

General Synod 2015

Representatives from churches across Scotland will gather in Edinburgh for the annual meeting of the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, which takes place on 11-13 June at St Paul's and St George's Church, York Place.

Commenting on the publication of the papers for General Synod 2015, the Most Rev David Chillingworth, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, says: "A range of significant issues will be addressed and debated, including the mission of the Scottish Episcopal Church, both here in Scotland and further afield; how the Church can deploy its financial resources to greatest effect in assisting our dioceses in their work across Scotland and how proposals for Mission and Ministry Support Grants – sometimes called block grants - will bring radical change in particular to the financial relationship between Province and Dioceses – enabling our Church to work together as "one Church" through its 'Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy'.

"Other key matters to be discussed are the wider engagement of the Church with society and its issues, including climate change and the Living Wage. General Synod will also consider the adoption of new liturgy and of a "Safe Church Charter" which is being considered by the Anglican Church worldwide which addresses how churches can be safe places for all people, particularly the vulnerable.

"What is likely to attract most attention at this year's General Synod is the beginning of a process through which the Church shall consider whether it wishes to consider change to its Canons on Marriage.

"As members of General Synod begin to read their papers in preparation for our meeting next month, they will recognise that this is a particularly important Synod.

"During the last two years, our Church has committed itself to the Cascade Process of conversation across difference in the area of same sex relationships. In Province, Dioceses and congregations, people have been courageous and open in expressing and listening to the diversity of views which are held within the Scottish Episcopal Church. We have sat together as one Church and shared thoughtfully and prayerfully.

"We now move to consider whether or not we should undertake a process of canonical change regarding Marriage. First we shall discuss a comprehensive paper on the Doctrine of Marriage from our Doctrine Committee. Then we shall consider whether or not we wish to consider future change and look at a range of possible ways forward.

"It is my hope that here too we shall think and act as one Church. That doesn't mean that we must, or that we shall, all agree. We are considering an issue which in our times is profoundly challenging for all churches. Our ability to do that depends on our commitment to sustaining our visible unity in Christ."

Anyone who is not a member of General Synod is welcome to sit in the public gallery of St Paul's and St George's Church during the meeting of General Synod, and live audio coverage of the meeting will be available on the Scottish Episcopal Church website <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/> or <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/the-general-synod/>, together with online updates of the proceedings and decisions of General Synod 2015 as the three day meeting takes place.

The agenda for General Synod 2015, together with supporting papers, are available on the Scottish Episcopal Church website <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/the-general-synod/>

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