. The title of the Lecture is 'Lead us not into temptation: On translating the Lord's Prayer'.

Please note that to avoid the printed papers being over-long, we have not included the text of the Lent, Holy Week and Easter Liturgies, the subject of a motion for second reading during Session 6. All of these can be viewed online, along with the full Synod papers, at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/boards-and-committees/the-general-synod/>. If you wish a hard copy of those Liturgies, please email Donna Glass at the email address referred to above.

The Worship Booklet for Synod will be available on arrival at the meeting and will also be posted online.

SYNOD EUCHARIST AND OFFERING

Synod will commence with a Eucharist at St Paul's & St George's, at 10.30am on Thursday 13 June. Coffee will be served after the Eucharist before the beginning of formal business.

The offering taken as part of the Synod Eucharist will go to the Friends of the Holy Land. Information about its work can be found at:

<https://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk>

Please note that the offering will be taken in online form only and Synod members are asked to donate using the following link:

<https://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/GeneralSynodOffering/oneoff>

All Synod members who are taxpayers are invited to give using the Gift Aid option on the website. We encourage members to give in advance of the Eucharist but if that is not possible for any reason please endeavour to do so by the end of the day on 13 June. Once the offering has closed, we will forward the funds to Friends of the Holy Land.

FRESHERS' MEETING

A "Freshers' Meeting" for new members of Synod will take place in the Upper Hall at St Paul's & St George's at 9.00am on Thursday 13 June. The purpose of that meeting is to welcome new members to Synod and explain practical arrangements. Freshers should make themselves known at the Welcome Desk upon arrival at Synod.

Dioceses have been encouraged to arrange diocesan pre-Synod meetings to assist members in their preparation for Synod and are invited to team up new Synod members with existing members as a means of introduction to Synod.

VOTING

We intend that voting at Synod will again be undertaken electronically but in 2024 we will use a new voting system. On arrival Synod members will be provided with a voting handset (see right). (It will not be possible to vote using your mobile phone, tablet or laptop.) There will be a short training session at the start of the meeting on how to use the voting device and advice will be available during the Synod should you encounter any technical issues.



The handsets will be numbered individually for each member. Please keep your numbered device with you throughout Synod and return it at the conclusion of the meeting. Voting involves use of the numeric keypad. The device will provide visual feedback to confirm that your vote has been recorded by the system. The system will record votes against each device so that, if an audit of votes is needed, it will be possible to check whether a vote from any individual's device has been recorded and how the vote was cast. The Tellers appointed by Synod will have access to those voting records, but they will not be published.

CHARGING FACILITIES

As explained above, in a change from previous years, Synod members will no longer use their own mobile phones, laptops or tablets in order to vote. You are welcome to bring such devices to Synod but in order to avoid an excess of cables, this year we will not provide charging sockets at the tables where members sit. Limited charging facilities will be provided close to the hall where tea/coffee is served to enable charging during breaks in the meeting. In addition to a number of 6-way extension leads, multi USB charging stations (with USB type A sockets) will be provided. We suggest that Synod members who wish to use their own devices during the meeting should bring

them already fully charged at the beginning of each day and should consider bringing a power bank. A small number of sockets are also available near some of the pillars in the nave of St Paul's and St George's for use during the meeting. Please contact office@scotland.anglican.org in advance of Synod if you have any concerns regarding these arrangements and we will endeavour to address them.

SYNOD BUSINESS

Elections: the agenda deals with the filling of vacancies on provincial bodies by way of formal motions, on which members will be able to cast their votes using the voting handset. Additional motions will be included in the event that additional nominations are received before the commencement of Synod. Further information will also be provided in relation to certain other vacancies which Standing Committee has filled pending Synod.

Table discussions: some of the sessions at Synod will include discussion in table groups. Each group will have an appointed facilitator.

Meet the Board Conveners: The Synod papers include work plans for provincial boards and committees. For 30 minutes at 12.15pm on the Friday of Synod, there will be an opportunity for Synod members, if they wish, to attend a "Meet the Board Conveners" session at which the Conveners of the Boards and the Standing Committee will present their respective work plans and members will be able to ask questions or make comment. Vacancies arise regularly on boards and committees (there are a number at present), and the sessions will also be an opportunity for Synod members to find out more about the work of the boards and their committees and consider whether they or perhaps others whom they know in their local congregation, might consider serving on a provincial body.

A separate room will be allocated at St Paul's & St George's for each of these breakout sessions. To enable us to assess likely attendance and allocate space accordingly, if you wish to attend a session, please complete the Google Form available at: <https://forms.gle/5fsWFaPoUophtUZU9>

Questions: Synod members are invited to submit, in advance of Synod, any written questions which they wish to address to the Conveners of Boards and Committees. This is intended to enable Conveners who are present to prepare for their presentations and ensure that relevant questions are addressed. (It may be possible to address some such questions during the session mentioned above.) Only those Committees which have business to bring to Synod have a slot on the agenda. Any questions for Committee Conveners without a slot at this meeting will be passed to them so that we can arrange an answer to be provided. If you wish to submit a question, please send it to me **by Thursday 6 June 2024** in order to allow it to be properly considered.

Speakers' cards: these will also be available at General Synod for members who wish to indicate an intention to speak in debate.

Help Desk: to assist in the process of debate, we will again have a "help desk" available during part of Synod where guidance can be offered if Synod members wish to propose amendments to Motions, etc. Whether or not members wish to avail themselves of the help desk, any member who wishes to propose an amendment to a motion is invited to let me know as early as possible, ideally before the commencement

of Synod. I would remind members that, under Rule 10 of the Rules of Order (see page 202 of the Synod papers), notice of any Rule 10 Motion should normally be given to me before Synod starts.

Motion from the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway: The Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway sent to the Province the undernoted motion which had been passed at its Diocesan Synod for inclusion on the agenda for General Synod:

That this Synod

- *recognise that there needs to be greater flexibility in clerical appointments than the current canonical structures provide; and*
- *recognise that there needs to be a more appropriate canonical provision for congregations which are not incumbencies than the current canonical structures provide; and*
- *request that the Faith and Order Board bring proposals to the General Synod in 2025 to address these matters.*

The Standing Committee gave consideration to the motion but decided not to include it on the agenda for General Synod. Recognising the importance of the issues raised, it has instead passed the motion directly to the Faith and Order Board for action.

(Under Canon 54.2, any resolution which has been submitted to the Standing Committee but not included in the Agenda must be notified to Synod members when the agenda is sent out but is not open to discussion or determination at the Synod “except with the consent of the requisite majority as prescribed in Rules adopted from time to time regulating the procedure of the General Synod”. Rule 10 requires a two thirds majority.)

SOCIAL MEDIA / LIVE-STREAMING

As in the past, the business of Synod is likely to be commented on through X (formerly Twitter) or other social media. The attention of Synod members is drawn to the Social Media Guidelines for use across all areas of the Church’s life, including the General Synod meeting, at:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/publications/social-media-guidelines/>

As usual, the proceedings at Synod will be live-streamed on the web and will also be recorded to enable the production of minutes of the meeting.

SYNOD DINNER

As mentioned in the initial letter to Synod members of 8 March, the Synod Dinner will be held on Thursday 13 June at 7.15pm for 7.45pm (not 7.30pm as stated on the agenda) at The Royal Scots Club, 29-31 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh. Dress for the occasion is smart but not formal, ie not black tie. Synod members were asked in the Google questionnaire to indicate whether they wished to attend the dinner. A place has been reserved only for those members who indicated a wish to attend, but **if, for unforeseeable reasons, any such member is now unable to attend the dinner please contact Donna Glass at: DonnaG@scotland.anglican.org by 24 May** as we have to supply final numbers and payment to the hotel and will be charged for any places booked but not taken up.

CORNERSTONE BOOKSHOP RECEPTION

Cornerstone Bookshop is again hosting a reception at its premises for Synod members. This will take place on the Friday of General Synod (from 5.30pm) giving Synod members an opportunity to browse Cornerstone books at their leisure and enjoy a glass of wine while doing so. A discount of 10% will be applied to any purchases during Synod, upon presentation of a Cornerstone voucher which will be given to Synod members on arrival at General Synod.

EXPENSES CLAIMS

An expense form is included in the Synod Papers at page 210. We encourage Synod members to submit their expense claims (including relevant receipts etc) electronically. Two versions of the claim form are available at <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/boards-and-committees/the-general-synod/>, – one can be completed electronically and then emailed to the email address below. The other version can be printed off for you to complete by hand, scan and send to the email address below. Expenses will be reimbursed by bank transfer. If the General Synod Office does not already hold your bank details, please provide that information, as set out on the form. The form should be returned by email to: GSexpenses@scotland.anglican.org.

Ideally Synod members would only submit one expense claim after the Synod meeting, but claims can also be submitted prior to Synod for expenses already incurred should members wish to do so. All claims should be submitted by 30 June.

Unless members are travelling from the more distant parts of the Province, the Synod would normally expect to pay accommodation costs for the nights of Thursday and Friday only. The overnight accommodation rate is £175 (including dinner and breakfast). Additionally, any members who will be staying with friends or family can claim an allowance of £50 per night.

LUNCHTIME ARRANGEMENTS

Synod members are asked to make their own arrangements for lunch each day. Members are welcome to bring their own packed lunches and eat them at St Paul's & St George's and tea/coffee will be available over lunchtime. There are a number of local sandwich bars and restaurants, a list of which will be available at Synod. For any members with limited mobility or who anticipate difficulty in sourcing lunch in this way, a sandwich will be made available at St Paul's & St George's, but you are asked to contact the General Synod Office in advance so that we can arrange this.

MISCELLANEOUS

A hearing induction loop operates in St Paul's & St George's and coverage is best in the main area of the Nave between the pillars.

Name badges/lanyards will be provided for Synod members on arrival at Synod along with an envelope containing additional information. For the purposes of security, we ask that lanyards be worn at all times during Synod.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide car parking and Synod members are advised to make their own arrangements. Parking in the immediate vicinity of St Paul's & St George's is limited and very expensive and central Edinburgh parking charges will be reimbursed

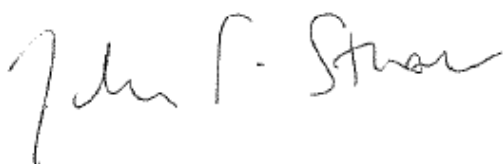
only in exceptional circumstances. The nearest tram stop is in Picardy Place, at the top of Leith Walk. The location of disabled car parking spaces in the area can be found on the website of the City of Edinburgh Council using the following link: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/parking-spaces/find-parking-bays>

The Synod papers and Annual Report are available electronically from the Provincial website at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/boards-and-committees/the-general-synod/>. Any further papers will also be posted there.

We expect the Scottish Episcopal Church Gaelic Society to hold a Gaelic Eucharist at St Paul's and St George's on the Friday evening following close of business for the day, to which all are welcome. Knowledge of Gaelic is not required.

I very much look forward to seeing you at the Synod next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Stuart'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John F Stuart
Secretary General

Encs