

Scottish Episcopal Church

General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church
Scottish Charity No SC015962

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17 May 2023

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 8-10 JUNE 2023

As previously advised, this year's meeting of General Synod will be held from 8-10 June 2023. It will take place at St Paul's & St George's Church, York Place, Edinburgh with most members present in person and some joining online. (A map showing the location of the venue is reproduced in *A Guide to the General Synod 2023* – 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).
2. The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022.
3. A Guide to the General Synod 2023.
4. A paper about the *Thursdays in Black* initiative.

Please note that to avoid the printed papers being over-long, we have not included the text of the three Pastoral Offices for Priests, for Deacons and for Readers and Authorised Lay Ministers each of which are the subject of motions for second reading during Session 6 at Synod. Similarly, we have not included the text of the Lent, Holy Week and Easter Liturgies, the subject of a motion for first reading during Session 7. 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 Offices and 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 8 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 Scottish Refugee Council. Information on the Council's work can be found at:

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.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 10 June. Once the offering has closed, we will forward the funds to the Scottish Refugee Council.

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 8 June. The purpose of that meeting is to welcome new members to Synod and explain practical arrangements. (Unfortunately, it will not be possible to join that meeting online.)

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.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETING AND TRAINING SESSIONS

As explained in my email of 4 May 2023, the Synod Hub will be used as the voting platform for all members, whether attending in person or online. An email will be sent to all Synod members around 24 May inviting you to register on the Synod Hub and to create your own password. **It is important that you register and create your password well in advance of the Synod meeting so please look out for it in case it ends up in your spam folder.** Information about registering for the online training

sessions at 7.30pm on Monday 29 May and 12 noon on Tuesday 30 May will also be included in that email.

Because voting will be undertaken electronically, **please remember to bring your device (laptop, tablet or smartphone) to Synod** to enable you to do that. We are providing tablets only to those who do not have their own device and who have therefore requested a tablet in advance.

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 in the Synod Hub. Additional motions will be included in the event that additional nominations are received before the commencement of Synod.

Table discussions: some of the sessions at Synod will include discussion in table groups. Those attending online will be able to participate in an online breakout group. Each group will have an appointed facilitator.

College of Bishops: the agenda includes two College of Bishops sessions. On Thursday, a presentation will be given by the College and table groups will then be invited to formulate and submit a question which they would like to put to the College. The College session on the Friday is designed as the opportunity for the College to respond to those questions.

Meet the Board Conveners: The Synod papers include work plans for provincial boards and committees. For 30 minutes at 2pm on the Friday afternoon 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. A number of pendant committee conveners will also be present for these sessions. 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 and we are separately emailing you today with a link to a Google Form inviting you to indicate which session you wish to attend. That will help us in allocating a room of appropriate size for those sessions. We hope to be able to make at least one of these sessions available to online members and once we see which sessions most online members opt for, we will make the necessary arrangements.

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 1 June 2023** 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. Those joining online will be able to indicate a request to speak via the Synod Hub.

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 230 of the Synod papers), notice of any Rule 10 Motion should normally be given to me before Synod starts.

MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

We are privileged this year to be joined on the Friday morning by the Rev Sally Foster-Fulton who, by the time of Synod will be the Moderator of the General Assembly. She will address Synod and is willing to take questions.

SOCIAL MEDIA / LIVE-STREAMING

As in the past, the business of Synod is likely to be commented on through 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 10 March, the Synod Dinner will be held on Thursday 8 June at 7.15pm for 7.30pm at a new venue, 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 25 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 242. 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. Standing Committee has increased the overnight accommodation rate to £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. Otherwise, it is difficult for staff to distinguish between members and any visitors. As in previous years, for security purposes, bags will be inspected briefly on arrival.

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. Owing to ongoing tram works, please note that there is no longer a tram stop outside St Paul's & St George's. The nearest stop is now in St Andrew Square. A stop in Picardy Place, at the top of Leith Walk is due to open "late spring/early summer" but no definitive date has been announced yet. 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:

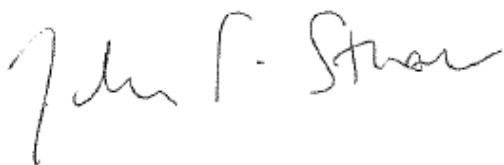
http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20085/parking_spaces/507/parking_bay_locations

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.

The Synod papers include a list of names of Synod Members and Alternates, and also a list of those individuals who serve as Scottish Episcopal Church representatives in other organisations. Details of how we use personal data can be found in our Privacy Notice which can be accessed on the provincial website.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John F. Stuart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John F Stuart
Secretary General

Encs